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**Description Notes** Includes "Agent Orange Controversy: Is Agent Orange Responsible for Health problems Reported Among Vietnam Veterans?", OSTP Issue 1981-1988; Agenda for the Domestic policy Council Agent Orange Working Group at DHHS; "Air Force Health Study: Study Overview and Update," Air Force Systems Command; three articles, "Agent Orange: An American Tragedy", Joe Cole, The Stars and Stripes National Tribune, November 14, 1988, "Legion Testimony Attacks CDC Study of Agent Orange", The Missouri Veterans News, "The Declassified War", Anthony L. Kimery, Veteran, November/December, 1988; correspondence from Congress to Donald M. Newman, Chairman, Agent Orange Working Group, November 22, 1988; memorandum from National Vietnam Veterans Coalition, November 1988, No. 48, "Agent Orange: Pending New Legislation"

OSTP ISSUE  
1981-1988

# AGENT ORANGE CONTROVERSY

Is Agent Orange Responsible  
For Health Problems Reported  
Among Vietnam Veterans?

# BACKGROUND

- o From 1965 to 1970, USAF Applied in Tactical Operations in South Vietnam, 42 Million Liters of Agent Orange.
  
- o 2.5 Million Military Personnel From the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and South Korea Served One-Year Tours During the Same Period.

BACKGROUND (Cont'd)

- Beginning in 1978 Many Veterans Of That Era Reported Medical Problems That They Believed Stemmed From Exposure To Agent Orange During Their Military Assignment.
- Complaints Have Ranged From Tingling In the Extremities To Skin Disfigurement And Rare Forms Of Cancer. Some Veterans Have Fathered Children With Birth Defects.

# DPC AGENT ORANGE WORKING GROUP (AOWG)

- 1981 President Reagan Established the AOWG.
  - Chaired By Under Secretary Of HHS
  - Serves As Overall Coordinator, Clearinghouse, And Evaluator Of The Federal Research Efforts
- Policy Group - HHS, DOD, VA, OMB, OPD and OSTP
- Science Panel - CDC, NIOSH, NIEHS, NCI, Air Force, OSHA, EPA, USDA, DOS, & OTA

# STATUS OF AOWG ACTIVITIES

- In The Past 7 Years, AOWG Provided Oversight To 10 Major Health Studies And 5 Major Health Surveillance Programs.
- Federal Agencies Have Expended \$200 M On Human, Toxicologic And Environmental Studies.
- CDC/Air Force Developed State-Of-The-Art Methods For Detecting And Verifying Exposure.
- Serum Dioxin Studies Completed On Ground Troops.

- o Serum Dioxin Analyses Underway For Cohorts In Air Force Health Study (The Men Who Served in AF Defoliation Program In SEA And Their Matched Controls).

# FINDINGS

To Date, No Major Health Effects (Mortality, Cancer Or Birth Defects In Children) Can Be Associated With Agent Orange Exposure in Vietnam.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Retain DPC Agent Orange Working Group
- Retain HHS As Chair
- Within 18 Months, CDC Rare Cancer Study  
And Air Force Health Study Will Be  
Completed.
- Publish Findings, Brief Congress
- Close-Out AOWG



AGENDA FOR THE DOMESTIC POLICY  
COUNCIL AGENT ORANGE WORKING GROUP

December 6, 1988 - 2:00-3:00 P.M.

Welcome and Introductions..... Chairman Don Newman

Report from DOD.....Admiral Edward Blasser, DAS/Defense

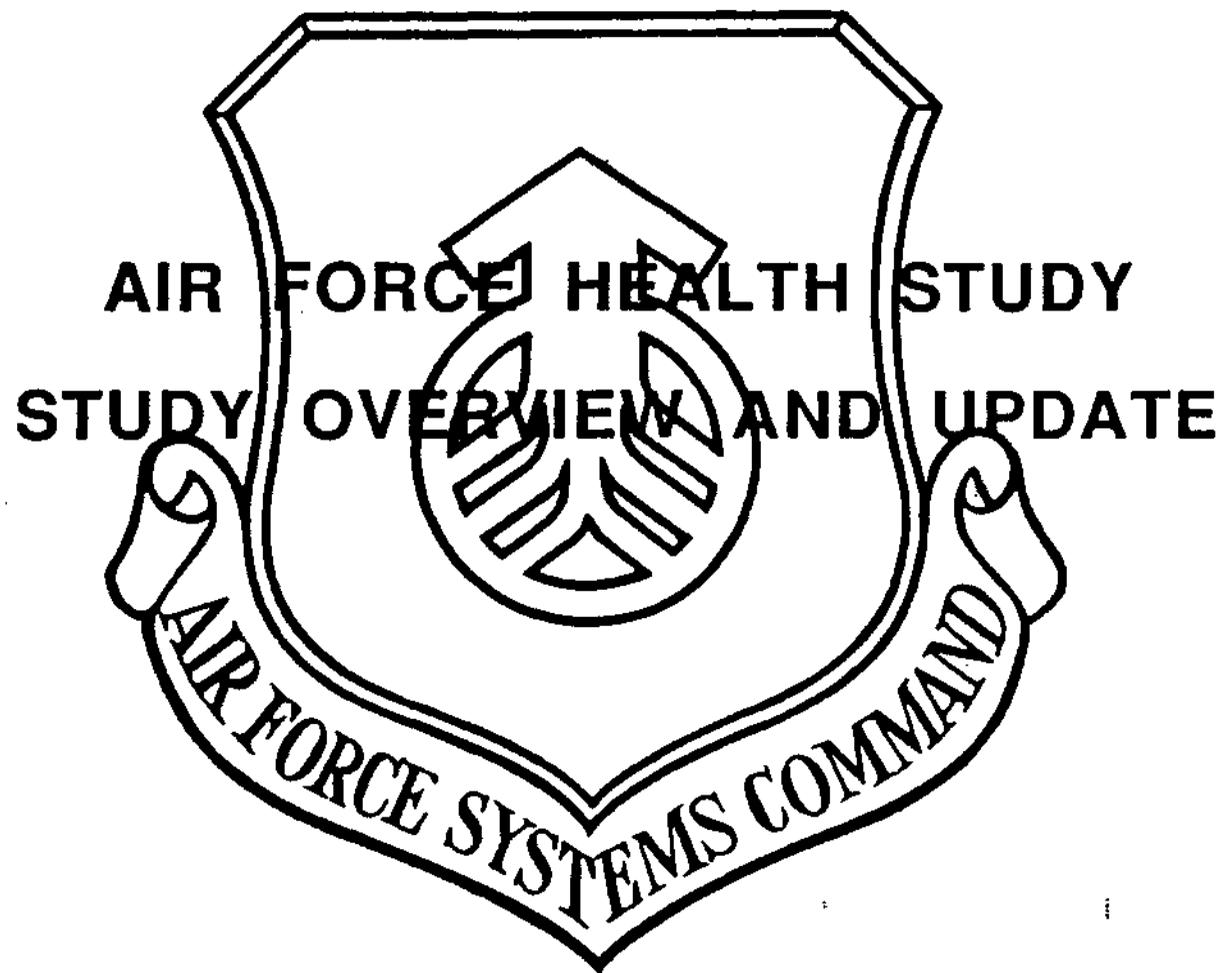
A presentation by Major-General James Sanders, Air Force  
Deputy Surgeon-General and the USAF Health Study (Ranch  
Hand) team.

