

An Example



Katie Jurek (pictured) died of osteosarcoma at age 20 in 2007, one of 21 young victims in 15 years in Oakdale, Minnesota, a town poisoned with chemicals called PFAS by the 3M Company.¹

[There may be many more victims if we don't act. Click here.](#)

PFAS chemicals cause frequent miscarriages and other severe pregnancy complications. They contaminate human breast milk and sicken breast-feeding babies. PFAS contribute to liver damage, kidney cancer, high cholesterol, decreased response to vaccines, an increased risk of thyroid disease, along with testicular cancer, micro-penis, and low sperm count in males.

A major source of this deadly contamination in hundreds of locations around the United States and around the world is **U.S. military bases**, which use PFAS for putting out fires, despite full knowledge of the effects, and despite the availability of alternatives.²

Women have warned each other to avoid getting pregnant at particular bases for decades.³ Local governments are struggling to address poisoned ground water around bases in **Ohio, Colorado, New Hampshire, Michigan, New Jersey, Belgium, Germany, and Okinawa**, with little help from the U.S. military or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).⁴ Bowing to chemical industry pressure, the EPA refuses to regulate PFAS.

Pictured at right: PFAS-laced foam fills Kadena Air Force Base,



*Okinawa after a drunk U.S. Marine activated a firefighting system in 2013.*⁵

Local governments hosting U.S. bases outside the United States, of which there are at least 800 major ones in over 80 countries, are often **forbidden by Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) from investigating** the environmental destruction of the bases.

Okinawan authorities, who represent communities straddling the bases there, have been recently denied access to the source of the ongoing contamination. The **SOFA** does not give Japanese authorities access to U.S. bases, preventing them from investigating sources of such contamination.

(The SOFA is a document negotiated between our State Dept, DoD and the “hosting country” for every U.S. military installation around the world. In typical DoD sloppiness (reference “[Pentagon’s Massive Accounting Fraud Exposed](#)”) the number of U.S. military installation around the globe was only revealed via State Dept. records in response to an FOIA request to the DoD.

The SOFA is typically very restrictive with respect to the rights of the “hosting country” and very protective of our military members and contractors. ~ Don Chapin)

An Empire of Bases Poisons Water, Threatening Its Own Collapse

The U.S. military’s fire-fighting foam is contaminating groundwater and sickening people in communities near U.S. military bases around the world

*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake.*

- *Macbeth, William Shakespeare*

By Pat Elder, World BEYOND War, December 2, 2018

(Pat prepared two pieces of legislation in Maryland that eventually became law in 2009 and 2010. One requires parental consent before children in the state's schools are tested by the Pentagon, and the other requires active parental consent before personal information about children is forwarded to military recruiters. He founded the National Coalition to Protect Student Privacy, www.studentprivacy.org, an organization that confronts militarism in the schools by advancing state laws protecting minors in the schools against a heavy-handed federal/military presence. Reducing data from FOIAs I submitted, I worked briefly with Pat in setting up his studentprivacy.org website, as I was unsuccessfully trying to get the ACLU interested in this problem in Oregon ~ Don Chapin)

<https://worldbeyondwar.org/an-empire-of-bases-poisons-water-threatening-its-own-collapse/>



Marines extinguish a blaze during a training exercise at the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, in Havelock, North Carolina, on Aug. 28, 2013. Photo: Lance Cpl. Shawn Valosin/U.S. Marines

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Per-fluoro octane-sulfo-nate or **PFOS**, and Per-fluoro-octa-noic acid or **PFOA**, are the active ingredients in the foam routinely used to train soldiers to extinguish aircraft fires at U.S. military bases around the world. The toxic chemicals are allowed to leach into surrounding soil to poison groundwater. The result is one of the greatest water contamination epidemics in human history.

Doubt that? Click on Google News and enter: “PFOS PFAO Military Base.” Then, come back and read the rest of this article – and brace yourself. It’s bad.

The water in thousands of wells in and around U.S. military installations across the globe have been tested and have been shown to contain harmful levels of PFOS and PFOA. The health effects of exposure to these chemicals include frequent miscarriages and other severe pregnancy complications, like long-term fertility issues. They contaminate human breast milk and sicken breast-feeding babies. PFOS and PFOA contribute to liver damage, kidney cancer, high cholesterol, decreased response to vaccines, an increased risk of thyroid disease, along with testicular cancer, micro-penis, and low sperm count in males.

The Pentagon [has known of the disastrous impact](#) PFOS and PFOA have on human health and the environment since 1974, and they continue to use the poisonous foams today.

By 2001, the [U.S. military fully understood](#) the enormity of the problem. They knew firefighting foams used at bases worldwide were poisoning streams and well water in surrounding communities, but they were concerned that publicizing the deadly contamination would be extraordinarily expensive, so, they decided to keep it quiet and continued to use the foams — without investigating whether anyone on or off the bases had been sickened.

