

Depleted Uranium: Here, There and Everywhere

Major Doug Rokke interviewed by Dennis Bernstein

May 2003

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INTRO:

While ECOTECTURE mostly reports on topics to do with improving the environment by designing better human systems, leaving environmental conservation to others, we occasionally come across a conservation topic that is under reported and far too significant to be ignored. We felt compelled to present this radio interview on the use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions in Iraq and elsewhere to our readers. After all, it is hard to create a sustainable environment in a radioactive waste zone.

The interview with DU expert US Army Major Doug Rokke was conducted by Dennis Bernstein, the producer of the program Flash Points on KPFA (Pacifica) radio in Berkeley, California, and broadcast on April 17, 2003. I heard it while driving my car, and was so upset that I had to pull over. I had heard of DU munitions, of course, but I thought they were used occasionally to attack tanks and had no idea of how widespread, deadly and permanent their damage was. ECOTECTURE obtained the tapes of the interview and republishes it with Mr. Bernstein's permission.

In a follow up interview to be published soon in ECOTECTURE, Major Rokke told Bernstein, "I do believe you're the first station to break this extremely world-critical story." ECOTECTURE is the first Journal to publish it, but we hope it will not be the last. We encourage our readers to copy and disseminate this material for any non-commercial use that will help expose the health effects of DU before any more people are exposed to it.

[PHILIP S WENZ](#)

INTERVIEW:

BERNSTEIN: Depleted uranium is now a key aspect of the US military's forward fighting capacity. It's currently being used in bunker-buster bombs and anti-tank penetrator missiles. The Pentagon swears by its effectiveness and is again using it widely in the current deadly attack on Iraq. While the US military sings its praises on the battlefield, it says little about the short- and long-term dangers of DU both to the troops that use it, and to the civilian populations who are subjected to it. While the Pentagon is busy covering up the danger of DU, Army Reserve Major Doug Rokke is blowing the whistle on its dangers.

Major Rokke in fact considers it his patriotic duty to tell the world about the dangers this radioactive material poses to his fellow soldiers and to the public at large. Flashpoints spoke with Doug Rokke about the toxic nature of DU and the military's ongoing coverup regarding the thousands of vets who may now be sick due to exposure to it. We began by asking Rokke to talk a little bit about his own military background and his expertise on DU.

ROKKE: I enlisted in the military in 1967 and spent my first few years in Vietnam as a bomb nab hardhat, especially with avionics and also involved with nuclear weapons and regular conventional munitions during combat missions over Vietnam. In 1980, I went back into the army as a combat medic and spent three years as a combat medic in a line infantry unit, and went on from there to become a medical instructor and also with expertise in nuclear and biological and chemical warfare as one of their instructors. In 1986 I received a direct mission as a nuclear medical sciences officer, some 19 years after I had initially enlisted in the military. At the time most people are retiring, I started all over at the bottom of the ladder as an officer again.

In 1990 I went to the Gulf War as a theater health physicist and was assigned the Bowers Raiders as an additional duty. Bowers Raiders was the third US army medical command's nuclear, biological and chemical warfare special operations and teaching team. With the completion of the ground war, I was reassigned by direct order from central command, that's General Norman G. Schwarzkopf, to clean up the depleted uranium mess that was caused by the deliberate use of

...my tasking was to identify what are the true health and environmental effects of uranium munitions on the battlefield...

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uranium munitions by US and British forces during Gulf War I. After we finished that job—it took us 3 months to clean up 24 vehicles—we went back to the United States in June of 1991 and continued to write reports and trying to get everything done.

In 1992, while I was working for the US Army at their construction, engineering and research lab, trying to ensure that they did come under compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act which they were in violation of, I got involved in the preparation of the US Army Environmental Policy Institute's report on depleted uranium. In 1994-95 I was recalled to active duty as the depleted uranium project director for the US Army and the Department of Defense, which then blossomed into a NATO project. As part of that responsibility, my tasking was to identify what are the true health and environmental effects of uranium munitions on the battlefield, how do you clean it up on the battlefield. Another phase of this was to develop all the training and education materials that all soldiers and military personnel would receive to make it safe or to respond to the use of uranium munitions in combat.

