

> That movie, called a "A Civil Action" and starring John Travolta and  
> Robert Duvall, is based on the best-selling book of the same title by  
> Jonathan Harr (published by Random House). The book is about a toxic tort  
> lawsuit filed by several families from Woburn, Massachusetts, and the  
> ~~trail against two large corporations for deaths resulting from leukemia~~  
> ~~and other illnesses allegedly caused by TCE found in the ground water.~~

> These families lived in an area served by two Woburn public water supply  
> wells (wells G and H). These two wells were installed in the mid-1960s  
> and shut down in 1979, following an apparently unrelated incidence of  
> illegal dumping in the vicinity. Sampling of the wells immediately prior  
> to shutdown revealed the presence of 267 ppb TCE in well G and 183 TCE in  
> well H, as well as lesser concentrations of PCE and other chlorinated  
> organic compounds. In 1982, a lawsuit was filed against three  
> corporations with manufacturing facilities in the area surrounding wells G  
> and H. Following extensive site investigations and settlement with one of  
> defendants, the trail against the final two defendants was held in Boston  
> in 1986.

> A Civil Action is an excellent chronicle of the extraordinary  
> efforts of Jan Schlichtmann, the attorney from a very small law firm who  
> represented the plaintiff families against the resources and influence of  
> two of largest firms in Boston and their clients. The book describes the  
> difficulties and extensive studies by Schlichtmann's medical experts to  
> evaluate possible link between TCE in ground water and the leukemia  
> clusters in Woburn.

> The primary focus of the first trial was the expert witness  
> testimony of provided by five well-known hydrogeologists, ground water  
> hydrologists, and a geochemist. As you can image, the various experts  
> providing conflicting opinions about the sources and timing of  
> contamination.

→ I recommend that each of you see the movie or read the book. ★

> The movie will undoubtedly increase the public's awareness of ground  
> water, but it also may cause serious concerns about the safety of ground  
> water for public water supply wells. As Jim Goodrich, executive director  
> of California's San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority wrote, the movie  
> raises many issues for public water utilities, regulatory agencies,  
> legislatures, consultants, the public, and the courts. An increasing  
> number of toxic tort lawsuits are being filled against both industry and  
> water utilities for real and potential future health effects caused by  
> exposure to industrial chemicals in groundwater.

> Portions of the above taken from "The Newsletter of the Association of  
> Ground Water Scientists and Engineers".

CLW

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To: SDG@EMD2@MCB LEJEUNE  
Cc: SAB@EMD2@MCB LEJEUNE  
Bcc:  
From: Environmental Control Spec2@EMD2@MCB LEJEUNE  
Subject: UTILIZATION OF PROPER CHAIN OF COMMAND  
Date: Thursday, February 9, 1995 6:10:04 EST  
Attach:  
Certify: N  
Forwarded by: Director Envir Compliance Div@EMD2@MCB LEJEUNE

Forwarded to: CPB@EMD1  
Cc:  
Forwarded date: Thursday, February 9, 1995 15:11:52 EST  
Comments by: Director Envir Compliance Div@EMD2@MCB LEJEUNE

## ----- [Original Message] -----

Sam, as my direct supervisor I am filing both a compliant and request with you via this media. As I noted to you yesterday morning, Danny Sharpe called me numerous times (throughout the day) requesting information relative to the bldg 25 tanks and PWO's, Plannings, IR's, RCRB's, and EACO's decisions relative to response to the tank pull's, the decision to re-fill the pit with existing soil which came from the excavation, sample results etc. Danny never mentioned any concern's which Julian was supposed to have raised with him....and I very quickly add the simple question as to why Julian didn't ask you and the other department heads, whose staff members had met--discussed the issues--proposed a response which was based upon the best information available--and carried out that proposed action which I might add was approved by the very regulatory agency which would hit us with a violation, if in fact a violation was present. As far as my input to this project, I was asked to provide comment, discussion and recommendation by the Planning personnel involved in the tank pull.....and if you look at the scenario you'll find that we--the noted group of personnel which involved all aspects of EMD and legal counsel i.e. Planning, IR, RCRB and EACO, you find that we carried out the very thing that the AC/S EMD and MCB is now pushing for--the so called resource or PAT team development under the TOL concept, which took the problem, discussed the issues and responded.....team concept, team approach....best decision based upon the best available info.

My foundation/compliant is simple, I take great exception to someone (in this case Danny Sharpe) coming to me and in general discussion pulling all the data relative to/about a subject and then that person rewriting the data to create what can only in my opinion be deemed a "self-serving" strike at you, certainly me and this department. I provided free discussion of the noted groups decisions to Danny as one professional to another, to whom I thought had legitimate concerns and was acting as part of the EMD team, only to have him write his E-Mail of Feb. 8 in such a way that totally biases the actual decisions made so that it appears there is this great ticking bomb sitting at bldg 25 and that RCRB/Planning/IR are sitting back doing nothing. In 1988/89 when I went over to that bldg doing my HW inspections and discovered all those corroded tanks and briefed my supervisor, Danny Sharpe, on the fact that there were tanks that were rusted through, and obviously tanks that needed checking because some had free liquids in them---he did nothing. Then again when the contractor which was moving the grass around that bldg broke one of the fill tubes of a UST, and it rained causing run off to enter the tanks and perked a hazardous material up onto the grass and Danny Sharpe was briefed---he did nothing..... He had a chemist (Elizabeth Betz) at his beckon and call, on his staff and he did nothing, so I simply ask why if this area is of such significance to him and he is so concerned that the tanks "may leak" did he not have the tanks pumped when this program was under his



cognizance??????????