Report from Chairman Science Panel.....Dr. Vernon Houk

Remarks from the Veterans Administration.....Don Ivers

Other business from Members.....Chairman Don Newman

Closing remarks.....Chairman Don Newman



**AIR FORCE HEALTH STUDY**

**STUDY OVERVIEW AND UPDATE**

**DECEMBER 1988**

**BRIEFER:**

**COL WILLIAM H. WOLFE**



## SERUM DIOXIN STUDIES

ASSAY DEVELOPED AT CDC TO DETECT DIOXIN IN SERUM  
AT PARTS PER TRILLION LEVEL

JOINT USAF/CDC EFFORTS:  
HALF-LIFE STUDIES (7.1 YEARS)  
ASSAY OF AFHS PARTICIPANTS

PRETEST OF 200 DEMONSTRATED ASSAY VALIDITY  
RANCH HAND MEAN = 48.0 PPT  
COMPARISON MEAN = 4.8 PPT

EXPANDED STUDY OF 2010 PARTICIPANTS  
TO BE COMPLETED IN 1989  
FUNDED BY HQ AFSC WITH REIMBURSEMENT FROM  
EXCESS VA FUNDS (S.11)  
DETAILS OF TRANSFER BEING ARRANGED  
FUNDS TO COVER COST OF ASSAYS AND ANALYSIS



## STATUS TO DATE

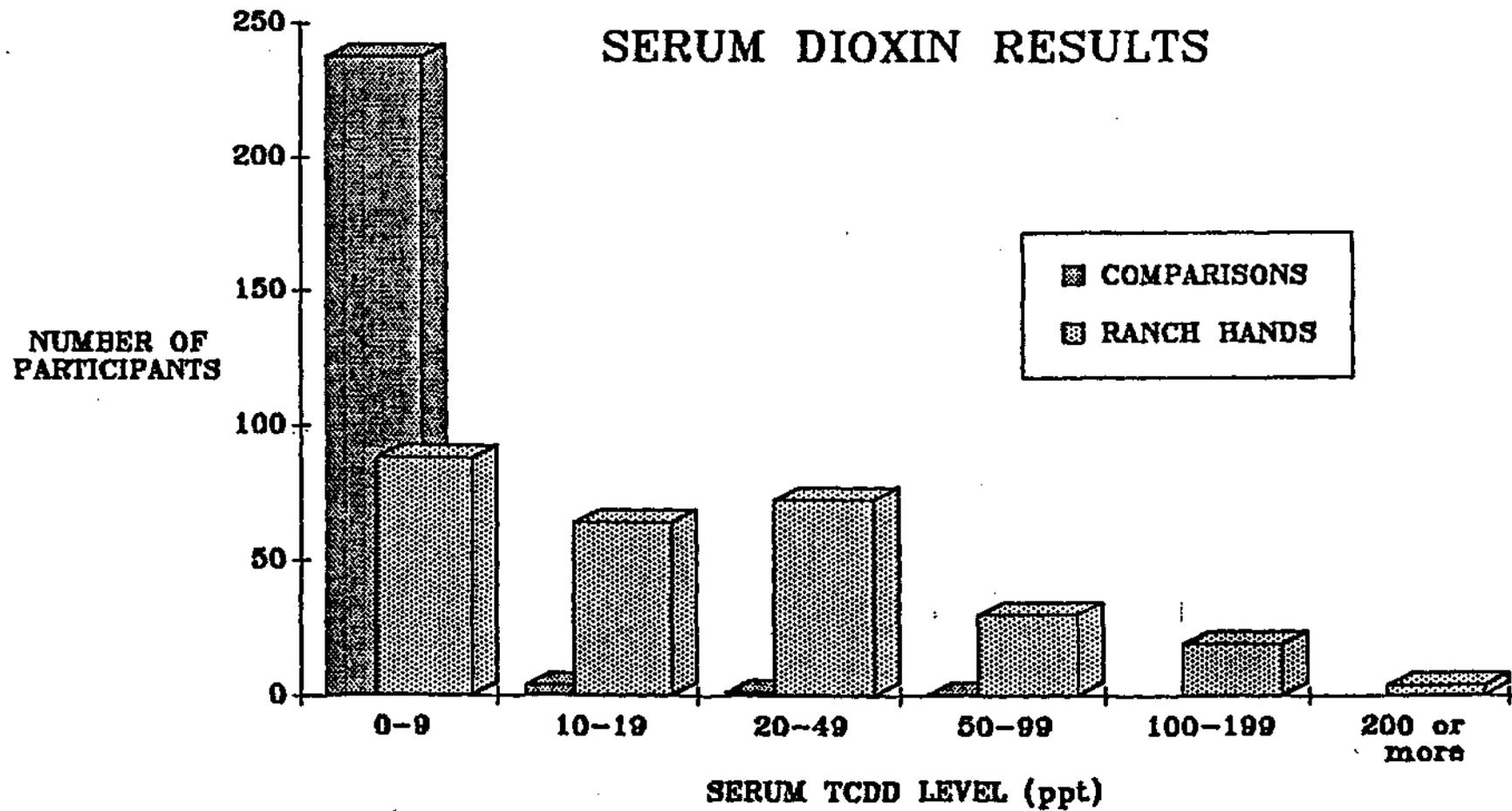
### SERUM DIOXIN VALUES IN AFHS PERSONNEL

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>MEAN</u>	<u>RANGE</u>
RANCH HAND	283	35.0	1.6 - 313
COMPARISON	246	4.8	0 - 84
RANCH HAND ENLISTED GROUND	184	46.3	1.6 -313