BERNSTEIN: Well, that gives us a sense of how much you know about depleted uranium. Are you still in the military?

ROKKE: Absolutely. I'm still an Army Medical Services Corps officer and now, I guess it's the year 2003 — I can't even add and subtract anymore, that's well over 30 years since I initially enlisted in the military.

BERNSTEIN: First of all, Doug Rokke, remind people what depleted uranium is used for by the US military.

ROKKE: The United States military uses depleted uranium munitions to kill and destroy everything in its path. The uranium munitions are a high velocity, kinetic energy penetrator. Each individual tank round that's fired by the Abrams tank is over 10 lbs. of solid uranium-238. We know from the US Department of Energy reports and also from the US Army Environmental Policy Institute report that it's also contaminated with plutonium, neptunium and americium and submitted cases. The uranium munition that's fired by the A10 warthog aircraft is approximately 3/4 of a pound for each individual round, and the A10 can fire it at a rate of up to 4,000 rounds a minute. That's a ton and a half of solid uranium fired into a target per minute. The uranium munitions were also contained in a lot of the bunker-buster bombs and also sub-munitions, land mines such as the Atum and the Pedom (?). We also have it in a 25 mm round that is fired by the Bradley fighting vehicle and also by the US Marine Corps' lab. In addition to that we have a 20 mm round that's fired by the Navy and that's the Phalanx Naval system. Because uranium munitions are absolutely effective in combat, they are an absolute killer and destroyer, the military has put them into almost every munition they can find and think of. It's extremely effective. It kills and destroys everything that it hits.

BERNSTEIN: You're saying that for instance, these 5,000-lb. bunker-buster bombs that we're seeing dropped on the people of Iraq in civilian areas may very well be full of depleted uranium.

ROKKE: Yeah, they more than likely contain uranium. The thing called depleted uranium is kind of a confusing term. There's nothing really depleted about it. If you take for every 100 lbs. Of solid uranium that you have which is put into the enrichment process you're able to retrieve .6 lb. of fissionable component. The other over 99.4 lbs. is what we call uranium-238, and that's what they deem depleted uranium. So there's nothing really depleted about it other than the fissionable component's been removed. Now, Dye Williams, who's an independent researcher over in England, has done extensive research looking at the patent office applications the US Patent Office reports to verify and to identify that a lot of these bunker-busters now contain uranium munitions. Independent researchers that have done onsite investigations to measure the contamination following these detonations have also verified that uranium was contained in these bombs. And then the other thing, too, is when you watch them go off on TV. Uranium munitions, if they are contained, leave a very distinctive signature. You'll see it in this conventional explosion, the fire, the blast and the concussion and everything going. In the uranium munition, you'll see sparklers and heavy metal uranium, which is pyroforic, will continue to burn for an extensive period of time after all of the other detonation, the initial fireball and the explosion with the smoke and everything, is over. It's very distinctive.

The thing called depleted uranium is kind of a confusing term. There's nothing really depleted about it.

BERNSTEIN: Talk a little bit about the dangers of depleted uranium, the way it's being used now, and how it will impact civilian populations and the troops that are using them.

ROKKE: Well, when you use uranium munitions what happens is each individual round, once it leaves the barrel of the gun that fired it, catches fire because uranium is pyroforic. So it's already on fire, it's a round, races downrange to hit any target. It can be a building, it can be a light-weight vehicle, a car or a truck, it can be a tank or it can be an armored personnel carrier. It's effective on everything. When I did

the research in Nevada for the US Army in '94 and '95, I actually shot up wood and it worked just as great hitting the wood target as it did anything else. Now when it impacts, you have a 10-lb. rod of solid uranium, okay, that's fired by the Abrams tank. When that impacts, about 40% or about 4 lbs. turns into what we call uranium spalling and oxides. That stuff is on fire, moving at extremely high velocity across the confined space and causes secondary detonations, either due to concussion or due to ignition, burning. Then what you have is a whole bunch of oxides form[ing] on all contamination in and around the vehicle. My actual measurements go out to 400 meters in and around a single vehicle for a single incident. What we've found and what the Army has also agreed on is that within 25-50 meters the contamination is so extensive that the US soldiers must wear respiratory and skin protection to be in that region. So it's real simple. You end up with massive contamination.

