



## **Submission No 9**

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

**Name:**

**Name withheld**

[REDACTED]

This submission is regards the incinerator operations to dispose of the used chemicals mainly SR 51 during the deseal reseal of the F111 fuel tanks . I was the NCO in charge untill posted out to Laverton March 1980 during which time I operated the incininerator

I joined the RAAF in June 1962 and discharged in July 1982 serving 20 years

I served at several RAAF base Wagga Richmond Kingswood Amberley East Sale Amberley Laverton and discharged at Amberly in 1982

During these 20 years I enjoyed the service the only period that was unpleasant was the time during and after the involvment with the deseal reseal program

My mustering was Boiler Attendant and I became the incinerator operator to dispose of the chemicals used in the deseal program in my last term at Amberley begining 1979 to 1980.

Being a Boiler Operator I was not given any training on how to handle or how to operator a incinerator to dispose of chemicals my senior officer ordered me to get the incinerator operational he also informed me that if I didnt my promotion prospects were in jepody I told him I was not a fitter and had no tools to do the job he said go and scrounge some .

On arriving at the incinerator it was blocked up with rubbish and was not operational I also noticed heaps of 200lt drums stacked around the incinerator these drums contained the used chemical SR 51 which was to be burnt I presume this as I was never realy informed what was in the drums

As what was done in the rag hanger I have no idea as I have still got the order stating it was out of bounds to all personal except those employed within ,the only contact I had was when hanger personal required empty drums or regards the tec blocks.

I have obtained several documents regards the incinerator ,it was not the correct type to be used for disposal of chemicals and all safty elements were not attatched this would mean emmissions were not being treated as required the incinerator should have been fitted with afterburner and scrubbers

When asked about SR51 I was told it was completly harmless and not to worry about it we were not given any safty or protection eqipment to use

.chemical details such as a sax sheet were not given

After several hours of trying to get the incinerator operational I was suffering with sore throat headache and dizziness when going to medical only to be given a couple of panadol and some brown mixture and told to get back to work ( Medical Doc attached)

After several days of trying to get the incinerator going and being covered with the chemical I knew it had to be modified to get it going undoing pipes and cleaning filters I became covered with chemical I collapsed in the compound only to be picked up by F,O, Scerri and taken to medical to get the same treatment as previous ,how this incinerator was run before the modification were done ,beats me as I cannot see it working ,this might explain why it was jammed up on my arrival.

After several modifications several lines enlarged and larger filters I adventually got it running

The incinerator had two chambers with two seperate burners it was lit on diesel and when temperature was reached the chemical was introduced into the top chamber the incinerator burnt in a erratic way sometime sending out lots of putrid smoke I can on one specific occassion being told by a SQN Leader not to run the incinerator when the F 111 were taking off from the southern end of the airstrip as he didnt want the aircraft sucking in the fumes from the incinerator,it was alright for us and the people of Ipswich when the westerlies were blowing

All this time my health was getting worse I was forgetting things fatigued breaking out in rashes losing libito eyesight failing depression anger and losing hours of not knowing where I had been ,I only went to medical when necessary as they wernt intrested or didnt believe me

During this period of operation I was informed about burning the Tec blocks from the settling dam to do this the Tec blocks which were large sponges used to soak up the SR51 on top of the water in the dam and carry them up to the incinerator open the incinerator door and push the Tec blocks into the incinerator the chemical would run all over you down your arms all over your chest stomach genitals and legs ,one morning after a large storm the dam overflowed into Warral Creek some of the Tec blocks were in the creek

In January 1980 I was posted to Laverton still health deteriorating as much as I didnt like going to Laverton it was an escape from the incinerator at Amberley at Laverton things became worse as memory was going anger getting bad and depression worse ,this was when the decision to get out became clear as to this stage I had a good record this was going to be

lost as paper work was impossible to cope with due to lack of concentration

Upon discharge I went to the RSL Advocate in Brisbane only to be told if I didnt go to Vietnam there was nothing they could or would do ( [REDACTED] )

So that was when I decided to fight my own battle and I didnt care how I went about it or what I said or who I upset ,this was when DVA called me into their office to sort me out only to be sorted out themselves I was abusive and made them read my medical documents in front of me ,when I was leaving they said thank you for coming in ,and I replied a waste of your time and mine this was aprox 11am when I left ,at aprox 2 pm they rang to get a bank account number and inform me I had been granted 70%pension and to apply for an increase ,the shock was unbelieval,on applying it was increased to 90% ,only to be sent to review board to have a decision on Psorieses. which I won and received the Gold card ,on application for TPI after having to stop work because of nervous breakdown it was granted .

During my time working the incinerator we went through several washing machines I accused my wife of using the wrong detergents and not taking proper care ,the seals were falling apart and letting water into the workings ,now I know what the SR51 was designed to do I know what the problem was The incinerator operators did their own laundry as we were not regarded as 3AD .

After fighting the Government for many years and being subjected to many of DVA S prostitutes (sorry to the prostitutes they would have more ethics than the mob I have been dealing with )I have got used to the crap they hand out ,two examples are a [REDACTED] N a physchist who blating lies to get DvaS work and a [REDACTED] who is a bullshit artist the crap that comes out of this prostitute is unbelieval he is an expert on incinerator operators health never to have seen or heard of SR51, [REDACTED] n needs to be sent to an ethics school as she has none all she does is critise other doctors

My health is shoking and not getting any better I have Chronic fatigue depression erectial failure psoriasis also Late Effects of Other and Unspecified Infectious and Parasitic Diseases Psoriasis Impotence Depressive Disorder the reason these are accepted by DVA are due to Late Effects of other and unspecified Infectious Paraasitic Diseases on the basis of chemical exposure during eligible service.

