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PETITION FROM MR. GENE CURBOW, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATOMIC VETERANS,  
CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85, paragraph 1, of  
the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

National Association of Atomic Veterans  
1109 Franklin Street  
Burlington, Iowa 52601

18 May 1983

The President  
Trusteeship Council  
United Nations  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Reference: Petition to Trusteeship Council

Dear Sir:

I have enclosed the original text of three pages and cover sheet (see annex) as a petition to the United Nations Trusteeship Council. As indicated per our telephone conversation of today, I would be pleased to have this included in the written petitions before the Council.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Gene CURBOW

Annex

PETITION CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS  
PRESENTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Prepared by:

National Association of Atomic Veterans  
Gene Curbow  
18 May 1983

I am pleased to appear today as a representative of the National Association of Atomic Veterans and for myself as a veteran who not only saw service in the Marshall Islands, but also as a veteran exposed to high levels of ionizing radiation. It was my pleasure to be part of the history in the making as the greatest nightmare of modern times occurred in 1954. I am speaking of "Bravo" shot. From that nightmare has come a close bond between the Marshallese and the group of Americans exposed during the same detonation of 1 March 1954.

In 1954, during the testing of a thermonuclear device in the Bikini Atoll area, several hundred Marshallese from Rongelap Atoll and Utirik Atoll were exposed to radioactive fallout along with 28 Americans on Rongerik Atoll. This exposure and subsequent fallout of radioactive matter was the beginning of a nightmare which has affected the lives, lands and culture of the Marshallese and has also been the beginning of a nightmare for the American service personnel. Twenty nine years of nightmares can leave one very bitter in his or her beliefs.

On doomsday, 1 March 1954 and earlier, some serious errors were committed by the military and scientific community responsible for making decisions affecting the lives, lands and culture of those we were committed to protect. During this period of development of the thermonuclear devices, the yield of the devices was usually in excess of design. There was nothing in this design, on 1 March 1954, to think any less. Even though officially I have seen many discrepancies in the actual yield, it is thought to have exceeded the design yield by 50 to 75 per cent. This to me is known as "hip pocket" research. This is a factor that should have been taken into consideration by those responsible.

Another gross error that has been widely publicized was the matter of wind direction at the time of detonation. In its press releases of 1954, as a means of explaining to the media the cause of the exposure, the Atomic Energy Commission explained all the errors away as "wind shift". To my knowledge, at least one week prior to the detonation, the surface winds and at levels above were in the easterly direction at Rongerik Atoll. Our equipment and the latest state of the art was capable of reading wind directions up to 80,000 feet and with some degree of success, at 100,000 feet. Our knowledge at that time of charting the upper level streams of air movement known as "Gulf Streams" was very limited and could not be relied upon with any degree of accuracy. It was reported by Life magazine that the apex of the radioactive cloud for "Bravo" shot had reached 32 miles or 169,000 feet. The question that has always been unanswered was why, with the knowledge of risks and conditions, detonate a device and place people under risk?

Another error was in monitoring the cloud and the movement of radioactivity. With the availability of the aircraft to maintain vigil over the direction of the radioactive cloud, the question has always been why did it take days to remove the Marshallese and American service personnel from a very dangerous and life threatening situation?

USS Gypsy  
?

After living with the problems and nightmares of exposure for 29 years, the people of the Marshalls and the American service personnel have received neither the medical care nor financial assistance to provide that care which is necessary due to the exposure. This is a shame and disgrace to humanity.

If the world leaders would recognize that radiation is harmful to the health of individuals exposed, the plight of the Marshallese and service personnel exposed from all nations would be better recognized. Instead of looking for cause, the scientific community could then give answers to the problems of radiation. Instead of study we could talk of cure. Instead of denial we could receive help. With help comes trust.

I call upon this body to give this special group of world citizens the help that they need and deserve. Only through the help and assistance received can the word trust, in its broadest sense, prevail.

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# 'Atom man' says N-bomb ruined his body

By JACK DORSEY  
Lead writer

NORFOLK — Gene O. Curbow says he is a "walking atom man" because of heavy exposure to radiation during military nuclear tests 30 years ago, adding that the government would have compensated him if he had been hit by a bullet in Korea instead of an atom bomb in the Pacific.

But the 48-year-old Roanoke resident said he was not lucky enough to be in Korea in the early '50s. Instead, as an Air Force staff sergeant, Curbow was weathering a weather station at Rongerik in the Marshall Islands when the government detonated a 15-megaton nuclear bomb March 1, 1954, on nearby Bikini.

He and 27 other servicemen on the project site were exposed to radiation rated the highest exposure level of any military personnel recorded, he said — 17 times greater than the internationally accepted safety standard for maximum radiation exposure.

