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MEDIA ADVISORY: Alaska Community Action on Toxics' hosts a Breast Cancer Awareness Tour, May 29th-June 3rd
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Breast Cancer Awareness Tour brings the film *Semper Fi: Always Faithful* to Alaska

Film exposes the military cover-up of one of the largest drinking water contamination incidents in American history *and the uncovering of rare male breast cancer cluster*

Anchorage, AK – Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) welcomes national hero Jerry Ensminger to Alaska from May 29-June 3, 2013 for a lecture and film series. The tour of five Alaska communities will feature the award-winning documentary film, *Semper Fi: Always Faithful*, which exposes the Marine Corps cover-up of one of the largest drinking water contamination incidents in American history. Jerry Ensminger is a former Marine Corps Master Sergeant who brought national attention to the groundwater contamination at Camp Lejeune, a military base in North Carolina, and exposed a disease cluster, including what is perhaps the largest cluster of rare male breast cancer ever identified. An estimated 1 million Marines and their families were exposed to toxic chemicals in Camp Lejeune's drinking water over several decades.

In Jerry's own words: "I have been fighting for justice in the Camp Lejeune drinking water contamination issue for 15 years. My fight has given me a very unique perspective into our country's programs and policies which are contributing to disease clusters and the overall demise of public health in general."

The film *Semper Fi: Always Faithful* will tour with Jerry Ensminger beginning in Anchorage on Wednesday May 29th at the Anchorage Museum with a reception beginning at 6:30 pm. The next stop for the lecture and film tour is Fairbanks on Thursday May 30th at the Pioneer Park Theater with a reception at 6:30 pm. Jerry will visit Nome on Monday June 3rd with a film showing and talk on Monday June 3 at Old St. Joseph's Church at Anvil Square. He also visits Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island on June 1st 2nd, respectively.

"We think Jerry Ensminger's story and film will resonate with Alaskans because we have hundreds of contaminated formerly used defense sites that affect many of our rural communities, as well as five military Superfund sites that are among the most polluted sites in the nation," said Vi Waghiyi, Alaska Community Action on Toxics' Environmental Health and Justice Program Director. "I was deeply moved when I heard Jerry speak about the loss of his daughter Janey to leukemia when she was just 9 years old. His loss inspired his tireless work to uncover the contamination at Camp Lejeune and led to the discovery of what is likely to be the largest male breast cancer cluster ever found. His story hit close to home because of the loss of my father, many family members, and friends of St. Lawrence Island whom have died of cancer and other illnesses. Our St. Lawrence Island communities have had great difficulty holding the military accountable--we are still fighting and hope to learn from Jerry's knowledge and experience. St. Lawrence Island communities suffer from the legacy of contamination left when the military abandoned its bases at Northeast Cape and Gambell; cancers and other illnesses continue to increase."

"Jerry's work is so extraordinary because it motivated the passage last year of the Janey Ensminger Act which will help Marines and their families who have suffered as a result of their exposure to the toxic chemicals at Camp Lejeune. Through this tour, we are also highlighting the need to ensure passage of the Safe Chemicals Act which would require that chemical corporations prove the safety of chemicals before we are exposed

through our water, food, household products, and in our places of work. Our Alaska Senators must take leadership and co-sponsor this important legislation in order to protect the health of Alaskans and people throughout the country.” The Breast Cancer Awareness lecture and film series is sponsored by Alaska Community Action on Toxics and Alaska Run for Women.

To arrange an interview with Jerry Ensminger, please contact Heather McCausland, Development and Communications Coordinator with ACAT at (907) 222-7714.

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Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) is a statewide non-profit public interest environmental health research and advocacy organization dedicated to protecting environmental health and achieving environmental justice. Alaska Community Action on Toxics *mission: to assure justice by advocating for environmental and community health. We believe that everyone has a right to clean air, clean water and toxic-free food. We work to stop the production, proliferation, and release of toxic chemicals that may harm human health or the environment. For more information, please call 907-222-7714. ACAT’s Breast Cancer Awareness Tour website: <http://bit.ly/jerrytour>*

Semper Fi: Always Faithful (www.semperfialwaysfaithful.com) takes a personal look at a public health and environmental crisis. The documentary follows Jerry Ensminger, a retired Marine Corps drill instructor, who lost his daughter to leukemia in 1985. After he learns of the water contamination at Camp Lejeune, twelve years later, Ensminger embarked on a journey to expose one of the largest water contamination incidents in U.S. history.

It is estimated that nearly one million Marines and their families were exposed to high levels of carcinogens while they lived and worked at Camp Lejeune. The Marine Corps eventually closed the toxic wells, but never made the contamination public. Today, only a fraction of former residents know about their exposure. The film follows Ensminger’s personal and political campaign to uncover the truth, improve health care for those exposed, and change the environmental policies that threaten air and water quality in the United States.

Semper Fi: Always Faithful, directed by Rachel Libert and Tony Hardmon, premiered in 2011 at the Tribeca Film Festival and has won several Best Documentary and Audience Awards at festivals across the U.S.

[Short Video-Interview with Jerry Ensminger/New York Times](#)

[The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten](#): a Military Toxic Water Advocacy Group co-founded by Jerry Ensminger

[How a Bunch of Scrappy Marines Could Help Vanquish Breast Cancer - Exposed to poisoned water at Camp Lejeune, these vets may hold the key to a scourge that kills some 40,000 American women—and a few hundred men—per year. By Florence Williams, Mother Jones, May 2012.](#)

[Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012](#) was signed by President Obama on August 6, 2012. [The final law HR 1627](#) began as the [Jamey Ensminger Act HB 1742 introduced May 5th, 2011.](#)

[Camp Lejeune Web Page at the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry \(ATSDR\)](#). The most recent report (3/15/2013) of Water Contamination at Camp Lejeune by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is the [Hadnot Point Report](#).

[US Department of Veterans Affairs: Exposure to Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune](#)