



NAAV NEWS

Members' Publication of the National Association of Atomic Veterans

Volume 1

March, 2015

Issue 2

*Veterans you might need us-we might need you.
We are especially looking for veterans during and after the first Gulf War.*



U. S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Patrick Dionne/Released



DoD photo by U.S. Navy. (Released)



U. S. Navy photo by Robert Ruyle, RM2 Aboard the USS Navasota (AO-106) Refueling Operation Red Wing Ships

All crew members on All Nuclear ships, submarines and any on ships using CWS (Sea Whiz System) and any military in contact with depleted uranium. We are looking for those who may have been x-ray technicians, those assigned to Enewetak Atoll radiation clean up, as these fit the VA's official description as Occupational radiation exposed veterans. Any military (Army, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and Navy who were in any way involved in the assembly, storage and deployment of nuclear weapon devices or the surviving (spouse, or child) of a deceased Atomic Veteran.

For those of you that might not fit this new second group of veterans that we are looking for please give the NAAV a helping hand. This is what you can do. Make sure that you get this information to

a veteran that might fit the above criteria. If they have any questions on how we can support, lead, or provide assistance have them give Gillie a call at 804-334-8585 and he will get them in contact with a state commander. Also, make sure that they "check out" www.naav.com/html/documents.htm.

Let's get the word out that NAAV has been serving Atomic Veterans since 1979. Cold War Vets that may have been involved in radiation exposure events. We can help with information, support and guidance with government agencies.

ANNUAL MEETING... scheduled for late Sept. or Oct. in Washington D.C. Final information will be in the next news letter.

Change of Address, Membership or Renewal....Write or E-Mail

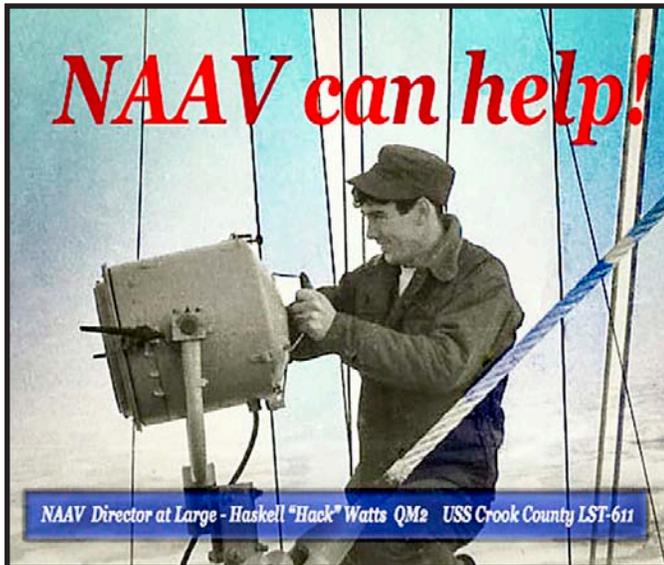
National Commander NAAV
Fred Schafer •130 Cleveland Street
Lebanon, OR 97355-4505
Phone: 541-258-7453
E-Mail: derf@trcschafer.com

Published quarterly by the NAAV

Deadlines are the 1st of every 4th month and any material submitted after that time may be delayed until next quarter. All submissions are to be e-mailed to newsboynaav@gmail.com or mail to Darryl Hirst - Managing Editor. All photos must be sent in JPEG format preferably at 300dpi or mail us an original and we will copy it and get it back to you.

NAAV can help!

Help from NAAV here is an example, for all veterans.



Start at the National Archives and Records Administration <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/Home>VeteransServiceRecords>MilitaryServiceRecords>

Military personnel records can include DD214s Separation Documents, service personnel records found within the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF), and medical records. Permission by NAAV Director Watts Military personnel records can be used for proving military service or as a valuable tool in genealogical research.

Home>VeteransServiceRecords>MilitaryServiceRecords>VeteransMedical and Health Records

The Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF), held at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), are administrative records containing information about the subject's military service history. Many OMPFs contain both personnel and former active duty health records, but the service branches discontinued retiring the health record portion to the NPRC in the 1990s. In 1992, the Army began retiring most of its former members' health records to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Over the next six years, the other services followed suit: Find out specific information by visiting the above links.