My request, that appropriate directives be provided to Danny Sharpe which require him to address any questions or concerns to and through my supervisor and you. I have never been faced with someone who continually misconstrues statements, opinions or actions to such a degree as Danny Sharpe and I find I can not continue to interact within any boundary of self respect or professional courtesy with him. He continuously develops self-serving correspondence which is always full of hidden agenda's and is normally biased to support his opinion versus fact. After this last episode it is my intent not to respond to his phone, E-Mail or written request or question. I will only respond to written request which have been specifically reviewed by and routed to me by my supervisor and you. I await your directive or response and will react to Danny's request as noted unless you specifically direct me to respond.

John Riggs

Site No.: 69

Name: Rifle Range Chemical Dump

Location: FWDH Coordinates 16, L14-15/M14-15; about 8,000 to 9,000 feet due east of intersection of Range and Sneds Ferry Roads, north of Everett Creek.

Figures and Photos: 2-1, 6-30, 6-32, 6-33

Size: Estimated area is about 6 acres.

Previously Reported: Yes EPA Form 8900-1 MC Bul 6280

Activity: Former site for chemical wastes, including various pesticides, PCBs, fire retardants

Materials Involved: Pentachlorophenol, DDT, TCE, Malathion, Diazinon, Lindane, gas cylinders, MTH, PCBs, drums of "gas" that were probably a training agent containing chloroacetophenone (CN), all other hazardous materials generated or used on base, chemical agent test kits for chemical warfare, which contain no agent substances. See Table 2-3 for reported contaminant levels in surface and groundwater at or near this site.

Quantity: Overall volume may be 93,000 cubic yards. This is based on an area of approximately 6 acres and an assumed depth of 10 feet.

When: Approximately 1950 to about 1976

★ Comments: The former base safety officer prepared a list of what and where chemicals were buried in the landfill. This list has been lost, but some information is known from an interview. Disposal was in pits/trenches between 6 to 20 feet deep. At least 12 different dumpings have been documented.

(Continued)



Site No.: 69 (Continued)

This site is at a higher elevation than surrounding terrain. Subsurface contaminant migration could be in many directions. Groundwater seeps were observed in the surrounding area.

Two reports of atmospheric emissions were noted. One incident occurred possibly as a result of meteorological conditions; the second incident was caused by accidental disturbance of the ground at the site by grading/disking machinery.

Some PCBs, sealed in cement septic tanks, are reported to be buried here.

Both fired and unfired blank rifle cartridges were found on the ground within the boundaries of this site. The presence of these cartridges indicate that troop training exercises may have extended into this area, possibly at night when warning signs might not have been seen.

The chemical agent test kits were a type called "Kit, Chemical Agent Detector, M9" for detecting mustards, nitrogen mustards, arsenicals and phosgene. The following is a contents listing of the kit from the kits' "General Directions."

- 1 Kit Carrier with Carrying Strap
- 1 Air Sampling Pump, with Flashlight
- 36 Mustards Detector Tubes
- 20 Nitrogen Mustards Detector Tubes
- 20 Arsenicals Detector Tubes
- 20 Phosgene Detector Tubes
- 20 Sampling Tubes
- 2 Aluminum Bottles of Liquid Reagent
- 1 Blue Bottle of Liquid Reagent
- 1 Red Bottle of Liquid Reagent
- 1 Aluminum Vial of Solid Reagent
- 1 Protective Cover
- 1 Set of General Directions for Use of Kit, Chemical Agent Detector, M9
- 1 Pack of Envelopes and Report Forms
- 1 Pencil

One disposal incident occurred in 1953 or 1954. About 50 drums of what is believed to be training agent were delivered on rubber padded trucks and were buried in two trenches (see Figure 6-32). The drums were described as being "not nearly as heavy as if filled with oil". These drums were placed in the pit one at a time and laid side by side. These two pits were up to 20 feet deep and the drums were stacked so

(Continued)



Site No.: 69 (Continued)

that the top layer was five or six feet below ground level when the drums were covered. Gas masks with some type of absorption cannister and other protective clothing were worn by those people present. The heavy equipment operator reported that he itched after working at this site. The drums were light blue or bluish-green and unmarked.

In 1970, another burial incident took place during which 5-gallon cans and 55-gallon drums of DDT, trichloroethylene (TCE), and calcium hypochlorite were placed together in a common pit. When earth was being placed over the containers, an explosion and fire occurred which caused a forest fire and blew drums from the pit into the forest about 40 yards from the pit. A fire truck and base safety personnel were present. Some of those present possessed gas masks.

Note: Size estimates are based on map and photograph information. Field estimates may have been made, but no field measurements have been performed. Estimates are provided for general guidance only.



09/04/2003 10:00 9183244480

COHARIE FARMS C11  
201-320-0754PAGE 81  
p. 2

Sep 02 03 07:51p Janie Gross

TYPE SURVEILLANCE

Installation CAMP LA SEUNE HADNOT POINT  
Date Collected 26 FEB 81 PM

AVE 63

SOURCE	Sample Number	CHCL <sub>3</sub>	CHCL <sub>2</sub> Br	CHCIBr <sub>2</sub>	CHBr <sub>3</sub>	MS/L ITEM
WTP	181	48.6	9.6	5.4	1.7	65
NH-1	182	54.5	13.8	5.5	0.2	74
1202	183	46.6	10.6	4.2	0.1	62
65	184	45.5	9.4	5.0	0.1	60
FC-530	185	43.6	8.5	4.2	0.1	56
Reference OBS						
Tsum						

Date Received 9 MAR 81Date Analyzed 9 MAR 81

Remarks:

WATER HIGHLY CONTAMINATED WITH OTHER  
CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS (SOLVENTS)!