OTHER OCCUPATIONAL STRATA ARE TOO SPARSE  
FOR ANALYSIS AT THIS TIME

# AIR FORCE HEALTH STUDY

## SERUM DIOXIN RESULTS





## SCHEDULE OF REPORTS

<u>REPORT</u>	<u>PUBLICATION DATE</u>
1989 MORTALITY UPDATE COMPARISON COHORT EXPANDED (N=19, 101)	WINTER 1988/1989
BIRTH DEFECT REANALYSIS BASED ON FULLY VERIFIED DATA	SUMMER /FALL 1989
THIRD MORBIDITY REPORT	FALL/WINTER 1989



## FUTURE PLANS

- 1989 COMPLETE SERUM DIOXIN ASSAYS
- 1990 ANALYZE SERUM DIOXIN DATA AND PUBLISH REPORT
- 1991 PREPARE FOR AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THIRD FOLLOWUP EXAMINATIONS
- 1992 CONDUCT PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS
- 1993 ANALYZE DATA
- 1994 PUBLISH REPORT



## **AFHS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ISSUES**

**SCIENCE PANEL OF THE AOWG STRONGLY SUPPORTS KEEPING  
THE CURRENT ARRANGEMENT WITHIN DHHS**

**USAF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS STRONGLY FAVOR CURRENT STRUCTURE  
ANY ACTION BY USAF OR DOD TO MANAGE THE COMMITTEE OR  
SELECT ITS MEMBERS WILL GENERATE CHARGES OF INTERFERENCE OR  
CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**INTENSE CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST EMPHASIZES NEED TO  
MAINTAIN SCIENTIFIC INDEPENDENCE**



## **AFHS ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RENEW CHARTER OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**RETAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMITTEE WITHIN DHHS**

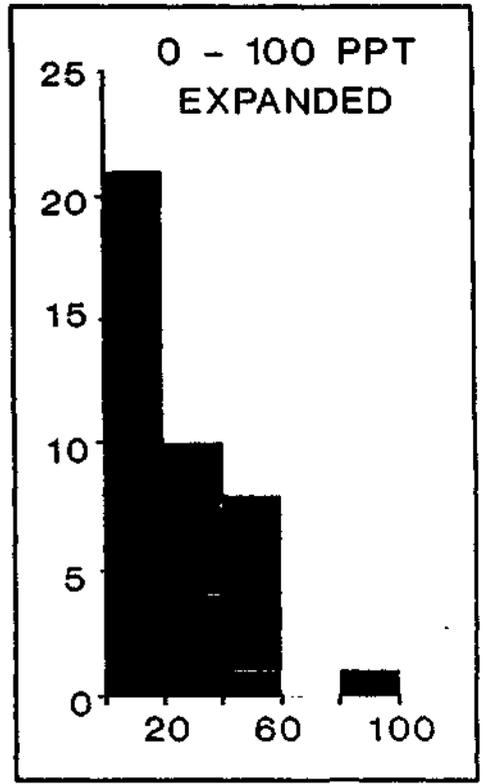
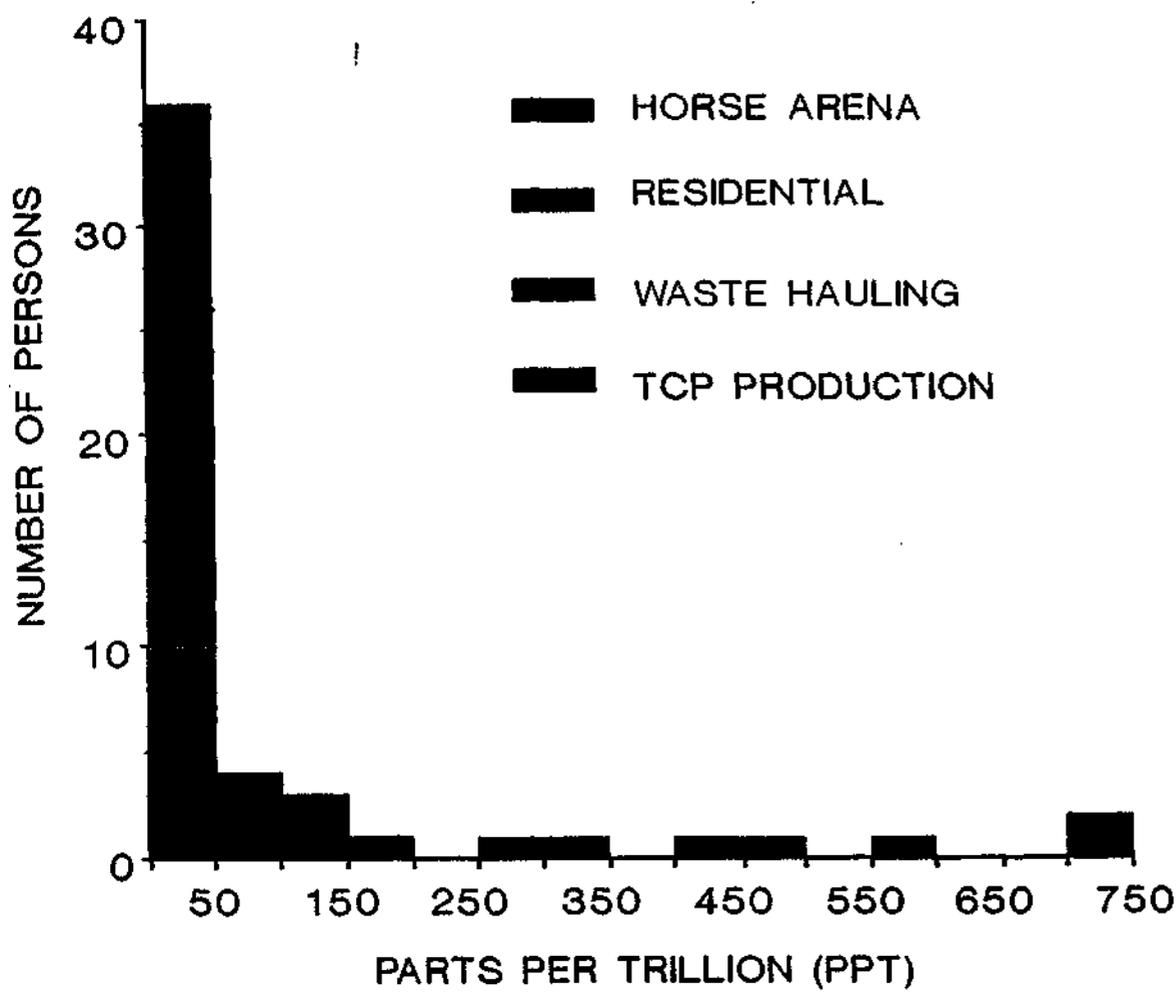
**SELECT MEMBERS AFTER REQUESTING NOMINEES FROM  
VETERANS GROUPS**