SHIPMATES ARE FOREVER

Sometime back during the holidays my head was hanging low and here came Alfred Weinberg. I had not known Al. I will not forget Al. That day I was hit by a Random Act of Kindness. With his permission, I would like for you to read his words. Always enjoy NAAV Newsletters. Write-up re: LST-611 extremely well done and informative.

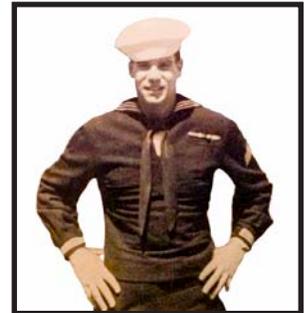
Difficult to enlist new NAAV members.

I participated in Operation Wigwam, 1955. For many years, 8 close Wigwam shipmates and I met several times annually. I am the last man alive from this group.

Having been topside on the carrier, USS Wright CVL-49, during the aforementioned operation, I experienced a substantial blast of 'hot water.' Therefore, my body sustained radiation poisoning for which the VA has treated me these many years.

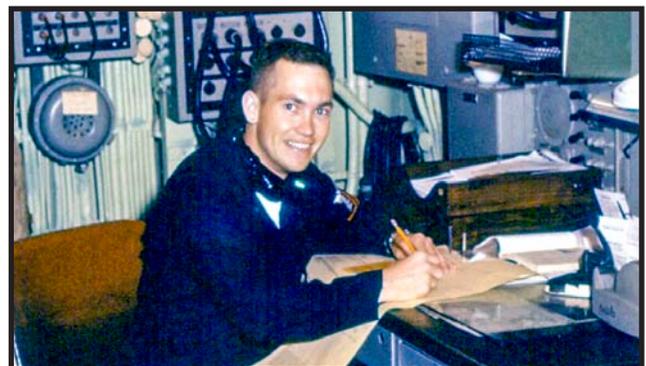
Keep up the good work.
Happy holiday season.

Al Weinberg
Shipmates Are Forever...



Man behind it all...

NAAV news Robert "Bob" Ruyle. Bob puts your newsletter together. He is responsible for the new look. He is an Atomic Veteran and former Navy RM1c, He is does the work of 3 men making sure that 3 different newsletters get out. Send Bob a note of appreciation. Send to Bob at bobruyle34@gmail.com. Do it, it will only take a you moment.



My Thermonuclear Summer

-- Continued -- 1956 My Thermonuclear Summer --

We arrived at Bikini not knowing what the future might bring. There may have been a tropical paradise at one time, but not in 1956. Although Bikini's reefs enclosed the blue and jade green lagoon, which was twenty-four miles long and fifteen wide, there had been a change. Bikini Atoll had already been formed into a concrete, one level canvas huts that had been established, by the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission), for those with temporary lodging needs. The island consisted of a few thousand military and civilians. My housing on board the 611 when taking part in the testing and other times on a cot ashore in one of the canvas structures. When not involved directly in testing duties it was pretty much an easy stretch.

My closest encounter with radiation to that time was when I was around 8 or 9 years old and had my feet examined by a fluoroscope (a shoe fitting x-ray machine) at a Buster Brown Shoe Store.

Of course, many individuals of my age can recall a similar experience I am sure. Seeing the bones in one's feet is very much the same as seeing the bones in one's hand while covering your eyes to shield against the effects of radiation. We did not have masks to block the unwanted light from a thermonuclear detonation.



Possession of Darryl Hirst RM2 & Haskell "Hack" Watts QM2

Thomas Edison, while speaking of X-rays stated, "X-rays... I am afraid of them. I stopped experimenting with them two years ago when I came near to losing my eyesight and Dally, my assistant, practically lost the use of both of his arms."

