

**Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico**

**Wed, Mar 27, 2013 at 9:47 AM**

Don,

Read your article on the near tragedy at Ramey. I was in the Air Police from 63 to 65 and was on patrol when summoned to a nuke maintenance facility. We were told to provide security until that bomb was transported to a waiting aircraft. Of the 4 of us who were on that detail, 2 have passed from cancer (prostate or bladder), another is in remission and I was diagnosed with stage 4 bladder cancer.

<http://www.rameyafb.net/annual-meeting/>

<http://www.rameyafb.net/blog-the-flight-log-for-ramey-air-force-base/>

Check out my Mind/Body/Healing blog

<http://jmichael.blogforacure.com/weblog>

I was on routine patrol of Ramey AFB when my Flight Sgt, Master Sargent Eichelburger called out on my radio to secure a hanger near the Flight Line that housed the Nukes for our B47 and 52,s. Airman David Albanese was also dispatched to the bldg to secure the rear of said bldg

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From: Don Chapin

To: Mike Machacek; David Albanese

Sent: Wed, Mar 27, 2013 11:10 pm

Subject: Re: Ramey

Michael, David,

Your call was quite a surprise, this morning, Michael!! :-)) I dunno how you tracked my phone #, but nothin' is a secret today and my # is openly listed. I'm glad you did, however.

When we were talking, I misspoke when I mentioned the Mk6-Mod6 weapon being at Ramey, but we had a lot of the Mk28 weapons, that also used a plutonium sphere. Such spheres required periodic inspection and cleaning, with the cleaning waste going into a special-disposal spring-lidded can labeled "radioactive waste." While this waste was supposed to be disposed of in a controlled manner, I now suspect that it was simply dumped into generic disposal pits common to all military bases, along with the toluene and trichloroethylene saturated waste.

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**Ramey**

**Wed, Mar 27, 2013 at 11:00 AM**

From Mike Machacek [REDACTED]

To

Don,

Great speaking to you this morning, below is my recollection of the incident, to my best memory it was the year of 1964 and either the month of March or April.

We (David Albanese) and I stayed on our posts for about 4 hours or so until Airmen Wm Barnes and Vieagus arrived to relieve us.

The next duty day we (David) and I were dispatched again to the same site to escort the "Ticking Bomb" to an awaiting aircraft, we did so and watched as it was loaded and taxied away, we had no knowledge of the destination of the aircraft!. Could this have been "A Leaker?" To this day it's still a mystery to me! It now reminds me of all the spraying of foliage around and about the runways and airman's barracks of either agent orange or agent purple that has affected veterans, but at the time was supposed to be harmless!

We also from time to time escorted materials from that same location to the base colegic pit (as it was called) and it was off loaded in the pit and covered over by a large earth moving tractor.

About 3 and 1/2 years ago I was diagnosed with stage 4 bladder cancer, my former partner (Dave Albanese) was diagnosed some years back also with cancer. The two airman who relieved us have died of cancer most recently.

My Doctor firmly believes that my cancer was caused by "Low doses of Radiation" and wrote a letter affirming that.

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Thank you again for your time Don! :)

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**Ramey AFB** Wed, Mar 27, 2013 at 12:09 PM

From [David Albanese](#)

To [REDACTED]

CC [REDACTED]

Hi Don . I just talked to my best friend Mike Machacek and I am very grateful for your article about the nuke incident. I definitely remember that day in march or April of 1964 when as you stated in your article that the entire Ramey base could have ceased to exist . As I recall we were on duty and we were called to secure the building where the bomb was located. From my vantage point at the rear of the building I could clearly observe the bomb with a group of airman working on (as they told me to secure the bomb) as it had almost been triggered. My friend Mike and myself remained on duty for approximately 4 hrs. We then were on the escort to I believe a C-124 MATS transport plane where the bomb was loaded and flown to some designation we were not privy to. A fact of the repercussions of being so close to the bomb Mike and myself have both been diagnosed with bladder cancer. Sadly to say, two of the Air Police who relieved us have since died because of bladder and prostate cancer. We were, over a period of 4 years, subjected to more hours than I like to remember, in a very close relationship to live nuclear weapons, along with being subjected to many toxic chemicals namely DDT, constant spraying of the base at Ramey along with, I believe, agent blue or orange or derivatives of those very toxic chemicals . I give you permission to use this email and my name for whatever purposes to help bring this (I believe) a government cover-up . My personal doctor has done a great deal of investigation on the relationship of cancer and exposure of nuclear weapons and toxic chemicals. I am leaving Puerto Rico tomorrow (from a reunion) and will give you a call as soon as I can. Sincerely Dave Albanese 585-616-6211

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**Re: Ramey Air Force Base Historical Association Sat, Aug 3, 2013, 11:34 AM**

From [J Michael Machacek](#)

To

Don,

For the "Good of All" do use our names (Airman 1st class J Michael Machacek and Airman 2nd class David C Albanese, dates, our job description (Base Police & Security) the names of the Airman no longer with us but part of that night were Airman 1st class Wm Barnes, Airman 1st class Vieagos. Those last two relieved us of security duty as our shift changed after 12 hours of on scene security, I have had no luck in locating their families if even any exist today, both died of cancer, one of bladder the other of prostate I had been told.

Yes, use our cancer afflictions, mine stage 4 bladder, Dave, Prostate & Parkinson's! Can you also give a shout about herbicides and dioxins in your report about Ramey, including that Caliche Pit (The hole of Hell!) with all the dumping that took place?

