

**TESTIMONY OF
JOSEPH JONES
BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE
HEARING ON "ANTHRAX VACCINATION IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM –
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED"?
ON OCTOBER 3, 2000**

Hello my name is Joseph Jones; I served in the military (ARMY) for 3 years 6 months 12 days. I joined the military January 22nd 1996. My first experience in the military was being sent to Atlanta, GA to work as security for the Olympics, and then was assigned to Kelly Hill at Ft. Benning Ga.

I decided in basic training to become the best soldier, to do what I was told and to learn from my leaders. I was recommended for excellence in basic training and leadership skills, and as all-around soldier. I wanted to be the best of the best, I actually enjoyed basic training. In basic training, I did not learn just to become a soldier, I learned to be a team leader, a person that others could trust and look up to. For me, that was important to have the trust of others and to feel the dignity of being a soldier in the United States Army.

All I ever wanted to do was to be a soldier in the Army. I got my chance, and I loved every minute. I actually liked the PT training, the early mornings the strict regime of everything. I was really looking forward to the Kuwait training mission overseas. I excelled in every aspect of training and excelled in every request that was asked of me.

Being in Kuwait was a true experience; it made me appreciate what I had. In Kuwait I was told that I might have to take the Anthrax vaccine just in case war broke out again, I said okay! I had nothing else to say, I couldn't say anything else, and I was in the military. My Sgt. Major for the platoon said "that we all had to take the anthrax shot, if we refused, we would get a field grade Article 15 and MP's would still hold us down and give us the shot", so you see; either way I was getting the shot.

I was a good soldier, I did what I was told to do, with out questions. If I knew then what I know now, I would have taken the field Article 15 and refused and would have taken the consequences for that decision. The consequences for taking this vaccine have been horrific. After receiving the Anthrax vaccine my good experience came to a screeching halt. I received the Anthrax vaccine March 17, 1998 in Kuwait, after receiving the 1st vaccine, I had chills, & fever, and became very sick, and it was just like having the flu. I did go to the med. tent and asked to see a Doctor, the PA told me to take Tylenol and get rest. The second shot was on March 31, 1998, I was reluctant to taking the shot due to the illness I experienced with the first shot. I was told I had to take the shot no matter what. I took the vaccine and again experienced the chills and fever and started the direahea and the vomiting, this time it was different than the first, the headaches had increased with more severe pressure than before. A soldier friend of mine took me to the med. tent due to me being so ill. They told me I had a virus

and for me to rest. I was losing weight, losing ground of all my strength. The headache went away to a dull pain after a week or so and I seemed to feel better until the next anthrax shot.

The third shot was on April 14, 1998, I was not feeling well at all, however; I had to take the shot, the illness that had taken my body was the worst flu that I had ever experienced. The headaches and the flu were not going away, the Tylenol was not working.

When I arrived back in the states, I was sick on and off, I was not able to fulfill my duties at work. My Sgt. knew I was sick. He was there in Kuwait with me and knew I had gotten sick after each shot. He gave me time off to be at home when I was sick, or he gave me desk duties.

I refused to believe that the Anthrax vaccine had anything to do with how I was feeling. The military would not give me anything that would make me this sick!!

The fourth shot was on September 22, 1998, I received it at Ft. Benning Ga. This

was the same day that I was sent to the Hospital by ambulance due to my becoming very ill and passing out. Two days later the doctors put me on temporary medical leave. I did not realize the Anthrax, was what caused my illness until I had my fourth shot, not until I read the insert that came along with the Anthrax vaccine.

(SHOW THE INSERT). I quote from the insert itself "systemic reactions which occur in fewer than 0.2 per cent of recipients have been characterized by malaise and lassitude. CHILLS AND FEVER have been reported in only a few cases. IN

SUCH INSTANCES, immunizations should be DISCONTINUED. All adverse reactions thought by a physician possibly to have been related to this product should be directed to the BioPort Corporation (517) 327-1500 during regular business hours and (517) 327-7200 during off hours". The doctors did not report anything; I had to report this to the FDA myself.