I had no knowledge of the previous series of tests known as CASTLE. There were complications associated with Shot Bravo which lead to additional safety precautions taken during OPERATION REDWING. Dosimeters (film badges) were issued to all participants. In February of 1956 some 96 attendees from the three ships, including LST611, were given radiological safety training. I was not included in that preparation. No other formal safety training was given to crew members of LST611. While at Bikini we were preoccupied with test preparations and had little time for training.

The mass of an atomic/hydrogen detonation will never leave your head. The time signals, minus 20 minutes, minus 15 minutes counting down the minutes increased the tension. One minute as you stiffen, a quietness around you is noticed by all, waiting for the moment that you will never forget. Then 3, 2, 1 seconds and then a blinding flash lighting up the whole area brighter than the brightest day. Higher temperatures produce a mixture of radiation and gas that moves outward, like a piston. Then came the resulting pressure wave, followed by what looked like a heavy puff of air which could be seen as a rippling across the water and then the hydraulic shock.



Operation Redwing, DAKOTA - The DAKOTA Event, part of Operation Redwing, was detonated from a barge at Enewetak Atoll on 25 June 1956

The impact upon the ship's hull is unspeakable. There is an intense radiation in the first few seconds, which creates an aura of fluorescence that is done by the ionizing of oxygen and nitrogen. To follow a nuclear occurrence is to pick up a great ball of black, cherry, yellow and orange boiling upwards.

-- Continued on Page 4 --

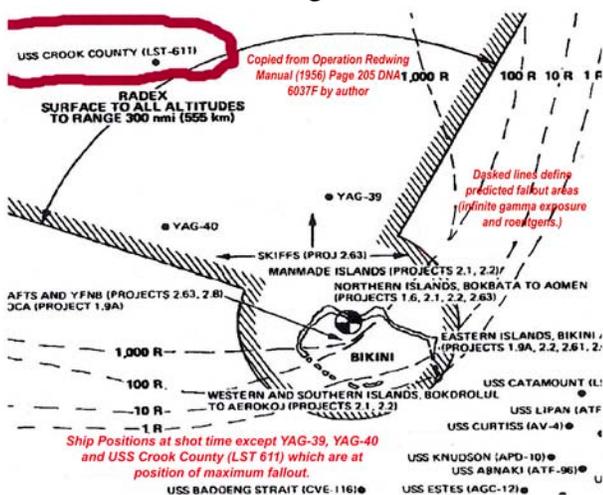
My Thermonuclear Summer- Continued

-- Continued from Page 3 --

The brightness decreases rapidly. The cloud boils to an altitude over thousands of feet. The cap of this mushroom shaped detonation soon reached the shifting sub stratosphere where the winds break up the shifting sub stratosphere where the winds break up the gray colored mass.

Ionizing radiation emitted as a result of a nuclear explosion includes photons, neutrons, as well as both beta and alpha particles. Photons consist of both x-rays and gamma rays and bring forth high energy electromagnetic radiation. Two forms of radiation occur one initial radiation (within one moment of detonation) and next residual radiation (the radiation emitted from the radioactive dust). Gamma rays are components of both stages and are measured through the use of dosimeters. One of the goals of Operation Redwing was to assess the types of radiation and their energies. Personal film badges were used by all individuals as a monitor during the series of tests. In addition, another goal was to categorize uncertainties in personnel film badge dosimetry, i.e., calibration, storage, environmental condition and the procedures that were used. These were two of the goals.