*William C. Neal*  
 WILLIAM E. NEAL, JR.  
 Chief, Laboratory Services

 USAEHA-5 Form 7  
 20 Feb 80

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**Site 3 - Soil Removal (Ms. Kate Landman)**

Determination still pending from EPA Region IV for soil going to Base landfill as "non-hazardous"

New rules may not apply as source originated from time before new EPA restrictions were established

Final decision to be made around middle of April

**MTBE in groundwater on Camp Lejeune (Mr. Bob Lowder)**

The fuel contractor that Camp Lejeune uses (Hess) doesn't put MTBE in gas, but there is the possibility that the Base may have purchased other gas with MTBE in it.

MTBE has been found in UST monitoring wells, but never in potable supply water wells.



"Official" answer: No MTBE in gas on Base.

**New Business****Admin Record on Internet Web Site (Mr. Rich Bonelli)**

A systematic demonstration of the capabilities of the electronic Admin Record was presented.

The paper copy at the Onslow County Public Library will be removed and a computer will be setup for accessing the Admin Record.

Updates will occur as needed and RAB members will have access to "Draft" documents.

**Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU) Program (Mr. Thomas Burton)**

Explanation of the SWMU Program under RCRA including:

62 total sites (Phase I)

47 sites requiring further investigation (Phase II)

4 corrective and remedial



remind members of the meeting. In the future, e-mails and letters will be sent to community members approximately 2-weeks before the meeting.

#### Old Business

Review of the meeting minutes from February meeting on the Web site. The Base will e-mail community members when the meeting minutes are posted to the Camp Lejeune RAB Web site. (Mr. Neal Paul)

#### Updates

Site 89 - The status of the Time Critical Removal Action (TCRA) phases and the funding were explained. (Mr. Rick Raines)

The site history was briefly discussed, followed by a description of how the TCRA will take place using the low temperature thermal desorption (LTTD) unit.

Depth of excavation, blending of soils, and treatment levels were outlined. Air emissions were addressed and surface water treatment through a "fountain" was delineated.

Phase 2 - residual soil remediation and future groundwater cleanup were also discussed.

The priority at this time is to begin removing the source, the "hot" stuff.

Site 73 - Courthouse Bay - IRD was asked to provide a status of the Site 73

Natural Attenuation Evaluation study is complete and has been submitted.

Awaiting funds before further addressing Vinyl Chloride issue (Ms. **Kate Landman**)

Dredging in Courthouse Bay as part of the Riverine Center of Excellence (RCE) project was discussed. Ms. DeBow had commented on the RCE Environmental Assessment (EA) at a public meeting, but had never seen/heard her comments addressed. Camp Lejeune will look into her comments and provide response. (Mr. Thomas Morris)



actions

All sites showed arsenic, chromium, and lead – background levels at IRP sites also showed high levels

Funding source is Base O&M, not ER,N

Lunch Briefings (Mr. James Swartzenberg / Mr. Neal Paul)

Present briefings at Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, and the Onslow County Commission in an effort to enlighten the community of the existence and purpose of the RAB and an effort to increase membership

Develop presentation, then have other RAB members present to other organizations

**Conclusion**

Mr. James Swartzenberg to present report on "Partners for Progress" at next meeting

Mr. Richard Mullins suggested everyone tour the UNCW Marine Research Facility

Next meeting scheduled for 6 June

**Meeting Adjourned (8:30 p.m.)**

RETURN



**The Washington Post**

## **Marines to Probe Pollution Case**

**Panel to Study How Camp Lejeune Dealt With Tainted Water**

*By Manuel Roig-Franzia*

Washington Post Staff Writer

Saturday, February 21, 2004; Page A07

The Marine Corps, buffeted by intensifying criticism of its handling of water contamination at its largest East Coast base, announced yesterday that an independent panel will be appointed to investigate why officials at Camp Lejeune, N.C., allowed tainted water to be supplied to base housing for five years after contaminated wells were discovered.

The wells were closed in 1985, but thousands of former Marines and their families did not find out about the contamination until 1999 when a federal agency began surveying possible victims as part of an ongoing study. The Marines estimate that 50,000 people, including civilians who lived on base, may have consumed the tainted water; victims groups place the figure as high as 200,000.

Gen. Mike Hagee, the highest-ranking Marine, said he will name a three-member panel made up of private sector experts in the environment, engineering and military command procedures. The panel, which has not yet been selected, will report its findings by Sept. 1, Hagee said in a statement.

"We are deeply concerned about the health issues raised by members of our Marine Corps family and are working diligently to ensure that anyone affected during this period and beyond is well cared for," Hagee said in a statement. The panel's formation, he said, was prompted by questions raised by Marine "families and other parties."

Hagee's announcement did little to assuage leaders of a victims rights group, Water Survivors, who for years have accused the Marines of a coverup and of moving too slowly to notify former residents. Jerry Ensminger, a retired master sergeant whose 6-year-old daughter died of leukemia shortly after the contamination was discovered, questioned whether the panel would be impartial.

"If these people were connected with the military or the government in the past, that is not going to be an acceptable solution," he said.

Sen. James M. Jeffords (I-Vt.), the ranking minority member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, renewed his call for congressional hearings.

"This is a good first step, but Marines and their families deserve more," Jeffords said yesterday. "I hope the Marines take the next step and immediately notify all those who may have been exposed."

High levels of two likely cancer-causing chemicals — the metal-degreaser trichloroethylene; and the dry-cleaning compound tetrachloroethylene — were found in wells in 1980 and 1981. Marine officials have defended the decision to keep the wells open, saying at the time there were no enforceable drinking water standards.

*Special correspondent Catharine Skipp contributed to this report.*



## **The Washington Post**

### **Tainted Water in the Land of Semper Paratus**

**Marines Want to Know Why Base Did Not Close Wells When Toxins Were Found**

*By Manuel Roig-Franzia and Catharine Skipp*

**Washington Post Staff Writers**

Wednesday, January 28, 2004; Page A03

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. --

A military engineer assigned in 1980 to test the drinking water at this sprawling Marine Corps base punctuated his findings with a handwritten exclamation point.

