

NEWS RELEASE

The Sound of **Silence** Project™
Fighting for Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians

FOR RELEASE ON
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Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians were routinely exposed to deadly radiation while working on live nuclear weapons, radiation exposures were not managed, and Technicians were not aware of their radiation doses.

VA does not consider Technicians' duties a "Radiation-Risk Activity" and does not consider them as "Radiation-Exposed Veterans." Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians seek federal law changes to provide VA benefits.

HENDERSON, Nev. (Nov. 28, 2023) — Military Nuclear Weapons Technicians maintained, disassembled, assembled, and repaired all nuclear weapons in DOD custody within the U.S. and in many other countries during the Cold War period (1947-1991). Technicians worked on those weapons, generally without restrictions regarding ionizing radiation exposures.

The Sound of Silence Project includes Veteran Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Nuclear Weapons Technicians who seek medical, health, and related VA benefits.

"Generally, our radiation exposures were not monitored nor restricted by dose, time, distance and shielding, Toxic chemicals were used without adequate personal protective equipment." stated Rick Workman, project Founder, and retired U.S. Air Force Nuclear Weapons Manager and Defense Nuclear Agency Technical Inspector.

"Nuclear Weapons Technicians were not informed of ionizing radiation emitted through surfaces of live nuclear weapons, nor the true potential of biological damage to cells and DNA from several types of radiation." he added.

Nuclear Weapons Technicians used approximately thirty toxic chemicals and solvents while maintaining nuclear weapons. For example, trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, and methyl ethyl ketone. Under existing law, VA does not consider their use as a "Toxic Exposure Activity" and Technicians are not considered "Toxic Exposed Veterans".

VA does not "presume" cancer or other illness as service-connected to ionizing radiation or toxic chemical exposures. Each Veteran Technician must battle with VA individually.

Nuclear Weapons Technicians (NWTs) are not protected under federal laws regarding ionizing radiation exposure and related medical and other benefits such as the: (1) Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA), (2) Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program (EEOICP), and (3) "Honoring our PACT Act of 2022".

– MORE –

What our Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians seek

The Sound of Silence Project seeks Congressional approval of proposed draft bill: ***“Cold War Period Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technician Act. An act to amend Title 38, U.S. Code, to establish Cold War Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technician Presumptive Service Connections related to Exposure to Ionizing Radiation and Toxic Chemicals.”***

The law, as proposed, will provide health, medical, and other assistance to those Veterans, as well as provide answers and closure to many surviving family members.

Secrecy hampered Veterans’ ability to file VA claims

Veterans signed secrecy agreements during the Cold War period. Some signed or swore “lifetime oaths” under penalty of imprisonment. Many remained silent about their duties in spite of the need to explain their exposures to VA. They kept “secrets” about their profession from their families, some taking those secrets to the grave. A 1996 memorandum from the Secretary of Defense released Veterans from their secrecy agreements. Few learned of the formal release. Ambiguities in the memorandum, its limited release, and other factors cause many to believe it does not apply to them.

Request for public support

Tens of thousands of Veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians and their families—who helped maintain our Nation’s nuclear weapons defense and deterrence capabilities during the Cold War—need your active support. The Sound of Silence Project Veterans ask that you share this information with others, including members of Congress.

To our members of Congress

Every member of Congress has a role in helping protect 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.

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.

— IF NOT NOW, WHEN? —

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Organization – The Sound of Silence Project (TSOSP) is an all-volunteer, nation-wide group of veteran Nuclear Weapons Technicians. Veterans 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.

TSOSP Founder/Director/Volunteer, Rick Workman, Capt., USAF (retired). Former:

- Nuclear Weapons Technician, Supervisor, Manager
- Nuclear Weapons Senior Technical Inspector, Defense Nuclear Agency, Field Command
- Deployed Aircraft Maintenance Commander, F117A Stealth Fighter Group, latter portion of Desert Storm
- Chief of Weapons Safety/Nuclear Surety, US Air Force Weapons and Tactics Center

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