



Submission No 15

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

Name: Mr David Stenzel

To: Defence Sub-Committee Secretariat
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CC: Hon. Arch Bevis MP
Federal Member for Brisbane
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Subject: Submission to F111 Aircraft Deseal / Reseal Inquiry

Date: 12 June 2008

Reference A: Media Release for F111 Aircraft Deseal / Reseal Inquiry
By Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Dated 30 May 2008

1. I am making this submission to the F111 Aircraft Deseal / Reseal Inquiry (Reference A), as I am sure that I have the Knowledge and the Experienced to be able to give clear and correct information on large percentage of the Inquiry's Term of Reference and I would be prepared, if requested, to attend the Queensland Hearing for this Inquiry.

The following points are some the reason that would show my Knowledge of the overall case:

- My Affidavit Statement for F111 Aircraft Deseal / Reseal Programs Dated the 13 May 2001, which stated the sequence of events from the First Major F111 Servicing through to where I was a Flight Sergeant in Melbourne looking at how hazardous good should be included in Aircraft and Equipment Tendering Process.
- The amount of time that I sent on the F111 Major Servicing Program. (Ref: My Letter to Barry Telford, General Manager DVA Policy & Development Division Dated 18 Apr 2006)
- My involvement in the Deseal Reseal of the F111's Air Conditioner Water Tank prior to the Main F111 Deseal Reseal Program commencing. (Ref: My Letter to Barry Telford, General Manager DVA Policy & Development Division Dated 18 Apr 2006)
- From a Blood Test that I had in 1975, it was found that I had a High Lead Count and the RAAF Doctor at the time believed that this was because of Chemical Exposure from my Work Environment. (Ref: Copies of my Medical Records from this time attached to my Letter to Barry Telford, General Manager DVA Policy & Development Division Dated 18 Apr 2006)
- Over my time on the F111 Major Servicing Program, I would have sent 320 Days working inside the Fuel Tanks of the F111 Aircraft. (Ref: My Letter to Barry Telford, General Manager DVA Policy & Development Division Dated 18 Apr 2006)

David Stenzel Submission to the F111 Aircraft Deseal Reseal Inquiry

- My Family Doctor firmly believes that there are Medical Issues within our family, which the cause would have most likely been because of the Exposure to Chemicals that I had during my time in the RAAF. (Ref: The Attachment Medical Statement to my Affidavit Statement for F111 Aircraft Deseal / Reseal Programs Dated the 13 May 2001, from my Family Doctor)
- In a letter from the Hon. Arch Bevis, Member for Brisbane to the Hon. Bruce Billson MP the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs, requested that there should be a thorough investigation of the side-effects on children of Personnel who were involved in F111 Deseal Reseal Program. (Ref: Letter from the Hon. Arch Bevis, Member for Brisbane Dated 07 Nov 2006)
- I have very clear memories of the sequence of events and issues from my Employment on the F111 Aircraft and in the Health Study for Deseal Reseal Personnel, the Doctor who carried out my test, said at its completion, that my memory test result was well about the average.
- Other Personnel at the F111 Support Group Meeting have indicated to me that they have had some similar issues to my case but they believe because of their Chemical Exposure, they do not have a clear enough memory to put their full case forward.

2. I did not receive any payment from the Ex Gratia Scheme, but I still believe that from the definitions of Tiers, that I receive before I applied for the Ex Gratia Payment, that I should be entitled to this payment and I do not believe that my claim was adequately assessed.

