

Chronology of Water Contamination at  
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

*sample was done from  
21027 to 21028 81  
7 hrs*

*required (over 10,000  
people)*

**October 1980** - In compliance with federal guidelines, Camp Lejeune began sampling its water distribution systems for Trihalomethane (THMs). The U.S. Army Environmental Hygiene Agency from Fort McPherson conducted the water testing and discovered unidentified chlorinated hydrocarbons in the Camp Lejeune water system. [It is unknown whether the results of these test were reported to Camp Lejeune officials, and it is uncertain if base officials were apprised of the contamination.]

**May 1982** - During routine water quality testing, Trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE) were identified as contaminants in the drinking water distribution systems serving Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point housing areas. The source of the contamination was unknown, and subsequent testing and sampling of the water quality produced inconsistent and conflicting results. Base officials decide to have ongoing Navy Assessment and Control of Installation Pollutants (NACIP) confirmation study look into the issue. *happened in Jan 83*

**November 1984** - The results reported for several wells serving the Hadnot Point housing areas surveyed as part of NACIP study indicate the presence of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Camp Lejeune officials decide to shut down all VOC-contaminated wells.

**December 1984** - Camp Lejeune's base newspaper "The Globe" publishes an article about results of water testing, contamination and corrective actions aboard the base. Notification of residents occurs to keep them informed of ongoing base efforts with regard to health and safety. *? Wilmington paper*

**January 1985** - Camp Lejeune officials decide to test all eight of the base's water systems and every well for possible VOC contamination. This additional testing discovers two additional contaminated wells in Tarawa Terrace and two additional contaminated wells in Hadnot Point. Upon confirmation of these results, the wells are shut down. *?*

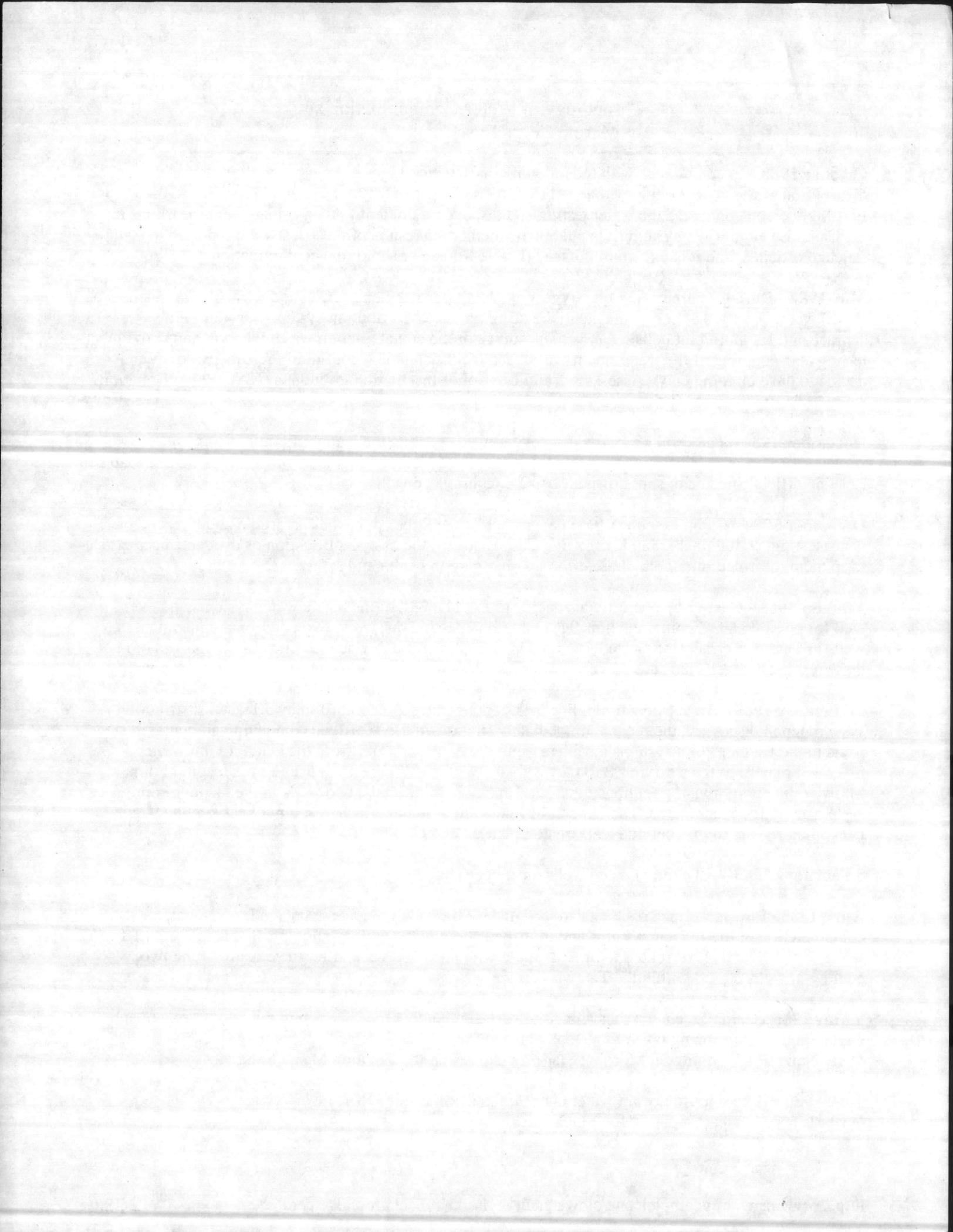
**27 January 1985** - An accidental fuel line leak contaminates Holcomb Boulevard water distribution system. Upon discovery, the plant is immediately shut down. Base officials, believing all contaminated wells in the Hadnot Point systems have been shut down, route water from the Hadnot Point water treatment plant into lines serving Berkeley Manor, Watkins Village, Paradise Point, Hospital Point, Midway Park and Stone Street housing areas. Unknown to officials, two wells in the Hadnot Point system are still contaminated. The Holcomb Boulevard system is flushed and put back on line 9 days later when repairs to the fuel line leak are completed.

