

# Fact Sheet

RCC1.951024.033



Defense Nuclear Agency  
Public Affairs Office  
6801 Telegraph Road  
Alexandria, Va. 22310-3398  
(703) 325-7095  
Facsimile Number (703) 325-2962

January 1994

## Nuclear Test Personnel Review Program Veterans' Services

The Nuclear Test Personnel Review (NTPR) program, established by the Department of Defense (DoD) in 1978, has developed an extensive support system to assist the veterans of U.S. atmospheric nuclear tests and the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. The program helps veterans assess the significance of their participation and radiation exposure. Through the NTPR program, veterans may learn the details of their individual participation and their radiation doses, obtain documentation about the tests and their unit's role, and be informed of the availability of health care and other assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) manages the NTPR program for the DoD. Military and civilian personnel from the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps initially researched extensive archival records to provide data about the numerous units that participated in the U.S. atmospheric tests conducted from 1945 to 1962 and in the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. In 1987, the NTPR program was consolidated at DNA. Through a public outreach program, DNA has encouraged veterans to contact the program through press releases, veterans groups and mass mailings. Such contact enables veterans to use DNA's information for their cases, and it allows veterans to augment DNA records by contributing information about their participation, which may be of help to others in their unit.

Public Law 97-72, the "Veterans' Health Care, Training, and Small Business Loan Act of 1981," authorized the VA to provide hospital and nursing home care and limited outpatient services to veterans who were exposed "while serving on active duty to ionizing radiation from the detonation of a nuclear device in connection with such veteran's participation in the test of such a device, or with the American occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, during the period beginning on Sept. 11, 1945 and ending July 1, 1946." This law provides for medical care related to radiogenic diseases, but does not authorize care for conditions that are found by the VA to have resulted from other than exposure to ionizing radiation. DNA assists the VA by verifying individual participation.

Public Laws 98-542 (October 1984) and 100-321 (May 1988) provide for VA determination of service connection and benefits for

"Veterans' Dioxin and Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act," defines rules for adjudicating VA claims and establishes a panel of experts for addressing scientific issues. Public Law 100-321, "Radiation Exposed Veterans Compensation Act of 1988," provides a presumption of service connection for veterans (and their survivors) who participated in U.S. atmospheric nuclear weapons testing or in the occupation of Hiroshima/Nagasaki, Japan, and who suffer from radiogenic diseases that may be attributable to exposure to ionizing radiation. Public Law 102-86, "Veterans' Benefits Program Improvement Act of 1991," (August 1991) modifies Public Law 100-321. The modification changed the manifestation period for leukemia from 30 to 40 years and included eligible Reservists and National Guard members as beneficiaries. Public Law 100-321 was further amended by Public Law 102-578 (October 1992), which eliminated the disease latency and expression periods and added two cancers to the list of presumed service connected diseases. DNA assists the VA by providing participation and associated radiation exposure information. Additional information about these benefits is available at local VA facilities or by dialing 1-800-827-1000. Veterans can receive free assistance in submitting claims by contacting one of the veterans' service organizations.

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (Public Law 101-426), as amended by the 1991 Department of Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 101-510, Section 3139), established the Radiation Exposure Compensation Trust Fund. Benefits may be available for on-site participants in certain U.S. nuclear weapons tests if the individual has one of the diseases listed in the Act. The Trust Fund established by this law is being administered by the Department of Justice. Any questions regarding this legislation and its eligibility criteria should be directed to the DOJ through the Department's toll-free line (1-800-729-7327).

DNA has developed a history of the U.S. atmospheric nuclear test operations in a 41-volume series. These historical reports are available at more than 700 libraries and facilities nationwide. In addition, over 25 volumes of radiation exposure assessments for major participant groups in the various test operations have also been widely disseminated. All reports are available in the DNA NTPR Reading Room. They may also be purchased from the Department of Commerce's National Technical Information Service (NTIS), which provides unclassified government publications to the public. The NTIS may be contacted at 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161 (phone 703-487-4650). Anyone interested in learning more about the histories, radiation exposure assessments, or the thousands of now-declassified source documents used in the preparation of historical and analytical reports is encouraged to visit the NTPR Reading Room at DNA Headquarters in Alexandria, VA, or contact the NTPR program at 1-800-462-3683 (in Virginia call collect 703-285-5610).

A repository of over 300,000 documents related to U.S. atmospheric nuclear weapons testing has also been established for public use at the Coordination and Information Center (CIC), 3084 South Highland Ave., Las Vegas, NV, telephone (702-295-0731). The center, partially funded by DNA, is administered by the Department of Energy and operated by the Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Company. The CIC makes available unclassified and declassified historical documents that have been collected, consolidated, indexed and stored for long-term preservation and rapid retrieval. The facility also provides a staff to assist in the identification and retrieval of specific documents that relate to participation in U.S. atmospheric nuclear tests. Correspondence regarding the CIC should be directed to the U.S. Department of Energy, P.O. Box 14100, Las Vegas, NV 89114. Nominal charges to cover costs are made for duplicating documents and for information searches through the data base. A fee schedule is available on request.