... the A10 warthog aircraft ... can fire ... at a rate of up to 4,000 rounds a minute. That's a ton and a half of solid uranium fired into a target per minute.

Now, the health effects, what we saw immediately, were documented as early as I can verify in what's called the Grove's Memorandum that was issued on October 30, 1943. There it stated the respiratory problems and rashes and everything would start within hours and permanent damage within days. That's exactly what happened to me and the others that were tasked to clean it up. I mean not even a question. So with the overall health effects of uranium and heavy metals, so you've got a heavy metal radiological toxin that once it's ingested into the body, absorbed into the body or shrapnel is deliberately left on the body, as the military directed to be done for the friendly fire casualties, you end up with cancers, neurological problems, fibromyalgia,

cataracts, respiratory problems, rashes, and the whole host of things associated with heavy metal toxicity and radiological exposures.

BERNSTEIN: Now what can you tell us in terms of its use in recent wars, in the first Gulf War, in the former Yugoslavia? How can we determine what impact it had and how it did or didn't make people in the region or those who are using it ill?

ROKKE: Well, one thing that we know for sure is that during Gulf War I that we fired close to a million rounds, if not over a million rounds from the A10. So each individual round was 3/4 lb. of solid uranium. So that's about 750,000 lbs. Okay. So that's an unbelievable amount of solid uranium left all over in the desert. Then we fired probably close to 15,000 tank rounds and we left them there. And much less any of the other large missiles such that the Cruise Missile, which does have uranium in it, again verified by the Patent Office and also verified by direct onsite measurements of impact holes.

What we saw was all of us getting sick right away. We initially, originally, I mean immediately directed medical care that should be provided. I did that as a theater health physicist. The theater medical commander sent a written order for medical care in June of 1991 for medical care for all DU exposures. What happened is even though we were getting sick and everything, medical care was denied, deliberately denied. The reports that were put out there, again, were supposed to be covered up. The famous Los Alamos memorandum that I received in March of 1991 was very clear. If we don't put out a case to use this stuff and cover up the health and environmental effects of uranium munitions, we will lose it. A defense nuclear agency report that I received in March of 1991 was very clear. It said that uranium munitions and everything are not only a health threat, they are a serious health threat. And that's what every document that I've been able to find from the military completely states over and over. And then my own health effects, the team members and my own health effects, the friendly fire casualties that are sick, the individuals that have died where the autopsies have verified it, the individuals that work in the areas where they mine and produce uranium munitions, are all sick. It's not even a question. The book *Discounted Casualties* that was published a couple of months ago, totally explains and clarifies and reveals the extent of the health effects all over the world.

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BERNSTEIN: Now, are you yourself ill? Did you get sick from it?

ROKKE: Absolutely. My exposure was due to inhalation, and that was faulty gas masks which are faulty today and the Department of the Army has acknowledged it, the Department of Defense has acknowledged it, the US General Accounting Office has verified that the gas masks are defective. The filters are inadequate to take out the primary less than .1 - .3 micron uranium particles that go right in the lung. And so therefore we had problems. When I got tasked by the Army to clean it up in 1991, we were all sick within 24 hours with respiratory problems and rashes, and they continued. The first cancers in our team developed within 8-9 months, the first deaths from cancers were within a couple of years.

BERNSTEIN: Let's talk just a little bit more about the protection ...So it's real simple. side of this. We assume from US reporting, or lack thereof, that You end up with the reason soldiers are wearing gas masks and are all suited up massive contamination... is to defend against an attack by chemical or biological weapons. Can we assume in part that they're suited up to protect themselves from the use of depleted uranium?