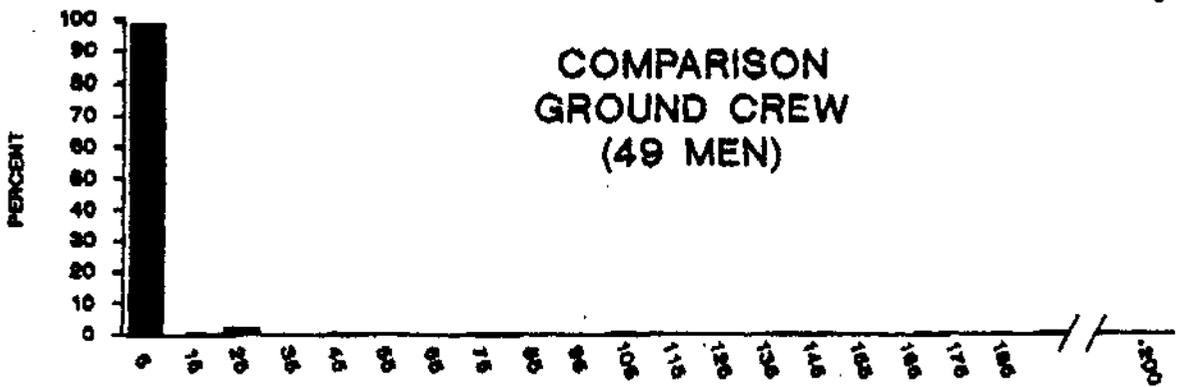
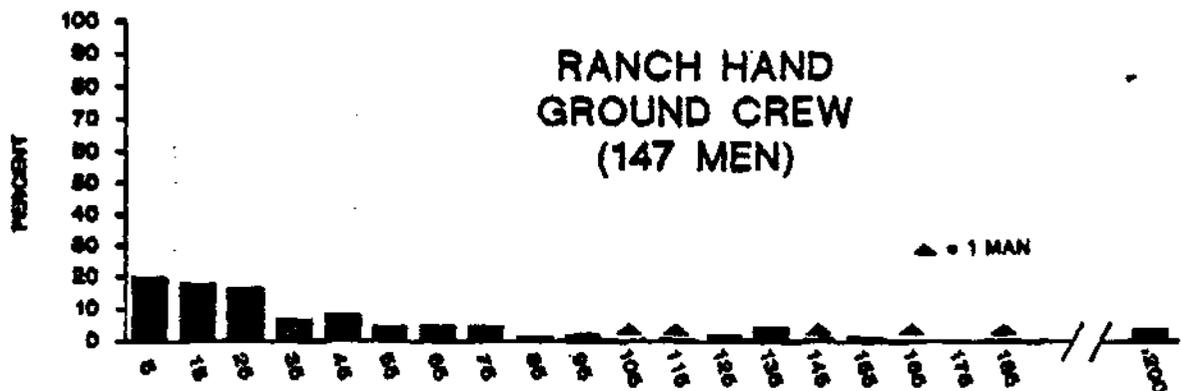
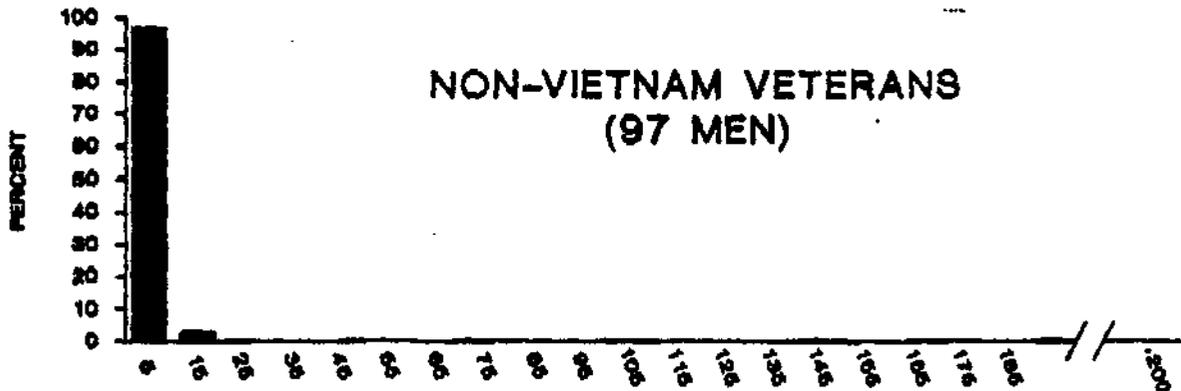
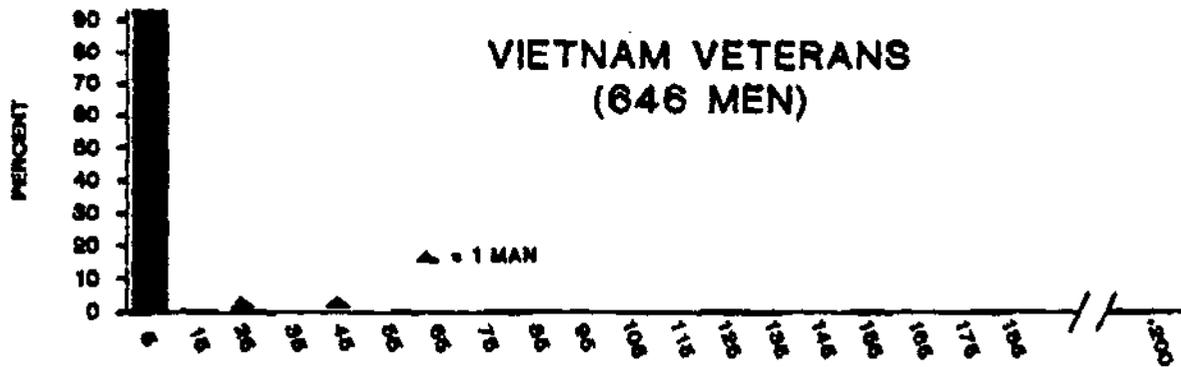
**SELECT CHAIRMAN FROM CIVILIANS CURRENTLY SERVING**

