



28 October 2000

Senator John Warner, United States Senate
Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Bldg. (RHH: Anne Wittmeyer)
Washington, D.C. 20510

COPY

- SUBJ: Request For Armed Services Committee Inquiry: Personnel Injuries/Wrongful Deaths From Environmental Contaminations at Marine Corps Base; Camp Lejeune, N. Carolina
- Ref: (a) Major Townsend's letter to Chairman Warner, 7 July 2000, same subject
- (b) Major Townsend's letter to Mr. Lee Brownless, Messing Staff Director, 21 July 2000, same subject
- (c) Major Townsend's letter to Mr. Lee Brownlee, Messing Staff Director, 22 August 2000, same subject
- (d) Major Townsend's letter to Chairman Warner, 8 September 2000, same subject

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The undersigned officer understands that the committee has been occupied with other events and the desire to finish the current appropriations cycle and the U.S. Cole inquiry. I have brought before your staff since July, veterans (a)-(d), the details of a high incidence of environmental contamination and related health problems to a large transient population at Camp Lejeune (CLW) over perhaps five decades.

The detected contaminant levels of volatile organic compounds in the base water supply system some fifteen years ago exceeded today's allowable limits by 300%. Some 16,500 pregnant women and their in utero children were exposed to these contaminants during an arbitrarily defined window of time: 1968-1985.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a subordinate element of the U.S. Public Health Service/Department of Health and Human Services, through a contract with the National Opinion Research

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Concerning the environmental disaster at a locale, which over the years, became a virtual hazardous waste site situated over hundreds of acres atop a vulnerable aquifer system.

It is my understanding that a major television news network has been doing pre-broadcast investigations during the past few months and will be ready to release their public story on the CLWC affair shortly. There is also interest in the Marine Corps Supply Center, Albany Georgia should that be of interest to Senator Cleland.

There exists a consortium of nationwide environmental law firms that are coordinating a litigation plan on the part of injured plaintiffs and an accompanying program of advertisement in newspapers nationwide that will make the incident known to a larger segment of the population, perhaps find more NRC participants, and presumably obtain additional clients.

This information about the incident exposure, the delay in notification for some three decades and the passive attitude and reluctant cooperation of the Department of the Navy and the Marine Corps will not, in my view, resonate favorably with the American general public. The DoN's action plan to date has been defend, deny, and delay. For the NRC survey to be ended for the lack of funding would be a delaying tactic that would come to rest on the doorstep of Navy Pentagon.

Since the attack on the U.S.S. Cole the Navy Public Affairs has been using the "Extended Navy Family" approach. Those of us former residents of Camp Lejeune that have been hung out to dry for the last three decades seem more to be the black sheep of the "family" than valued naval family members even though we have long since retired or been discharged. Read Korea/Viet Nam.

The Senate Armed Services Committee has an opportunity now to help mitigate this problem. Abba Eban, former Foreign Minister of Israel, once said at Yaffo Arafat "never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity". The window of opportunity is closing.

CC: Senator Cingco
Senator Cleland
NPSOR
HMC/KMC

SECRET
(3)

Robert C. Schmitt
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