ROKKE: The United States Army Common Task Training Manual that all soldiers must comply with, and again it's the depleted uranium task, requires all respiratory and skin protection in and around any uranium munitions use, downwind or in a vehicle that's been hit. Absolutely required. The other problems that you have is, yes, Iraq does — did possess chemical and biological weapons, and that area is totally contaminated. We know that it's still contaminated (because of) the measurements have done. In December of 1991, a decision was made at General Schwarzkopf's headquarters — this is verified in his book, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, on page 390, that we would deliberately and willfully blow up chemical, biological stockpiles, weapons stockpiles and the nuclear reactors that Iraq has. And the reason we knew that (Hussein) had chemical and biological weapons is because the United States deliberately and willfully gave it to him. Again, that's verified in the United States Senate Regal Commission Report, written by James Toot, which was the subject of a made-for-TV movie that we did on Showtime, called "Thanks of a Grateful Nation."

... during Gulf War I There's no doubt about it. What we're seeing today, and I was ... we fired close to a reminded by a phone call not even an hour ago, and this is March million rounds, if not 31st, that the White House and the Department of Defense are still over a million rounds stating that the health and environmental effects of uranium munitions from the A10 ... that's are a propaganda move by those nations that don't want uranium about 750,000 lbs. munitions used against them. Ladies and gentlemen, that's an absolute lie. The health and environmental effects of uranium go back to 1943, were restated explicitly in the Rose Memorandum then, were stated explicitly in the Defense Nuclear Agency memorandums that I received from the US Army as I cleaned up the DU mess in the Gulf War I, and numerous other documents. Not even a question. In 1992 I went to a US military medical conference at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and I presented all of this information before members of the Secretariat and other senior military physicians identifying the health effects, the hazards, and stating that something must be done. It's been there. It's not propaganda. It didn't come from outside the country. The warnings came from the US military's own experts and those experts were basing that on the absolute health effects that have been occurring in all of us.

BERNSTEIN: Now what do we know, I know there hasn't been a lot of testing, the Pentagon has not been forthcoming in terms of trying to answer questions by veterans in terms of the toxic soup that they were exposed to in the first Gulf War, so there's not a lot of testing. But what could we say about the impact on the region, on what's happening to people in Kuwait, in Iraq, in Saudi Arabia?

ROKKE: Well, uranium munitions have been fired extensively, not only ...What we saw in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, but they were fired extensively was all of us getting throughout the Balkans, first in '94, '95 and '96, and then again in 1999. sick right away... They were fired extensively in Vieques, Puerto Rico, which is American

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territory which is American citizens, and also in Okinawa in Japan and Terashima Island, and many other places. What we can state and what we do know is that the deliberate and willful denial of medical care has been ongoing. In a report issued by the Department of Defense by individuals that I know and I've reported directly to just several weeks ago, they stated they've given medical care to 90 individuals that were exposed to uranium contamination during the Gulf War I. I'm one of those. I'm sick. And they haven't done anything for me nor many of the others. I want to repeat, I had over 120 known friendly-fire casualties that survived DU impact. I had another several, 250-350 individuals with known exposures to uranium munitions. In a directive, in a report that was given to the Presidential Oversight Board in 1998, the Department of Defense formally acknowledged that there were 424 individuals absolute known uranium exposures and that at that time they had only notified 120. As of several weeks ago, they're acknowledging medical care for only 90 individuals, and they're not even accomplishing that.

... What happened is even though we were getting sick and everything, medical care was denied, deliberately denied... The first cancers in our team developed within 8-9 months, the first deaths from cancers were within a couple of years.

