



Newsletter
September 2009

Ex-soldier died of cancer caused by Gulf War uranium

The death of an ex-soldier, Stuart Dyson, from cancer was caused by his exposure to depleted uranium during the 1991 Gulf War, an inquest jury ruled.

Telegraph 10 Sep 2009 (extracts)

In a narrative verdict, the panel found it was more likely than not that Mr Dyson's death in June last year was "caused or contributed to" by the radioactive material, which is used in military munitions.

The jury heard that Mr Dyson, a Lance Corporal with the Royal Pioneer Corps, cleaned tanks after the first Gulf War during a five-month deployment to the war zone.

After the verdict was returned at Smethwick Council House, Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain said he intended to send a report on the death to the Secretary of State for Defence. Mr Balmain, who expressed disappointment that the Ministry of Defence had not sent an expert witness to the inquest, told the court: "This case has brought into sharp focus the problems that arise and the difficulties of dealing with the conflict between the need of the military to have the best munitions for their tasks, and the health of soldiers who go to war ... and indeed the health of the public who are caught up in wars."

Mr Balmain, who is to write to the defence secretary under Rule 43 of the Coroners' Rules, described the scientific evidence presented to the jury as persuasive. "What action is taken is no doubt a difficult political decision, but what I am certain of

is that action needs to be taken," the coroner added.

Giving evidence at the inquest, Professor Christopher Busby, an expert on the effects of uranium on health, said Mr Dyson's cancer was "more likely than not" caused by ingestion and inhalation of the substance during his service in the Gulf. The witness, a visiting professor at the University of Ulster, added: "The interesting thing about My Dyson's cancer is that he was extremely young - the chances of him acquiring the cancer were something like six per million per year."

Professor Busby said he had visited Iraq in 2000 and had personally found particles of depleted uranium with dangerously high radiation levels near the wrecks of tanks destroyed during the 1991 war. The expert told the jury: "We also know in this case that he was cleaning tanks and generally walking about in Gulf War One, where there was a significant amount of depleted uranium in the air. Mr Dyson was exposed by inhalation and ingestion.

"My feeling about Mr Dyson's colon cancer is that it was produced because he ingested some radioactive material and it became trapped in his intestine. To my mind there seems to be a causal arrow from his exposure to his final illness. It's certainly much more probable than not that Mr Dyson's cancer was caused by exposure to depleted uranium."

Mrs Dyson explained to the jury how her husband - who served in the Gulf between January and May 1991 - had suffered from a variety of medical conditions after leaving the military. Her husband had once been very fit, Mrs Dyson said, even boxing and playing rugby for the army, but had suffered sleep problems, night sweats, creaking bones and cold sores as his health deteriorated over the years.

"He was convinced that his time in the Gulf was where the cancer had come from," she told the court. Mrs Dyson said there was no history of colon cancer in her husband's family and that his immune system had appeared to "run down" once he returned from the Gulf.

Summing up the evidence to the jury panel, Mr Balmain said he had received a submission from a scientific advisor to the Ministry of Defence (MoD), who had concluded that Mr Dyson's cancer arose naturally and there was no evidence to associate it with his exposure to depleted uranium.

The verdict has been called a "landmark ruling" by Gulf War Syndrome sufferers who believe that 10,000 out of the 38,000 ground troops in the invasion show symptoms related to the syndrome. Shaun Rusling, of the Gulf Veterans and Family Association and a former paratrooper, said: "I would advise all veterans of the First Gulf War to have regular tests for cancer. Sadly the MoD does not seem to care or recognise this problem yet former servicemen still suffer and die from it."

Editor: Prof Chris Busby has conducted several studies in the past decade on health problems near Hinkley Point. His work has consistently undermined the International Commission on Radiological Protection whose model prescribes 'safe' radiation doses. Hinkley managers involved in the following incident might also take note. Stop Hinkley contacted the media after several reports to us of high doses and sickness in eight contaminated workers:-

Seven Hinkley Point workers exposed to radiation

Bridgwater Mercury
Thursday 23rd July 2009

HINKLEY Point B has admitted today that seven workers have been exposed to radiation, The Mercury can reveal.

The firm which runs the nuclear power plant near Bridgwater says the contractors were asked to leave the radiation controlled area as a precaution after the incident last week. A spokesman for EDF Energy told the Mercury the workers were sent to a testing facility in Oxfordshire and were found to have been exposed to the same amount of radiation emitted in a dental X-ray.

It was also confirmed that all staff at the plant were informed of the incident the same day. The spokesman said: "This was an incident we would have preferred not to have happened, but no one's health is at risk."

Hinkley leaks & fires

Bridgwater Mercury 25th Aug 2009

THERE have been 12 leaks and four fires at Hinkley B power station since 2001, it emerged this week. The information was released by Labour MP David Kidney, a parliamentary under-secretary in the Department of Energy and Climate Change, in response to a question in parliament about fires and leaks at all of Britain's nuclear power stations.