You know what I did, I consulted with my physician and he gave me Tylenol, did he stop the shots - NO!! Yes! the military is responsible for my illness. I do believe for their carelessness, their lack of responsibility in taking care of their soldiers, and their ignorance in hoping that no one would read the label.

Every doctor I saw in Kuwait, and here in the states, knew I had become ill with CHILLS AND FEVER AND MALAISE AND LASSITUDE after each shot, and NEVER not once did they discuss with me that this could have been a reason for my illness, nor did they discontinue the vaccine until this was brought to their attention after the 4th shot. I can tell you now, I never received the 5th and 6th series of the vaccine, the military discontinued it.

While I was on medical leave, September 1998, I was either at home in bed or being transported by ambulance, or by my wife to the hospital! I was never admitted to the hospital, only through the emergency room would I be seen. My doctor ordered test after test and listening, as the doctors found nothing, am I sick? Yes, I'm sick. I was a very healthy person when I entered the military. I can tell you now that my health is far from being

good or even fair. The promise the military made to me, that the VA would take care of me, is a joke. The VA has not taken care of me as promised. It took a year for me to just receive the VA card and to get an appointment is an act of congress.

To this day, I've had 70 + seizures and 40 + passing out spells, several of which I have lost my memory and forgot who my wife was! There have been times that I get lost because I forget where I am. I would not wish this on anyone.

Can you tell me, that the anthrax did not make me sick? No! You cannot. You can only go by what I have told you here today.

Everyone knows that taking the flu shot either gives you the flu or prevents you from getting the flu. What is the anthrax supposed to do? Has it prevented me from getting sick, NO, it made me sick. If I was not sick and I had a choice to re-enlist, I would serve my country in heartbeat. But due to the fact that I became ill and I am still suffering from taking the Anthrax vaccine, I would have to rethink that decision.

The military took something of mine, and I want it back. My life, yes, that is a

correct statement THEY TOOK MY LIFE, my fun, my activities, my sports, everything that makes me, me, they took away. I cannot run or do anything that overexerts my body I cannot do anything that causes my body to be exerted in any form. I can no longer function as a productive person in today's society and the military has allotted me only 30% medical benefits and 30 % of my pay. Now ask yourselves could you live on 30% of your pay and survive on 30 % of your

medical benefits? Would you?

I have to have a job where I can set my own hours, because I am sick 3 times or more a week. I am not able to hold down an 8-5 job and for this, insurance is not a benefit. I have to purchase insurance that will take pre-existing injuries, this is not cheap.

My intent for joining the military was not to become sick. My intent was to join the military and serve my country with all my heart and soul. I'm afraid that this illness will not go away, and I am afraid that the United States government will not acknowledge that I am sick from the Anthrax vaccine.

I'm asking you to help me get my life back, I've taken every medical test the military wants me to take, but cannot afford the test recommended to find out what the true cause is. I ask you to help me and all the other soldiers who are sick from this same illness.

I can understand why all of these soldiers do not want to take the Anthrax vaccine, why would they, if they know they are going to get the same type of medical treatment, that I and all the other sick soldiers have received. There has been no treatment, there has been no acknowledgment of this, and just unknown causes of whatever illness the military list on the records.

When someone asks me about the Anthrax vaccine, I tell them to investigate all

avenues and all aspects of the illness this shot has caused. I tell them my story, and recommend them to contact others that are sick as well.

Let me ask you, why would you approve a vaccine to be produced that has the capability of making anyone sick? What are you going to do about helping those of us that have gotten sick from taking the vaccine? And last, if you do approve the vaccine to be continued, are you going to suggest the President and Vice President and everyone sitting before me take the same shots?

In closing, let me ask you a question, would you take this vaccine after hearing my story or would you have some reluctance in taking the vaccine? Would you take this vaccine or would you refuse, knowing it could make you this sick?

I pray that you can have influence on the medical board in San Antonio to upgrade my benefit package.

Thank you for your time,

Joseph Jones