What we also know is all the medical directives that have been issued have been issued numerous times. In October of 1993, again based on the research and the input that we had and I worked on this, the Department of Defense issued a very specific medical directive. This we call a Somalia message, and that's what it's head title, and it's Medical Management of the Unusual Depleted Uranium Exposures. This Department of Defense, Department of the Army medical directive requires medical care within 24 hours for all individuals who are — direct quote, ladies and gentlemen, "a) being in the midst of smoke exposures, being in the midst of smoke from DU fires resulting in the burning of vehicles uploaded with DU munitions, or depots in which DU munitions are being stored. Working with environments containing DU dust or residues from DU fires, and being within a structure or vehicle while it is struck by DU munitions. This requires a radio

bioassay within 24 hours and then consequent medical care based on exposures." This was issued in October of 1993, and the purpose of this was we were going to use uranium munitions when we attack Somalia. Astonishing. Now, if medical care has been required, going back to what I directed right after Gulf War I, a completion of the ground phase and what was directed by theater medical commanders, directed by the General Accounting Office, was directed by the Assistant Secretary of Defense, was directed by General Eric Sensecki, the general of the Army right now who is in charge of all military army personnel, then the medical care must be provided to all casualties. But they're only providing medical care to 90 individuals? And this is how many years after the fact?

BERNSTEIN: Well, Doug Rokke, it's actually during the fact, again, because I think if I understand you correctly and somebody who is still in the military and an expert in depleted uranium, the soldiers now on the front line and the people living in the region are going to be heard because they were misled, lied to, and they're still not prepared.

ROKKE: Absolutely correct. The training that's required had been directed that I prepared has not been totally provided to everybody. We do know that on Friday of this last week, a United States Air Force A10 pilot killed and wounded British soldiers in a friendly-fire incident involving uranium munitions. No two ways about it. We have sent the Central Command briefing to General Brooks, he has acknowledged uranium munitions use in combat. However, the medical protocols are not in place, and more important, the specific requirements for total decontamination and cleanup of uranium contamination that I wrote for the Army, which is now Army regulation 700-48, has not been complied with. It's not been complied with any place that it's been used and it's not been, the safety precautions for use right now are not being complied with.

...It's not propaganda. It didn't come from outside the country. The warnings came from the US military's own experts and those experts were basing that on the absolute health effects that have been occurring in all of us....

BERNSTEIN: Now, let me get this straight. So that would also mean that those reporters that are, if you will, embedded — some say in bed with — the military at this point, are also in grave jeopardy.

ROKKE: Anybody that comes in contact with uranium contamination and inhales it, ingests it or get into a wound, is at serious risk of adverse health effects, as all has happened to me, and other members of the cleanup team, friendly-fire casualties, and thousands upon thousands of others who were exposed. In a recent directive from the United Nations, Pec___ (?) Visto, and he sent me a personal e-mail just a couple of days ago, has told the US military they must clean up the uranium contamination

in the Balkans that was caused by deliberate acts. The other thing when we go back, we know that on September 10 of 2001 the United Nations ruled that uranium munitions were illegal in a weapon of mass destruction, and they should not be used.

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BERNSTEIN: You're listening to Flash Points on KPFA radio. We're talking to Doug Rokke. He's among other things a military health physicist. He's still in the United States military and apparently, you're telling us things, Doug Rokke, that the US military would not really want you to share publicly. Tell us why you're doing this and is there a backlash for this?

ROKKE: Well, I was specifically tasked by a direct order from Central Command, which means that General Schwarzkopf directed me to clean up the DU mess. In 1994, I was given a specific task and as the director of the depleted uranium project to ensure the safety and the healthy environmental cleanup of the DU mess. I'm an Army officer who will finish my job. That's my responsibility as an American citizen, as an Army officer, and as a man that answers to God.

The retaliation has been huge and it continues to be huge, not only against me and other scientists who did the work but any physician that reports what they have seen and tries to ensure that medical care is provided for all uranium munitions exposures. We have to remember and understand that nobody in the United States can possess even a half-pound of solid uranium-238. They cannot dispose of even a half-pound of solid uranium-238 in any location other than a licensed, secured facility. You cannot do that. However, the United States is deliberately, willfully, because this is an extremely effective combat weapon, throwing hundreds if not thousands of tons in combat areas around the world, refused to provide the medical care as required by numerous directives, and refused to clean up uranium contamination as required by Army regulation in numerous laws.