"WATER HIGHLY CONTAMINATED WITH . . . CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS (SOLVENTS)!" William C. Neal wrote in capital letters on one of his surveillance reports in early 1981.

A private firm followed up with tests the next year. One of its samples showed an astonishing result: 1,400 parts per billion -- 280 times the level now considered safe for drinking water -- of trichloroethylene, a likely cancer-causing chemical used for degreasing machinery that can impair the development of fetuses, weaken the immune system, and damage kidneys and livers. Other samples showed as little as 1 part per billion to as many as 104 parts per billion -- more than 20 times the level now considered safe -- of tetrachloroethylene, a toxic dry-cleaning chemical that can seep into body fat and slowly release cancer-causing compounds.

The number of people who may have drunk the tainted water, bathed in it, had water fights with it is staggering: The Marine Corps estimates 50,000 Marines and their families lived in base housing areas that may have been fed by the wells before they were closed in 1985. Victim advocacy groups place the figure even higher, at 200,000, which would make Camp Lejeune one of the largest contaminated-water cases in U.S. history.

Already, more than 270 tort claims have been filed with the Navy's judge advocate general's office by former residents, who are required by law to file claims with the military before proceeding with any possible action in civilian courts.

One of those claims was filed by a Marine air traffic controller named Jeff Byron. Within months of the 1982 tests, Byron moved his family into base housing at Lejeune, grateful to leave behind a rickety mobile home in favor of a modest townhouse with a postage-stamp back yard. Byron and his wife, Mary, were not told about the water-sampling results, and nearly two decades would pass before they would find out about them. Now he wakes up thinking about all the frozen lemonade and apple juice he mixed with tap water for Andrea, who was born three months before he moved on base, and for Rachel, who was born two years after.



Both of his girls have been beset with a lifetime of ailments: Rachel, who is developmentally disabled, was born with a cleft palate and needed leg braces as a child. She has spina bifida; a gangly, arachnoid cyst on her spine that cannot be removed; and brittle, rotting teeth. Andrea had a rare bone marrow syndrome known as aplastic anemia and has been told by her doctors that the disease could recur if she becomes pregnant.

"I find myself asking, 'What if I hadn't joined the Marine Corps?' " said Byron, who left the military for the private sector in 1985.

No one knows for sure whether the water at Lejeune made Byron's children ill or whether it sickened thousands of other former residents -- both Marines and civilians living on base -- hundreds of whom have organized into a lobbying group known as Water Survivors. The group's members blame the contamination for a variety of ills, from chronic headaches to virulent cancers, from infertility to the incurable leukemia that claimed their children's lives.

The battle over the water contamination at Lejeune has strained age-old loyalties, matching Marine veterans against the power structure of an organization that prides itself in the motto *Semper Fidelis*, or "always faithful." The Marine Corps has not denied that contamination took place at Lejeune.

In a written response to questions from The Washington Post, the Corps said the wells were not shut down for five years because there were no federal drinking-water regulations then for the chemicals found in Lejeune's water: trichloroethylene, or TCE, the metal degreaser that federal researchers say was kept in leaky underground storage tanks, and tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, which researchers believe leaked into the wells from a dry cleaner that still operates across the street from Lejeune's main gate. The Environmental Protection Agency had recommended levels -- not enforceable standards -- at the time, and the Corps said the average contamination readings for TCE were below those levels and that the PCE readings were "only slightly above" those levels.

In recent months, the contamination case has drawn the attention of the EPA's criminal enforcement division, which has dispatched investigators to gather information about the history of contamination at the base. There also is pressure on Capitol Hill. Sen. James M. Jeffords (I-Vt.), the ranking minority member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, says hearings are warranted.

"I have very serious questions about why the Marine Corps, who knew the drinking-water wells were highly contaminated in 1980, didn't close them until 1985," Jeffords, a Navy veteran, said in an interview. "Sunshine is always the best disinfectant. . . . We have a strong obligation to provide all the information we already have to the Marines and their families."

For many former residents, the contamination saga did not begin until 1999, when they received questionnaires from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, or ATSDR, which studies polluted Superfund sites, such as Lejeune.



The ATSDR, which focused its research on women who were pregnant while living on base from 1968 to 1985, issued a progress report in July that identified 103 cases of birth defects or childhood cancers among nearly 12,600 births included in the survey. Jeffords and his research staff say the rate is three to five times the normal rate.

The Marine Corps has vowed to cooperate with the study. In a videotaped statement accompanying the public release of the ATSDR progress report, Lt. Gen. Rick Kelly, deputy commandant for installations and logistics, said, "I want you to know that the welfare of our extended Marine Corps family is very important to the commandant and me." He closed his remarks with the words *semper fidelis*.

The release of the ATSDR report came after three years of often bitter clashes between members of Water Survivors, who used the Freedom of Information Act to gather mounds of evidence that they say proves federal officials have not been forthcoming about the contamination, and the Marine Corps and federal researchers. In a series of 1998 e-mails recently disclosed on the Marines' Web site, officials at Lejeune discussed how public concern about water contamination could be stoked by the release of the film "A Civil Action," which traced the legal battle over contaminated drinking-water wells in Woburn, Mass.

"Just a thought," Neal Paul, director of Lejeune's toxic cleanup program, wrote to an official at Marine headquarters. "With the movie coming out in Dec., can we delay the questionnaires until April/May time frame?" An ATSDR spokesman said the timing of the survey was not influenced by the Marines.

The ATSDR estimates that the Lejeune wells may have been contaminated as many as 30 years before being closed -- going back to the mid-1950s -- a projection that would greatly expand the number of potential contamination victims to encompass the massive buildup of troops at Lejeune between the Korean and Vietnam wars. Marine Corps officials described the projection as "opinion or conjecture" in its written response to questions.