**8 February 1985** - All contaminated wells have been shut down.

**April 1985** - Tarawa Terrace residents are notified by Base Commander, MajGen L.H. Buehl, about contamination of their water systems and informed about water conservation plans that are required while water systems is re-routed to provide them with adequate water after the closure of the two additional wells closed within the Tarawa Terrace system.

**9 May 1985** - Camp Lejeune issues a press release announcing the water contamination problem and explaining the steps being taken to restore water services to the effected base residents. Jacksonville Daily News and Wilmington Morning Star print stories on the situation May 11 and 12.

**June 1985** - Holcomb Boulevard water distribution auxiliary line to Tarawa Terrace is completed. Water is tested at least monthly for VOCs.



**March 1987** - Holcomb Boulevard plant expansion is completed. Tarawa Terrace plant is closed. All water to Tarawa Terrace is subsequently provided by Holcomb Boulevard plant.

**May 1987** - The North Carolina Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Branch identifies ABC dry cleaners as possible source of Tarawa Terrace ground water contamination through the Superfund program. The Marine Corps provides technical and administrative assistance as necessary to facilitate help them accomplish remediation and cleanup

**September 1988** - North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development established its first state standards for monitoring requirements of TCE and PCE in ground water.

**1991** - ATSDR makes first site visit to Camp Lejeune as part its statutory duty to conduct a public health assessment. Marine Corps provides information and assistance for the duration.

**1997** - ATSDR publishes final public health assessment for Camp Lejeune.

**1998** - ATSDR publishes final report "Volatile Organic Compounds in Drinking Water and Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes" Though the report identified a potential association between contaminated water and adverse pregnancy outcomes at Camp Lejeune, ATSDR instructed that the report should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size. This indicated a need for further study.

**17 September 99** -- ATSDR sends letters out to previous residents of Camp Lejeune who met their criteria for a established survey. Survey participants were identified through health and housing records. The Marine Corps cooperated with ATSDR to identify and build a database of Camp Lejeune residents who met the criteria for the survey.

**January 2000** - Camp Lejeune holds an open house with base residents and Jacksonville community to discuss issues pertaining to the contaminated water previously discovered aboard the base.

**15 August 2000** - Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington sends a message to all Marines worldwide in an effort to reach potential ATSDR survey participants. Articles are published in numerous base newspapers including the Quantico Sentry, Camp Lejeune Globe and Camp Pendleton Scout, which have a large retired military readership. A number of other publications also publish information contained in this message.

**12 September 2000** - Camp Lejeune solicits participants for the ATSDR survey by sending press release to military base publications.

**24 October 2000** - After concluding that efforts to reach a sufficient number of participants for the ATSDR survey had not succeeded, the Marine Corps decides to move the communication effort to its Washington headquarters and begins planning an national media outreach campaign.