BERNSTEIN: So what you're saying, sort of, if you flip this a little bit, is that the United States military simply wouldn't be able to use this material, which now is a key part of their forward fighting force, unless they —

ROKKE: I would like to read, direct quote, the Los Alamos memorandum that was sent to me in March of 1991. And I'm going to read this verbatim because I think it's extremely important to understand and I'm going to read it very slowly. "Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico, 1 March 1991. Subject: The effectiveness of depleted uranium penetrators. There is a relatively small amount of lethality data per uranium penetrators, either the tank-fired long version or the Gowy 8 round fired from the A10 close air support aircraft. The recent war has likely multiplied the number of DU rounds fired at targets by orders of magnitude. It is believed that DU penetrators were very effective against Iraqi armor. However, assessments of such will have to be made. There has been and continues to be a concern regarding the impact of DU on the environment. Therefore, if no one makes a case where the effectiveness of DU on the battlefield, DU rounds may become politically unacceptable and thus be deleted from the arsenal. If DU penetrators prove their worth during our recent combat activities, then we should assure their future existence (until something better is developed) through service DOD proponency. If proponency is not guarded, it is possible that we stand to lose a valuable combat capability. I believe we should keep this sensitive issue in mind whenever director action reports are written. Respectfully, Colonel Z (?)."

BERNSTEIN: In other words, if they don't lie to the public and they find out what a nightmare this is, they won't be able to use it so they will keep lying.

ROKKE: Absolutely. Now, another memorandum that I received at the same time, simultaneously from the United States Army's Defense Nuclear Agency. Subject: Depleted Uranium Ammunition. I'm going to read a direct quote from this. "As explosive ordinance disposal ground combat units and civil populations of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq come increasingly in contact with DU ordinance, we must prepare to deal with the potential problems. Toxic war souvenirs, political furor, and post-conflict cleanup are only some of the issues that must be addressed. Alpha particles, uranium oxide dust from expended rounds is a health concern, but beta particles and fragments from intact rounds is a serious

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... uranium munitions have been fired extensively, not only in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, but [also in]... the Balkans... Puerto Rico... Okinawa ... and many other places.

health threat with a possible exposure rate of 200 millirads per hour on contact."

The United States and Great Britain have made a conscious decision to take radioactive waste that they could not dispose of legally in their own nation, and spread it across the battlefields of other nations, and refuse to do medical care and refuse to clean up the environment.

BERNSTEIN: Again, Doug Rokke, please tell us more specifically how you yourself have come under attack for trying to get this information out to the public.

ROKKE: The US Army, for whatever reason, gave me the responsibility to develop the procedures and identify the risks and hazards. They made me their expert. When I did the research and put my recommendations in, they didn't like it. Again, the Los Alamos memorandum which I read. And as a consequence, my life ended after I spoke up. Jobs, much less the health and trying to get medical care from the Department of Veteran Affairs and the military, has been extremely difficult — not only for myself but anybody else that's speaks up. It's very simple. The United States and Great Britain have made a conscious decision to take radioactive waste that they could not dispose of legally in their own nation, and spread it across the battlefields of

other nations, and refuse to do medical care and refuse to clean up the environment.

BERNSTEIN: Have you ever been personally threatened, intimidated, have you been told that you will be given a dishonorable discharge?

ROKKE: I'm still completing the direct order that I was given to complete the mess. But yes, I've been threatened, yeah. I mean it's real simple. That happens, that's a regular basis. One of the things we've done when we do press reports or interviews, Department of Defense officials have come on and say that we never did the work, we never did the findings. However, the documents all verify that we did. Most recently, what we have found is and other individuals (and I) involved in this, that our records at the National Records Center at AR Presscom in St. Louis, MO have disappeared.

BERNSTEIN: Is it true that you attempted to go to Vieques and confirm or verify the use of depleted uranium against I guess, if you will, a civilian population that lives near the bombing range there?