During the time as the incinerator operator I was treated as a big joke I did all the work assisted by Jock Hastie the other lazy bastards deliberately had problems and breakdowns which I had to fix therfor not spending time at

the incinerator but claimed to be there when \$40,000 was mentioned if not given my statement to read they knew nothin fuck all about what happened regards the incinerator operation there are genuine personal missing out on the ex gratia payment while these got it this makes me angry and why I am doubting innocent people

When the BOI statements were being taken I was the first on the list when my statement was finished it was given to others to read and they followed on what I had said as they knew nothing about the operation of the incinerator one member hurt his back unloading the drums of chemical off the back of the truck this is bullshit as the drums were delivered to the incinerator on pallets with a fork lift only aprox 20 yards away why load a truck with a fork lift and then unload it by hand another lit the incinerator with petrol this would have blown it to pieces another lit it with wood the lies continue the biggest load of bullshit is he operated the incinerator months some extoridorary time before I was shown the incinerator if this was so why so many drums were there when I took over and the second aircraft had just been finished I am so angry these member have got away with this I did all the work damaged my health only to be laughed at by these imposters who ripped the Government off out of all the incinerator operators myself and Jock Hastie are the only guinine worker who deserved the \$40,000 compensation listing to the servicemen in the hanger doing the deseal reseal there were only 400 odd members how come 1200 have applied they are as angry as myself with the imposters

I would like the Government to look into this as it is not fair to the genuine members there should be a cut off to the people who were involved with SR 51 at the sight at southern end of the Base at Amberley and then others at other parts of the base

There are a lot of imposters on the band wagon a thorough investigation might lower the compensation claims I would like a doller for every time I have been asked do you remember me I you must I was there with you the answer has been piss Off I dont tell lies for any body

This incinerator might have tried to be lit up before I was given the job of operating ,there is no way it would have been operational untill after the changes were made by myself with the help of Cpl Hastie this is the reason it was jamed up when I first went out to the deseal reseal area

I have put this in writing as my health is deteroating and the truth has to be known my wife has had several operations my children have similar problem with their health this episode just shits me to anger at the way we are being treatedI cant write more as it only upsets me and I want to try to get away from this time of my life .

One last suggestion for the goop troop is we should all help one and other and have a central person to call on or our family to call when things get too much to handle just the comfort of someone who has been there would help and understanding the pressure the desal reseal program has put on everyday life

We are only a small group the incinerator operators, I have a document stating the SR 51 was at its most dangerous when heated and being burnt the fumes are very toxic and we inhaled these for months on end, being only a small group we deserve to be included in the overhaul Desal Reseal operation

On posting to Laverton my health became worse I was having panic attacks confusion erectile dysfunction memory loss rashes and things I couldn't understand were taking place I became frightened and nervous with every small thing developed into major dramas I had to make decisions about my RAAF career as my record to date was excellent and I wanted to keep it that way I would have stayed in only I lost confidence I hated the decision I was about to make to leave the RAAF this meant giving up all I had achieved in 20 years of service. I became intolerant and developed a short fuse I was living in at Laverton and spent most of my spare time making sure the boiler section was operating correctly even when on leave I was concerned and this should not have been as my staff were very competent members I should have went to medical and sought help but I had lost respect for medical after the episodes at Amberley and I didn't want to be labeled as some wimp who lost his marbles and discharged as medical unfit this would have had effect on my DFDRB payment and to lose this would have been devastating

(annual reports attached)

To stay in control when I became over stressed I would go for a drive not knowing where but just to get away from my small room I look back and think this was very silly as there were occasions I didn't know what was going on I did on one occasion stop wondering where I was and what I was doing

I returned home to Brisbane on discharge to take up a good job only to realise I wasn't capable of doing this and declined the position due to lack of concentration and not able to cope with extra tension so I went and took up a job as a boiler attendant where I knew the trade and didn't have to learn new skills my working life was over all I had to do was exist and look after my family no new exciting challenges my nerves were bad and I was easy to upset even to take the stand at the Board of Inquiry was difficult but I wanted to be heard and the incinerator operators included in the inquiry as the chemicals were most potent when being heated for

exposure

If only the problems with the deseal program stopped with my poor health it also effected my family they have had to suffer poor health as I bought home the chemicals on my clothing and on my body ,we were doing our own laundry and being in contact with my wife she has sever bowel problems having had to have a stomer ,my eldest daughter has sever bowel prblems ,my youngest daughter also has bowel problems ,doing our own laundry was a result of us being Base Squadron as the program was a 3AD project these problems might have been avoided if we were told the dangers of SR 51 instead of being lied to and told they were harmless,this is were most of the issues could have been avoided if the truth was known a lot more care might have been taken and safty equipment demanded

My main concern is a lot of personal are trying to get in on the compensation list who wernt there ,these members didnt want anything to do with the genuine personal when the SR 51 was being used as the smell was something never to be forgotton .

Regards some of the incinerator operators who claim to have been involved when I was in charge of the disposal ,their statments to the BOI are very conflicting they made stat dec covering one an other if they were real why wasnt I asked the main reason was I would have told the truth and that wouldnt have suited them .

If given the chance to reveal the truth about these personal I will

Yours Faithfully

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

P- S I would like my name supressed