



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

October 5, 2005

The Honorable Lane Evans
Ranking Democratic Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Evans:

This is a follow-up report on the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to conduct outreach to individuals who may have been exposed to hazardous materials in tests at Fort Detrick and Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland.

VA reviewed the sets of names provided by your staff along with other information obtained from the managers at Fort Detrick and Edgewood Arsenal. Given existing data limitations (e.g., unique coding format, incomplete names, and lack of Social Security numbers), VA has turned this information over to the Department of Defense's Deployment Health Support Directorate (DHSD). DHSD is currently converting the data into manageable formats, validating names, and obtaining source documentation.

When DHSD provides the verifying information, VA will conduct internal data matches to identify these individuals, where possible.

Thank you for your continued interest in this important veterans' issue. A similar letter has been sent to Congressman Ted Strickland.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. James Nicholson". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

R. James Nicholson