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HORSHAM WATER AND
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Guest Opinion: PFOA issue is not going away

By Joseph P. McGrath Sr.

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I have been following the topic since 2016 when it became clear that this PFOA animal was not going away and may impact me and my fellow veterans as we age. I do regret that more of my fellow veterans are not up in arms knowing what Department of Defense/Navy has on purpose subjected us to.

I pray that will pass. It is well documented by the manufacturers and both federal and civilian health experts that this stuff is nasty and may cause some health issues that otherwise we may not be subjected to.

Since this did occur on base, at our work stations and in our dining halls, it is career related. The military's history of subjecting its employees to harmful solvents is less than stellar, and there is data to reflect that.

I get routine announcements about studies regarding burn pits during Desert Storm and Enduring Freedom, and I am asked to participate. I fortunately was never exposed to that. But, for 30+ years, I was exposed to drinking water and eating food prepared with the same water sources.

Those water sources, by all expert analysis, were to be off the charts where a safe lifetime exposure rate is indicated. Yet, to this day, there is no mention where veterans or former civilian employees are included in any surveys or test subjects.

Several times a year, honoring veterans is a hot topic and local retailers do provide discounts on their services, but here are serious possible health issues that have been documented and the reality for these former employees to be examined is denied.

I have approached the American Legion and during its convention of 2016. They did formulate a resolution to cover sampling products for veterans. Also, it is not just our local bases that are affected as other states that have bases are coming forward with the same results of PFOA contamination.

I also am at odds with this publication. Nowhere is there any example of the journalists asking why there is no inclusion for veterans and former employees to be surveyed for their exposure possibilities.

In the big picture of agencies, there is OSHA/EPA at both federal and state levels and no one called this on the rug while some information was flowing. Where were you and why did you fail us?

I have attended the biannual meetings of the Restoration Advisory Board and they do not address health concerns even though they are BRAC-related and supposed to be involved with concerns that affect the employees.

After several months, the RAB did ask for state and federal health agencies to attend the meetings and despite all the data they have collected, still no tangible results. I do support what the state representatives have done for us, as I feel they are working hard for us and trying to get us a resolution.

What I do not agree with is making this a state issue. The polluting of the aquifer is the sole responsibility of the Department of Defense, and since they will not be responsible to cover their damage, they know states will step up to the plate. So, in the future, I will be holding our federal representatives accountable where they oversee federal agencies.

If anyone wishes to discuss this topic with me, I am available and welcome further discussion.

Joseph P. McGrath Sr. is a resident of Hatboro.