



Investigation needed

‘Evidence supports existence of mustard gas in Castle Hill’

ON October 24 2009 the *Townsville Bulletin* published an article by Tony Raggatt titled “Munitions and mustard gas under Castle Hill”. The basis of the article was a statement by a former field officer from the Defence Department’s Defence Estate Organisation named Aaron Frattner who is now deceased.

The story said that on March 16, 2000 Aaron Frattner in company with others went to the car park on top of Castle Hill and after a short walk entered complex of tunnels via a ventilation shaft where 300 44 gallon drums of distilled mustard gas were counted and inspected.

At the time the Department of Defence did not publish any comment and the story died a natural death.

A small amount of research has brought up a reasonable amount of information that gives an element of credibility to the existence of the tunnels at the location reported.

World War II photography from the RAAF Museum, when examined minutely, shows a considerable amount of military engineering in Castle Hill and this can be rationalised through



EVIDENCE . . . photograph supplied by Kevin Parkes of the possible air vents and entrances to the tunnels

Australian National Archives documents as to their function.

A geophysics survey of the locale indicates that considerable anomalies consistent with engineering activities exist that cannot be attributed to local infrastructure or natural phenomena.

The timing of the reported incident also gives an element of credibility to the statement.

The foray in March 2000 was initiated after two separate documented reports regarding movement of the summit of Castle Hill were lodged late in 1999. Landslides followed this in January 2000. If I had a stash of hazardous materials in Castle Hill I also would have made efforts to inspect their integrity after the landslides.

If the statement about the

existence of military tunnels inside Castle Hill has credibility then the existence of the mustard gas must also have an element of credibility.

One has to ask why the Australian Government desired to maintain a stockpile of chemical weapons inside Australia as late as 2000 in violation of our own Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act 1994 and our international obligations to the 1994 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention)?

If there are stockpiles of chemical weapons in Australia we, as a nation state are in breach of our international agreements.

In the midst of a federal election campaign one has to ask if any of the mainstream or fringe political parties are willing to, firstly, investigate (Parliamentary Inquiry or Royal Commission) the claims and then lobby the Parliament for funding to rectify any problems that may be found?

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