

10 November 2001

Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr.
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
1200 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1200

SUBJ: Environmental Concerns Re: Volatile Organic Compound Contamination
of Personnel Living at Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune N.C. 1968-1995
Ref: (a) My letter to Dr. J. Jarrett Clinton of 27 August 2001
(b) Dr. J. Jarrett Clinton's letter of 23 October 2001
(c) My letter to Dr. J. J. Clinton of 31 October 2001

Dear Mr. Secretary,

A belated thank you to the staff/office of the Assistant
SECDEF for Health Affairs and your predecessor for the support of
the Tricare for Life Program for older military retirees. Much appreciated.
The thrust of this letter is to encourage you to assist in
motivating the DOD and the DOW to include the Marine Corps, to take
some positive steps to directly contact the 100,000 or more Marine
and Naval personnel, mostly male enlisted personnel, as to the details
of their contamination exposure and advise on possible medical
assistance and disability compensation by the Department of
Veterans Affairs.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has
been directly involved in this contamination disaster for many years
and is currently finishing a health survey of some 16,500 women
who conceived and bore children at CLC during the 1968-1995 period.
This is an admirable first step; however, the male population

- 1 -

CLW

000003413

has been completely ignored, never directly contacted by the DoD, and many are still unaware of their exposure even while suffering adverse health effects. No one in the Department of Defense, even in the health care operations sectors, seem to care?

I realize this issue nominally lies within the purview of the DoD, the Navy Surgeon General in particular with the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery as the action staff. Unfortunately for my comrades the Navy intends to take no action on behalf of the male cohort until ATSDR completes the health survey (female) and an epidemiological analysis completed. I said unfortunately because some of these exposed veterans are dying at a rapid rate because of the massive levels of VOC contamination over a very long period.

MASSIVE means 1400 ppb of TCE and 407 ppb of DCE in the base water supply while current MCL's are 5/7 ppb.

Does the Navy Surgeon General consider these levels, affirmed by ATSDR, to be benign and equivalent to giardia?

Further delays in contacting these veterans with details of their contamination strikes this officer as being disgraceful leadership on the part of the Department of the Navy and its surgeon, DoD.

I plan to petition the ATSDR to conduct a Public Health Assessment of this male cohort to get the program underway before more time elapses and more veterans suffer.

The Secretary should also be aware that the members of the female cohort of 16,500 were only notified of their exposure beginning in 1999, some thirty one years after the fact. The male cohort of 100,000 has never been directly contacted on a personal basis even as this is written.

For the record I would note that on my return from Vietnam in 1965 my wife conceived a son born in 1967 at CLAC. Unfortunately he succumbed to in-utero VOC poisoning at age three months.

As a Marine, enlisted and Commissioned, since 1949 I am unwilling to let 100,000 of my fellow Marine veterans left in the dark for any number of spurious reasons on the part of the naval establishment.

The Department of Defense is supporting a forward looking health survey of 140,000 healthy servicemen for the next twenty years (Millennium Cohort). If DOD can support this program with a naval officer (physician) as the Principal Investigator why does the DOD/DON ignore 100,000 veterans who served their nation during a real "men to man war" in Vietnam as opposed to one hundred hour conflicts and B-52's currently bombing from 30,000 feet?

Dr. Clinton noted "my staff has contacted the Office of the Navy Surgeon General and I have been assured that the concerns raised in your letter are being addressed appropriately".

If doing nothing is deemed appropriate and Assistant SECDEF for Health Affairs accepts theBUMED "do-nothing" attitude then I shall know that the old values of military leadership and care of one's troops has disappeared from the military ethos.

Respectfully Submitted,

cc: Chairman John D. Rockefeller,
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
Senator Larry Craig, Senate
Veterans Affairs Committee
Senator Mike Crapo
Commander, American Legion.

MAJOR USMC (Retired)

CLW

0000003415