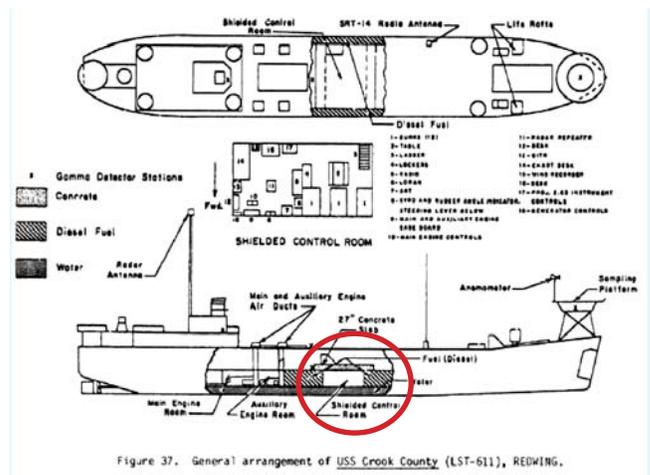
The LST 611 was stationed directly into the downwind path of the radioactive dust (the hotline) of radioactive material from an atomic or hydrogen bomb. The nature and distribution of radioactive fallout from high yield thermonuclear detonations was another prime object of the Operation Redwing. There were 12-14 individuals on our ship that operated as a skeleton crew. The operation compartment, which had been constructed in San Francisco at Hunters Point, consisted of lead shielding.



1. Our goals were to collect, while sailing into the path of fallout, data such as time of arrival, total exposure, distribution, particle size and cession after the radio chemicals reached the surface.

2. In addition, the 611 was to be used, with the previously mentioned shielded room, to evaluate the shielding effectiveness of the thickness of varied compositions of steel and find the quantity of gamma radiation in a diversity of ways.

As a radioman I was one of those 12 to 14 individuals, as was my close friend then and today Haskell "Hack" Watts QM2 from Logan, W.V.



Later on each test involving the LST611 a general decontamination procedure was needed. Our ship, along with two other small YAGs (small platform vessels) were to evaluate the strength of a variety of wash down operations. Of fifteen Navy ships used in the Operation Redwing only these three ships sailed at once into the fallout from the nuclear cloud and took part in this performance. We like our shipmates since 1776 followed the old formula of "a clean sweep down fore and aft" but in reality little was accomplished. We had no idea that what fell from that radioactive cloud could not be washed out. The sailors of "611" were ordered to and did wash down the decks and outside of the ship with salt water often wearing white tee shirts, dungarees and rubber boots. This called for spraying the topside of the ship with hoses. Contaminated seawater was used.

-- To Be Continued --

ATOMIC vs NUCLEAR

Are you one or the other? Are they one in the same? I guess that it depended on where you were born and maybe where you lived. It matters down-winder or not. Bottom line, we are all related, without one there is not the other. History will show the birth of the Nuclear Navy and its father Admiral Rickover. The history of the Atomic World began long before Rickover started the Nuclear program. Even as he was working on the first reactor for placement on a ship or boat, others were trying to understand what was the true fallout of the bomb.

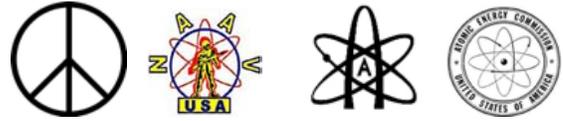


Scott Donaldson, MM2/SS
USS Bluefish SSN 675

With little or no understanding of the consequences of their actions, exposed men and women, with even less knowledge of the consequences of their superiors. They stood watch and sailed their ships through clouds of nuclear fallout. Twenty years before my entering the Navy, my father and my father-in-law's generation were part of the worlds largest test lab. Today, as in the case of WW2, this is an aging group. They, like all of us who served went through a debriefing. They swore that they would keep their mouths shut and not speak of the events or the cause of their illnesses they are suffering from. This was the time that you were only as good as your word. A contract to give their lives for freedom. These folks did that, they lived up to their word. As their health is showing the results of these tests, the government has not lived up to their word. These veterans deserve better, we deserve better or does the Oath of Office mean less than a Cell Phone contract? Do we not treat the wounded in the field? Then why do we not treat the symptoms from the laboratory 50 years later? Yes, their blood is not pouring out of their body, cancers still kill and shortens life. While there is a group working to recognize them with a medal we owe them more, we owe them treatment for their wounds. There are statistics and there are facts. We need to look past the statistics and see the damage done and stand by our family .Mr. Donaldson can be contacted at scottfly@comcast.net

A BENEFIT FOR YOU

As an Atomic Veteran you have a choice, but only one of these symbols, is available for the placement upon your United State Veteran's Government Headstone or Marker.



