

Harold Rumzek

During the Department of Defense (DOD), Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA), Radiological Cleanup, I served as the initial USAF Element Commander at Enewetak Atoll, Marshall Islands, where 43 nuclear devices were tested. I supervised a Medical Officer and 88 enlisted personnel. Because of our expertise in our respective career fields, we were assigned by name from 44 locations worldwide. We initiated operations, prepared facilities, and formulated operational procedures to manage seven major functional areas to support 900 military, government agency, and civilian contract personnel assigned to Field Command, DNA. The USAF personnel performed assigned duties pertaining to managing Airfield, Communications, Field Radiation Support Team (FRST), Medical Clinic, Post Office, Petroleum-Oil-Lubricants (POL), and Radiation Laboratory operations. I reported directly to the Air Base Wing Commander, a Colonel, and to the Commander-In-Chief, Pacific Air Forces, a Three Star General, at Hickam AFB, HI.

In 1977, I was instrumental in coordinating with USAF to arrange the *Airman Magazine* article (attachment 1) "Recovering A Paradise Lost" which was highly edited prior to being published. My picture is displayed at the top left of the 5th page. We are standing on the lip of the crater on Runit Island where the 31-foot mountain containing our cleanup debris was constructed during the last 2 1/2 years of the Radiological Cleanup of Enewetak Atoll. I'm on the left with my hands on my hips, talking with my Non-Commissioned Officer's who were in charge of our Field Radiation Support Team (FRST). We were given the task to ensure the safety of the military personnel assigned to the Radiological Cleanup of Enewetak Atoll, but our inputs on radiation safety were ignored and overruled. Accordingly, I bear the burden of the consequences what the military participants have endured. Initially, we were required to wear the yellow suits, which were actually biomedical, not radiation, protective suits. However, a few weeks after arrival, scientists working with the Defense Nuclear Agency visited and task our FRST team to locate a radiological debris burial site on the North end of Runit, the island where we are pictured. Despite being unable to locate this site or any measurable radiation, our suits and radiation measurement devices were declared to be effective measures. However, within weeks we were told that, due to the low radiation threat, we could safely perform duties in the radiation areas wearing only the surgical masks and rubber gloves and boots to protect us from the dust (note articles in picture). A couple of years ago, I was invited to join a group, who describes themselves to be the Enewetak Atoll Cleanup Survivors. They located and notified me that during their participation they were required to perform their duties without any radiation protective gear.

We have been working in a coordinated effort since that time to get help from our elected members of the U.S. Congress and Senate. Despite suffering numerous cancers and other signs and symptoms, and some bearing afflicted children, we qualify for neither disability nor compensation from the Department of Veteran Affairs or U.S Government. They, as well as the DOD, deny any possibility of radiological side effects from the exposure we endured. My Congressman told me that the Chair of the Armed Forces Committee said, "There are not enough of them to worry about." When responding to comments made to my Congressman by a high ranking DOD member of what was formerly the DNA, I was personally told that, "There is more radiation in the US than at Enewetak Atoll." Few media sources will even respond to us. Then, a few months ago, after sending information to the American Legion about our plight, I was contacted by a member of their *American Legion Magazine* staff who arranged the interviews of individuals of this group who are featured in the current March, 2016, issue (attachment 2). This article, "Invisible BULLETS" describes how we were placed in harms way by our Government during our assignments from 1977-1980. Also, view their video (<http://www.legion.org/legiontv/PLD74653C32937FDD6/HegnRPVopg8>) on how we have been ignored since our involvement. Consequently, I continue to state, "The only people treated worse than the American Veteran is the American Indian." We refer to ourselves as the "Enewetak Atomic Cleanup Veterans" and HR-3870 is now being considered by the U.S. Congress. It addresses the need to consider us to be authorized equal medical treatment and financial benefits commensurate with those received by the Atomic Testing Veterans (<http://www.atomicveteran.info/>). However, we have been told this measure has only about a 3% chance of becoming a reality for us. Accordingly, we can use any help individuals are willing to provide in advancing H.R. 3870 - Atomic Veteran Healthcare Parity Act: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3870/all-info>.

Thanks for taking your valuable time to review this, and please share this with everyone you know who supports our troops.
GOD Bless America, and GOD Bless Our Troops!

Harry