



Submission No 81

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

Name: Mr Glen Bowman

Jeanroy, Paul (REPS)

From: I-Bowman, Glen A [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 1 July 2008 11:50 AM
To: Committee, JSCFADT (REPS)
Subject: FW: Deseal/Reseal Submission for Parliamentary Inquiry

Mr Glen Alan Bowman
[REDACTED]

26 June 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to submit this submission of my involvement in the F111 Deseal / Reseal Program for the Parliamentary Inquiry. For going on 3 years now, I have been fighting to have my involvement with the Deseal / Reseal program recognised. This started by applying for the Ex-Gratia Lump Sum Payment through the Department of Veteran Affairs which, from the information they had received, they did not recognise my involvement in this program. After gathering the required evidence, which included a more detailed letter of my direct involvement, statutory declaration's and copies of official aircraft documentation relating to the spray sealant of F111's that I had been involved with, they once again rejected my application. From there, I then forwarded on, all my correspondence to the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office for review, for which they are still dealing with to this day. Through my conversation's with the Senior Advisor looking after my claim at the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office, they cannot see how I am not eligible for this payment and are seeking clarification from the Department of Veteran Affairs.

From the time that I lodged my application for the ex-gratia payment, I have heard the rumours that how the the Department of Veteran Affairs have run out of the funds that had been allocated for these claims, and how there have been applications approved and paid out to people that may not have been directly involved in the deseal / reseal program. I realise that these may only be rumours, but it is frustrating not knowing exactly what is going on , and hearing these things. For example, I have a friend that cannot believe that I have had my claim rejected even with all the supporting evidence, as he had received his payment and in his words has said; "I can't even remember getting into a tank!" However the difference was, his name was on an attendance roll for deseal, as he had officially been posted into Deseal / Reseal, although it was for only a short amount of time and my involvement came about as an attachment and not a posting. This process has been long and drawn out, stressful and draining, however as I believe that my involvement in the Spray Sealant Program more than meets the criteria for the direct involvement as stated in the Tier 1 Definition's for the ex-gratia payment I intend to stick with this fight.

Whilst this process has been underway, I have since become a member of the Deseal / Reseal Support Group, which offer support for both my family and I, as well as having the ability to talk with other members that are and have experienced the same problems / issues.

Please find attached copies of my initial application letter (which has a brief overview and the health issue's that I experience), my follow-up letter (a more detailed overview and further evidence) and the 2 Statutory Declarations regarding these issues, and if you require copies of the Aircraft Documentation for the spray sealant process that I was involved with, just let me know as I would be only to happy to forward these onto you if required. If you require anything else in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Thankfully,

Glen Bowman

3/07/2008

MR GLEN BOWMAN

30 October 2006

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: F111 Ex-Gratia Lump Sum Payment

I am writing to you in regards to a letter that I received from your department, dated 12 September 2006, and the follow-up phone conversation I had with a member of your team, concerning the decision made towards my claim for the Ex-Gratia Lump Sum Payment.

I was informed that 'the decision was made as my duties do not satisfy the definition of a F-111 Deseal / Reseal participant, as I had not participated in one of the four specified Deseal / Reseal Programs and I did not undertake "pick and patch" activities while attached to a specific Deseal / Reseal Section.'

Upon receiving this letter, I contacted your department, and was informed that I was to forward on any additional information or supporting evidence that I had to further support my claim.

Enclosed along with this supporting letter, are some of the copies of tank entry permit's and aircraft paperwork (EE508's) for one of the aircraft that I was involved in its spray sealant program. This aircraft paperwork, was the paperwork used for the fuel tank de-plumb, tank preparation, spray seal and then the re-plumb of aircraft A8-514, which was carried out in the 6 Sqn hanger in 1999. This information is hard to obtain as a civilian, due to the nature of the documentation.

Along with this paperwork, I have enclosed two statutory declarations, supporting my claim of attachment to the Deseal / Reseal program during 1999, 2000 and 2001. One Stat Dec is from FLTLT Paul Ryder, the AMO (Aircraft Maintenance Officer) of 1 Sqn and the OIC Fuel Tank Repair Section at the time in question, and the other from Mr Anthony Lindsay, the WOE (Warrant Officer Engineer) in charge of 1 Sqn from 1997-2000.

