

Atomic Veterans: Operation Dominic 1962:

USS Ponchatoula is recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs for Presumptive status to Ionizing Radiation during its participation in Operation Dominic in 1962. The VA recognizes the following diseases / ailments to be Presumptive for ionizing Radiation exposure:

Presumptive cancers: If you have developed a “presumptive cancer,” which is presumed to be due to radiation exposure during your military service, all you have to do is verify that you are an Atomic Veteran to be eligible for disability compensation. Your service connection is established without considering the dose received. **There are 21 presumptive cancers defined by law:** leukemia (except chronic lymphocytic leukemia); cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract (kidneys, renal pelvis, ureter, urinary bladder and urethra), bone, brain, colon, lung, and ovary; lymphomas (except Hodgkin’s disease); multiple myeloma; primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated); and bronchio-alveolar carcinoma (a rare lung cancer).

The USS Ponchatoula radiation dosimeter badges were reportedly “destroyed” in archives by humidity; so that information is not available to assist with Ionizing Radiation exposure claims. The Defense Nuclear Agency Report on Operation Dominic conclusively documents Ponchatoula’s participation in Operation Dominic, including three shots (Adobe, Aztec and Arkansas) where the Ponch was anchored within 23 – 28 Nautical Miles from ground zero; but it also lists Ponchatoula’s badge readings as 0.000. Incredibly, Ponchatoula is the only ship on the list in the London Roads anchorage off Christmas Island with readings supposedly 0.000. Other ships anchored there at the same time had dosimeter readings ranging from 0.65 to 3.1. Yet I’ve had reports of shipmates standing on deck during these shots, and physically feeling the heat and shockwave from the blasts.

Atomic Veteran Resource Index:

Department of Veterans Affairs Website: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/radiation/atomic-veteran-brochure.pdf>

1. AO-148 @ Christmas Island (Excerpts from Defense Nuclear Agency Report)
2. Defense Nuclear Agency Report on Operation Dominic I (Full Text):
http://www.dtra.mil/Portals/61/Documents/NTPR/2-Hist_Rpt_Atm/1962_DNA_6040F.pdf

Legal Assistance: John Wells specializes in assisting active Military and Veterans with legal issues.

Commander (Ret.) John B. Wells

Military-Veterans Advocacy

C/o Law Offices of John B. Wells

769 Robert Blvd., Ste. 201 D

Slidell LA 70458

1-800-817-5123

<http://www.johnwellslaw.com/index-11.html>