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# JAMES KUIKEN

Writer | Speaker | Advocate

James A. Kuiken  
344 Maple Ave. West  
Suite 289  
Vienna, VA 22180

April 20, 2017

To Whom It May Concern

Reference: Mr. Brian Moyer's claim for exposure to herbicides (Agent Orange)

Dear Sir or Ma'am:

This letter is to support Brian Moyer's claim for exposure to herbicides (Agent Orange) while stationed on Guam as a member of the United States Marine Corps from 1974 to 1976, assigned to Marine Detachment (MarDet), USS Proteus AS-19, home ported at Apra Harbor. The USS Proteus AS-19 was a Submarine Tender that serviced ballistic nuclear powered submarines and fast attack submarines of Submarine Squadron 15 (COMSUBRON 15), part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

In February of 1974, then Private (Pvt.) Brian Moyer arrived on Guam, and reported to the Proteus to begin his standard two-year tour of duty as a Sea Duty Marine. At that time I was a Corporal of the Guard, and was assigned as Bryan's team leader, then later, as Sergeant of the Guard, his section leader...and we also quickly became close friends.

Within the first three months of Brian Moyer's arrival on the USS Proteus, the Marine Detachment was ordered to send three Marines to Andersen Air Force Base (AFB), located at the north end of Guam, to attend firefighting school. The Captain of the Proteus had ordered each division aboard the ship to have assigned personal trained in damage control and firefighting. Bryan Moyer and I both volunteered to attend the course, along with one other MarDet Marine.

This was a two-day course that took place at the Andersen AFB Fire Station. The training consisted of putting out fuel fires in split 55 gallon drums that were set into, and level with, the surface of the ground. A flammable fluid, aviation fuel (JP4), was poured into one of the open 55-gallon drums and was ignited, which produced large volumes of smoke. We then waited until the course instructor told us to extinguish the fuel fire with a conventional fire extinguisher. Each trainee went through this procedure several times until they were proficient and deemed capable of extinguishing a fuel fire with the appropriate fire extinguisher. We wore no protective respiratory gear during this exercise. It must be noted that there was no vegetation growing in or

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around the training areas, just dirt, which got kicked up with all of the foot traffic, and the wind would blow dust and dirt all over us.

Also, while we were in training, one of the instructors told us that if the water in the drinking fountain had a bad taste or smell, not to drink it because of possible fuel contamination, which happened periodically. Brian Moyer started to take a drink from the fountain, when he spit it out and said something to the effect of "Don't drink it! It's Bad!" I smelled it, and could easily detect the smell of fuel in the fountain.

On day two the trainees were assembled at the Andersen AFB Fire Station for more training, which required the trainees to don a SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) and extinguish fires in a cinder block constructed building, where unserviceable tires were placed inside the cinder block structure. Again, aviation fuel (JP4) was poured on the old tires as an accelerant, and set on fire. The entry door was shut and the fire was allowed to intensify in size and volume of smoke for approximately fifteen minutes, while we assembled fire hoses and became acquainted with the different types of wands, nozzles and techniques, before we were instructed to enter the structure to fight and extinguish the fires. We did this exercise several times with SCBA gear on, and then with the SCBA gear off several times, and this concluded our training on Andersen AFB.

In addition to our training, since we lived on Guam for our two-year tours, we also explored and found recreational opportunities on Guam during our time off work.

Brian and I regularly, along with various other Marines at different times, would go out "Boonie Stomping", i.e., exploring and hiking, through the jungle between Apra Harbor, Mount Tenjo, Mount Lamlam, and other areas, which took us through dense jungle growth in the tropical heat, intense sun and humidity. We took canteens, but would often run out of water, and would drink from, and refill our canteens from, the local water streams while making our way up Mount Tenjo, which is supported by photos in both of our photo collections. We also came upon some above-ground pipelines that were painted white, which we had to climb over on our return to the ship. We did this many times for recreation and to explore Guam.

Brian Moyer and I would also go up to Andersen AFB and go swimming at Tarague Beach, and while at Andersen AFB, we both occasionally went exploring in an old gutted B-52 bomber which was parked across a field, with hardly any vegetation growing there. There was frequently a lot of dust and dirt that would blow around when the wind blew in from the ocean.

Also, just to the left after entering the main gate to Andersen AFB, and along the perimeter fence, there was a large area of dense, tightly intertwined trees and growth that were brown in color, and had no leaves growing on them, while a little further on there were other forms of vegetation that did, such as grasses, palms and other types of trees that are native to Guam.

Additionally, where we were stationed at Polaris Point, Apra Harbor, Guam, there was a large athletic field that we frequently used for recreation and training, which also had minimal vegetation or growth to speak of, very uncharacteristic for a tropical island that is located

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approximately 400 miles north of the Equator, with an average rainfall of 80 to 110 inches of rainfall per year.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

James A. Kuiken  
Sergeant Major, USMC (Ret.)

***"What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal." Albert Pine***

Email: [Contact@JamesKuiken.com](mailto:Contact@JamesKuiken.com)  
Phone: 888-670-1555  
Website: [www.JamesKuiken.com](http://www.JamesKuiken.com)

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/JamesAKuiken](http://www.linkedin.com/in/JamesAKuiken)  
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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

COUNTY OF Fairfax

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN BEFORE ME, on the

20<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2017

Signature Vahedi (Seal)

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission expires: 8-31-2017

