

Good afternoon: My name is Eileen Beauchamp from Canada and I am a Executive Board Director with BRATS in the Battlefield. The BRATS in the Battlefield are a Canadian advocacy group for veterans, their families and Gagetown's surrounding communities who have been affected by the harmful chemicals sprayed at CFB Gagetown and this is my personal story.

I am a Canadian Army Brat and my family had been posted numerous times to Armed Forces Bases within Canada. At the age of 5, my Dad and our family were posted to Gagetown. As a family we loved the outdoors and we were fortunate enough to go on weekend trips picking blueberries, fishing, drinking spring water, and weekend picnics in the areas now known as the chemical spray areas. Some areas we frequented were down wind and downstream of those areas where spray of these harmful chemicals had been sprayed. Some of these areas affected by spraying were recreational areas for many families. Little did anyone realize how these activities or our living in Gagetown would affect our lives in the future. My father was a Master Warrant Officer (MWO) with the Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers (RCEME). In 1991 my Dad had been diagnosed with metastatic colon cancer and passed away in 1996. On behalf of my Dad's estate, I applied for the ex-gratia payment and it was denied, yet he did receive compensation for his service in Korea.

Members within my family have also been diagnosed with cancers, respiratory diseases and other diseases. I have found it rather curious and questionable as to how one family could have multiple cancers and illnesses when the only common denominator is CFB Gagetown, not a family history. Throughout my life and at a very young age, I had been diagnosed with a number of illnesses and diseases, some occurrences had no known explanations, such as multiple miscarriages, child born with birth defects (baby born full term and lived for only 3 days), endometriosis, and ulcerative colitis. It began to cross my mind that perhaps many of my health circumstances may have something to do with the spraying at Gagetown as these diseases are not known in our family history. Through my research I am now aware that the scientific community has identified dioxins as being an endocrine disruptor and can affect the DNA. So this is perhaps the link to many of my illnesses and diseases.

The illnesses didn't end there. In October/November 2017 I was diagnosed with 3 individual (totally separate) cancers (Melanoma, Breast Cancer (2 types) and Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL) (2 types - follicular and less than 5% diffuse B). In December 2017, I underwent my surgeries, in January 2018 I met with oncology and hematology to determine what was the best course of action and treatment. In October 2018 I began my journey with a chemotherapy regime for the NHL (a blood cancer) and completed treatment in February 2020. NHL is not a curable cancer, but is considered a treatable cancer, so there is a possibility that it may return --- so I am in remission at the moment. The journey is not yet complete as I am currently being followed up for Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma and Melanoma and that will continue for approximately another 10 years or more.

To improve my chances of survivorship I opted to do both conventional and complementary medicine. In Canada complementary medicine is out of pocket, so I paid a large some of money, so that I may improve my odds of survival. The ultimate question enters a person's mind when

faced with mortality...how does anyone put a price on health and quality of living and what can I do to improve my longevity?

I researched the ex-gratia payment offered through our Canadian Veterans Affairs but based on the website, our Canadian government implemented an expiry date of March 2014 for completing an application, so therefore I was not eligible.

Since 2006, I have been following and researching information on these harmful chemicals, the application processes for benefits as well as our Canadian Veteran Affairs archived documents and the impact the spraying program at Gagetown has had on friends and acquaintances. When Brats in the Battlefield was founded, I became a member and then an Executive Board Director. I joined because of the many stories I have heard, the people I know, and because I am hopeful that I can advocate for veterans, family members or any individual who has been affected. By advocating perhaps, I can do my Dad as well as other Gagetown Veterans who are no longer with us proud, and use my skillset to hopefully help our governments implement the change that is required in providing benefits for all those affected, including our future generations. Our governments promote a military career and ask people to sign up only to complicate the process or deny benefits when an individual really needs their support. When a person becomes ill with an illness that affects their lives and their family, there isn't enough money in the world that can buy health when it's your mortality, but benefits sure can help improve it. Benefits that will assist veterans, families, and future generations to ease their daily living and perhaps provide hope as well as an outlook to be strong and carry on is what all veterans and individuals deserve.

As a Brats in the Battlefield board member, I have had the privilege to attend via zoom the Maine Commission Study meetings as our Chairman was a presenter at one of the meetings. It is important that the Recommendations of the Gagetown Chemical Study Commission and the Re-establishing of the Study Commission be enacted in order to provide the necessary benefits and support for the veterans affected by the exposure of these harmful chemicals. The Veterans deserve no less.

Be the change by implementing the recommendations as per the Gagetown Harmful Chemical Study. Veterans and families need to know that our governments support the sacrifices veterans and families make and endure.

Thank You,

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