

The Sound of Silence Project™

Fighting for Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians

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Contact: Rick Workman, Director
Email: Rick@TSOSProject.com

Exposed: Cold War-Era Non-Therapeutic Human Radiation Experiment ¹

Elaborate deception or operational necessity?

Nuclear Weapons Technicians exposed to radiation without their knowledge or consent

HENDERSON, Nev. — Throughout the Cold War-era (1947-1991), military veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps worked in direct contact with live nuclear weapons—disassembling, replacing components, reassembling, maintaining, transporting and storing nuclear warheads, bombs, missiles, torpedoes, artillery shells, and atomic demolition munitions in Department of Defense custody throughout the world.

These veterans were repeatedly and unknowingly exposed to ionizing radiation ²—continuously emitted through the surfaces of live nuclear weapons and related components—without their informed consent or adequate protective measures. Dosimetry use was generally non-existent. ³

There was no therapeutic benefit to the veterans. These radiation exposures were not part of a controlled study, but a dangerous byproduct of their routine military duties. There were no appropriate oversight or efforts to monitor and manage radiation exposures, nor cumulative dose.

Silence and secrecy as policy — Technicians were actively discouraged from asking about potential radiation exposure while working on weapons. Bound by secrecy requirements and oaths, they were unable to discuss their duties with family members, physicians, Veterans Affairs officials, or others. Technically, they have not been formally released from those secrecy requirements.

These facts align disturbingly well with the ethical definition of a non-therapeutic human radiation experiment.

An Institutional Betrayal — The Department of Defense (DOD) continues to deny these technicians' actual occupational radiation exposures, preventing them from receiving related Veterans Administration medical care and benefits. This institutional failure echoes the darkest chapters of U.S. history, where a vulnerable cohort was involuntarily exposed to radiation in secret human experiments for science or national security.

The undeniable conclusion — Cold War-era Nuclear Weapons Technicians (NWTs) were unknowingly subjected to an unethical human radiation experiment—one that spanned decades and remained hidden behind Cold War secrecy. The DOD leadership, fully aware of the risks, chose operational secrecy and security over the lives and long-term health of its own personnel.

We ask for accountability and justice. The silence must be broken.

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¹ **Non-Therapeutic Human Radiation Experiment (typical):** Research studies involving exposure to radiation where the primary purpose is not to treat or diagnose a disease or condition in the subjects,

² **Ionizing radiation** (live weapons): Alpha, beta, gamma, neutron. Ionizing radiation impacts the immune system, damages DNA cells in our body, and kills cells. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8784945/pdf/nihms-1768466.pdf> Neutron radiation was largely unknown to NWTs throughout our time in service and for decades afterward.

³ **No ability to refuse:** Dosimetry programs were typically scarce, short-lived (days or weeks at best), without instructions for proper use, nor dose feedback. Many NWTs now insist they would not have worked on nuclear weapons had they been aware of the actual health risks and were given a choice. Most NWTs are still not aware of the truth.

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To our members of Congress

Our veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians, through The Sound of Silence Project, seek Congressional support and subsequent approval of our proposed draft bill: “*Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technician Act*”, or “*Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technician Ionizing Radiation and Toxic Exposure Act*”. An act to amend Title 38, U.S. Code, to establish Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians presumptive service connections related to exposure to ionizing radiation and toxic chemicals.” The law, as outlined in the [proposed draft bill](#), will help provide VA assistance to these veterans, as well as provide answers and closure to many surviving family members. **We call on every member of Congress to stand with these forgotten veterans and their surviving families**, to co-sponsor and vote in favor of this critical legislation. **Justice delayed has already cost lives. Let it not be denied any longer.**

Our team is working with the DC staffs of U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (NV) and Congressman (retired USMC Lt. Gen.) Jack Bergman (MI). Upon request by the House DAMA Subcommittee staff in 2024, we developed and provided several documents to DAMA, and to the Cortez Masto and Bergman staffs. A revised Senate bill draft is now undergoing a second review.

Time is running short. It is time for the leaders of the nation we served to act. Veterans are asking for your proactive support of the proposed draft bill, to take the necessary steps to put it to a vote as soon as possible, and for your vote in favor of the bill—a vote in favor of tens of thousands of largely unknown Nuclear Weapons Technicians.

Each member of Congress has a vital and irreplaceable role in supporting all U.S. military Veterans regardless of place of residence or constituency. **Their residence is the United States of America as it was whenever and wherever they served.**

Request for public support

Tens of thousands of Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians—who helped maintain our Nation’s nuclear weapons defense and deterrence capabilities during the Cold War—need your active support. These veterans and surviving family members ask that you share this information with others, including members of Congress.

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Organization — The Sound of Silence Project is an all-volunteer, nation-wide group of Cold War-era veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians—and family members—from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Veterans and families fighting for ionizing radiation and toxic chemical exposure acknowledgement and VA benefits for all military veterans who maintained our nation’s nuclear weapons at bases, on ships, and submarines around the world during the Cold War period.

The Sound of Silence Project

Website: <https://TSOSProject.com>

Related documents: <https://tsosproject.com/docs.html>

Related/recommended reading:

Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, Final Report, October 1995. U.S. Gov’t Printing Office. <http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2019/ph241/kumar1/docs/achre-oct95.pdf>