Extending the contamination dates to the 1950s would draw in veterans, such as Tom Townsend, a retired Marine major, whose wife, Anne, is ineligible for the study because she was pregnant with their third child, Christopher, in 1966 -- two years before the start date of the ATSDR study, which was chosen because it marks the beginning of computerized birth records in North Carolina.

Christopher always had a "strange cry," Anne Townsend recalled, "not a healthy, full-wallop cry." Christopher's father, who was on duty in Vieques, Puerto Rico, got home just in time to see him die of a heart defect when he was 3 months old.

Tom Townsend trades documents and talks strategy with Jerry Ensminger, another retired Marine once based at Lejeune, whose eyes still well with tears when he talks about Janey, the 6-year-old daughter he lost to leukemia in 1985. Ensminger said he wonders whether



doctors would have been able to change her treatment if they had known about the contamination.

For Townsend and Ensminger, one of the most galling pieces of paper they have unearthed is a notice sent in 1985 to residents of Tarawa Terrace, a large housing development at Lejeune where Byron and Ensminger once lived, by the base's then-commander, Maj. Gen. Louis H. Buehl. The notice announces the closure of two wells because "minute (trace) amounts of several organic chemicals have been detected," though it does not specify which chemicals were found.

Some water-contamination experts believe the lack of enforceable regulatory standards for the chemicals would be a weak defense if the case ever made it into the courts.

"Even in those days, that would have constituted pretty close to a drinking-water crisis," said Richard Maas, director of the environmental studies department at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. "That information was all out there; it was being used in the late 1970s and early 1980s. . . . If a typical town had done that [sampling], they probably would have abandoned that as a water source."

Finding out who may have been exposed to the tainted water at Lejeune is proving to be a monumental task. The ATSDR is poring over aging maps and pipe diagrams to glean where the water flowed and when. The research is further complicated by the transitory nature of military life -- many of the Marines who may have consumed tainted water lived on base for only a few years and have since moved.

The ATSDR has been assailed by the Water Survivors group and by Jeffords for limiting the scope of the study to pregnant women.

"We didn't want the whole world to know, or they'd all start calling -- we couldn't handle that," said Marie L. Socha, an ATSDR researcher who has worked on the Camp Lejeune project.

The agency has determined that the chemicals would not affect the health of adults, a contention disputed by Michael Gros, an obstetrician at Lejeune from 1980 to 1983. Gros, who has T-cell lymphoma and can no longer practice, has been pushing for the ATSDR to notify all former residents, regardless of age.

"They've just done the biggest ghoulish experiment on adults, and they don't want to know the results," Gros said. "What's happening while they're stalling us is everybody's gone hither and yon, and they're dying."

Leaders of the Water Survivors group, increasingly skeptical about the pace of federal research, are hoping the possibility of congressional hearings could speed their efforts to get compensation for the medical bills of possible victims.



"We want to force these people, under oath, to come in and talk about this stuff," Gros said. "How do you know your water is contaminated for five years and do nothing about it? How do you explain that away?"

But, for all the passion, some of Ensminger's old Marine pals want him to let up.

"They say, '*Semper fidelis* -- give 'em a break. Why do you want to hurt the Corps?' " said Ensminger, a former master sergeant who retired in 1994 after 24 1/2 years in the Corps.

But an image that rattles around inside Ensminger's stubborn, crew-cut head will not let him give up. He sees Janey, all big, brown eyes and silly smiles, watching him as her doctors advised him to stop treatment because there was no hope. Janey looked up at them, Ensminger recalls, and said: "You're talking about *me*. I'm not dead. You're not giving up on me."

One week later, she was gone.



## Retired Marine fights for truth over Lejeune water

Kevin Graman  
Staff writer

In January 2000, Tom Townsend was reading "Leatherneck," a journal for Marine retirees, when he stumbled upon a small article titled, "Did you drink Lejeune water during 1968 to 1985?"

The article described a federal survey of women who were pregnant during that time at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Townsend's son Christopher died in 1967, three months after his birth, from a heart defect when the family lived at Lejeune, the largest Marine base on the East Coast.

Tom Townsend, a retired major from Moscow, Idaho, now believes contaminated drinking water on base caused Christopher's death. For the last four years, Townsend has been on a quest to force the Marine Corps to take responsibility for it and for the illnesses of potentially thousands of military personnel and their families who passed through Camp Lejeune.

The Marine Corps, responding in writing to questions from The Spokesman-Review, said it "cares deeply about our current and former Marines and their families" and supports federal efforts to find out who might have been affected by contamination before there were federal drinking water standards.

Townsend, 73, has been joined by a network of fellow retired Marines who believe the corps has not done all it can to help them or identify potential victims of the contamination.

"We have made life hell for the Marine Corps," Townsend said, "and intend to continue doing so until we get some resolution or we die."



## Water Contamination At Marine Base Could Be To Blame For Cancer Deaths

POSTED: 4:06 pm EST February 11, 2004  
 UPDATED: 7:06 pm EST February 11, 2004

**LEBANON, Pa.** — Camp Lejeune is a sprawling Marine Corps base in North Carolina where hundreds of thousands of Marines have trained and live.

### Video



Download  
Real Player

Now there's a black cloud hanging over it.

A growing group of Marines who lived there in the '60s, '70s and '80s, including some from the Susquehanna Valley, said their family's health has been severely compromised by water contamination on the base at that time.

There is growing pressure on the Marine Corps about water contamination.

Tuesday, Sen. Jim Jeffords, of Vermont, called for an expansion of the federal investigation and asked that all Marines and their families who lived in the affected areas be notified about the contamination and potential health effects.

### Father Looks For Answers

A Lebanon County native who lost his young daughter to leukemia believes it was caused by bad water at the base.

Jerry Ensminger still vividly remembers his young daughter's endless energy, but everything changed when she was just 7 years old. After Janey couldn't shake a bad case of strep throat, further tests revealed the awful truth.