**Now, they’ll pay a price that
may threaten the very survival
of the overseas American empire.**

Think I’m overstating it? Then, you probably didn’t google it like I suggested at the top of this piece.

This thing has blown up in the last few months.

Examine the brilliant reporting by Tara Copp of *Military Times*, a Gannett News publication. Her series documents untold suffering from young women in the military who drank the water on base. Her pieces, including, [Why women were told “Don’t get pregnant at George Airbase.”](#) are tough to read because they link the contamination to human misery and death. Many women

reported multiple miscarriages, others had stillborn children. The military still refuses to release the medical records for afflicted women all over the country.

And what about the women (and men and babies) on bases and in surrounding villages in places outside of the U.S., like [Spangdahlem Airbase, Germany](#) and [Kadena Airbase, Okinawa](#)? High concentrations of PFOS and PFOA have been found in streams adjacent to those bases. They receive no protections. The Americans aren't rushing to test their water, or their soil, or their wildlife.

Local authorities seeking the source of the poisoned water in Okinawa have been denied access to two U.S. bases. The refusal represents the latest example of the Japan – U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) hindering Japanese officials trying to address health problems facing local residents.

The SOFA, with its boilerplate language, lays down the imperial law. It states, “Within the facilities and areas, the United States may take all the measures necessary for their establishment, operation, safeguarding and control.”

Problem solved?

There is significant contamination in Belgium. The Americans are responsible for military contamination at the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Caserne Daumerie in Chièvres, Belgium. The Army poisoned groundwater that extends out from the base. Members of the local community have been warned not to drink the water and have been supplied with bottled water. The Army command has been silent, hiding behind the SOFA that bestows carte blanche authority to destroy the earth and its inhabitants.

While the EU and the UN have taken steps to regulate these poisons, the U.S. military continues to use them in their fire-fighting foam in Europe and around the world. After all, there's a regulation from the mid-sixties that says they must use the deadly fluorochemicals. Meanwhile, American chemists have developed a fire-fighting foam substitute that works just as well without all of the environmental and health dangers, but the U.S. military doesn't want to use it. Instead, the military is spending millions to [replace toxic firefighting foam with toxic firefighting foam](#).

All over the U.S., where we still have vestiges of the once significant EPA, and we still have resilient and competent state water works officials, the military is generally refusing to admit damage or do much to ameliorate the problem.

Here's a brief sampling of the way the Air Force has recently reacted to the crisis.

- Dayton, Ohio's Director of Water sent out a warning to its residents on PFOS contamination from Wright Patterson Airbase. June, 2018
“Unfortunately, the Air Force has not acted, and that is why I am writing.”
- The Air Force refuses to reimburse three Colorado communities for the money spent responding to water poisoned by PFAS and PFAO used in firefighting foam at Peterson Air Force Base. The poor towns have an \$11 million tab. The water in El Paso County,

Texas is unsafe to drink. The Air Force [blamed other sources](#) for contaminating the aquifer.

- The Air Force initially denied the request of citizens in New Hampshire who demanded a study be conducted. They drank Portsmouth's poisoned water, The Air Force said it [didn't have the money](#) to pay for the study. After brilliant citizen agitation, the Air Force has agreed to pay \$14.3 million to construct a water treatment facility to remove PFOS and PFOA from city-owned wells. (Take note.)
- Meanwhile, the Air Force is flouting a Michigan ruling that demands it provide safe drinking water in the Oscoda-Wurtsmith area. The B-52 base was closed in 1993 and the water remains deadly. Last month, Michigan health authorities issued a 'Do Not Eat' advisory for deer taken within five miles of the old Wurtsmith Air Force Base. It's been 25 years and the stream water deer drink is still poisonous.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), PFOS and PFOA are considered emerging contaminants. An "emerging contaminant" is a chemical that is characterized by a "perceived, potential, or real threat to human health or the environment or by a lack of published health standards." The EPA does not regulate PFOS and PFOA! Instead, it has set a shoulder-shrug of 70 parts per trillion Lifetime Health Advisory for drinking water. Meanwhile, scientists with the University of North Carolina say a safe dose of PFOA and/or PFOS in drinking water is 1 ppt.

The EPA developed the nonregulatory Health Advisory Program in 1978 to provide information to the public on pollutants associated with short-term contamination spills that can affect drinking water quality but are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The EPA lists Health Advisories for more than 200 contaminants, including PFOS and PFOA. Many of these contaminants are strictly regulated by nations around the world, but they're OK for Americans to drink.

In the absence of federal leadership on the issue, some states, including New Jersey, have started to regulate the chemicals at much lower limits than the EPA's. New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection is implementing its first tough PFAS regulation. Contamination of water wells at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst was [as high as 264,300 ppt, and that's just fine with the EPA](#)

The EPA [continues to approve](#) new equally toxic PFAS chemicals despite widespread contamination. America, it seems, is a criminal enterprise.

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