Gotta thank Jake Lamkins for getting me on to this. Check #16 on the following page.

www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/emblems.pdf

ROLLING IN CASH!

Get your story in...Okay, at least this time I don't have to make a remark like "Way to go gang!" No one replied. Pete Besas is the really big bucks guy by having gotten his story into the Newsletter. The money, 1953 Une Piastre, One Yi 1996 Yuan and a 1952 Hong Kong dollar.

Pay
dues
now

*If you haven't
paid your
dues then
please, consider
doing that now. It's
an important way
to keep informed.*

\$25 annual \$250 life

Thanks, All Hands, Sept. 1945

Admiral Nimitz issued "cease fire" order:

"It looks like the war is over, but if any planes appear, shoot them down in a friendly fashion."

I made a difference, join me!

I want each of you to make a real difference. I can teach you how.

Why did you join and did you find the information, the value, the help, and the stories you liked from NAAV? Are you disappointed that you joined the NAAV?

In speaking with one of our NAAV members recently about the age of our association he mentioned that in his state they had a number of members that were in their nineties and eighties. This is no surprise to you. Our membership is dwindling. Our organization is 36 years old.

I'm thinking that some of you must feel the way I do. I want you to pass on the gift of NAAV. It is my wish that others might benefit from what I have gained. If I had not heard of the NAAV through the AARP magazine article a few years ago I would not be writing this. I would not have been sent to the Ionization Radiation Registry and I would have not found a way which leads to recognition of my injuries obtained at Bikini Atoll.



This is what I am writing to you about. I would wish each member of NAAV to reach out to one family member and offer the gift of membership to the National Association of Atomic Veterans. We know that many service members since 1990 are qualified to be members as atomic veterans. Your National State Commander will be reaching out to you through your individual state commanders in assisting you, if needed, to meet our challenge. They will contact you. Personally, I am asking

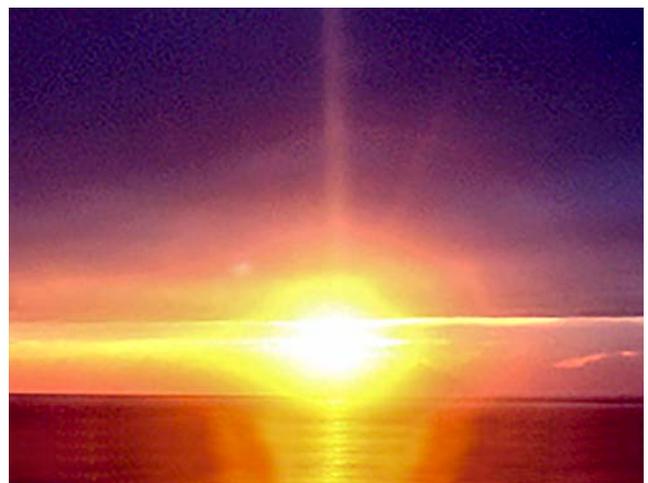
for each one of you to reach out to a family member. I propose that you let them know why you would like them to become a member, then obtain the application form from our website (or have someone with a computer help you) http://www.naav.com/html/apply_now.htm then write the check for \$25.00 and let's find out if they will experience what you have.

I would wish you to recognize that I've helped my son-in-law toward membership this past year. You can see his photo and read his article in this issue of the newsletter. (Scott Donaldson) Atomic vs Nuclear.

I would value your story telling of your success.
By newsboynaav@gmail

PARADISE...

