

Testimony of:

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Good morning, my name is Peter Devereaux I was in the Marines from Sep 1980 – Dec 1984 and was stationed at Camp Lejeune from Dec 1980 – April 1982. I was assigned to the 8th Communication Battalion in the French Creek area of Hadnot Point.

I was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma, a very aggressive form of breast cancer on Jan 8th 2008. I had mastectomy surgery that involved removal of my left breast along with 22 cancerous lymph nodes on Jan 28th 2008.

The following month I began a 14-month treatment regimen which consisted of 29 chemotherapy and 30 radiation treatments along with daily medication.

My treatment was scheduled to end April 8th 2009 when it was discovered my cancer had spread to my spine, ribs and hip. It is now classified metastatic breast cancer, THERE IS NO CURE! The average life expectancy after Metastasis is 2 – 3 years. Since my metastatic diagnosis I have had 18 more chemotherapy treatments for a total of 47, and also 15 more radiation treatments to my spine and 8 more to my hip for a total of 53.

I will be in treatment until I die. Presently I receive chemotherapy every 3 weeks and take prescription medication daily.

I am constantly fatigued both mentally and physically and need to take multiple rests daily; my body has changed completely and is always sore. Prior to my diagnosis I was in perfect health; always active between work and working out, I ate well, never smoked and hardly drank. I always had tremendous energy; of course that is no longer true.

I have a great wife and we have a 12-year-old daughter. This disease has not only ravaged me it has also ravaged my entire family. It has impacted my daughter severely. She is not confident of her future with me nor am I of my own future with her. I have no idea if I will see my daughter graduate high school, go to college or get married.

Before my diagnosis I had been a very productive person; I feel like such a burden to everyone especially my wife and daughter. I am no longer able to work due to the devastating side effects and physical limitations from my treatments and surgeries. The water contamination at Camp Lejeune has wreaked havoc on my family and me.

August 1, 2008 I received a letter from the Department of the Navy stating “unregulated chemicals were discovered in some of the base drinking water systems in the early 1980’s at Camp Lejeune.” The Hadnot Point Water Distribution system was one of those.

I then decided to move forward with genetic testing for the breast cancer gene (BRCA 1 and BRCA 2), which I tested negative for both. It was then that I really understood my cancer came from my chemical exposure due to the chemicals in the drinking water at Camp Lejeune.

The wells were discovered to be contaminated in 1980 when I arrived, the Marines knew about it and said nothing, knowing full well we were bathing in and drinking contaminated water on a daily basis. The water reports all state that the wells were contaminated and action needed to be taken and nothing was done.

In March of 1982 a switch to Grainger Analytical Laboratories once again showed contamination and still nothing was done. I would also like to point out in 1974 the Base Commander declared "organic solvents as a hazardous substance" and then warned the commands at Camp Lejeune that improper disposal practices could result in the contamination of the drinking water. (Ref: Base Order 5100.13B)



"Base Order
5100.13B.pdf"

After receiving my letter in August in 2008, I filled out the USMC Water Registry as requested. It was then Mike Partain contacted me and let me know that I was the 7th man that was diagnosed with Male Breast Cancer that was in August of 2008. There are currently 64 men!

I originally filed a VA claim for benefits on Nov 11, 2008 to be denied in April 2009. I appealed the claim and requested a hearing, which I received in May 2010 in Boston, MA. I had 1 hour to present new information about my case with my doctors letters, and letters from Dr Clapp and Senator Kerry of Massachusetts.

My case was approved with 100% disability in August 2010. This will greatly help my wife, daughter and me and I hope the VA will continue to help veterans and civilians affected by the contamination.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.