Ensminger will never forget that conversation with the doctor.

"He said, 'We suspect that your daughter has leukemia.' I went to my knees in the hallway, my forehead went down on the deck and I couldn't move," Ensminger said.

Janey died 27 months after the diagnosis in 1985. She was 9 years old.

"When the shock wore off, I started questioning. Why? Why? I checked my family tree. I checked her mother's family tree. We found no other children on either side of our families that ever had leukemia. And I was just at a loss," Ensminger said.

For the next decade, Ensminger looked for an answer in his daughter's death.

After more than 24 years in the Marine Corps, he retired in 1994. Ensminger grew up in Lebanon County, but after his retirement he chose to live in North Carolina near Camp Lejeune.

### Study Reveals Water Contamination

In 1997, Ensminger was getting ready to eat dinner and saw a local news report that changed his life. A new study revealed water contamination at Camp Lejeune, where Ensminger and his wife lived when Janey was conceived.

"I dropped my plate. I finally had a glimmer of hope that I was going to get an answer to a question that had nagged me for over 14 years," Ensminger said.

Ensminger took it as his mission to find out everything he could about the contamination. He joined a group called Water Survivors that started to uncover documents that indicate the



Marine Corps knew about the contamination years before it shut down the wells at Camp Lejeune.

In a memo from a military engineer assigned to test the water, his handwritten comment said, "water highly contaminated with chlorinated hydrocarbons (solvents)!"

The memo is dated March 1981. The wells he was referring to were not shut down until the beginning of 1985, according to News 8.

## **Chemicals Thought To Cause Cancer**

Two chemicals are drawing the most attention.

Trichlorethylene is a metal degreaser that's believed to be a cancer agent and can also impair fetal development and damage kidneys and the liver.

Tetrachloroethylene, which researchers believe leaked into the wells from a near-by dry cleaner, is also believed to cause cancer.

Tests indicate the levels of these two chemicals in Camp Lejeune's water were hundreds of times higher than what's considered safe, and a federal report released last year showed that children conceived or born at Camp Lejeune before 1985 were more than twice as likely to suffer from cancer or birth defects.

## **Marine Corps Releases Little Information**

Ensminger said the Marine Corps has not been very forthcoming in the investigation.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, or ATSDR, studies Superfund sites like Camp Lejeune and has been investigating the contamination.

In a memo from the ATSDR, a researcher indicated that "we have sent Camp Lejeune several requests for information and, in most cases, the responses were inadequate and no supporting documentation was forwarded."

Ensminger believes the Marines are doing everything they can to delay the investigation.

"It's my belief and the belief of a lot of other people that are involved in this with me that they have done this to minimize their culpability," Ensminger said.

Ensminger said he thinks it is a cover-up.

Estimates vary on how many Marines and their families may have been exposed, anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000. The higher estimates would make Camp Lejeune one of the largest contaminated water cases in American history.

"You're talking about a lot of money. A lot of people," Ensminger said.

So far, the military has notified people who were born at Camp Lejeune from 1968 to 1985 about the contamination, but Ensminger said that's not enough.

For instance, Janey was conceived there, but he transferred before she was born.

"I'd have never known about it. They'd have never contacted me," Ensminger said. "Those people are probably still wondering why. A lot of mothers blame themselves. What did I do wrong while I was pregnant to cause this? It wasn't anything they did. It was what they were exposed to."

Janey is buried at the Fort Indiantown Gap National Cemetery in Lebanon County.

Her father vows to carry on the fight for the truth about what he believes caused her death.

"The Marine Corps has a motto and it's Semper Fidelis. It's Latin. It means "always faithful." Well, the Marine Corps has not lived up to that motto. Not to the people that were exposed to this stuff," Ensminger said. "I'll live up to that motto. That's my mission and the mission of a lot of other people I'm involved with, is to get the word out to these people."

News 8 contacted the Marine Corps for a response to this story. News 8 was told to submit a list of questions. News 8 e-mailed those questions last week and have not received written answers.

News 8 will bring you any response that comes from the Marine Corps and continue to follow the story.





South  
Georgia's  
#1 News  
Source

February 26, 2004

**Albany—** The Marine Corps' motto, "Semper Fidelis" means "always faithful". But some retired Marines and their families who lived at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina before 1985 say the Corps broke that creed.

In January, we aired a story featuring a Fort Gaines woman who says she is poisoned from water she drank there. It's a story that caught the attention of several South Georgia families. And they, too, may be poisoned.

We introduced you to Ellen Harris in January. "I'm toxic poisoned. I should have been dead a long time ago," she told us then.

"When I seen Ellen Harris on the news I seen her skin and I said oh my gosh, that's, I just broke down and cried." A Tifton mother and grandmother, Pamela Lake, saw herself in Ellen Harris. "I'm not happy what has happened to me and I don't know if that's the cause what they are saying but I'm, I'm very concerned about my health."

Pamela Lake, like Ellen Harris, lived at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina with her Marine husband in the 1970's. Like Ellen, Pamela drank the water there, bathed in it, washed in it. Water contaminated with high levels of cancer-causing chemicals.

Now, Pamela, like Ellen, has life-threatening health problems. "It itches, my skin is dry, it hurts, it burns, um it feels like something is burning me all the time."

At first doctors thought Pamela had skin cancer, now they are baffled. "The doctor just shakes his head every time he looks at me now. Truthfully I can't see where it can be sun damage because there are parts of my body that have never been exposed to the sun and it is there really bad."

Painful, flaky, cancer-laden skin is not Pamela's only health problem. "Last year I almost, I literally almost lost my life. My gall bladder burst into my liver. The doctor said he had never seen anything like that."

"My mother saw the story and called me down at my home and told me to come up real quick and see it." Joyce Mullis-Keith lives in Albany, but in 1970, she was newly enlisted in the Marines and stationed at Camp Lejeune. Soon after, she married and gave birth to a daughter on the base.