Whilst I was never officially posted into Deseal / Reseal section, my involvement came about as attachments to this section for several month's at a time, through-out the years 1999 to 2001. These attachments were for the purpose to assist FTRS during the Spray Sealant Program and fuel leak identification / rectification. The attachments were on a rotational basis, and while we were still controlled and reported to 1 Sqn, there were at the time, shift rosters and attendance sheets for these rotations to Deseal. The tasks performed whilst at Deseal included such things as the preparation of the fuel tanks for spray sealing, de-plumbing of the fuel tanks, initial sealant inspection, inspection of spray sealant application, pick and patch repairs to the spray sealant if required, re-plumbing of the fuel tanks and leak checks, among other tasks. We were basically required to do all the tasks required for a spray sealant except actually spray the sealant, as there were only a handful of tradesmen qualified and authorised to do this task.

Two aircraft that really stand-out for me during my rotations were aircraft A8-129, which during the re-plumb / post spray sealant inspection, we found that the spray sealant was lifting off in sheets, this was discovered whilst removing the blanks, after investigation it was determined this was caused from incorrect preparation, prior to the spraying process. This exposed us to the underlying chemicals on the aircraft structure. The other aircraft was A8-514 which had the re-plumb carried out in the 6 Sqn hanger, which upset a number of people as the strong odour it omitted as we were purging it, carried throughout the entire hanger, not to mention the fumes that came from within the tank when we removed the access panel to F2. These fumes physically removed the breathable air from around us; we had to move down to the back of the aircraft to regain our breath. We had it annotated in our medical documents that we had been exposed to spray sealant, PR2911.

During later discussions with the tradesmen and supervisors of Deseal / Reseal, we were told that the manufacturers of the sealant had advised them to leave the tanks venting for up to four days prior to commencing rebuild of the fuel plumbing etc, this was to reduce exposure to the fumes the sealant gives off as it is curing.

So with this, I would like your department to re-assess my application, taking this further evidence into consideration, as I feel that my involvement with the spray sealant program alone, is more than enough to satisfy the criteria laid out in the attached Tier 1 description of the Lump Sum Scheme.

If for any reason you have any questions or queries regarding this claim, please do not hesitate to contact me, as I would only be too happy to assist in anyway.

Your's Thankfully,

Glen Bowman

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
STATUTORY DECLARATION

Statutory Declarations Act 1959

(1) Insert the name, address and occupation of person making the declaration

⁽¹⁾ **I, Anthony John Lindsay 8435336**

make the following declaration under the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*:

(2) Set out matter declared to in numbered paragraphs

(2) I have been requested by Mr Glen Bowman to provide information regarding his employment relating to F111 Fuel Tank Repair Activities. I was the Warrant Officer Engineer (WOE) at 1Sqn during the period of July 1997 to Dec 2000. During this time Mr Glen Bowman was a Corporal(CPL) ATECH at 1 SQN. I have no formal documentation to support my statement, however I have a clear recollection of the fuel tank repair activities that my subordinates were involved in, especially the last 10 months of activities in support of the spray sealing fuel tank program before I was posted.

Due to aircraft shortages being experienced at the flying squadrons which were being caused by continuing fuel tank leak issues, the management of both 1 Sqn and 8 Sqn offered up two teams of trained fuel tank entry personnel to assist 601WG Fuel Tank Repair Section(FTRS) to carry out a rolling spray program for the F111 fleet. These personnel were never officially attached or posted to FTRS therefore no roll book history from FTRS is available as they were still under 1SQN and 6SQN control.

These teams performed the following tasks on a rotational basis at 601WG FTRS of 4 weeks on 4 weeks off

Before spray sealing:

- The removal of all plumbing from the affected fuel tanks.
- Inspection of the tank sealant.
- Cleaning the tank.
- Pick and patch repairs of any suspect areas.
- Preparation of the tanks for spray sealant application.