**DR LEONARD KURLAND**

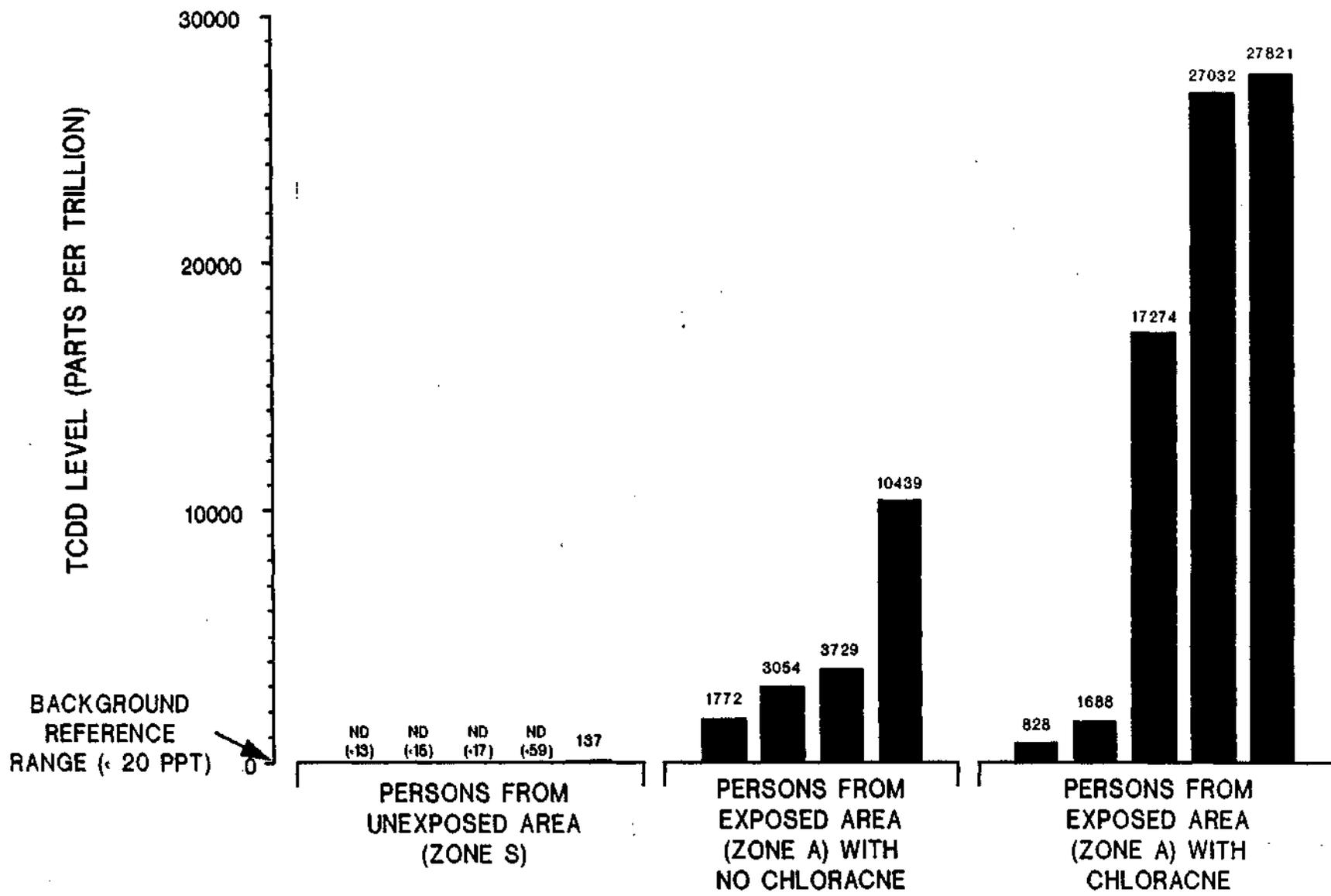
**DR RICHARD MONSON**

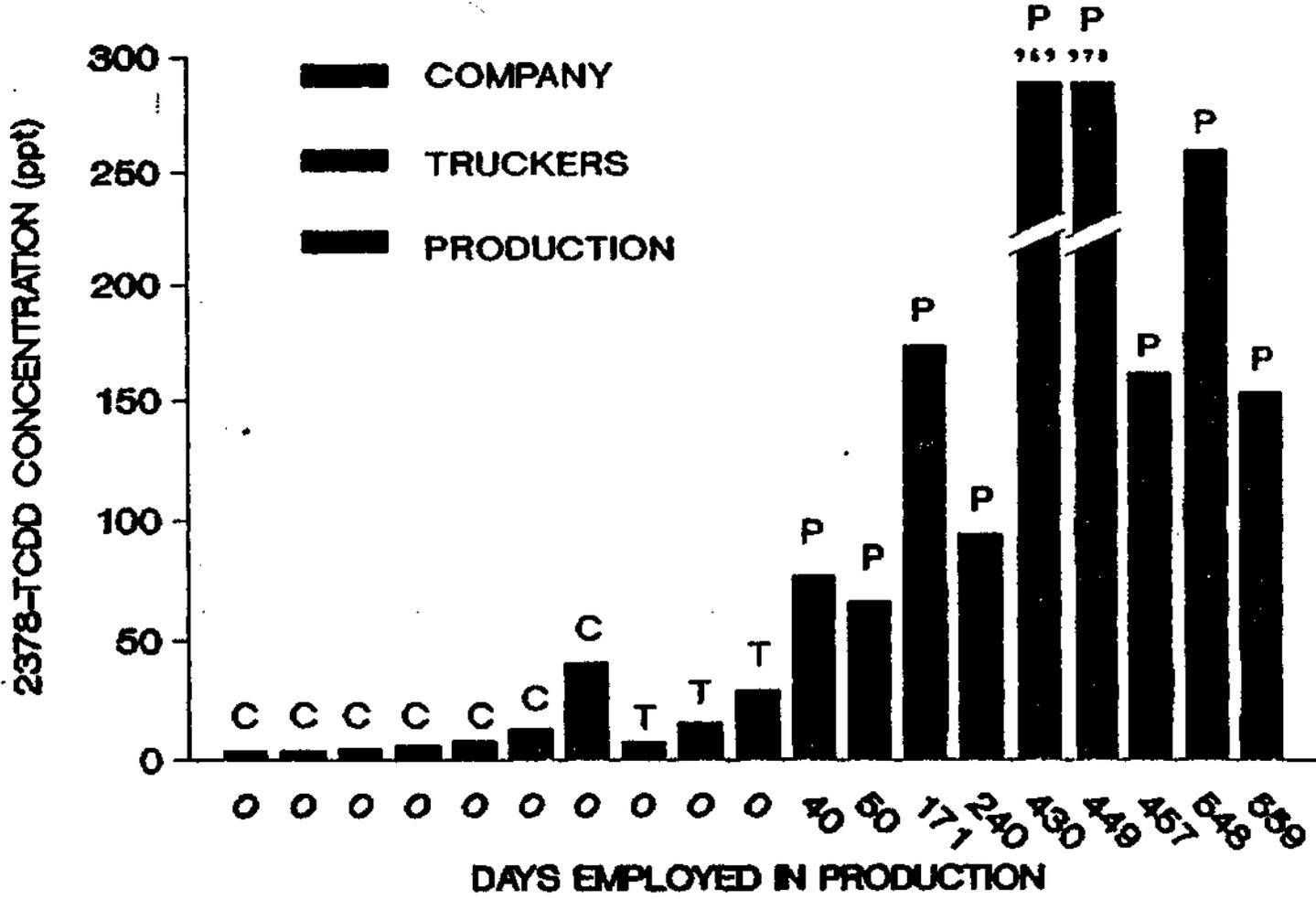
