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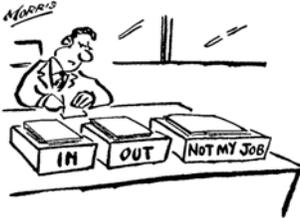


VFC News

From: "Paul Sutton" <sstusmc6169@yahoo.com>
To: <undisclosed recipients:>
Sent: Tuesday, October 22, 2013 12:09 PM
Subject: USAF Refuses to Designate C-123s as "Agent Orange Exposure Sites"

More, not so good news from Wes Carter:

USAF Refuses to Designate C-123s as "Agent Orange Exposure Sites"



"Not our job," can be the summation of the USAF response to veterans' request to designate the toxic C-123 aircraft as "Agent Orange Exposure Sites." Go try the VA, was the decision by DCS/Logistics, Installations and Mission Support and Lieutenant General Judith Fedder.

Although all C-123s were destroyed back in June 2010 in special operations due to their confirmed dioxin contamination, veterans flew and were exposed aboard these warplanes for a decade after the Vietnam War.

Concerned, and rebuffed by the VA which refused them medical care, the veterans asked the VA to consider in retrospect designating the known spray planes as exposure sites to permit claims to progress. Thus, veterans proving duty aboard these C-123s might progress in their claims for VA medical care for Agent Orange-associated illnesses.

Predictably, VA refused, referring the problem to the Air Force. So the veterans eventually identified the AF office with responsibility, and has recently also been refused their help. "Not our job," claim both AF and VA. [Her letter is below, and our letter requesting reconsideration hasn't been answered.](#)

Because of their known history of spraying Agent Orange, and because of the decades of AF-confirmed tests establishing their dioxin contamination, these aircraft are clearly covered by the language of both agencies' dealings with Agent Orange Exposure Sites. Because the CDC/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the National Institutes of Health/National Toxicology Program concur both with the contamination and the veterans' exposure, it begs the question what leads the AF to disagree?

We have absolutely no doubt that LtGen Fedder and her troops would storm the barricades to protect any active duty troop from potential harm. Like the School of Aerospace Medicine, that's their mission and their dedication can be assumed and relied upon.

What we find disappointing is the failure of DCS/Logistics, Installations and Mission Support to consider any reasonable, merely administrative retroactive steps to make right earlier mistakes...mistakes such as AFMC and the AF Surgeon deciding not to notify already-exposed C-123 veterans that we'd had a decade of service aboard toxic airplanes! Is this only to justify the earlier decision by the Air Force Surgeon General not to notify already-exposed C-123 veterans "to prevent their undue distress," as his

office explained?



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

AUG 22 2013

HQ USAF/A4/7
1030 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1030

Major (Ret) Wesley T. Carter
Chair & Legislative Liaison
C-123 Veterans Association
2349 Nut Tree Lane
McMinnville, OR 97128

Dear Major Carter:

Thank you for your follow-up response letter dated July 20, 2013 requesting additional assistance in designating C-123 aircraft as "Agent Orange Exposure Sites." We fully understand and appreciate the challenges you are facing in pursuit of veterans claims, but regrettably we are still unable to fulfill your request.

In my July 10, 2013 letter, I noted that even though some C-123 aircraft were found to have residual levels of Herbicide Orange on the interior surfaces following use in Vietnam, the medical community was and is still not able to confirm that the level of residuals could contribute to adverse health effects. Our assessment remains unchanged; we cannot designate these aircraft as Agent Orange Exposure Sites.

We discussed your concerns with DoD Health Affairs and they advocate continued pursuit of resolution through Veterans Affairs channels. The recent decision by the VA to provide benefits to Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Paul Bailey was a very positive step and signifies progress in the VA's willingness to work with each veteran pursuing a claim.

Again, thank you for your dedicated service and for the opportunity to address your additional concerns. My staff and I value your input and hope you are able to resolve your claims with the VA soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith A. Edder", is written over a circular stamp.

JUDITH A. EDDER
Lieutenant General, USAF
DCS/Logistics, Installations & Mission Support

Attachment:
Washington Post Article, 8 August 2013

