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EPA Superfunds: Veterans at Risk

May 16, 2009 posted by [Robert O'Dowd](#)

Veterans and dependents are at risk of exposure to contaminants from military bases listed on the EPA National Priority List (Superfund). Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) have not notified their memberships, even though the information on health effects is on an EPA website.

(WASHINGTON, DC) – The Pentagon owns 130 Superfund sites, the most of any organization. Veterans and dependents were exposed to contaminants at these sites, including carcinogens like TCE, PCE, benzene and radiation.

The Defense Authorization Bill for 2008 required the Pentagon to notify Camp Lejeune veterans, but only after the death of children from TCE contaminated wells.

Except for Camp Lejeune, there's no legal requirement to notify veterans of the other 132 Superfund sites.

Camp Lejeune's Water Contamination

Former Senator Elizabeth Dole was instrumental in requiring the Navy and Marine Corps to notify residents who may have been exposed to contaminated water at the Camp Lejeune.

An estimated one million people at Camp Lejeune may have been exposed to contaminated drinking water.

“Senator Elizabeth Dole, along with four of her colleagues, today introduced legislation to help protect our most susceptible populations, such as pregnant women, infants and children, against the negative health impacts of drinking water contaminated with trichloroethylene (TCE), a chemical commonly used in degreasing agents, paint and spot removers and adhesives,” according to a press release of August 1, 2007.

The amendment introduced by Dole and signed into law in the 2007 Defense Authorization Act required the Secretary of the Navy to notify those who may have been affected by the contaminated wells starting in 1958.

Benzene and Missing Documents

On May 13, 2009, the Camp Lejeune story took another twist when Senators Kay Hagan and Richard Burr of North Carolina requested a meeting with the Acting Secretary of the Navy the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment.

According to the Senators Hagan and Burr, “new information [that] has surfaced regarding human exposure to volatile organic compounds in Camp Lejeune’s drinking water. This information calls into serious question the validity of the 1997 Public Health Assessment (PHA)...one of our constituents and his advocacy group found progress reports undertaken by a Department of the Navy (DON)-hired contractor in 1984 that showed high levels of benzene in an operating well...this finding was not previously made public not provided to ATSDR. We note that ATSDR omitted benzene from its 1997 PHA...this finding is one of the reasons ATSDR retracted the water contamination portion of its 1997 PHA...it has also come to our attention that the DON and the United States Marine Corps did not provide certain documents to ATSDR or the public until 2007.”

Other Military Sites

It’s unlikely that Congress will require DOD to take special steps to notify veterans and their dependents of the contaminants and health effects at other military sites on the EPA Superfund list.

Public service announcements of the contaminants and the health effects would be a relatively inexpensive way to communicate to veterans. However, don’t bet on DOD undertaking this type of effort.

In fact, EPA has an internet website which shows all of the contaminants and health effects for all military bases and sites on the EPA National Priority List (Superfund).

Veteran Service Organizations

Part of the mission of Veteran Service Organization (VSOs) is to keep their membership informed of issues important to them and their families. Nothing could be more important than you and your family’s ill.

The American Legion, the VFW, the Marine Corps League and other VSOs have the resources to notify their memberships of the contaminants and health effects of military base on the EPA Superfund list. There are no indications of an organized attempt by VSOs to spread the word to their membership. The result is that veterans and their dependents are on their own.

Imagine for a moment that you are one of the thousands of veterans who served at bases now on the EPA Superfund list. Unlike someone injured on the job, there is no workman compensation for a veteran to cover his or her medical expenses or even the possibility of filing a tort lawsuit for injuries. The Supreme Court’s FERES doctrine prevents any veteran from filing a tort suit, even when an injury occurs from government negligence.

VA disability compensation is available, if you “connect the dots” of illness to military service. Even when the “dots are connected,” the veteran will be required to obtain a nexus statement from a physician linking the medical condition to military service. The veteran’s physician may be hesitant to sign a nexus statement and unsure about the correct legal terminology to use.

Independent Medical Evaluations (IMEs) are available, but can be expensive. A telephone call to a California doctor showed that the cost of a VA nexus opinion started at \$3,000 and could go higher, depending upon the amount of documentation to review.

EPA’s Military Superfund Sites

EPA has identified the Contaminants of Concern at each Superfund site. According to EPA, “The chemical substances (i.e., hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants) listed below were identified as contaminants of concern (COC) for the site. COCs are the chemical substances found at the site that the EPA has determined pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment. These are the substances that are addressed by cleanup actions at the site.”

“Identifying COCs is a process where the EPA identifies people and ecological resources that could be exposed to contamination found at the site, determines the amount and type of contaminants present, and identifies the possible negative human health or ecological effects that could result from contact with the contaminants” according to the EPA website.

Military sites on the EPA Superfund list are shown below. Click on the base name to follow the link to EPA website. Once on the EPA site, the Contaminants of Concern (COCs) and their health effects can be found by clicking on “View Contaminants of Concern” at the bottom of the first page. The next screen will show each COC and a link to the Agency of Toxic Substance Disease Registry (ATSDR) where the health effects can be viewed.

