



Submission 84

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

Name:

Name withheld

4/7/08

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

Phone: [REDACTED]

This submission is written by [REDACTED] wife of [REDACTED]

1.2 In the early days of the Deseal Reseal Fuel Tank programs they didn't have any protection. [REDACTED] went into the tanks in shorts, singlets and socks therefore no protection.

1.4 1977-1982 During this period [REDACTED] went into the tanks on more than one occasion. He would come home as if he was high and was also impossible to talk to. During the time he was in the tanks we had many arguments which was very unusual for us. During the time he worked in the tanks I had to continuously replace his underwear because the elastic would virtually disintegrate and when we had intercourse I suffered terrible burning sensations. (for the past 9 years [REDACTED] has been impotent) I went to the doctor many times thinking it was a problem with me (which it wasn't). Since then I have spoken to other women who have said they had the same problem. (for the past 9 years [REDACTED] has been impotent)

1.10

There was an appalling lack of care taken by the RAAF and also very poor record keeping. [REDACTED] had approximately ½ litre of Methyl Ketone spilt over him from head to toe in 1977 (from memory). He spent time in the Amberley Base Hospital then some time at home with his eyes covered against light. Even after all that there are no records in his medical documents or in leave documents.

Question: Where are those records?

3.6

We have lost our home and businesses, not to mention the inability to be able to work; therefore we have lost 20 years of superannuation between the two of us. Even though I am back at work now at aged 60

my superannuation contributions are not enough to retire on. We are about to move again for the second time in the past 4 years as we have been reduced to renting for many years. We don't want to move but our landlords want to move into the house. Moving is not easy as it unsettles my husband and I am the one who is dealing with the entire thing and at the moment have a damaged elbow which is not healing and never will it seems if I have to cope with heavy workloads.

We have had a case against the Commonwealth for 6 years and during that time the AGS have stalled us on many an occasion. They had a Toxicology report done by a Toxicologist in Adelaide and the report confirms that some of [REDACTED]'s conditions are due to the chemicals. After receiving the Toxicology report the AGS have done a major back pedal.

In 2005 we received a very nasty email from an individual stating [REDACTED] is a fraud and didn't go into the tanks. This email was very upsetting and created many problems for us, so much so that I had to go back into counselling to cope with it all. We tracked down the person who supposedly sent the email but after a lot of talks with the person we have established that someone had used his name on an email address. Recently we had a call from the person in question to tell us that the AGS had sent him a letter asking to speak to him about his claims against [REDACTED]. Naturally he phoned us to let us know about it and he told the AGS that he had nothing do with the Email. It seems to us that the AGS is clutching at straws trying to prove a case against [REDACTED]. Since then we have had an apology from the AGS via our solicitors. This is not good enough as I feel a written apology is in order. [REDACTED] has had most of his conditions accepted by DVA and MCRS but still the AGS are stalling us. It seems that an illegal immigrant can have his case settled in 18 months but we have to wait 6+ years for ours to get to the mediation stage, we are still waiting for mediation.

3.8 As a partner of a desealer I have experienced 2 breakdowns and have had to give up work in the past as a result of not being able to cope. I have had to go into counselling to try and sort out my issues of coping with a partner who has memory loss, cognitive decline, major depressive disorder and many other physical problems.

2 years ago Leonie Coxin from the University of WA did a study on the effects on partners of desealers. I phoned Leonie recently to find out

what happened to the study she did. She informed me she had sent it to the RAAF 2 years ago and to date not one of the participants has received any feedback. Leonie told me her findings were disturbing. Apparently her report has been sent on to DVA and still we haven't received any report. Considering we signed the questionnaire allowing us to receive information about our questionnaire we haven't had any information about it at all. Many women including myself are constantly stressed and depressed and in need of counselling so why hasn't this report been filtered down the line to those who contributed to it?

3.8 As for the children, we have one child who has Coeliac disease which is unusual as we do not have a family history of Coeliac disease. Whilst on a life style management course, Dr Keith Horsley showed us some information re studies he had been doing on mice and strangely the mice had damage to their Villi from being exposed to the chemicals. This happens with Coeliacs when they eat Gluten containing foods. It makes me wonder why our daughter is a Coeliac when her family history shows no relatives with Coeliac disease.

On a personal note, life for the past 20 years has been horrendous for both of us. I have a husband who can't remember what I told him yesterday. He has trouble understanding what I say to him. Because of the many medical conditions he has our life has changed dramatically.

Questions:

Why does an illegal immigrant get compensation before our ex servicemen are compensated?

How long do we have to fight for decent compensation? Are they going to drag it out until ~~he~~ dies?

When are they going to release the study done by Leonie Coxin or do we have to go through freedom of information to receive our individual results?

I have listed [REDACTED] medical conditions here:

Neuropathy (has lost feeling to 70% of his body)
Hypertension
Dupuytren's Contracture
Dementia and cognitive decline
Osteoporosis
Hyperparathyroidism
Peyronie's Disease
Agoraphobia
Alcohol abuse
Psoriasis
Psoriatic Arthritis
Sinusitis
Recurrent eye ulceration (MEK spill)
Major depression
Diabetes (about to go on to insulin other wise kidneys will shut down)
Meniere's disease
Tinnitus
Hearing Loss
PTSD