The following points are applicable to Ex Gratia Scheme:

- The Solicitor Mr R. P. McCormick that took my Affidavit Statement for F111 Aircraft Deseal / Reseal Programs BOI, informed me after I had completed my Statement that he had seen and taken enough evidence to confirm that F111C Air Conditioner Water Tank Deseal Reseal Process which utilised the same process as the Main Deseal Reseal Program was validated as a core part of the First Program and the BOI had placed me into a Miscellaneous Section of the First Deseal / Reseal Program. (Ref: Record of Conversation Dated 13 Sep 2002, with DVA Chief Medical Officer Dr Keith Horsley and attached to my letter to Hon. Arch Bevis, Member for Brisbane Dated 25 Sep 2006)
- The Record of Conversation Dated 13 Sep 2002, with DVA Chief Medical Officer Dr Keith Horsley, where Dr Horsley agreed with the F111 Aircraft Deseal / Reseal Programs BOI Solicitor Mr R. P. McCormick statement that I did fit into a Miscellaneous Section of the First Deseal / Reseal Program. (Ref: Record of Conversation Dated 13 Sep 2002, with DVA Chief Medical Officer Dr Keith Horsley and attached to my letter to Hon. Arch Bevis, Member for Brisbane Dated 25 Sep 2006)
- After my application for the Ex Gratia Payment was rejected by Barry Telford, General Manager DVA Policy & Development Division, I appeal my case to him and in this reply Barry Telford finally gave me some answers to why my claim was rejected, but I disagree with the reasons that he gave for the rejection of my claim. In this letter Barry Telford acknowledged that a Chemical Deseal Reseal of the F111's Air Conditioner Water Tank was carried out prior to the Main F111 Deseal Reseal Program commencing. (Ref: Letter from Barry Telford, General Manager DVA Policy & Development Division Dated 24 Oct 2006)

- After my Ex Gratia Payment Claim was rejected by DVA, I contacted the Hon. Arch Bevis, Member for Brisbane, who submitted a Ministerial Appeal to the Hon. Bruce Billson MP the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs for me and Hon. Bruce Billson endorsed the DVA rejection of my claim. Hon. Bruce Billson in his answer he did acknowledge that there was an Air Conditioner Water Tank Deseal Reseal Process, but these answers also raised more questions about what Chemicals were utilised and what Personal Protective Equipment was available for when I carried out the Air Conditioner Water Tank Deseal Reseal Process. (Ref: Letter was the Hon. Bruce Billson MP the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs to Hon. Arch Bevis, Member for Brisbane Dated 17 Jan 2007)
- Hon. Arch Bevis, Member for Brisbane sent a letter Dated 23 Feb 2007 to the Hon. Bruce Billson MP the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs asking for further advise of the Air Conditioner Water Tank Chemical Usage and the Personal Protective Equipment that was available and this letter has not had any response.
- DVA Chief Medical Officer Dr Keith Horsley stated publicly at a meeting with the then Chief of Air Force, that it was not the amount of Chemical Exposure that could effect Personnel and that any Chemical Exposure could have a similar long term effect on Personnel.(Ref: Chief of Air Force meeting commencing 9:00am on the 13 Sep 2002 at RAAF Base Amberley)
- At a F111 Deseal Reseal Support Group, I raised the question with Hon. Cameron Thompson the then Member for Blair, that Maintenance Records were not kept beyond the F111 Second previous Major Servicing and that the Personnel's Records of Training and Employment (RTE) at the time did not require Fuel Entries to be recorded in them, so what would be an acceptable prove of the Internal Fuel Tank Work for the Personnel who fitted into the situation where no records were kept. I did not get a clear answer to this question. (Ref: F111 Deseal Reseal Support Group Minutes of Meeting held at 9:30am in the Ipswich RSL on Sunday the 09 Apr 2006)

3. On the question of whether the Ex Gratia Scheme is appropriate, I believe that there should be an Ex Gratia Scheme Payment, as I believe that this would cover my Family Situation, but taking into account all of my Family's Medical Payment that my Doctor believes could be linked to the Chemical Exposure that I had during my Employment on the Major Servicing Work of the F111 Aircraft along with the potential wages that wife could be paid if she had not been required to stay at home to look after some of the Medical Issues which have effected our Children, I believe that the Ex Gratia Scheme Payments should have been higher than what it was.

4. I also believe that the Personnel and their Spouses in similar situations to mine, should also be given access to a DVA Gold Card to cover their Medical Expenses

Yours sincerely
Dave Stenzel