After spray sealing:

- Removal of spray sealant plumbing blanks.
- Trimming of spray sealant to ensure adequate plumbing clearances.
- Inspection of the spray sealant to ensure adhesion was adequate.
- Repair of spray sealant using pick and patch sealant techniques.
- Replumbing the fuel tanks.
- Leak and functional Checks.

The post spray sealant tasks were commenced as soon as the minimum drying period for the sealant had elapsed. This period was 24 hours. However even though the sealant had dried it still gave off very strong sickly smelling chemical vapours until the tanks were sealed and filled with AVTUR. These post spray sealant tasks required several days to complete which meant that personnel were exposed to these vapours over a period of days.

Mr Glen Bowman was a member of the 1 SQN team during this period as he was fully qualified and current for fuel tank entry. Mr Bowmans participation in these activities would be confirmed by checking the Confined Space and Hazardous Chemical Claims during the above mentioned period.

I understand that a person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence under Section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*, and I believe that the statements in this declaration are true in every particular.

(3) Signature of person making the declaration

(3)

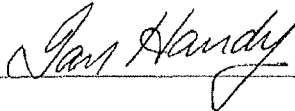


(4) Place
(5) Day
(6) Month and year

Declared at (4) CAKREY QLD on (5) 18TH of (6) OCTOBER 2006

(7) Signature of person before whom the declaration is made (see over)

(7)



(8) Full name, qualification and address of person before whom the declaration is made (in printed letters)

(8)

IAN ASA HANDY (SPQA)
Po Box 7126, Toowoomba M.C. Q4352



Note 1 A person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence, the punishment for which is imprisonment for a term of four years - see Section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*.

Note 2 Chapter 2 of the Criminal Code applies to all offences against the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959* - see Section 5A of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
STATUTORY DECLARATION

Statutory Declarations Act 1959

(1) Insert the name, address and occupation of person making the declaration

I, ⁽¹⁾ PAUL DUNSTAN RYDER, 8163428

make the following declaration under the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*:

(2) Set out matter declared to in numbered paragraphs

(2) I have been requested by Mr Glen Bowman to provide information regarding his employment relating to F-111 Fuel Tank Repair activities. I was the Aircraft Maintenance Officer (AMO) at 1SQN during the period January 1999 until November 2001. During this time, Mr Glen Bowman was a CPL ATECH at 1SQN. I have no formal documentation to support my statement, however I have a clear recollection of the fuel tank repair activities that I and my subordinates were involved in.

Due to the fuel tank issues the F-111 aircraft experienced, I became heavily involved in the management of F-111 fuel tank repair from approximately June 2000 until November 2001, as OIC Fuel Tank Repair Section (FTRS). Manning shortages and a heightened work load required personnel from both 1SQN and 6SQN to supplement the on-strength manning at Fuel Tank Repair Section. Consequently, Mr Glen Bowman was seconded to FTRS during the months of October, November and December 2000 for fuel tank repair duties.

Fuel tank maintenance involved a broad range of scenarios from operational level 'Pick and Patch' to fuel leak investigations involving F111C aircraft. Mr Bowman's duties were performed on aircraft allocated to 501WG Deseal Reseal Section (Hangars 255 and 260). His duties required entry into F1, F2, A1 and A2 fuel tanks using approved personal protective equipment (PPE) and approved procedures.

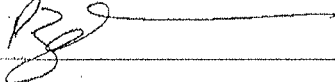
In order to quantify Mr Bowman's involvement in fuel tank repair activities during the period that I was OIC FTRS, I estimate that Mr Bowman was assigned to fuel tank repair duties approximately two weeks out of every four during the period October, November and December 2000. I have no records to certify this estimate; however, fuel tank maintenance was continuously performed during this period and Mr Bowman was one of a small group of people who were trained and qualified for fuel tank repair duties. Therefore, Mr Bowman was regularly drafted from regular aircraft maintenance for fuel tank repair duties.

I believe the estimate of time that I have given to be accurate to the best of my recall. A more accurate account of Mr Bowman's involvement could be found by researching fuel tank entry worksheets and Confined Space and Hazardous Chemical Claim forms during the aforementioned period.

