Good Day,

 First let me thank you for taking the time to listen to us. What is being presented to you is the results of exhaustive research by the group. I believe it shows without a doubt, that the jet-gun is a source of HCV infection, among the men and women Veterans. The gun needs to be put back on the list of risks associated with HCV and the VA needs to make a concerted effort to make all Veterans aware of the risk.

 That being said, I served in the Army in 1968 & 1969. I was a squad leader in A 3/60, 9th Inf. Div. Vietnam.

 I came home from the service and got back in the business of being a civilian, getting married and raising a family. I had no idea at the time I was infected with HCV. I blamed the fatigue and periodic depression on working hard as well as the joint pain and the neuropathy in my legs and hands.

 As any good Veteran I donated blood whenever there was a blood drive at work. Now I regret it deeply as I feel I infected an untold number of people by doing so. This is a burden I now carry even though I didn’t know I was a biohazard. I only stopped when my doctor read me the riot act, due to the fact I only have one kidney and no spleen. He told me to stop. This was well prior to the discovery of HCV in 1989. I’m sure many other Vets feel the same as I.

 My wife was diagnosed infected in 2000, the only risk she had was me. She used to clean and dress my cuts and such, used my razor, all put her in contact with my blood. Even though she treated and was cleared of the virus it is on me that I put her through a year of hell. I got tested at the same time and put off treatment until she was over hers and most of the bad side effects. She still suffers from residuals of the treatment. Then she watched me go a year, but to no avail, the treatment didn’t clear the virus. When I was done it came back with a vengeance. I now had the virus induced ailments and the residuals of the treatment to deal with. But I had to keep working so we would have a place to live and I needed the benefits such as medical and life insurance. You see, once you are tagged as being infected with HCV you become a risk and it is unlikely you’ll be able to get either.

 I’m at present going through the new treatment, which has a much better clear rate. Although even if my viral load reaches the undetectable level (which they call cleared) I will still have it. Hopefully at a level where my body can keep it in check. Time will only tell how long this will hold. But I’ll be grateful for as much time as I can get feeling normal again. And the further damage to my liver will be a minimum and it may even have a chance to heal.

 As I stated in the beginning, “The gun needs to be put back on the list of risks associated with HCV and the VA needs to make a concerted effort to make all Veterans aware of the risk.” It will save lives.

Thank You for your time,

Harry Hooks

Director HCVets.com

Disabled Combat Veteran