Curbow, who is the deputy director of the National Association of Atomic Veterans, said he and the veterans his organization represented could not convince the government that their medical disorders were the result of those early nuclear tests.

"We look upon this as being an injury just as much as being shot by a bullet," he said. "Being shot by an atom bomb is just as bad — both of them will kill you."

"So, from that standpoint, we think we have

a case. The problem is we are here 30 years later and trying to prove our case to the Veterans Administration and the other government agencies. It's a very frustrating situation because you can't get the government to do anything. They are not even entering any research projects to help the cause of the atomic veteran."

Curbow was in Norfolk on Friday as the guest of the Southeastern Virginia Peace Coalition, which is advocating full compensation for the veterans subjected to radiation and an immediate freeze on the production and deployment of nuclear weapons.

While he stopped short of agreeing to a total freeze on nuclear weapons — "I know we have it here a strong weapons system for defense" — Curbow welcomed the group's effort to make the plight of thousands of servicemen like him known.

Curbow said that while the United States was detonating more than 600 nuclear weapons between 1945 and 1977, up to 300,000 military persons

had been exposed to radiation. In 1979, when the Defense Nuclear Agency set up a telephone hot line to receive inquiries from affected servicemen, Curbow said 48,137 called. Of those, 30 percent reported major health problems, and 9.8 percent had cancer, he said.

"That alone should prove we had an epidemic," he said.

To date, he said, the Veterans Administration has awarded service-connected disability to only 16 people who said they had radiation-related disorders out of more than 2,800 who filed. The VA said that, according to records kept by the Defense Nuclear Agency, the low doses of radiation received by most of the 130,000 atomic veterans were not sufficient to cause injury to the men or their offspring.

Curbow, who operates a small engineering firm in Roanoke, works with the low-dose atomic veterans organization nearly full time to help the cause of radiation victims.

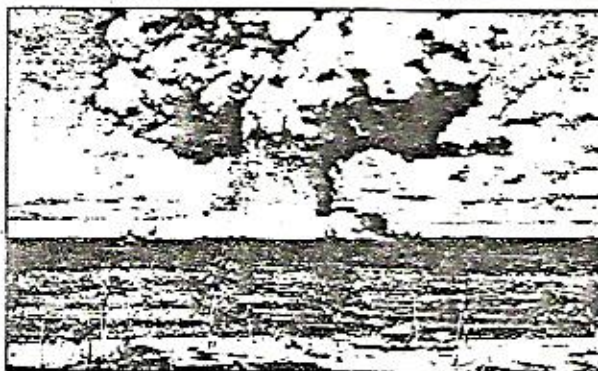


Curbow

FEBRUARY 13, 1983

## Significa

By Irving Wallace,  
David Wallechinsky and Amy Wallace



H-bomb blasts Bikini island in 1954 test: Some people still feel effects

### Bomb Blast Coverup

**F**ive former Air Force men are suing for damages inflicted on March 1, 1954, by BRAVO, the test of an H-bomb on the Pacific island of Bikini. They say the U.S. and its contractors knew that east winds would carry the bomb's fallout to the Marshall Islands but gave the go-ahead for the test and later attempted a coverup. Federal officials insist the contamination of 28 servicemen and hundreds of Marshallese was accidental.

Late on the morning of the blast, say witnesses, radioactive ash settled "like a snowstorm" on Rongerik Atoll in the Marshalls, 125 miles away, where the servicemen lived. The radiation dose was 15 times the level now allowed nuclear workers for a whole year. Military doctors pronounced the men in good health on May 16, 1954; since then, the U.S. has refused to

provide medical care for them.

The five former airmen say they have developed cancer and other serious conditions, including reproductive problems. Therefore, they have filed claims of \$10 million each for punitive damages plus medical costs against contractors who worked with the government on BRAVO. (According to precedent, servicemen cannot sue the government for service-related injuries.) Why did they wait so long to sue? Gene Curbow, one of the five, says it was "a mixture of patriotism and ignorance." The government admits that the men were exposed to large doses of radiation but denies that their injuries are related.

Servicemen who believe their health has been affected by BRAVO may write to attorney Gordon A. Stemple, 2020 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 440, Century City, Calif. 90067.

### A Zinc Penny for Your Thoughts

**I**f you looked upon the copper penny with disdain, waiting for the chance to dump that clunker of coins from your pocket, you may wish you'd saved them. Copper had become so expensive that last year the government

switched to a zinc-based penny. The old penny was 95% copper and 5% zinc; the new one is 97.6% zinc, 2.4% copper and 34% lighter.

The zinc penny, according to the Treasury Department, will save about \$25 million annually.