ROKKE: In February of 1999, the US military did use uranium munitions down in Vieques in preparation to go into Kosovo. Not a question, confirmed. I attempted to get through the Deputy Secretary of Defense cleanup and medical care provided for them and I was unable to do it. They refused to do it. I personally have gone down to Vieques, Puerto Rico. I have been onsite, I've participated in the medical investigations one-on-one with physicians where they did an assessment of me and my health effects with known uranium exposures, with the residents down there, and the physician verified that the same health effects from the same exposures occur. The contamination is extensive. And we were unable, and they're still working on Vieques, to get the cleanup — which you'll see in Vieques there are a lot of things in the incidents in Vieques, the government and wire stories state, well, it's all about dropping a few bombs off the target. Well, yeah, that happened too but that was total carelessness. But what they don't talk about is the extensive use of uranium munitions and other chemical and biological warfare materials on that island for 47 some odd years.

Today in war, as we did in Gulf War I, in that area's toxic wasteland, you blow up an infrastructure, you release all the hazardous materials associated with that city, a country, industry, agriculture, medicine and everything else. You destroy the water supplies. You get the sandstorms up there, which individuals should be wearing respiratory protection for because just sand in itself, breathed into the lungs and the eyes, causes serious health effects. And then they use uranium munitions. Today the technology of war has gotten

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to a point where, as we know now from numerous engagements, you can't clean up the environmental mess and the medical care has not been provided. And even the medical care that they provide is basically treat the symptoms, rather than trying to treat and cure the illnesses. Ladies and gentlemen, you must know that the Gulf War I casualty rate is not the 766 that's published in the World Almanac. The US Department of Veteran Affairs, in a report issued September of last year, verified that over 221, 000 Gulf War I veterans are now permanently disabled due to service in the Gulf region from August of 1990 through May of 2002. We know that number's low because myself and others that have got care have still not been included in those numbers, and the Department of Veteran Affairs has also acknowledged and verified that well over 10,000 of our nation's finest sons and daughters have died as a consequence of Gulf War exposures.

BERNSTEIN: Finally, you consider yourself a patriot, you are still in the military. What would your advice be to young men, young women enlisting now? What would you tell your own child if they wanted to do service for the United States government, would you tell them don't go because you're

going to get exposed in a way that is incurable?

... Ladies and gentlemen, you must know that the Gulf War I casualty rate is not the 766 that's published in the World Almanac. The US Department of Veteran Affairs, in a report issued September of last year, verified that over 221,000 Gulf War I veterans are now permanently disabled due to service in the Gulf region from August of 1990 through May of 2002..

ROKKE: Well, first off they need to have adequate training and education, combat education and training. Okay, to survive in combat. They must have equipment that's functional and operational. All the defective gas masks that have been confirmed by the United States General Accounting Office must be replaced. All the defective mop suits, chemical protective clothing, must be replaced. Medical care must be in place and put there. In a recent congressional (hearings), last week, chaired by Christopher Chase, they verified that the military is not providing the medical care for the troops now or prior to deployment. And we know it's close to a quarter of a million individuals that served in Gulf War I that are sick and dying across this nation and all of them sick and dying across the world, that medical care is not provided. The veteran, as in all other wars, has been abandoned because of the cost and the liability issues. This is not just liability for a handful of American warriors. This is liability because the health and environmental effects of war affect

everybody, not only immediately, but for years down the road. We can't clean it up and we don't have the medical knowledge to take care of the casualties that result. So anybody's going to go in the military today, you better think about what the results are, and then you need to make the choice.

BERNSTEIN: And why haven't you yourself resigned?

ROKKE: Because as a military officer I can still make a difference. My intent is to finish the job for God and the citizens of the world, to protect our troops, to ensure medical care is provided, to ensure that combat readiness is the ultimate, and to make sure that this never happens again.

BERNSTEIN: Doug Rokke, military man, expert in depleted uranium, health physicist, we thank you very much for this very important information and for joining us on Flashpoints.

ROKKE: Thank you again, Dennis.

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