

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

Toxins at Fort Mac

We have another Camp LeJeune on our hands. Veterans who served at the U.S. Marine Corps base in North Carolina have been getting sick for decades. So have their children.

Now we have Fort McClellan, the Army chemical school in Alabama, and the stories are coming out: polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), radiation, depleted uranium, mustard gas and more ... leading to cancer, arthritis, autoimmune disease, diabetes, heart disease, fibromyalgia and multiple miscarriages. And it's hitting the second generation, the children of those veterans. Reading the veterans' stories on Internet, a common theme emerges: Their civilian doctors can't figure out the cause of their strange combination of illnesses, but say they appear to be caused by exposure to chemical toxins.

Fort Mac was mothballed in 1999 and is considered a superfund site.

For years, small pockets of information surfaced around the country, but the Department of Veterans Affairs wasn't listening, if the stories of veterans are accurate. As is standard, it was left to the veterans to try to prove they were sick because of toxin exposure at Fort Mac. Hearing those stories, Congressman Paul Tonko tried and failed numerous times to get the Fort McClellan Health Registry Act passed. He's going to try again.

Ideally, the VA would share information on its website about toxic exposure at Fort Mac. It would be a step, but the Fort Mac illnesses likely will go the way of Agent Orange: years of pushing to get it called presumptive. Don't hold your breath on getting notification from the VA, at least not until Tonko's bill is passed.

If you were stationed at Fort Mac and are sick, go here: www.fortmcclellantoxicexposure.com, or search online for Fort McClellan toxins.