

Dear Sir or Madam:

12 Dec 2019

I was assigned as the U.S. Army's 1/20th Special Forces Group, (Airborne) Battalion Flight Surgeon and Diving Medical Officer at Karshi Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan (K2) in 2002/03. I'd like to bring to your attention very concerning incidents involving the health of our service members who served there during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) deployments.

Since returning from OEF, we've had an extraordinary number of our soldiers who have been diagnosed with, and many have died from, head and neck cancers, primary lung cancers, prostate cancers, and other chronic diseases including various respiratory, genitourinary, and gastrointestinal disturbances at an incidence far exceeding what is expected in the general population.

I am aware these same maladies are common among all personnel who spent time at K2 and do not involve only those in my unit.

We know the Department of Defense (DoD) is aware of the serious environmental, ionizing radiation, and chemical toxins existing at this location. Numerous classified and unclassified documents and memoranda clearly describe the hazards present. All who have been deployed there were continually exposed to the toxic chemical contaminants and radioactive hazards that are present in the water, the dust, the dirt, and the air. Deployed personnel have been repeatedly and continually exposed through skin contact, ingestion, and inhalation.

At no time were we provided basic safety measures, equipment, training, or information to prevent contamination and were continually reassured that the exposures were "low" and "short-term" and of no significant concern.

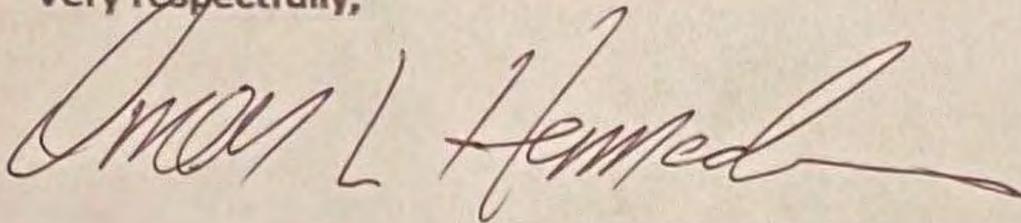
Karshi Khanabad Air Base is a former USSR air base in southern Uzbekistan. It was formerly used to produce, test, and store radioactive and chemical weaponry during the Soviet era. A large chemical weapon production/manufacturing facility existed at the base used by our forces. This factory was destroyed by an explosion unleashing an environmental catastrophe at this air base which exists today. Though the weapons factory and stockpiles were removed, the toxic contamination remained in the earth and within the structures occupied by our forces. In fact, Uzbeki warning and hazard signs are posted throughout the base declaring the presence of radiation, chemical agents and unexploded (and degrading) chemical weapons.

It is indisputable that these chronic illnesses and deaths are directly related to the environmental toxins we were repeatedly and continually exposed to. However, the VA continues to deny service connection, disability ratings, and medical services and support to these soldiers and airmen who risked their lives willingly; for the sake of our nation. Not only have they suffered, but so have their spouses, their children, their families, and their coworkers.

I appeal to you to help us, the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who willingly put ourselves in harm's way; in defense of our nation. Please do not continue to neglect, forsake, or forget us. Please come to our aid to assist us in dealing with these illnesses that have forever altered the courses of our lives and the lives of our families - illnesses due to the environmental toxins we were directly exposed to while fighting for freedom.

I am happy to discuss this matter further. You may contact me by cell at 615-598-0801 or via email at olhamada@gmail.com.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Omar L. Hamada". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

OMAR L. HAMADA, LTC, MD, MBA, USA
1/20th SFG, (A) - BN FS/DMO