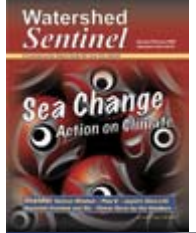




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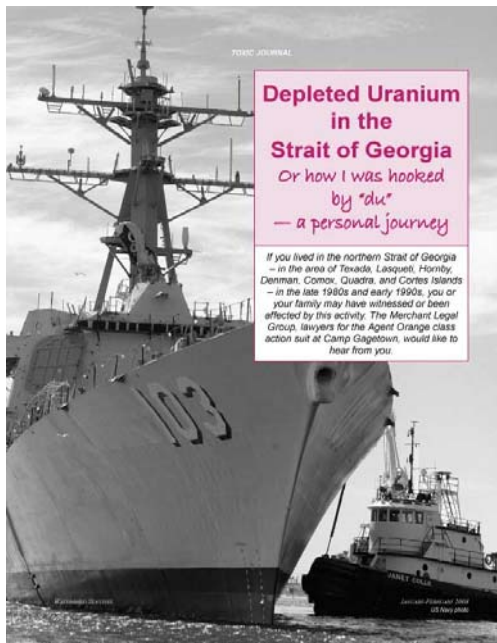


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From the January-February 2008 issue



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in the
Strait of Georgia**
*Or how I was hooked
by "du"
— a personal journey*

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by G. Turnbull

Saturday morning, April 15, 2006, I was listening to a favourite radio station, Malaspina College radio CHLY-FM, from Nanaimo. They were interviewing Leuren Moret, a geophysicist from Berkeley CA, who had worked at US nuclear labs.

She went on for 40 minutes about the horrors of depleted uranium (DU) in munitions, which releases radiation into the atmosphere and its medical effects on, for instance, the first Gulf War veterans, where it was first used in quantity. Over 500,000 out of 700,000 vets are now on disability for something called "Gulf War Syndrome," a 'disease' with many symptoms identical to radiation sickness. Or the test range off Vieques, Puerto Rica, where the residents are suing the US Navy for all the cancer, etc. That test range was finally moved to Rockhampton, Australia, where birth defects are starting to show up. Part way through the interview, she said, "The US navy used to test fire these munitions in Puget Sound until the local residents complained. They then moved north across the border to Nanoose Bay and now test in Canadian waters!"

Nanoose Bay means the Whiskey Gulf test range which is only 30 miles southeast of where I was sitting.

I had just been told I was 30 miles downwind of a nuclear test zone!

I went into a bit of an anxiety attack with all the attendant brain chemicals associated with "fight or flight," where the risk is usually assessed fairly quickly. But the risk assessment of when and how much DU was only partially answered 11 days later, (and for that period some friends thought I was a bit off.) I was certainly running on adrenalin.

I started on the internet where googling 'du Nanoose Bay' brought up 16 sites but nothing conclusive. (There are now more than ten times the sites!) Googling 'du' confirmed the horrors of its use, the quantities used in the first Gulf War, the Bosnian carpet bombing (where Rumanian and Bulgarian atmospheric testing detected dirty radioactive isotopes found only in spent nuclear fuel rods, what's called RU), the Afghanistan and Tora Bora bombings, and the second Gulf War, where the US admits to using 2.5 million kg.

And its definition: when uranium is 'enriched,' what is left of the original uranium is 'depleted' to 70% of its original radioactivity. There is a lot more of the depleted stuff than the enriched stuff, and its storage had always been a problem. It was first used by the Germans in 1943 when their tungsten supply was blockaded, according to A. Speer. Tungsten is used in armour piercing munitions. Replacing it with DU was more effective, DU being more dense, and had the added 'benefit' of being a gas weapon!

Yes, it is an excellent armour piercing weapon, but what is rarely mentioned is DU's pyrophoric qualities. As a metal, it ignites and

burns like magnesium at an intense 2-to-3000OC. Water does not put it out. It ignites at only 1700C, meaning it's on fire as it comes out of the barrel of the gun, or, if used as a bomb, it ignites on impact, burning, vapourizing almost entirely, and condensing to tiny, hollow spheres with a density less than water that then float on the wind and water, and are just the right size to lodge in lungs. Essentially that 70% radiation is released to the atmosphere just as an atomic bomb releases its radiation to the atmosphere but in smaller doses.

DU tips, coats, and is solid in munitions from handgun caliber to 5000 pound bombs. Considering the quantities used (conservatively 3 million kg.), those small doses apparently add up to the radiation released by 400,000 Nagasaki A-bombs (500,000 by another source). I don't know how to judge those numbers. There are 67 million kg. DU munitions 'prepositioned' in South Korea on three US bases!

The DU storage problem was solved and in fact DU is given free to the munitions manufacturers.