I understand that a person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence under Section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*, and I believe that the statements in this declaration are true in every particular.

(3) Signature of person making the declaration

(3)




(4) Place
(5) Day
(6) Month and year

Declared at ⁽⁴⁾ RAAF EDINBURGH on ⁽⁵⁾ 19th of ⁽⁶⁾ SEPTEMBER

(7) Signature of person before whom the declaration is made (see over)

(7)

Before me, 

(8) Full name, qualification and address of person before whom the declaration is made (in printed letters)

(8) FLEET S. ZEUNER 0413916 of LOT 25 BLACKTOP RD ONE TREE HILL SA 5114

Note 1 A person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence, the punishment for which is imprisonment for a term of four years - see Section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*.

Note 2 Chapter 2 of the Criminal Code applies to all offences against the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959* - see Section 5A of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*.

MR GLEN BOWMAN



14 September 2005

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Involvement with Deseal/Reseal Process and Chemical Exposure

I am writing to you regarding my involvement in the deseal/reseal program of the F111 aircraft. The following is a brief outline of my RAAF career involving work on and/or in the F111 aircraft.

Upon enlistment into the Air force in Feb 1990, I completed my Airframe Fitters course and was then posted to F111 Wing Section at No 3 Aircraft Depot, RAAF Base Amberley in June of 1991. During my 3 ½ - 4 year stint in Wing Section, it involved Deeper Level maintenance of the F111 wings including fuel leak repairs, de-plumb and re-plumb of the fuel system and de-puddling of the fuel tanks. From there, I had an internal transfer to the R4 F111 servicing which then included Fuel tank entries, for such tasks as fuel leak repairs (pick and patch) and fuel system de-plumb and re-plumbs. I was in this section for approx. 2 years until I was posted to No 1 Sqn, which entailed flight-line maintenance tasks. During my 4 years at the squadron, I was involved once again in many fuel tank entries (pick and patch), and also was involved in the re-plumb of several F111's that had just undertaken the initial fuel tank Re-spray program. This job entailed weeks of fuel tank entries into tanks that were high in fumes, etc that were a result of this spray seal procedure. Also, during my time at 1 Sqn, I was involved in a job rotation through Deseal/Reseal Section that took place around the year's 1998/1999. This rotation was of monthly stints, in which I had 3-4 rotations of. I finished my RAAF career at No.1 Sqn in Nov. 2001 and took up a position with Boeing Australia at F111 Wing Section to which I am currently employed.

Numerous fuel tank entries that I had been involved in, were required as the Deseal/Reseal crew were unavailable for these tank entries, as they were either under manned or committed to other work, so, our 'guy's' as 'framies' were required to carry out these tank entries for them.

My mustering as an Airframe Fitter/Aircraft Technician involved the exposure to chemicals such as MEK, turco, white spirits, Avtur fuel and sealants such as PR2911 (spray sealant), PR1750, 1826, 1440 and Q4. For the majority of my time working in these area's, there was never the range and/or amount of PPE (respirator's, gloves, etc) or the requirement to wear them as there is today. It was not unusual to climb into tanks wearing only your T-shirt, shorts and socks, as there was no requirement so we thought, for anything else.

Since I have been involved in F111 fuel tank entries (Deseals, Reseals, Replumbs, etc) I have noticed changes to my health in such ways as, memory loss, mood swings, sore and irritating eyes, sinus and throat trouble, headaches, dry skin, and a duodenal ulcer.

From this brief overview of my RAAF career as an Airframe Fitter/Aircraft Technician, in which I spent approx. 10 years working on and/or in the F111 aircraft, it hopefully details to you my involvement in the F111 Deseal/Reseal program.

Please find enclosed, examples of supporting evidence, which include tank entry permits, EE508 maintenance sheets for the replumb of one of the spray seal aircraft, and course certificates. This supporting evidence is only some of the documents of tank entries that I was involved in for Deseal/Reseal purposes. If you require any further information or have any queries at all, please feel free to contact me, as I will be only to happy to help where I can.

Your's Thankfully,

Glen A. Bowman