US Air Force

[Air Force Plant #4 \(General Dynamics\)](#)

Fort Worth
TX

[Air Force Plant 85](#)

Columbus
OH

[Air Force Plant PJKS](#)

Littleton
CO

[American Lake Gardens/McChord AFB](#)

Tacoma
WA

[Andersen Air Force Base](#)

Yigo
GU

[Andrews Air Force Base](#)

Andrews Air Force Base
MD

[Arnold Engineering Development Center \(USAF\)](#)

Tullahoma/Manchester
TN

[Brandywine DRMO](#)

Bradyine
MD

[Castle Air Force Base \(6 Areas\)](#)

Merced
CA

[Chanute Air Force Base](#)

Rantoul
IL

[Dover Air Force Base](#)

Dover
DE

[Edwards Air Force Base](#)

Edwards AFB
CA

[Eielson Air Force Base](#)

Fairbanks
AK

[Ellsworth Air Force Base](#)

Ellsworth AFB
SD

[Elmendorf Air Force Base](#)

Anchorage
AK

[F.E. Warren Air Force Base](#)

Cheyenne
WY

[Fairchild Air Force Base \(4 Waste Areas\)](#)

Spokane
WA

[George Air Force Base](#)

Victorville
CA

[Griffiss Air Force Base \(11 Areas\)](#)

Rome
NY

[Hanscom Field/Hanscom Air Force Base](#)

Bedford
MA

[Hill Air Force Base](#)

Hill AFB
UT

[Homestead Air Force Base](#)

Homestead Air Force Base
FL

[Loring Air Force Base](#)

Limestone
ME

[Luke Air Force Base](#)

Glendale
AZ

[March Air Force Base](#)

Riverside
CA

[Mather Air Force Base \(AC&W Disposal Site\)](#)

Mather
CA

[McChord Air Force Base \(Wash Rack/Treatment Area\)](#)

Tacoma
WA

[McClellan Air Force Base \(Ground Water Contamination\)](#)

McClellan AFB
CA

[McGuire Air Force Base #1](#)

Wrightstown
NJ

[Mountain Home Air Force Base](#)

Mountain Home
ID

[Norton Air Force Base \(Lndfl #2\)](#)

San Bernardino
CA

[Pease Air Force Base](#)

Portsmouth/Newington
NH

[Plattsburgh Air Force Base](#)

Plattsburgh
NY

[Rickenbacker Air National Guard \(USAF\)](#)

Lockbourne
OH

[Robins Air Force Base \(Landfill #4/Sludge Lagoon\)](#)

Houston County
GA

[Tinker Air Force Base \(Soldier Creek/Building 3001\)](#)

Oklahoma City
OK

[Travis Air Force Base](#)

Travis AFB
CA

[Twin Cities Air Force Reserve Base \(Small Arms Range Landfill\)](#)

Minneapolis
MN

[Tyndall Air Force Base](#)

Panama City
FL

[Williams Air Force Base](#)

Chandler
AZ

[Wright-Patterson Air Force Base](#)

Dayton
OH

[Wurtsmith Air Force Base](#)

Oscoda
MI

US Army

[Aberdeen Proving Ground \(Edgewood Area\)](#)

Edgewood
MD

[Aberdeen Proving Ground \(Michaelsville Landfill\)](#)

Aberdeen
MD

[Alabama Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Childersburg
AL

[Anniston Army Depot \(Southeast Industrial Area\)](#)

Anniston
AL

[Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Hall County
NE

[Fort Devens](#)

Fort Devens
MA

[Fort Devens-Sudbury Training Annex](#)

Sudbury
MA

[Fort Dix \(Landfill Site\)](#)

Pemberton Township
NJ

[Fort Eustis \(US Army\)](#)

Newport News
VA

[Fort George G. Meade](#)

Odenton
MD

[Fort Lewis \(Landfill No. 5\)](#)

Tacoma
WA

[Fort Lewis Logistics Center](#)

Tillicum
WA

[Fort Ord](#)

Marina
CA

[Fort Richardson \(USARMY\)](#)

Anchorage
AK

[Fort Riley](#)

Junction City
KS

[Fort Wainwright](#)

Fort Wainwright
AK

[Iowa Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Middletown
IA

[Joliet Army Ammunition Plant \(Load-Assembly-Packing Area\)](#)

Joliet
IL

[Joliet Army Ammunition Plant \(Manufacturing Area\)](#)

Joliet
IL

[Lake City Army Ammunition Plant \(Northwest Lagoon\)](#)

Independence
MO

[Letterkenny Army Depot \(PDO Area\)](#)

Franklin County
PA

[Letterkenny Army Depot \(SE Area\)](#)

Chambersburg
PA

[Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Texarkana
TX

[Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Karnack
TX

[Louisiana Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Doyline
LA

[Materials Technology Laboratory \(USARMY\)](#)

Watertown
MA

[Milan Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Milan
TN

[Natick Laboratory Army Research, Development, and Engineering Center](#)

Natick
MA

[New Brighton/Arden Hills/TCAAP \(USARMY\)](#)