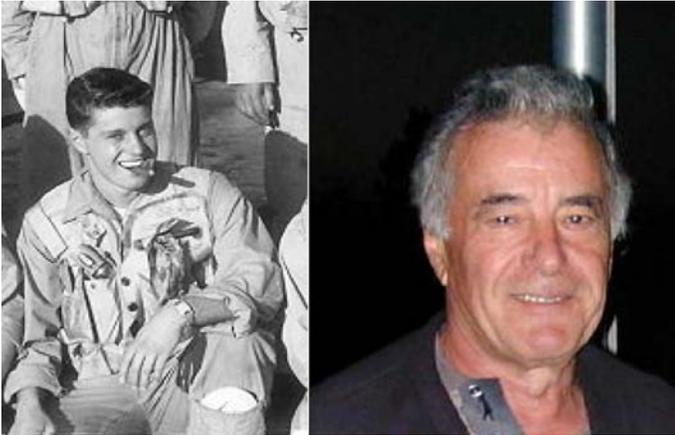
Upon the sea, what a beauty to lay eyes on. This image, another permanent record of my past experience. This image still lingers, after so many years. Unseen it is frozen in my everyday life. It is history as a fact and gathers dust unless shaken to be used or to be shared.



Would you share your image, with us? Whatsoever, the story, whatever, the image.

Send to me – Darryl newsboynaav@gmail.com

Pete Besas Story



Pete Besas • Blaine (Birch Bay) Washington
phbesas@aol.com • 360-269-7051

I served in the U S Navy Air Force during the Korean War as an aviation electronics technician. In May of 1955 I took part in Atomic testing. "Operation Wigwam" was the world's only deep-water Atomic Bomb Detonation. The atomic weapon device used in this test was a 31 kiloton "Plutonium core" Atomic bomb that was detonated on May 14, 1955, approximately 500 nautical miles southwest of San Diego, California, under the joint sponsorship of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense.

This particular test involved 6,700 military personnel, 120 scientist & engineers, 25 U. S. Navy ships, 5 Scripps Oceanographic Institute scientific research vessels, 36 Navy & Air Force reconnaissance, photographic, and radiation monitoring aircraft, its purpose was to determine the effects of an Atomic explosion on submarines.

A bit of background Information:

The U.S. was involved in nuclear, thermo-nuclear and hydrogen weapons testing from July 16, 1945 to late November 1992. During this 47 year period, there were a total of 1,149 (U.S. sponsored) nuclear weapon test detonations, some of which were in joint venture with the United Kingdom. Although a little more than 900 of the tests were below ground, more than 200 resulted in the atmospheric dispersion of ionizing radiation particles, and there were more than 450,000 military personnel and 45,000 civilian scientists who witnessed and participated in these nuclear event activities.

I was assigned to one of 3 converted C-54 cargo planes equipped to photograph the detonation. I was in the plane closest to the detonation. My job was to monitor all the instruments used to measure levels of airborne radiation. All the instruments that I monitored went off scale. All personnel also wore film badges for detecting radiation levels. I never heard results of radiation levels that we were exposed to.

At present I serve as Washington State Commander of the National Association of Atomic Veterans. There are approximately 50 of us in Washington. I help anyone filling claims to the Veteran's Administration for health effects caused by exposure to air-borne radiation. Many have suffered known cancers associated with exposure.

Pete Besas • Blaine (Birch Bay) Washington
phbesas@aol.com • 360-269-7051

National Commander:

Fred Schafer - derf@trcschafer.com

National Vice Commander:

F. L. Grahlf s flg17@caa.columbia.edu

Treasurer:

H. Frank Farmer - hFarmer000@centurytel.net

Secretary:

Barbara Schafer - bnewt2025@yahoo.com

Director of State Commanders:

G. H. Jenkins - atomicgillie@verizon.net

Director at Large (2014-2015):

Robert Pfiefer - oldreliable2@live.com

Director at Large (2014-2015):

Steve Harrison - lojwaanimal@yahoo.com

Director at Large (2014-2015):

Haskell Watts Jr. - hwatts4@frontier.com

Editor-NAAV Newsletter

Darryl Hirst - newsboynaav@gmail.com

NewsItter Layout

Bob Ruyle - bobruyle34@gmail.com

All NAAV members – here is a list of all State Commanders as of 9 August 2014. Your Director of State Commanders Gillie Jenkins wishes for all members to be able to contact their State Commander for questions. Hopefully this will “keep us together.” If your state does not have a State Commander or to volunteer to be a State Commander in your state, call or write to Gillie.

