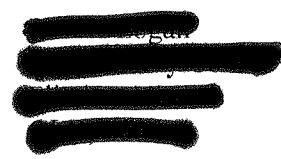




Submission No 37

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

Name: Mr Daniel Logan



To Whom it concerns,

My involvement with the Desealing and Resealing of the fuel tanks of the F111 have varied, firstly I completed my trade training at RAAF Wagga Wagga, NSW. At the completion of this training I was then posted to 482 SQN RAAF BASE AMBERLEY (1991-1992), where I was employed in Aircraft Maintenance Section (AMS), on R3/R4 servicings. During the course of these servicings, as the new kid on the block so to speak, I was heavily involved in fuel tank repair work to fix fuel leaks, this would last for days, sometimes weeks at a time, during the course of the servicing. 482 SQN and 3AD were then amalgamated to form 501 WG.

During my time at 501WG I was employed in the Wings servicing facility (1995-1997). This also had periods of pick and patch work to fix fuel leaks, as well as sealant injection. We would also have to deplumb and then replumb the wing tank during the course of the wing servicing.

My next move was to 1 SQN RAAF BASE AMBERLEY (1997-2001). I was part of Aircraft Maintenance Section. Here I was also involved in a lot of pick and patch jobs inside the fuel tanks of the F111, "have to keep the jets on line", was what we were told. Also during my tour at 1 SQN, I was heavily involved in deplumbing and replumbing the fuselage fuel tanks during the spray sealant program. This reminds me of an incident that happened when we had to replumb the fuselage tanks of a G Model (A8-514) aircraft in the 6 SQN hangar, at RAAF BASE AMBERLEY. We received the aircraft back from Deseal / Reseal section and were told to refit the fuel plumbing back into the fuselage tanks. When I removed the access covers from the F1 and F2 fuel tanks I was overcome by the vapours of the curing spray sealant escaping from the now open holes, it literally removed the oxygen from around me; I had to move down to the rear of the aircraft to catch my breath.

We then questioned the smell, and we were told to stop whinging and whining and get back into the tanks, it was also stated to us that "**the sealant was only a concern in liquid form**", to which I have serious doubts. By this stage the entire hangar space was full of these vapours, people that walked through made several comments about the smell, it was then decided that perhaps we should let the tanks air out a little, this was after much protest from management.

After this incident I had it placed on my medical file, that I had been exposed to spray sealant (PR 2911). On another occasion, this time in the 1 SQN hangar we were Deplumbing the fuselage tanks of a C Model aircraft (A8-131), in preparation for spray sealant application to the forward tanks. We were running shift work to get the jet back on line faster. Day shift had been instructed to drain, depuddle and mop out the tanks ready for us to commence the Deplumb when we came in on night shift. We started on our shift and got ready to get into the tanks, at this stage I looked into the tank and could see rags on the floor of the tank, which was an indicator that the tanks had been mopped out, ready for work. It appeared that the tank was infact dry. I removed my boots, as we were **not allowed** to wear them incase we damaged the sealant. I entered into the tank

with shorts and t-shirt, as this was all that was required, as we had never been instructed we required PPE, as soon as I landed on the floor of the tank, fuel went up and over my feet, I was now ankle deep in Avtur. Fuel had run back into the F2 tank from the F1 tank. I got out of the tank straight away and went to wash my feet, by this stage however my feet were already red, irritated. Now skin will peel off the soles of my feet on a regular basis, I have periods where my feet will become itchy after extended times of being in covered footwear.

During the last spray sealant program, I was involved in a rotational duty from 1 Squadron down to the actual De-seal, Re-seal facility to assist speeding up the aircraft turn around time going through the program. These stints were for one-month intervals in which I was involved in two. This involved deplumbing the tanks, preparing the tank (picking areas of defective sealant), removing the blanks post spray sealant (which were covered in PR 2911), we then had to replumb the tanks, carry out any repairs to the spray sealant if we found any damage prior to exiting the tank. We then carried out extensive wet and dry fuel leak checks.

Towards the end of my time at 1 SQN I was rotated through R3 section, which again involved extensive pick and patch work to fix fuel leaks. Also, during my tour I was fortunate enough to go on many overseas deployments, which usually would involve fuel leak repairs to some degree to ensure the jets remained on line, to complete mission sorties etc, it also ensured the aircraft could return to base after the exercise had been completed. Almost all of my fuel tank entry work was done with little or no PPE, due to a few reasons, first and foremost we were never told of the dangers associated with this type of work, secondly we were never instructed or trained how to or when to use PPE.

Some of the chemicals I have been exposed to during fuel tank work include and not limited to MEK, TURCO, AVTUR with additive (FS II), PR 2911 (spray sealant), PR 1750 (type A and B), PR 1826 (and activator), Q4.

I now suffer from mood swings and a slight case of depression, which I have had to seek independent medical advice on, as I was evaluated by so called specialists hired by DVA as not being affected by chemical exposure. I now take medication to control these symptoms on a daily basis. Both of these conditions are recognized by SHOAMP. My mood swings were putting a real strain on my family life, prior to me seeking medical advice. My wife told me to get help or she and my children would have to leave me, as they couldn't and shouldn't have to put up with it anymore.

I am now a member of the Deseal / Reseal Support Group, sharing experiences and issues with other members in the same situation. I recently submitted my supporting evidence to the Commonwealth Ombudsman for review, due to the fact my claim for the Ex- Gratia payment was rejected. I have since been advised by Angela Oneill (Senior Advisor), from the Ombudsman office that I have had a ruling in my favour, as in their understanding of the guidelines, they too cannot see any reason that I would not have received the payment, but they also advised me it was still up to DVA to have the final say on the matter.

If you would like any other information from me, with regards to this information I would be more than happy to assist, my home phone number is [REDACTED] and my work number is [REDACTED] thank you,

Daniel Logan