# ADIPOSE TISSUE TCDD LEVELS IN EXPOSED PERSONS MISSOURI 1986

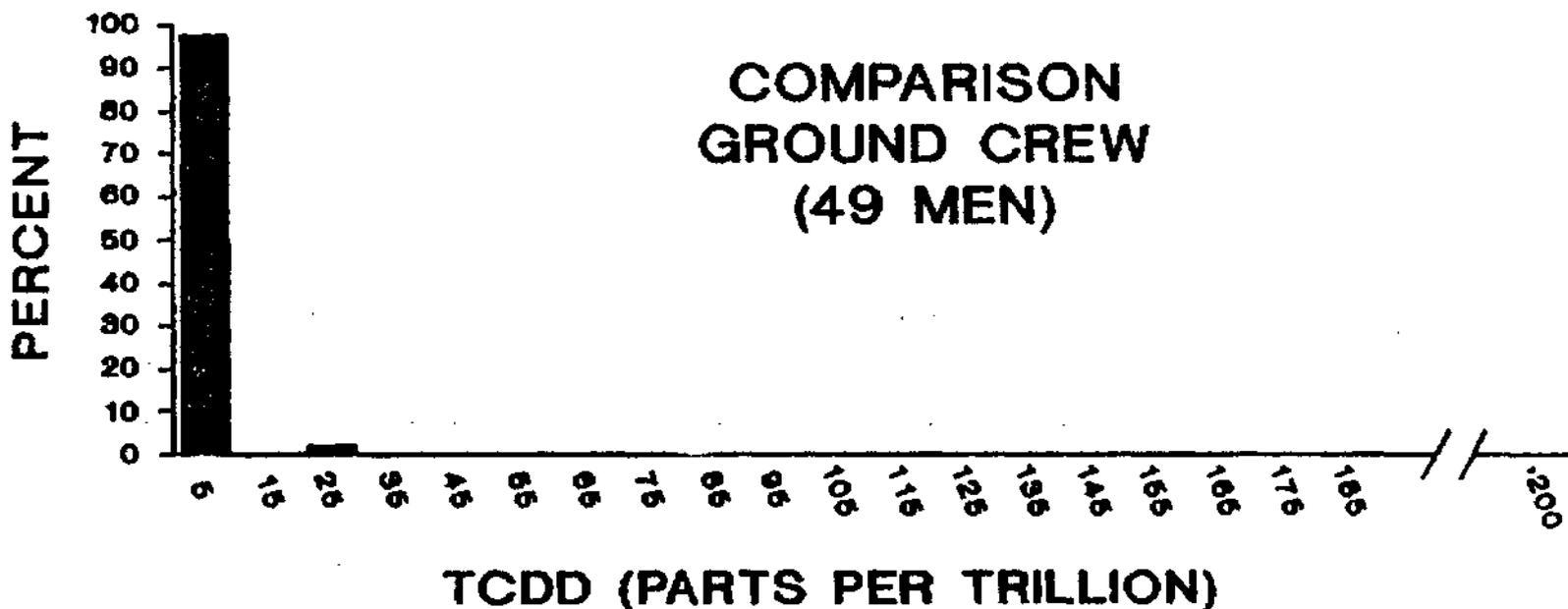
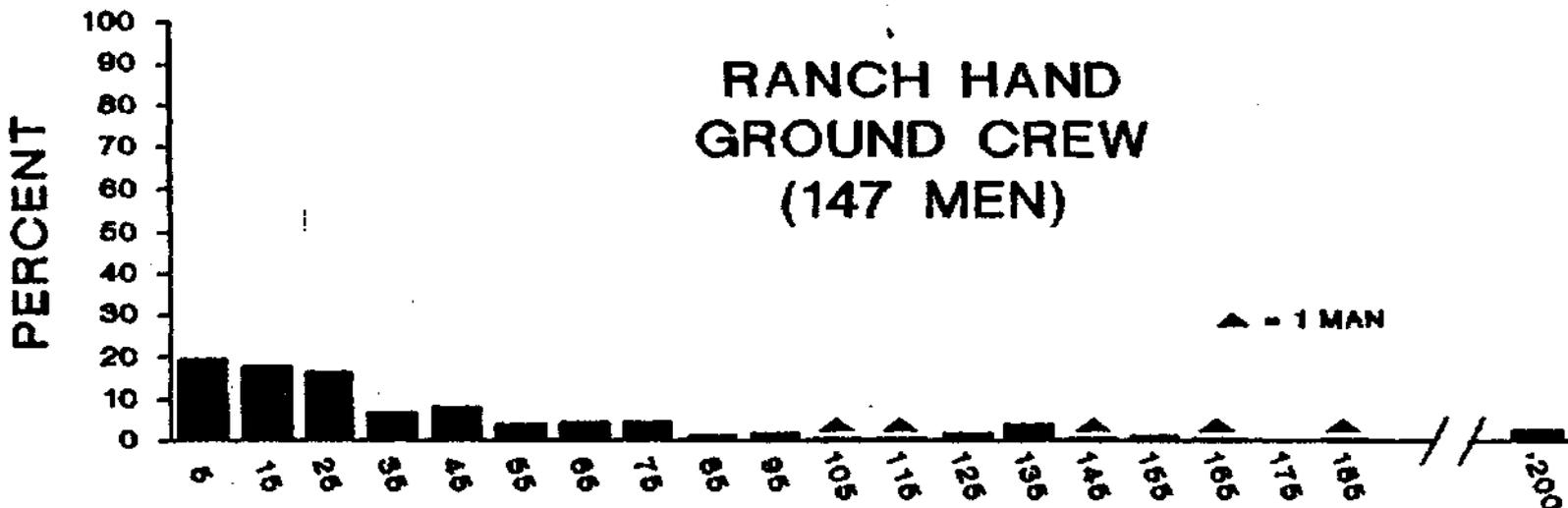