Joyce has a long list of health problems, but she is more concerned about her adult daughter who was conceived and born there. "I would like to find out if she was exposed. That would explain a lot of her medical problems and a lot of her illnesses."

It's not surprising several viewers contacted us after Ellen's story aired, South Georgia is home to many retired Marine families. At this point, 200,000 people could have been exposed to the toxic water at Camp Lejeune, making it the largest contaminated water case in our country's history.



Ellen Harris is now an advocate for the women and children of Camp Lejeune. "There is not an elected senator in the United States that I have not contacted their office in the last four years."

Only one has listened, Vermont Senator James Jeffords. And two weeks ago, Jeffords called for an expansion of the federal study into the health impacts of the drinking water contamination at Camp Lejeune to include every child and adult. If Jeffords' wish becomes reality, each one of these three women will be contacted by the government. "I do think it has something to do with my medical condition, I may be wrong. But as many times as I have been to a doctor. I just see myself getting worse and worse."

And she feels more and more that she's been betrayed, forgotten by the Marine Corps, the military family whose motto promises they'll be "Always faithful."

A 1980 test of the drinking water at Camp Lejeune showed high levels of cancer-causing chemicals, but the wells were not closed until five years later.

On Friday, the Commandant of the Marine Corps convened an independent panel to review the water problems at Camp Lejeune from 1980 to 1985. In a press release, Major General Hagee says "informing and supporting our Marine families remains our top priority."

We will keep you updated on the what happens with the review.



# THE DAILY NEWS

Jacksonville, NC

## Marines brief congressional staff

February 24, 2004

MIKE SHERRILL  
DAILY NEWS STAFF

Staffers from members of the congressional delegation representing Onslow County were briefed Monday by military officials on the investigation into the impact of contaminated drinking water in Camp Lejeune housing until 1985.

Staff members from senators Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., and John Edwards, D-N.C., and U.S. Rep. Walter B. Jones, R-N.C., met at Camp Lejeune for nearly two hours to discuss what the military is doing and what timetable leaders should expect results, Dole spokesman Brian Nick said.

Wells serving Camp Lejeune housing areas was polluted with dry cleaning chemicals and degreasing agents as late as 1985 when the wells were closed. Officials don't know when the water was first contaminated, but a 1980 report said some officials knew the water was tainted at that time. Federal officials have studied births at Lejeune dating to the late 1960s.

Thousands of people might have been affected, and the chemicals have been linked to cancer and other illnesses - particularly in children who were born during the period of contamination.

At Monday's meeting, officials discussed how a three-person committee to investigate the findings will be chosen and when it should complete its work, Nick said.

Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Mike Hagee said last week the panel would include private sector professionals with environmental, engineering and military experience. The group will review the evidence for six months.

Dole submitted questions about the contamination to the Marine Corps in early February. She and her staff have reviewed the issue in detail since last fall, Nick said.

"(Dole) feels like they were very responsive, in that she's just recently submitted her question," Nick said.

Dole, in Indian Beach on Friday, said one concern was notifying those families involved. Nick said Monday that the sheer number of people has made that difficult.

"It's out there. (How to do that) is being addressed," he said.

During the fall, Dole and her staff began compiling information about the issue and talking to those actively championing the release of the information. Dole has now designated a staff member solely to the problem, Nick said.

"This is just a massive amount of information," Nick said.

Some answers, Nick said, will not come out until the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry finishes its report. Officials have said this will take years.



## **Cincinnati Post**

October 3, 2003

### **Tainted water at base blamed**

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*Associated Press*

Jeff Byron treasures the memories of his career as a Marine.

What he doesn't like is the litany of medical problems his daughters have suffered — problems he blames on tainted water his family was supplied while they lived at a Marine base.

Byron, 44, of Fairfield, served as an air traffic controller from 1982 to 1985 and lived at a base in Camp Lejeune, N.C., with thousands of Marine families. While there, his daughter Andrea, then a toddler, got frequent rashes, fevers and ear infections, and daughter Rachel, born at Camp Lejeune, suffered several birth defects.

In March 2000, a government letter arrived at the Byrons' home that said Camp Lejeune's water had been contaminated with hazardous chemicals used in dry cleaning and to remove grease from metals while the family lived there.

The chemicals, believed to have come from a dry cleaning business near the base, were found in 1982 in drinking water systems that supplied base housing units, though the wells were not capped until 1985.

Byron believes his family should be compensated for his children's medical ailments.

"I signed a paper that says if a bullet hits me in the heart — OK. But I didn't sign that for them," Byron said.

From October 1982 to April 1985, the Byrons took Andrea to the base hospital emergency room 56 times, three times within 30 hours on Nov. 26 and 27, 1983, when her fever reached as high as 105.8 degrees. Rachel suffered a heart murmur, spinal cyst, umbilical hernia, scoliosis and rotated, dimpled ears, her parents said.

After Rachel's birth, the family returned to Ohio, where bruises covered Andrea's body within six months. Tests revealed she had a potentially serious anemia, and she underwent blood transfusions at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, the Byrons said.

Andrea, now 20, is an assistant manager in a clothing store in Florence. Rachel, now 17 and a student at Fairfield High School, still faces surgery to correct conditions she has had from birth.

The letter — from a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — invited the Byrons and almost 17,000 other families who lived at Camp Lejeune between 1968 and 1985 to complete a survey on cancers or birth defects their children suffered.

Preliminary results of the survey are to be released late this month, agency spokesman John Florence said Wednesday. Results will be used to decide whether to study the contaminated water's effect on the health of the families who were exposed to it, Florence said.

Byron, now an engineer in suburban Cincinnati, says his family has filed claims of \$3.5 million for Andrea and \$4 million for Rachel.



