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Agent Orange Review

Vol. 3, NO. 2

Information for Veterans Who Served in Vietnam

July 1984

Herbicide Literature Review Update Published and Available

VA recently published an updated review and analysis of worldwide scientific literature on the health effects of Agent Orange and other phenoxy herbicides.

The review and analysis, conducted by an independent organization under contract with VA, covers published and unpublished literature in this field that has become available since an original, two-volume report was completed in 1981.

The updated report analyzes literature on health effects of exposure to phenoxy herbicides and their contaminants, cacodylic acid (Agent Blue) and picloram.

The annotated bibliography includes documents related to studies of animals exposed to these substances, as well as human studies of occupational and environmental exposure and Vietnam veterans.

The two-volume report reflects VA's goal to develop, maintain and expand an invaluable reference resource on the various herbicides and associated dioxins.

Copies can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Volume III, Analysis of Recent Literature, stock number 051-000-0164-8, costs \$9.50. Volume IV, Annotated Bibliography, stock number 051-000-0165-6, costs \$3.25.

Volumes I and II of the original report also can be ordered from the Government Printing Office. The titles, order numbers and costs are: Volume I, Analysis of Literature, stock number 051-000-00154-1, \$9.00; Volume II, Annotated Bibliography, stock number 051-000-00155-9, \$9.50.

The lay-language summary of the literature review is expected to be published by the end of the summer.

Report on State Agent Orange Groups Presented to Advisory Committee

Twenty states now have commissions or programs relating to the Agent Orange issue.

VA's Agent Orange Projects Office maintains an ongoing relationship with each state program, providing Agent Orange informational materials and other assistance.

George Anderson, M.D., Texas Department of Health, was appointed by VA Administrator Harry Walters to serve on VA's Advisory Committee on Health-Related Effects of Herbicides as a representative of state Agent Orange programs in July 1983. Dr. Anderson was selected as a result of nominations to Administrator Walters by the various states operating Agent Orange programs.

At the 20th quarterly meeting of the committee, held on June 5, 1984, Dr. Anderson reported on some of the projects and studies being carried out by these states.

About the "Review"...

"Agent Orange Review" is prepared by VA's Office of Public and Consumer Affairs. The "Review" is published periodically to provide information on Agent Orange to concerned veterans and their families.

This issue contains information on:

- the Centers for Disease Control's birth defects study;
- health care services under Public Law 97-72; and
- other Agent Orange-related research.

For additional copies of this issue, write VA's Office of Public and Consumer Affairs (063), 810 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC, 20420.

If you have any questions about your Agent Orange examination, contact the environmental physician at the VA medical center where you had the examination. If you have questions about VA benefits or Agent Orange, contact the VA facility nearest you. The phone number can be found in your telephone book under "U.S. Government" listings.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive the "Review," please send your name, complete address and social security number (if you are a veteran) to the VA Data Processing Center (200/392), 1615 E. Woodward St., Austin, TX 78772, Attn: Agent Orange Clerk. Changes of address should be forwarded to the same Austin address, along with your mailing label.

If you know someone who has had an Agent Orange Registry exam and is not receiving the "Review," please have that individual follow the instructions just described in order to be added to the mailing list.

Iowa has been conducting public awareness efforts, including the distribution of public service announcements and questionnaires to Vietnam veterans in the state.

West Virginia has distributed flyers, as well as several public service announcements about Agent Orange examinations. In addition, the state is planning to conduct a mortality study of the number of Vietnam veterans in the state who have died since returning from Vietnam and the cause of death.

Surveys and questionnaires will be sent out in the fall by the Pennsylvania Agent Orange office, and public service announcements and informational brochures are being developed.

Minnesota and New Jersey are conducting informational outreach activities. New Jersey is also conducting a death-record study.

Texas is conducting a birth defects study, and Wisconsin is looking into the possibility of conducting a cohort mortality study.

The following states also have commissions or programs related to Agent Orange: California, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Ohio, Rhode Island and Oregon.



Agent Orange Bill Passes Senate

On May 22, 1984, the Senate passed the Veterans' Dioxin and Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act.

The bill was passed by a vote of 95-0 and substantially amended the House-passed version of H.R. 1961.

H.R. 1961 -- the Agent Orange and Atomic Veterans Relief Act -- was passed by the House of Representatives on January 30, 1984. (See the April '84 "Agent Orange Review" for details.) The House-passed measure had been awaiting Senate action.

The Senate version would establish an Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards, with four members representing the general public and eleven members from the scientific community.

The scientists would be recognized authorities on dioxin and radiation studies, and epidemiology and other applicable disciplines. They would advise VA as to whether there is sound scientific and medical evidence indicating a connection between dioxin or radiation exposure and latent disability.

Under the bill, VA would be required to publish proposed regulations within 120 days of enactment that include determinations based on sound scientific evidence as to whether or not certain specific diseases should be presumed service-connected. Examples of the specific diseases include soft-tissue sarcoma suffered by veterans of service in Vietnam and leukemia suffered by veterans who participated in an atmospheric nuclear test or the post-World War II occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The regulations would specify the circumstances under which any such presumptions apply, and service connection would not be recognized if evidence demonstrated the diseases were the result of other causes.

In addition, the Senate bill calls for reforms in the Defense Nuclear Agency's preparation of estimates of radiation doses, as well as a study of the various means of assessing an individual's past radiation exposure and a method for resolving disputes over dose estimates.

The bill also would amend Public Laws 96-151 and 98-160 (both deal with epidemiological studies) to require VA to prepare any necessary amendments to its regulations promptly after find-

For Information on the Agent Orange Lawsuit Settlement...

Veterans seeking information about the May 7, 1984, tentative out-of-court settlement in the class-action suit on behalf of Vietnam veterans and their dependents against seven manufacturers of Agent Orange can call the following toll-free numbers;

From New York::	800-832-1303
From other states:	800-645-1355

or they can write to the Agent Orange Plaintiff's Management Committee, 26 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11242. Public hearings on the proposed settlement will be conducted by the trial judge at various locations around the country. The hearings will be held in New York City, August 8-10; Chicago, August 13-14; Houston, August 16-17; Atlanta, August 20-21; and San Francisco, August 23-24. For further information concerning these hearings, contact the Plaintiff's Management Committee at the telephone numbers or address listed above.

ings of these studies are reported. Public Law 96-151 -- Veterans' Health Programs Extension and Improvement Act of 1979 -- requires VA, unless it is determined infeasible, to conduct an epidemiological study of Vietnam veterans exposed to dioxin, including Agent Orange. The study was transferred to the Centers for Disease Control in January 1983. Public Law 98-160 -- Veterans' Health Care Amendments of 1983 -- requires VA to conduct an epidemiological study of the long-term effects of radiation exposure resulting from atmospheric nuclear testing or the post-World War II occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Senate referred the bill to the House of Representatives for further action, and requested that a formal conference committee be appointed to work out the differences between the two versions. At the time this newsletter was printed, no further action had been taken by Congress.

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Who Served in Vietnam**

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