New Brighton
MN

[Picatinny Arsenal \(USARMY\)](#)

Rockaway Township
NJ

[Riverbank Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Riverbank
CA

[Rocky Mountain Arsenal \(USARMY\)](#)

Adams County
CO

[Sacramento Army Depot](#)

Sacramento
CA

[Savanna Army Depot Activity](#)

Savanna
IL

[Schofield Barracks \(USARMY\)](#)

Schofield
HI

[Seneca Army Depot](#)

Romulus
NY

[Sharpe Army Depot](#)

Lathrop
CA

[Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant](#)

Desoto
KS

[Tobyhanna Army Depot](#)

Tobyhanna
PA

[Tooele Army Depot \(North Area\)](#)

Tooele
UT

[Tracy Defense Depot \(USARMY\)](#)

Tracy
CA

[Umatilla Army Depot \(Lagoons\)](#)

Hermiston
OR

[US Army/NASA Redstone Arsenal](#)

Huntsville
AL

[Weldon Spring Former Army Ordnance Works](#)

St. Charles County
MO

[West Virginia Ordnance \(USARMY\)](#)

Point Pleasant
WV

US Coast Guard

[Curtis Bay Coast Guard Yard](#)

Baltimore
MD

US Navy

[Adak Naval Air Station](#)

Adak
AK

[Alameda Naval Air Station](#)

Alameda
CA

[Allegany Ballistics Laboratory \(USNAVY\)](#)

Mineral County
WV

[Bangor Naval Submarine Base](#)

Silverdale
WA

[Bangor Ordnance Disposal \(USNAVY\)](#)

Bremerton
WA

[Barstow Marine Corps Logistics Base](#)

Barstow
CA

[Brunswick Naval Air Station](#)

Brunswick
ME

[Camp Lejeune Military Res. \(USNAVY\)](#)

Onslow County
NC

[Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base](#)

Camp Pendleton
CA

[Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station](#)

Havelock
NC

[Concord Naval Weapons Station](#)

Concord
CA

[Davisville Naval Construction Battalion Center](#)

North Kingstown
RI

[El Toro Marine Corps Air Station](#)

El Toro
CA

[Indian Head Naval Surface Warfare Center](#)

Indian Head
MD

[Jackson Park Housing Complex \(USNAVY\)](#)

Kitsap County
WA

[Jacksonville Naval Air Station](#)

Jacksonville
FL

[Marine Corps Combat Development Command](#)

Quantico
VA

[Marine Corps Logistics Base](#)

Albany
GA

[Moffett Naval Air Station](#)

Moffett Field
CA

[Naval Air Development Center \(8 Waste Areas\)](#)

Warminster Township
PA

[Naval Air Engineering Center](#)

Lakehurst
NJ

[Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island \(Ault Field\)](#)

Whidbey Island
WA

[Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island \(Seaplane Base\)](#)

Whidbey Island
WA

[Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek](#)

Virginia Beach
VA

[Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Eastern Pacific](#)

Wahiawa
HI

[Naval Industrial Reserve Ordnance Plant](#)

Fridley
MN

[Naval Security Group Activity](#)

Sabana Seca
PR

[Naval Surface Warfare Center – Dahlgren](#)

Dahlgren
VA

[Naval Undersea Warfare Engineering Station \(4 Waste Areas\)](#)

Keyport
WA

[Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant](#)

Bedford
MA

[Naval Weapons Station – Yorktown](#)

Yorktown
VA

[Naval Weapons Station Earle \(Site A\)](#)

Colts Neck
NJ

[Navy Ships Parts Control Center](#)

Mechanicsburg
PA

[New London Submarine Base](#)

New London
CT

[Newport Naval Education & Training Center](#)

Newport
RI

[Norfolk Naval Base \(Sewells Point Naval Complex\)](#)

Norfolk
VA

[Norfolk Naval Shipyard](#)

Portsmouth
VA

[NWS Yorktown – Cheatham Annex](#)

Yorktown
VA

[Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Depot](#)

Parris Island
SC

[Patuxent River Naval Air Station](#)

Patuxent River
MD

[Pearl Harbor Naval Complex](#)

Pearl Harbor
HI

[Pensacola Naval Air Station](#)

Pensacola
FL

[Port Hadlock Detachment \(USNAVY\)](#)

Indian Island
WA

[Portsmouth Naval Shipyard](#)

Kittery
ME

[Puget Sound Naval Shipyard Complex](#)

Bremerton
WA

[South Weymouth Naval Air Station](#)

Weymouth
MA

[St. Juliens Creek Annex \(U.S. Navy\)](#)

Chesapeake
VA

[Treasure Island Naval Station-Hunters Point Annex](#)

San Francisco
CA

[USN Air Station Cecil Field](#)

Jacksonville
FL

[Washington Navy Yard](#)

Washington
DC

[Whiting Field Naval Air Station](#)

Milton
FL

[Willow Grove Naval Air and Air Reserve Station](#)

Horsham
PA

[Yuma Marine Corps Air Station](#)

Yuma
AZ