



Editorial, *LEAD Action News* volume 20 number 1, October 2019 – Who can mend old leaded men?

By Elizabeth O'Brien, instigator of ILPPWA, co-Founder of The LEAD Group Inc.

As mentioned on the front page, this issue of *LEAD Action News* is dedicated to occupationally lead-exposed men who in their twilight years have reached out to The LEAD Group for assistance in demonstrating to others (Veterans Affairs, Compensation Boards, etc) that their exposure to lead and other toxics at work has had significant health and financial impacts. This issue is an appeal to all readers who may be able to offer any kind of help to these men.

Following this Editorial is a Letter to the Editor from a 90-year old Korean War veteran who worked as a cable splicer in the Bell System. He probably wrote to The LEAD Group because we have previously published:

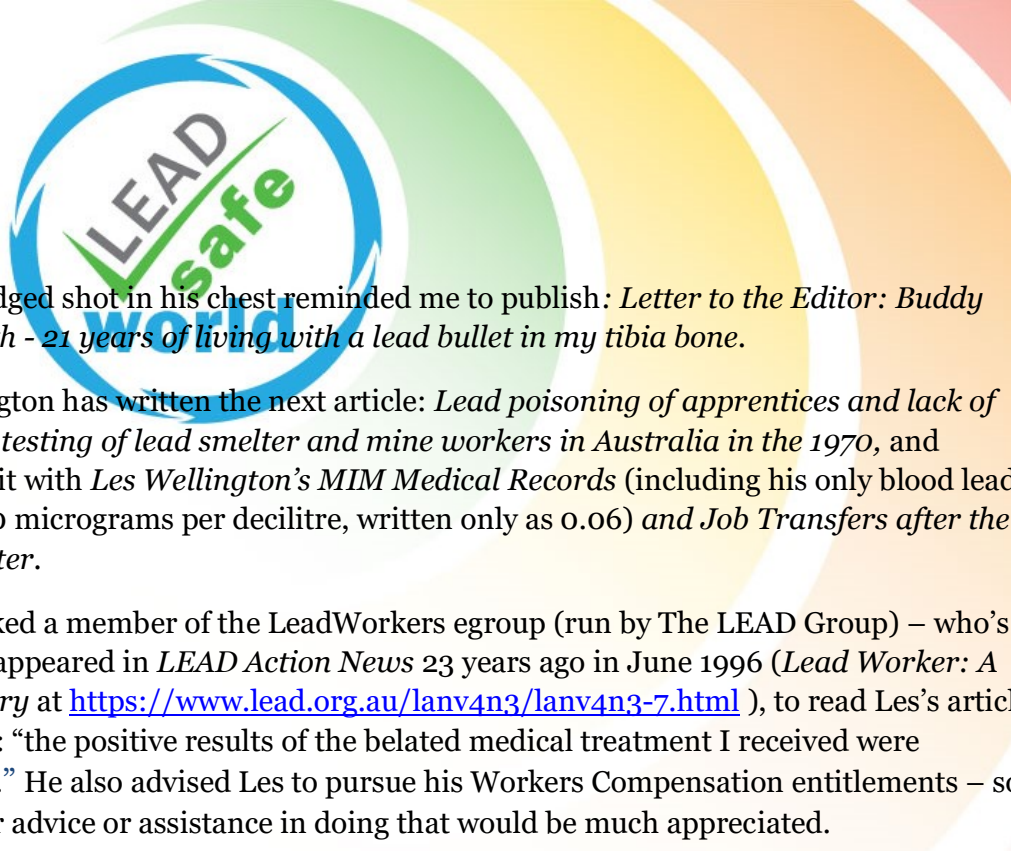
Blood Lead Levels in a Group of Bell System Employees - 1976 to 1980 [shows 36 telephone workers had blood lead levels similar to plumbers in NHANES II], at https://lead.org.au/bellsystemleadpoisoning/images/NHANES_article.pdf and

An investigation of circumstances surrounding an alleged case of lead poisoning, at <https://lead.org.au/bellsystemleadpoisoning/images/an%20investigation%20of%20circumstances.pdf> which references (inter alia):

Health status of cable splicers with low-level exposure to lead: results of a clinical survey, by A Fischbein, J Thornton, W E Blumberg, J Bernstein, J A Valciukas, M Moses, B Davidow, B Kaul, M Sirota, and I J Selikoff, from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1619483/>

But if you can provide any other relevant articles which will help this ex-Telephone Trouble Shooter convince a US Veterans Hospital that he may have had lead poisoning, that would be highly appreciated.