Don't forget, you could receive this newsletter more quickly by email, also saving us postage, paper and printing costs as well as labour. Send your email address to val@stophinkley.org. You can opt to have a snail mail copy as well, if you'd prefer.

New 400,000 volt power line plan for Somerset

Western Daily Press,
16th September 2009 (extracts)

A new 400,000 volt power line could soon stretch 37 miles across Somerset to connect the new reactor at Hinkley Point nuclear power to the National Grid.

The idea is to connect 'Hinkley C' to the electricity substation called Seabank in Avonmouth, Bristol, 37 miles north of the nuclear station.

The pylons to carry the cables would be 46.5 metres high, a little shorter than those used to carry the existing 400,000 volt link which runs east from Hinkley Point across the Somerset Levels.

That link will stay, but the huge output, of 3,600MW proposed for Hinkley C, will require the extra link.

The entire scheme, which will include new substations and is likely to include substantial upgrading of existing equipment, is likely to cost £2 million per mile of line, and a total of £600 million. The price will be borne by electricity-users nationwide. The proposals are at an early stage, and the final route will depend on the results of consultation with statutory authorities, and public consultation, which begins next month.

French-owned EDF Energy is bidding to provide two 1,800 MW European Pressurised Water reactors at Hinkley in response to the Government's need to increase energy resources as existing power stations close over the next 10 years. To meet the electricity demand over the same period more than 20GW of new generation— one third of the current national requirement – will be needed. Hinkley would be the largest single generator.

Peter Bryant, National Grid project manager for the Hinkley-Seabank scheme said yesterday: "[After consultation] we will hopefully make a submission in summer of 2011, and hopefully get a decision in

summer of 2012. Then between then and 2016 we need to do the work."

The new Infrastructure Planning Commission will rule on the scheme, following input from local authorities and the public.

The costs of putting the line underground would be 12 to 17 times more expensive, and bring other problems, sterilising land the width of a motorway, and bringing problems in heat dispersal and access.

Jim Duffy, of anti-nuclear group Stop Hinkley, said yesterday the scheme would discourage the development of single turbines and he questioned EdF's ability to fund the development. As well as opposing nuclear power on principle because of potential dangers and the legacy of waste left for future generations Stop Hinkley argues that smaller-scale energy production is more sustainable. "There is a huge waste in sending electricity out of the region," said Mr Duffy.

EDF in debt

Times 22nd Sept 2009

EDF, the heavily indebted French power group, is close to agreeing a big asset swap with E.ON, its German rival, but it played down reports yesterday that it was also considering the sale of a 20 per cent stake in British Energy, the UK's nuclear generator. The company, which is leading the drive to build the next generation of nuclear reactors in Britain, has begun a sweeping review of its businesses as it aims to cut its 37 billion (£33.5 billion) debt pile.

Website

Val Davey, our website manager, has re-organised the Stop Hinkley website, making it simpler to navigate and use.

It is also now easier to join Stop Hinkley or send a donation via the website – please encourage your friends to have a look.

New improved Merchandise page
For much more news please visit:

www.stophinkley.org

Bristol nuclear plant protesters invite professor to village

Bristol Evening Post, September 2, 2009

An eminent professor has been invited to give a talk on nuclear power by villagers opposed to a new atomic plant near Bristol.

Stephen Thomas is professor of energy policy at Greenwich University and has been critical of the idea that the nuclear power industry is undergoing a renaissance.

He has been asked to give a lecture by families in Shepperdine, near Thornbury, who are fighting plans for a new power station on their doorstep.

The area is one of a number of locations being considered as potential sites for a new generation of nuclear reactors and if built, would be next to the existing Oldbury atomic station, which will cease generating power in the next couple of years.

Power firm Eon wants to build the new station and has acquired land at Shepperdine for the major project.

But villagers recently blockaded a road leading to the site for five hours, preventing contractors gaining access to carry out investigative drilling until they had reassurances about the work being done.

Eon later organised a drop-in session for people to ask questions about the project.

Reg Illingworth, one of the organisers of the protest, said: "As residents of Shepperdine, we are interested in cultivating the debate over nuclear power and will be inviting a number of eminent speakers to talk over the next few months.

"The first lecture will be given by Professor Thomas and will be called Nuclear Power: A Cheap Option?"

His talk will be held in the Memorial Hall, Camp Road, Oldbury-on-Severn, on Wednesday, October 14, at 7pm. The event is free to anyone who wants to attend and take part in a question and answer session. To reserve a seat email oldburynuclear@btinternet.com

Events

Prof Stephen Thomas Nuclear Power: A Cheap Option? Memorial Hall, Oldbury Wed 14th October 7pm

As space might be limited, contact oldburynuclear@btinternet.com to reserve a seat

Stop Hinkley meeting
Tuesday 24th November
West Bow House, Milton Place
off West Street, Bridgwater TA6 3RT

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