TCCD (PARTS PER TRILLION)







TCDD (PARTS PER TRILLION)

# The Stars and Stripes



Times Tribune

"To Care For Him Who Shall  
Here Borne The Battle And  
For His Widow And His Orphan"  
Abraham Lincoln

14 NOVEMBER 1988

THE STARS AND STRIPES—THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE

7

## Agent Orange: An American Tragedy

By Joe Cole

In May 1983 officials of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommend evacuation of the Quail Run Mobile Home Park near Times Beach, Missouri, after E.P.A. officials find dioxin contamination in excess of four times that of the town of Times Beach (1,100 ppb.). More than 90 percent of the town of Times Beach, located approximately 25 miles southwest of St. Louis, Mo., was found to be contaminated with more than 100 ppb. of dioxin, according to a January 1983 report. CDC officials warned the more than 3,000 residents to stay away because of health hazards.

Police were stopping the residents from removing personal belongings out of fear of spreading the contaminants to other areas. Flooding of the Meramec River may have further contaminated vast areas of southern Missouri.

Russell Bliss, owner of Russell Bliss

Drain Oil Service, has been identified as the source of much of the contaminated waste oils which were sprayed on over 100 sites in southern Missouri, including Times Beach. The town of Times Beach paid Bliss \$4,800 for two applications of the contaminated waste oils in 1971 and 1972. The federal government has since paid a reported 34.5 million dollars for the purchase of Times Beach, as part of the EPA Super-fund hazardous waste site clean-up program.

Last April 1988, Mr. Brian Manza, a disabled Vietnam veteran, visited the Times Beach site, only to be turned away by EPA officials, wearing "moon suits" as Brian described them. The entire area was fenced and posted as an extremely hazardous waste site. Brian's concerns are obvious to Vietnam veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals in Vietnam.

Millions of gallons of Agent Orange, contaminated with dioxin were sprayed over vast areas of Vietnam. If two spray missions using less than 5,000 gallons of contaminated oil could do this to a town in Missouri, what could millions of gallons of oil-based herbicides contaminated with dioxin at thousands of times the level found in Times Beach do to a country called Vietnam?

In 1986, the Centers for Disease Control conducted blood serum studies of Vietnam veterans, as a possible method of identifying those veterans who may have been exposed to toxic chemicals while serving in the Vietnam War. Their findings indicated that Vietnam veterans' levels of dioxin in blood were similar to those samples of persons who had not served in Vietnam. Since the non-ex-

posed comparison group was selected from the Times Beach and Southern Missouri area, one can only speculate as to the meaning of the studies results. Southern Missouri is no better nor worse than Vietnam.

Last 7 July 1988, the Department of Defense declassified documents which revealed that the Defense Department had purchased a chemical plant at Weldon Springs, Missouri, which was to produce 8 million gallons of Agent Orange per year by late 1969, over and above the entire domestically produced product, which was currently being used for defoliation in Vietnam.

Declassified USMACV reports indicate herbicide use in Vietnam during 1967 through 1969 was 11.9 million gallons per year. Weldon Springs, Missouri is located approximately 25 miles west of St. Louis.\*

## Legion Testimony Attacks CDC Study of Agent Orange

WASHINGTON (ALNS) — The government has "fallen short of its responsibility" to compensate victims of Agent Orange exposure, an American Legion spokesman has told a House subcommittee.

The statement submitted by John Sommer, director of the Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, expressed serious concern for the government's lack of responsibility in recognizing any problems associated with dioxin exposure. Sommer criticized the Centers for Disease Control for its mishandling of research data, and for its interpretation of the data the CDC researchers did gather.

Sommer pointed out that the CDC study of Agent Orange exposure was so limited by the restrictions upon just what veterans would be included that an accurate picture of these veterans was not developed. Veterans eliminated from the group which the agency looked at were those who served more than one tour in Vietnam, those who served in a particular unit for fewer than 180 days, those who were above the rank of E-5, those who transferred from one unit to another during their tour, and any veteran who served any number of days before or after the proposed study window (January, 1967-December, 1968).

The U. S. sprayed more than 12 million gallons of Agent Orange on an area

smaller than the size of New Jersey during the war. "It is absurd that the CDC says that it cannot find enough people to study," Sommer said. He told the members that the CDC developed a study that was "destined to fail."

Basic research flaws were committed by the CDC, Sommer said. Among the errors made were what he called "cardinal sins of epidemiology." First, the CDC research diluted the effects of Agent Orange exposure by including in the study group every person in Vietnam. For example, about 1 in every 5 men who served in Vietnam actually served in combat. The CDC "generalized" exposure to Agent Orange across the entire service population in Vietnam, so that the 20 per cent likely to be exposed was diluted by the other 80 per cent of the non-exposed men.

To further weaken the CDC's study, the veterans who were not included in the study took away the "statistical power" of the potential dioxin victims. "A knowledgeable epidemiologist would try to optimize the chance of observing an effect by including, rather than excluding, the veterans who are most likely to have suffered from exposures in question," Sommer said.

Sommer also alleged that the CDC would minimize any findings which would tie Vietnam service to health

problems. Levels of combat were not analyzed, nor were other studies which showed that levels of combat had a great deal to do with health problems of Vietnam veterans looked at. "It seems that every time the CDC came up with a positive finding, it was interpreted to be either negative or wrong," Sommer told the committee.

The CDC also failed to avail itself of the comprehensive computer analysis of Vietnam service and where troops were during different periods. He said that the data, developed by the U.S. Army and Joint Services Environmental Support Group, is one of the most carefully developed and extensive records of any environmental exposure to be found anywhere. He chastised the CDC for opting for a simplistic approach, rather than using this vital and readily available tool.

Despite Congressional mandates calling on the Veterans Administration to pay a certain amount for certain diseases, not one Agent Orange claim has yet to be paid. The VA also denied a presumption for certain problems to be related to dioxin exposure, denying even more veterans the right to collect disability compensation.