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**Re: Ramey Air Force Base Historical Association Sat, Aug 3, 2013, 12:01 PM**

Time Warp, March/April 1964

Radio call to my unit (vehicle) Base Police to Police 15, call this office by land line a sap! As I did as instructed the desk SSgt deployed me to your bldg. to render security along with Albanese, no one to enter or exit until further notice! We were not privy to the event but did furnish security for about 12 or so hours until relieved by the aforementioned airman. Air Force personnel were let in and out as cleared by us as per Master SSgt Eichelburger of Base Police (obviously people were cleared for entry or exit thru Eichelberger and then to us thru him) And that's all that I remember! The next duty shift came and gone with nothing ever mentioned, in fact, when asked it was like as nothing ever had occurred!

Will pass this to Dave for more recollection...

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**Re: Land lines Sun, Aug 4, 2013, 12:54 PM**

From [coinace](#)  
To [Don Chapin](#)

Hi Don, Yes, I'm all for using my name; we were there and it's part of history never known by the public.

Michael's reference to the use of land lines during this incident was drilled home to us as the only way to communicate with headquarters to keep anyone else from knowing what was going on of course they were over secure land lines only.

Best, Dave Albanese

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**Re: Ramey Air Force Base Historical Association Sun, Aug 4, 2013 at 10:58 AM**

From [Don Chapin](#)  
To [J Michael Machacek](#)  
CC [David Albanese](#)

Similarly, "business as usual" inside the weapons building! While (Gen.) LeMay almost immediately instituted the SAC Two-Man Policy, within about another two weeks, the SSGT that had caused the incident received his shipping orders and wasn't talking about where to. :-) Minot, Thule... some cooling-off base, from the "heat" of Puerto Rico? (I suspect he was also transferred right out of the nuclear weapons field.)

Don

**Embrace Peace**

<http://www.lprww.us>, "Light Path Resources, a spiritual library"  
<http://www.rvpv.org>, "Rogue Valley Peace Veterans" (includes DoD FOIA responses)

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Letter in support of Mike's VA claim:

Jame M. Machacek

David C. Albanese

Mike, David,

In response to your question concerning the "ticking" Mk 39 bomb that I mentioned on the webpage <http://www.rvpv.org/nuc-wpns-accidents/#Incident#2>, that weapon could not have released any radiation that would harm anyone simply from that Ramey AFB incident. It used a tritium gas boost primary (now openly published information), rather than the more standard sizable plutonium sphere that was common to its predecessor (the Mk 15) and other fission primaries, or weapons. It was the electrical system that had "fired" in that situation (the "ticking" that was heard) and which had activated to an inert point. Even if the tritium bottle had fired to "energize" the primary (the atomic trigger for the secondary/fusion reaction), the firing signal didn't get through the barometric switch that I had set the day before. Of course, this is all in retrospect and we had no idea at the time why it hadn't eliminated the island and us, while we were hunkered down in the ditch across the road, as described on that webpage.

However, while I was stationed there, Ramey had a good-sized contingent of Mk 28 bombs (fission only, not thermonuclear) at Ramey that did use plutonium spheres, plus earlier-model weapons of similar fissionable primaries. All of these spheres (from the Mk 28 and earlier weapons) required maintenance and cleaning, with the products of these cleaning operations going into a special hazardous waste disposal can with a covered lid. The cleaning cloths/rags we used for that operation were saturated with trichlorethylene and, obviously, had plutonium particles attached. The actual disposal of this waste was something we didn't even think about at the time, but as we all know today from similar situations all over the world, probably wound up in a common pit and buried. However, this leads to another topic.

Our facility used quite a bit of the solvents called toluene (primarily used on elastomeric materials, with an MSDS sheet at <http://hess.com/ehs/msds/1813Toluene.pdf>) and trichlorethylene (primarily used on metallic materials, with an MSDS sheet at <http://dakotadistributing.com/files/Trichloroethylene.pdf>) which have since been identified as highly toxic cleaning agents and banned from use, even by the military. (I have no idea what replaced these solvents since it was sometime after I left a hands-on maintenance job and was demoted from SSgt. to 2nd Lieutenant.) However, our maintenance facility was by no means the only one on base that used these solvents, as they were used on every aircraft and every piece of support

equipment on every base in the military with the waste disposal thereof most likely going into the common disposal pit which (as we all have been finding out) was a common feature of every military base around the globe. Evidence of these situations is the fact that Ramey is now listed as a Superfund clean-up site.

Additionally, there was the seemingly constant spraying of DDT to suppress the insect population around the base (which, being in a tropical zone, was considerable) and the foliage suppression (the formulation of which was not made known at the time, but almost had to have been some form of Agent Orange as used in Vietnam). While my job was primarily limited to the Special Weapons maintenance facility, the odor of DDT, even back in that relatively remote location on base, was not unknown.

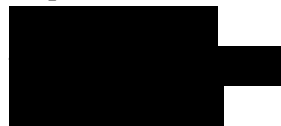
Therefore, it is just as likely as not that this caused the condition of Airmen Albanese and Machacek. Actually, as a scientist/engineer, a social scientist, a witness to some of the Ramey AFB practices and to my late wife's (and others) demise from cancer, I would go much further and state that it is my considered opinion that the combination of pesticide/herbicide spraying and the exposure to the chemical cocktails deposited in the Ramey AFB dump are the causal factors of these gentlemen's diagnoses at this time in their respective lives.

In support of my presence in Puerto Rico, my residences while stationed at Ramey were:

02-05/61	Base Quarters (21 <sup>st</sup> MMS barracks)
05-09/61	138 Aquadia Ave, Isabella, PR
09/61-05/63	PR #2, Quebradillas, Puerto Rico
05/63-05/64	Base Housing, Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico

Rev. Don Chapin, B.S., M.S., PhD  
Capt., Ret'd, USAF

April 2, 2013



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