All this information wasn't helping my anxiety and I still had nothing solid about Whiskey Gulf. I phoned a UBC professor who has been working on nuclear issues, asking whether he knew anything about DU testing in Whiskey Gulf. For 20 minutes we had the strangest conversation where, in a loud voice, he would say that the range is only used for torpedo testing, loudly that DU is safe, while in between, in a quiet voice, he would say that DU is 'highly chemically and biologically reactive' and that the Navy were using an anti-cruise missile gun, the Phalanx, that shot bursts of 60-120 rounds of 20 mm cannonfire at a time, up to 2000 per minute – an enormous quantity of DU vapourizing into the atmosphere. At the end he was saying, in the loud voice, that he believed that the 15 hijackers took out the World Trade Centre with nobody else aware. Loudly I agreed. Quietly he told me if I came on information to contact him by mail, not to phone, not to e-mail. The implication that I was talking on a monitored phone, and his anxiety, did not help me with my anxiety.

I started noticing clicking on my line.

I still didn't know my risk from exposure and it seemed the only definitive way would be to scientifically measure the radiation in the environment around me. Not knowing how best to test for this I called the Provincial Public Health Officer on the morning of April 25. She was not interested, couldn't help me and put me on to the Ministry of the Environment where a bureaucrat was interested, suggesting looking at disease statistics, but couldn't help me on how to measure radiation. He put me on to the Ministry of Health Radiation Protection Branch, adding, "though they might have shut it down." (Slight rise in anxiety: "they?") Other phone calls to government offices, ending up at the Ministry of Health Radiation Protection Branch, were less informative or dramatic.

Wednesday April 26th, I was talking to an unnamed source who used to be in the Canadian military and who was on board a Canadian naval ship when not only was the US navy test firing DU munitions in Whiskey Gulf but so was the Canadian navy and at least three other NATO navies, not only the Phalanx but every gun! This was in the late 1980s, early 1990, prior to their use in the 1991 Gulf War. This source could face military justice for divulging this and therefore insists on anonymity. This information has since been confirmed by another ex-military person.

Finally, some sense of time and quantity though I don't know about prior to this period (the Phalanx was being installed at this time). From then to now is also vague though the Phalanx has to be test fired twice a month to maintain correct calibration, 400-700 rounds each time. Presumably Canadian and US warships in these waters with this gun are test firing them still. There is a concerned group in the Puget Sound that tries to keep track of this activity. There is no Canadian counterpart. In other test ranges it has taken years to get them to stop or move. The Brits tested in the Scottish Firth of Forth and it was the same procedure of secrecy, deny, deny and move finally. Here we have testing that has been secret for close to 20 years in which at least five countries are complicit.

Given this information my local MP did nothing more than open a file.

I am not a political animal and, feeling against a wall, I came back to my original concern about my health and started researching uranium detoxification. DU in the body acts as a toxin like other heavy metals such as mercury and lead, plus it is radioactive, doing DNA damage wherever it is. DU stays in the body much longer than other forms of uranium, according to H.D.Sharma.

Detox research consistently referred to the Japanese experience after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The people that were irradiated but lived had a particular diet – miso, shitake and kombu [kelp]. The miso and shitake boosted health while the kelp detoxed. After Chernobyl, the Russians did a lot of research using this knowledge to test various algae and seaweeds, finally fixing on the brown kelp *laminaria japonica* and making a 40:1 extract that is sold in the US under the trade name Modifilan and in Canada as brown seaweed extract. I've been through the six month detox and feel much better.

After following the news of the CFB Galetown NB Agent Orange class action suit and noting the similarities to Whiskey Gulf, I contacted the law firm about a possible suit here. After some correspondence, the principal of the firm, Tony Merchant, agreed to pursue the action, stating that he thinks the case "ought to move forward." He will need more input than just mine. I lost a father and a number of then-young friends to diseases associated with uranium exposure (thyroid, brain, stomach cancers, etc.) in the early 1990s, only over three years after DU was tested heavily in Whiskey Gulf. Does that sound familiar to anyone living in the area of Texada, Lasqueti, Hornby, Denman, Comox, Quadra and Cortes Islands, or have you witnessed this activity?

If so you could write your concerns to:
Re: File Number 402540, Merchant Law Group
#100-2401 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina SA Canada S4P 4H8

My interest in a litigious, rather than a political approach, is first to publicize this criminal activity and then possibly to seek justice. Feeling relatively fit for 60, I probably do not qualify for compensation, but some of you may.

G. Turnbull is an ordinary Canadian citizen concerned about some particular activities of his government.

More Information

Globalresearch.ca, wise-uranium.org, mindfully.org and stop-du.org all have good information and links about DU. Look for the 2001 report to the World Health Organization, Radiological Toxicity of DU. The Moret interview is archived at radio4all.net. You may wish to use public access internet to avoid being on a list.

Air Force Environmental Assessment

“Target 63-10 is the only air-to-ground gunnery range in the United States cleared to employ 30mm depleted uranium rounds from A-10 aircraft. The target area is restricted and is more than 10 miles from any community, facility, or home.

“A single depleted uranium penetrator, about the size of an adult’s little finger, is capable of penetrating the armor of a tank. As the round penetrates the armor, it burns at extremely high temperatures and sprays hot metal in the interior of the armored target.

“Depleted uranium is the by-product of converting natural uranium into enriched uranium. Depleted uranium is 40 percent less radioactive than natural uranium and is twice as dense as lead. The small depleted uranium penetrator weighs 1.7 pounds.

– Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, <http://www.nellis.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123022433>

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