Managing Director –

National Commander Fred Schafer 541-258-7453 derf@trcschafer.com

Alabama: Ronald H. Holmes 205-758-6823 sgme9holmes@charter.net

Alaska: Terry T. Brady 907-333-9462 terrybrady9462@gmail.com

Arizona: Robert Spires, 2301 S. Pima Dr. Lake Havasu City AZ. 86403 928-855-9864 robertspiers@frontnet.net

Arkansas: W.C. 'JAKE' Lamkins 479-879-8358 jake@lamkins.com

California: Leo "Bud" Feurt 858 748 7204 bufeurt@yahoo.com

Colorado: Beverly A. Gray 1754 45th. Ave Greely, CO.80634 970-330-1057 bevnan@comcast.net

Connecticut: Ronald T. 'RONNIE' Benoit 413-245-7819 H 413-218-8573 C atomicvet024@gmail.com

Delaware: Position available

Florida: Becky Miller 407-678-2051 beckymillr1@gmail.com

Georgia: Kenneth P. Price 229-241-9183 ppprice@att.net

Hawaii: Bob Kiltthau 808-422-6149 RAKaloha@yahoo.com

Idaho: Position available

Illinois: Bill Fish 708-479-0193 NukedApril181953@aol.com

Indiana: Position available

Iowa: Gilbert Amdahl 712-362-5607 naaviagfa@yahoo.com

Kansas: Position available

Kentucky: Position available

Louisiana: Rodney L. Guidry 318-487-8375 rodguidry@juno.com

Maine: Ronald T. 'RONNIE' Benoit 413-245-7819 H 413-218-8573 C atomicvet024@gmail.com

Maryland: Position available

Massachusetts: Ronald T. 'RONNIE' Benoit 413-245-7819 H 413-218-8573 C atomicvet024@gmail.com

Michigan: Robert Jackson 248-622-0055 rjackso6@msn.com

Minnesota: Jim Hamman 763 428 2046 No email

or Keith Kiefer 612 232 6596 KIEFER4RAMSEY@YAHOO.COM

Mississippi: Elroy Warren 601-833-5696 Ewarren63@hotmail.com

Missouri: Thomas Bair 417-627-9577 tombair@hotmail.com

Montana: Position available

Nebraska: Robert Ruyle 402-488-7927 cell-402-450-7123 robert_ruyle@yahoo.com

Nevada: Position available

New Hampshire: Bernard Wynn 603-924-7951 bfwynn1@comcast.net

New Jersey: Rudy Florentine 609-822-9714 rnflorentine@msn.com

New Mexico: Glen Howard 505-865-8138 Leprechaun40@juno.com

New York: Ed Gettler 845-628-2338 pappypac@verizon.net

North Carolina: Lee Meadows 704-847-8835 leemeadows@aol.com

North Dakota: Fred Hartleib 701-663-5854 (lwingnbach@yahoo.com)

Ohio: Alan Miller: 330-468-1894 alm9th2@windstream.net

Oklahoma: James Lazalier 405-329-0489 jhll@cox.net

Oregon: Gary J Smith 541-259-1482 gjs659@centurytel.net

Pennsylvania: Anthony Marceca 717-600-8678 (anthonymarceca@earthlink.net)

Rhode Island: Ronald T. 'RONNIE' Benoit 413-245-7819 H 413-218-8573 C atomicvet024@gmail.com

South Carolina: Tom Botchie 843-607-3842 toppop59@gmail.com

South Dakota: Position available

Tennessee: Position available

Texas: James Brettell 903-534-7044 jbrettellj@cox.net

Utah: Position available

Vermont: Ronald T. 'RONNIE' Benoit 413-245-7819 H 413-218-8573 C atomicvet024@gmail.com

Virginia: Gillie Jenkins 804-334-8585 atomicgillie@verizon.net

Washington: Pete Besas 360-371-5322 Phbesas@aol.com

West Virginia: Haskell Watts Jr. 304-752-5552 hwatts4@frontier.com

Wisconsin: F.Lincoln Grahfs 608-230-5870 flg17@caa.columbia.edu

Wyoming: Position available

