



Submission No 7

Inquiry into RAAF F-111 Deseal/Reseal Workers and their Families

Name: Mr Gregory Andrew

Quintus-Bosz, Donna (REPS)

From: ANDREW, Greg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 11 June 2008 9:10 AM
To: Committee, JSCFADT (REPS)
Subject: F-111 DESEAL/RESEAL INQUIRY SUBMISSION

Please find attached a copy of a submission to the F-111 Deseal/Reseal Inquiry.

Please feel free to contact me if additional information or the original document is required.

<<F-111 Deseal_Reseal Inquiry Submission.doc>>

Regards

Greg Andrew

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11/06/2008

11 June 2008

Phone: [REDACTED]

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Whilst not strictly within the published terms of reference, I wish to make the following submission to the F-111 Deseal/Reseal Inquiry.

I was not employed on the F-111 deseal/reseal program, but I and many others carried out similar tasks on other RAAF aircraft and I have concerns that I may have been exposed to similar health risks.

In particular, my RAAF service included duties as an Airframe Fitter at No. 2 Aircraft Depot (2AD), RAAF Base Richmond from December 1976 until May 1984. Over that period I was employed on the repainting of HS-748 aircraft (approximately 6 months) and on Deeper Level Maintenance of P3 Orion aircraft (approximately 6 years).

During that period, I was regularly employed on tasks that required exposure to various chemicals, particularly during integral fuel tank inspections and repairs, and the tasks associated with aircraft corrosion control and repaints. Work in integral fuel tanks involved long periods of time in a confined space performing tasks including sealant removal and replacement, corrosion removal and chemical treatment of metal surfaces. Aircraft repaints included the use of strippers and solvents to remove paint and sealant, removal and treatment of corrosion, and replacement of sealant.

To the best of my recollection I was exposed to chemicals including the following:

- Sealants - including PR1422, Beckothane and Primer/Adhesion Promoter.
- Solvents - including Methyl Ethyl Ketone (MEK) and Acetone.
- Metal treatment and Conversion Coatings - including Deoxidine 624 and Alodine 1200.
- Paint Stripper.
- Paint.
- Fuel - Aviation Turbine Fuel.

Personal Protective Equipment was worn, but by current standards, usage would be considered minimal and adhoc. Additionally, there was limited atmospheric testing - I can only recall irregular testing of fuel tanks prior to initial entry. Whilst ventilation was provided, there was no ongoing monitoring of the atmosphere during occupation of fuel tanks. In many cases we entered wet tanks and manually "de-puddled" the residual fuel before commencing inspections and other tasks.

For a number of years now, I have been receiving treatment for chronic medical conditions - some of these are still under investigation as to causes. While my physician has indicated chemical exposure as a possible cause, I have not investigated or pursued any possible link to my RAAF employment - in particular my duties at 2AD. Additionally, two of my three children have psychological disorders, and although I had not previously considered any link to my RAAF service, I am now unsure as whether it may be factor.

I have significant empathy with the personnel involved with the F-111 reseal/deseal program and I consider that further review of the consequences of that program is essential. However, I believe to some extent, that the F-111 issues are only the "tip of the iceberg" and that detailed assessment of other similar maintenance activities is warranted. I work in an industry that employs a number of ex-RAAF maintenance personnel - many experienced RAAF service similar to mine. While it may be perception, the level of health issues similar to that experienced by F-111 personnel appears to be high amongst them and their families.

I have made this submission to highlight that the issue may go beyond the F-111 reseal/deseal program and that many other RAAF members have been exposed to similar hazards. In the end, I would like to receive assurance that I and my family have not been exposed to similar health risks due to my RAAF employment.

It should be noted that I made a similar submission to the then Minister for Defence in 2001. The response indicated that no decision had been made on expanding the F-111 inquiry and that I should make a claim to DVA - to date I have not pursued that action.

I am willing to provide further information to the inquiry if required.

Yours Sincerely

Original Signed

Greg Andrew

Service Details

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Service Number:	A319166
Period of Enlistment:	09/01/70 to 30/06/93