



Submission No 35

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

Name: Mr Dennis Lambert

Dennis Lambert
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Service No.: A219724
Boiler Attendant – Disposal Team

F1:11 Deaseal Reaseal Submissions
Defence Committee Secretary
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2602

19th June 2008

Dear Sirs,

At 19 years of age, 1979, I joined the RAAF eager to be doing something of value and earning a living as well. I was a fit young farm boy straight off a farm at Moorland mid north coast of New South Wales. This choice was to be my career by the time of discharge in 1980; I was both mentally and physically devastated.

My first years of service was as a Cooks Assistant, but wanting to better my self, I studied in my spare time and eventually remastered to Boiler Attendant.

My last years of service were at Amsley. Everything seemed okay until now, a family of four children all happy and well, I was quite looking forward to my not to distant transition into civilian life.

Mid 1970's our section commander SGT Ronald Seamoure informed us that a new duty had been given to us in the form of an incinerator, this was, we were told to be used to burn off a substance. We were told this substance was SR51, a substance created by other sections of the base. It was required to be burnt off with a mixture of SR51 and diesel fuel and this was to be done by us during our normal working days.

Each airman was taken out to this incinerator, situated south of the strip, close to the RAAF rubbish dump.

On arrival we found a white compound attached to a dwelling, more of a stand, to hold aloft the diesel and SR51 tank. The incinerator was enclosed only by a

mesh fence (no roof), the ground was dirt and gravel which soon became awash with the foul chemicals.

The chemicals to be burnt were dropped outside the compound and we were to manually manoeuvre and roll the sometimes leaking drums by hand to an entry pipe, and with a hand diesel pump, pump this foul chemical up into an overhead tank. We had to perform this in normal work dress overalls and leather boots and no protection at all.

Boots soon became saturated, along with our overalls, due to leaking pumps and pipes. When we believed the tank was full we were required to climb a greasy contaminated ladder to check.

Sometimes over flows would occur and this would lay on the top cover of the tank and cause much trouble during rain as the rain caused contaminated spray to engulf everything. There was no water as the site to clean away the spill and personal contaminations.

Before operation, the incinerators diesel and chemical filters had to be cleaned, each filter of approximately 2 litres in size. Myself, I used to clean the diesel filters first and keep in a separate container enough diesel to clean up after washing the chemical filter (no water).

Head aches and dizziness were constant. On complaining, nothing was done, we were told to do our job and quit complaining.

Our contaminated clothing was taken home to our family to be cleaned. All along we were told by our section commander this chemical was harmless and no attempt to prove otherwise occurred.

Every square inch of that compound was contaminated to the point of saturation. As we had to use our own transport this too became contaminated as well. For years later, until I sold this vehicle, I remember my children often complaining of headaches when in this vehicle on hot days.

Around 2000 I wrote to Air Marshall Angus Huster, my reply was a visit from Victory Barracks, Brisbane. The young corporal was able to get me my air force documents. On receiving these I found that I was out the time of these mentioned duties, listed as disposal team and was supposed to be health monitored. I was not informed or monitored.

Discharged 1980.

Divorced 1985.

I have lived alone since.

I suffer many ailments as listed. Only one has been recognised.

Upon lodging these claims back in 2000 I was sent to a specialist after an examination. I believe these doctors had no toxic reports at the time but my claims have been rejected up until now on their findings, a very one sided judgement. I am told that only in the last 2 years has the full extent of the chemical been known, I believe more than 30 toxins.

NO Training in safety procedure.

NO Protective clothing.

NO Protective boots.

NO water for cleansing etc.

NO Phone.

NO Toilet.

NO Breathing masks.

NO First-aid.

NO Transport.

NO Roof protection from rain.

NO Monitoring of health.

NO ALTERNATIVE.

We were told should the amount burnt was not enough to keep up; we were to tip excess into the nearby creek, Bremer River.

I am proud to have served my country for some 22 years, but not proud of the last few years where we were forced to work under conditions that were not allowed in other sections.

By today standards, it is unacceptable to say the least.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Lambert', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dennis Lambert

DHAMBERT A219724

MEDICAL CONDITIONS PROVEN, AND ATTEMPTED TO
RECEIVE COMPENSATION FROM MORS

ANXIETY - UNDER TREATMENT.	-	REJECTED BY MORS-	
DEPRESSION, MOOD SWINGS - TREATMENT -	-	REJECTED.	
PANIC ATTACKS.	U	REJECTED	
AGGRAVATED SLEEP	TREATING	-	REJECTED
CHRONIC FATIGUE	"	-	REJECTED
HEART ATTACK 1980.		-	REJECTED
HEART MURMUR		-	REJECTED
SYST BOTH KIDNEY. PROVEN		-	REJECTED
ROUING MUSCULAR PAIN		-	REJECTED
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE	U		REJECTED
PSORIASIS.	U		REJECTED
FLUID RETENTION	U		REJECTED
STAGE 2 ULCER	U		REJECTED
BLOOD CLOTS BOTH LEGS	U		REJECTED.

ALL CLAIMS REJECTED ON PROGNOSIS OF
UNIMPROVED SPECIALIST FREE 2000.
FREE DETAILED TOXIN REPORTS.

VERY UN FAIR. FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY?
THATS ASKING A LOT.

Jim Hamblin