



Submission No 11

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

Name:

Name withheld

Fax Cover Sheet

TO Committee, JSCFADT
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

FROM [REDACTED]

Attn Donna Quintus-Bosz

Fax 02 6277 2221

RE: Inquiry

Thank you for your patience. The easiest solution is give up on the attachment. I'm taking your advice and faxing my submission.

Please advise if it correctly presented or it needs more work.

Regards

[REDACTED]



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

As a desealer I spent many hours of many days working in the fuel tanks of the F111's swimming around and breathing in the cocktail of chemicals without any protective equipment.

I have struggled with life for many years. My whole body suffers the effects of the programme. I need to know how the DVA specialists come to their very wrong conclusions. I have medical reports that fail to agree with them. Why have others had their conditions excepted when they had little contact in the programme? I would like to know why the whole process has taken so long. Why have there not being some person appointed to help. I could not find an advocate, even within the RSL or Vietnam Veterans clubs. I found the whole process demeaning and that I was made to feel guilty for wanting justice. I feel my whole integrity was questioned in the letter that rejected my claims. I lost the will to fight even though I am right.

Nothing will ever fix this life that I now lead. I would like my claims be reassessed. No compensation will ever give me my life back. To have a TPI pension and Gold Card would help financially. That would be one less worry I would have to endure. A small action on the Government behalf for the wrecking the lives of a family. My family also needs medical assistance and compensation.

I put my future once again in the Governments hands. I am willing to appear at the inquiry, any questions about my or my families mental conditions would have to be confidential. I would prefer it if everyone did not know us as freaks. Here is a summary of my life.

I enlisted in the RAAF Aug 75. I completed my trade courses as a Motor Transport Fitter Aug 76. In July 78 I received orders that I was to work outside my trade on the reseal deseal programme. I worked there until Sep 79. This was not a position I volunteered for. This was a position I did not want. This was a position that I was ordered to do. I saw a fellow Motor Transport Fitter charged and placed in cells for refusing to carry out duties at reseal deseals. As a young person and starting a family I felt it better not to buck the system as my family needed me. Besides I did as the RAAF had trained me, obey orders.

If only I knew then what I know now. A discharged service no longer required would have been the best thing that could possibly have happened.

My memories are few of those days. I remember the confined spaces we crawled into. I remember often getting stuck thinking I would die there. I remember getting dizzy and light-headed with the chemical fumes. I remember not been able to breathe. I remember it been freezing in winter, sweltering in summer. Most of all I remember the stench. It never went away. We ate in a special area of the mess. People would walk away as you approached them, we were ostracised where ever we went. I do not remember any protective equipment. No showering facilities, we wore home the same overalls we worked in therefore contaminating the household with the cocktail of chemicals we swam in during the day. When the shift was completed I turned to alcohol as a way to dim the memories of the day. I blamed the alcohol for the outburst of temper that was increasing every day.

My time passed and I was moved back to my own trade. Life seemed normal except for my mood swings. Crippling Headaches had invaded my life.

Around 1990 life was changing. The changes were gradual. Concentration was a problem. Bones began to ache and creak. Trembling and numbness in my hands was becoming more pronounced. Numerous nights of staying awake followed by weeks of sleepiness. Noises and bright lights would put me in a black mood. People around me would upset me. I had no time for anybody. Turning into a grumpy old man I thought. Even though I was still young my mind convinced me that this was life. The through as seeking medical help would have me classified as a wimp. Men are supposed be strong. All this was too much I left the RAAF to live a quite life.

I was lucky to find employment at a retirement village. I was the maintenance man. It was a good role for me as I worked by myself not having much to do with anybody. As the years passed my concentration got poorer my brain would not function like it should. My hands were letting me down, constantly dropping everything. I could not read books. I would read the some page over and over I just didn't understand what was on the page. Movies were the same I would lose the storyline and get confused and frustrated. Nightmares began to wake me up screaming and covered in sweat.

Then the article appeared in the newspaper asking for Desealers to taker part in a health study. Things suddenly began to make sense. I attended various specialist appointments that DVA arranged. Their reports were that far from the truth I wonder how they came to their conclusions.

I then attended The Health Study and bingo the psychologist summed me up in two minutes and convinced me to seek help. Two different psychiatrists later both stated that I had severe problems. Pills they prescribed for me helped. All too late for my job. I was made redundant. Apparently contractors could carry out the work a lot quicker.



I considered going back to my trade. I realised that was impossible I doubt if I could even change a fiat tyre. As fuck would have it a new primary school opened in the neighbourhood. I applied to become maintenance person. I still work there today. thankfully I work by myself having little contact with people. Every day is a struggle. My memory and my ability to carry out basics tasks will soon catch up to me.

My life today is more about things I can not do. Remember those special occasions my wedding the birth and the growing up of my children my own childhood. Family holidays and Christmas's etc .I can not achieve doing minor activities without going insane working out what routine to do them in. Not been able to read books watch movies. Go out and behave like a normal person. Not been able to breathe when near certain perfumes or chemicals. I do have physiological problems. Constant joint pain, nightmares and headaches which I hope my head will explode and get it over with. Psoriasis over my body and a lack of smell and taste.

The above I consider bad enough but when you add the following it gets unbearable to think I have inflicted my family as well.

My wife is suffering or has suffered

B12 deficiently

Stomach Erosion

Reflux

Skin cancers x 2

Reoccurring throat and chest infections

Miscarriages

Cervical Cancer

Depression and anxiety

My daughter [redacted] born on the 31st Jul 79 Whist I was employed on deseal has suffered or is suffering

Eczema

Asthma

Various bouts of Pneumonia

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Mood Swings

Anxiety and Depression

Miscarriage

My other daughter [redacted] born 09 Apr 84 after my deseal day has no health problems. Is this co-incidental? I think not

Thank You

[redacted]
[redacted]

14 Jun 08