The next *Letter to the Editor* is from another US War Veteran Sonny (Tex) Gilligan, who was exposed to lead, other heavy metals and radioactive metals as an underground miner, and who has lodged lead shot in his body from a hunting accident and was then exposed to wildfire flame retardant. I have already advised him to join our Lodged Lead Shot and Bullets Support egroup at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/LLSBS/info> and our LeadWorkers egroup at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/LeadWorkers/info> but this 75 year old veteran would appreciate our readers' suggestions to relieve his loss of memory, loss of vitality and breathing difficulties.



Sonny's lodged shot in his chest reminded me to publish: *Letter to the Editor: Buddy Bucksworth - 21 years of living with a lead bullet in my tibia bone.*

Les Wellington has written the next article: *Lead poisoning of apprentices and lack of blood lead testing of lead smelter and mine workers in Australia in the 1970*, and supported it with *Les Wellington's MIM Medical Records* (including his only blood lead result of 60 micrograms per decilitre, written only as 0.06) and *Job Transfers after the Lead Smelter.*

When I asked a member of the LeadWorkers egroup (run by The LEAD Group) – who's own story appeared in *LEAD Action News* 23 years ago in June 1996 (*Lead Worker: A Case History* at <https://www.lead.org.au/lanv4n3/lanv4n3-7.html>), to read Les's article, he advised: "the positive results of the belated medical treatment I received were significant." He also advised Les to pursue his Workers Compensation entitlements – so any further advice or assistance in doing that would be much appreciated.

In between writing up the third case and the fourth case for this newsletter, I received the very sad news that our long term Spanish and French translator volunteer Orlando Aguirre-Lopez had passed away unexpectedly despite being in excellent health. His Obituary appears next – kindly translated from Spanish to English by our original translator volunteer, Sandra Patricia Palomino who now has the surname Buckley.

In the fourth case in this issue, Brian Arndt, born 2nd August 1940, currently 79 years of age and an ex-petroleum refinery worker from New Zealand needs your help to convince the New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) that he should be compensated for the disastrous health impacts which resulted from the work he did from 1965 to 1975 blending tetraethyl lead (TEL) and tetramethyl lead (TML) – collectively known as Tetra Alkyl Lead (TAL) – into petrol (which contains the known carcinogen benzene), along with the probable carcinogens called lead scavengers (which had to be added to leaded petrol to scavenge lead out of the vehicle engines and exhaust systems and stop the lead destroying the vehicle) and a myriad of other carcinogens and other hazardous substances in the air at refineries.

Brian had one child when he began his TAL-blending work in early 1965 but Brian suffered multiple health issues within months of starting his refinery work (including erectile dysfunction which stopped him having any more children), psychotic dreaming, and balance problems, and has already had numerous surgeries and treatments for 4 types of cancer.

On 15 December 2017, Kurt Bayer from the New Zealand Herald wrote an excellent summary of Brian's trials and tribulations up to that point, in "Ex-Marsden Point Oil Refinery worker with cancer wants compensation, claiming lead poisoning", at



http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11959704&ref=rss which includes:

ACC's toxicology panel concluded it was unlikely that Arndt's cancers were caused by workplace exposure to TEL and TML and recommended his claim be declined.

In September 2019 Brian is facing heart and neurological problems so anything any reader can do to help with his compensation claim while he's still alive would be much appreciated!

After all, **justice delayed is justice denied.**

Sure, *LEAD Action News* readers know that lead is hazardous but really, how many people are exposed ONLY to lead? My real concern is that I haven't found time to research the question of mixtures of hazardous chemicals as a cause of Sonny Gilligan's health issues or of Brian Arndt's health issues, especially the cancers and his inability to father children after he began working at the refinery! Here's a sample of the limited information that's out there on synergistic effects of multiple chemicals:

Deemed Diseases in Australia, by Safe Work Australia, August 2015, <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1702/deemed-diseases.pdf> states:

Occupational exposures and occupations that have been strongly implicated in adversely affecting reproduction in both males and females are **lead**, mercury, **multiple chemical** and pesticide exposures, **organic solvents** Exposures implicated as being of concern specifically to males include ...; **ethylene dibromide [a lead scavenger in TAL]**; and styrene.

Just as I was about to call it a day (or a quarter! – Three months in the making!) for this newsletter, I found a fifth case story - *Ray Harvey phone account of lead detox with Vit D & colostrum on vegan diet* – which had been omitted from the previous issue of *LEAD Action News* because I was waiting on the lab report of his blood lead result in our Blood Lead Challenge. I do like to back up everything we publish with documentary evidence! Apologies to Ray for its late publication.

I would be so grateful if any *LEAD Action News* reader were to contribute articles on any of these cases/issues or on new lead-related cases/issues for a future edition! Please be inspired by what follows...