WKRC12 – Cincinnati, OH

## Local Families Getting Help With Tainted Water Case

LAST UPDATE: 2/12/2004 8:57:35 AM

The family of a local marine at the heart of what could be the largest water contamination case ever reached a turning point Wednesday. For at least 27 years, families stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina drank tainted water suspected of causing genetic mutations, Local 12's Paula Toti reported.

The Byron family of Fairfield Township was among those using the water which was found to have a high dose of chemicals linked to liver damage, kidney failure, and cancer. They were recently featured in a "Washington Post" article that got the attention of lawmakers.

The contaminated wells were shut down in 1985, but not before the Byrons and thousands of other military families were exposed to dry cleaning chemicals that can affect genes for generations.

Cancers and birth defects appeared to be uncommonly high among those who drank the water. About a month ago, a new document surfaced that seemed to show the military knew as early as 1958 there was a crisis.

The Marine Corps has been under increased pressure from families like the Byrons to release such documents. Jeff Byron's has paperwork of his own that shows his daughter Andrea went to a base doctor 57 times in two years. She just recently went into remission from aplastic anemia.

The staff for North Carolina Senator John Edwards contacted Byron after the "Post" article was published asking for help in writing legislation that might one day get ongoing medical coverage for all Camp Lejeune victims. The Byrons estimated as many as 200,000 families may be affected. On Tuesday, Senator James Jeffords of Vermont urged the Department of Health and Human Services to contact those families. The Environmental Protection Agency has also launched a criminal investigation.



# THE DAILY NEWS

## Pentagon delaying notices

February 16, 2004

THOMAS DAIL

DAILY NEWS STAFF

Pentagon officials say they probably won't consider telling former Camp Lejeune residents of their possible exposure to toxins in water until a federal agency finishes a study of childhood cancer and birth defects in children who were exposed to the poisons before they were born.

Last week, U.S. Sen. Jim Jeffords, I-Vt., called for the Secretary of the Navy to notify people who lived on base before 1985 about their possible exposure to tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, and trichloroethylene, or TCE.

The contamination was found in wells in 1980. The wells were capped in 1985.

After a survey identified 103 cases of childhood cancer and birth defects among 12,598 children carried in the womb while their mothers lived at Camp Lejeune, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, or ATSDR, began working on a full study to see whether drinking water contamination increased a fetus' risk of developing certain birth defects or childhood cancers after birth.

Study expected to take years

That study will likely take years and involves reconstructing the base water system as it existed before 1985 to determine which housing areas got which water.

Pentagon officials said they wanted to see the results of the study before further notifying former residents.

"Based on (the) ATSDR results, we will expeditiously consider the need for additional notification," officials said in a statement that was delivered by a spokesman for the Secretary of the Navy and that originated at Headquarters Marine Corps.

Some who feel that the contaminated water made them or their families sick have asked the Marine Corps to notify previous residents.

Many said they didn't find out about the contamination until 1999, when ATSDR began distributing questionnaires to families with children born at Camp Lejeune between 1968 and 1985.

The military said it notified base residents several times, including in media reports in 1985, when the base shut down contaminated wells and put water-use restrictions in place to make up for the lost water.

Who should know?

An ATSDR spokesman, responding to Jeffords' call for an expansion of the study to include adults and children, said ATSDR designed the study to include only people exposed as fetuses, because unborn children were the most vulnerable population group.

"They were the place where we were most likely to get results," said Scott Mull, an ATSDR spokesman. "That's why the study was conducted the way it's being conducted."

"It's not meant to denigrate anybody's illnesses. It's not meant to say that this group is any more important than you are."



"They are much more vulnerable than you or I as adults."

If the study establishes a causal link between exposure to the contaminated water and certain birth defects or childhood cancers, it could be expanded to children and adults.

"It was never meant that this would be the end of it," Mull said. "It is really just the first step in what could be (a larger study)."

The agency hadn't decided how it would respond to the Jeffords' request.

"It would be difficult to expand it at this point in time," Mull said.

Who else?

Meanwhile, a naval attaché at the Dutch embassy in Washington, D.C., said his government is trying to track down Dutch Marines who were stationed at Camp Lejeune before 1985 to make sure they aren't ill.

The Netherlands has an exchange program with the United States in which three or four U.S. Marines are stationed for a year in the Netherlands, and a similar number of Dutch troops come here.

"The least you can do is this, make up a list of people who had been there in those years and try to track them down," said Col. Herman Dukers, himself a Marine. "The regulations in those days, at least in my country, were not as firm as they are today."

"We are aware of it and we are keeping track of it."

#### Figuring outflow

No one is exactly sure when the contamination of the drinking water supply started, but a dry cleaner that opened in the 1950s was the main source of PCE in Tarawa Terrace, while leaking underground storage tanks on base were the main source of TCE at Hadnot Point.

Camp Lejeune authorities realized the base had a drinking water problem as early as 1980, but said they didn't understand the full extent at that time.

That's when the Environmental Protection Agency had established drinking water standards for total trihalomethanes, another class of organic chemicals that includes chloroform.

Sometimes those compounds formed during the chlorination process, and when the tests began coming back positive for high levels of trihalomethanes in 1980, base engineers began working to confirm the results and change the chlorination process, records show.

In May 1982, Grainger Lab retested the water and found that the readings on total trihalomethanes were being caused by contamination by other pollutants, primarily TCE in Hadnot Point and PCE in Tarawa Terrace.

While the EPA had not yet established enforceable drinking water standards for those chemicals, it had established the suggested standards for them. The levels found at Camp Lejeune blew them out of the water.

The base was still using the contaminated wells three years later when state regulators told the Camp Lejeune it was violating groundwater standards.

By that time, environmental assessment and remediations were under way at Camp Lejeune, and in 1989, the base and the dry cleaner were added to the EPA's National Priority List, better known as Superfund.