Sommer's testimony also endorsed a legislative initiative which would exclude payments made to veterans and their survivors under the Agent Orange liability settlement in 1984 from being counted as income when determining eligibility for or entitlement to a veteran's or survivor's pension or a veteran's medical care under means test provisions. He also called for the bill to be extended beyond VA programs, to include any need-based government assistance program.



# The Declassified War

## Documents Disclose A/O Use Counterproductive And Ineffective

By Anthony L. Kimery

It has been nearly 20 years since the last orange-striped, 55-gallon drum of Agent Orange was sprayed on the green canopy of Southeast Asia. Since that time, the debate about its use and lethal side effects has appeared steadily throughout what are now yellowing pages of newspaper, scientific journals, congressional hearings, and scholarly attempts to relate the history of its use, abuse, and deadly, devastating consequences. Yet, after all that, there is still another story to be told. It is the story about the internal politics, politics, and decision-making regarding the use of chemical defoliants in Southeast Asia. The story is based on reams of newly declassified military records that were recently released by the Army for storage at the National Records and Archives Center near Washington, DC.

This reporter spent weeks examining these records, most of which were declassified for the first time since being turned over to the National Archives. The documents show that America's use of defoliants in South Vietnam—a program that would be expanded to include Laos and Cambodia in direct violation of MACV directives governing the use of herbicides—was a hotly debated and often strongly contested concept among military and political planners, strategists, and analysts.

Agent Orange and its chemical cousin, Agent White, were first introduced to South Vietnam in 1962, albeit in limited quantities. According to the documents turned over by the Army to the National Archives, the defoliants were earmarked for three broad purposes. First, they offered a means to destroy crops and therefore deny foodstuffs to the burgeoning Vietcong movement in the countryside; second, they offered a means to dampen infiltration by providing observation corridors to South Vietnamese aerial spotters; and third, they offered support for allied operations—by clearing out landing zones and firebases. Between its introduction in 1962 and the end of the program in the early 1970's, the U.S. government dumped 20 to 40 million gallons of the chemical on Southeast Asia, according to the documents. Exact figures are hard to come by, in apparent reflection of the willy-nilly planning of the U.S. program.

While actual day-to-day chemical operations were under the titular control of the South Vietnamese government, it's clear the U.S. initiated and monitored the program's effectiveness.

Contrary to popular belief, the most heated debates about the use of defoliants were not over the dangers they posed to human health, but over whether the principal reasons for their being used were justified. The Archives' records indicate that the military has long been aware that the saturation of South Vietnam with

herbicides was actually causing more problems than it was solving.

The declassified records show that the horrific aftermath of Ranch Hand should have been avoided on the grounds that the program was counterproductive with respect to the objectives it hoped to achieve. Yet it was allowed to continue. The documents also indicate that within just a few years of their introduction to Vietnam, and continuing through the early 1970's, there was overwhelming evidence that the use of defoliants was not hindering the VC by depriving them of foodstuffs.

A study conducted on the use of herbicides between 1961 and June 1967, for instance, found that there had been no effects of any significance from the use of the herbicides. The study concluded that their use was instead causing damage with respect to wounding the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese.

This report, and many others, clearly pointed to the negligible benefits of the further use of defoliants. A major policy review was convened in 1968 which, while conceding that the risks of using the defoliants did not outweigh the benefits, concluded that defoliation efforts should be intensified. As a result of this study, a clause was built into subsequent directives for using herbicides to permit their use in heavily populated areas, "in those cases of extreme military necessity." More important still, the military documents show that economic considerations brought about by the government's multi-million-dollar commitment to bringing on-line a government-run Agent Orange production plant was an important factor in escalating defoliation efforts.

In late 1967, prior to the broad-based policy review on the use of defoliants in South Vietnam, the American military command in South Vietnam prepared a memorandum containing harsh language about the "disadvantages" of using herbicides. "The herbicide program carries with it the potential for causing serious adverse impacts on the economic, social, and psychological fields," the report concluded. Nevertheless, the proponents of Agent Orange within MACV continued to push for expanded use of Agent Orange and other herbicides. Consequently, the debate about their use continued to be rigorously fought in Saigon, despite doubts about the herbicides' actual effectiveness.

Probably no better illustration of the conflict within the military over the use of herbicides is a July 1967 MACV memorandum setting forth new criteria for defoliant use. "Crop destruction should continue to be the highest priority for the use of herbicides," the



memorandum states. It adds, "there has never been a question as to the effectiveness of crop destruction." This conclusion, however, is in glaring contrast to what military contracted studies and intelligence reports were showing. A RAND Corporation report concluded in October 1967 that the VC required only three percent of the total food consumed in the country, that the crop-destruction operations were not in any major sense denying food to the VC, and that Vietnamese peasants, the target of long-range pacification objectives, bore the brunt of the crop-destruction efforts, and they held the U.S. and the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) responsible.

As of July 31, 1968, the VC and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had a daily food requirement of about 215 short tons, according to the documents. About 58 percent, or 124 short tons, could be internally procured in South Vietnam. Of that, "only a small portion is produced by the enemy in areas subject to herbicide operations," a MACV report concluded. This report added that "food shortages are reported in captured documents, but they are temporary in nature and are often the result of distribution problems. The enemy usually meets the minimum food requirements of his military forces."

Numerous internal MACV reports, memorandums, and intelligence briefs support these conclusions. A 1968 MACV report on the RAND and other studies states, "reported food shortages have been the result of Allied sweep operations, not of herbicide operations."

This had already been spelled out earlier, in a December 1967 field report to MACV, which states, "this headquarters does not have empirical data on the effects of herbicide operations on VC/NVA food stocks, nor is there evidence that enemy combat operations have been cancelled because of food shortages resulting from crop destruction. Such food shortages as

*Continued on next page*

*Above: Three Air Force C-130s spray Orange in the A Shau. Right: A USAF airman operates spray equipment during defoliation mission*

are known to exist among the VC are the results of a many-faceted program to deny resources to the enemy." The report went on to state that "the effort and cost of employing crop destruction is insignificant in comparison to the troop effort required to control and secure an equivalent area of rice."

In a 1968 MACV evaluation of crop-destruction programs which followed the final 1968 herbicide policy review, Col. John Moran, chief of the Chemical Operations Division, stated that "herbicide crop destruction is only one aspect of a comprehensive food-denial program." Moran went on to state that deprivation of food is due more to "Allied sweep operations" and only "occasionally to herbicide operations."

The 1968 MACV evaluation also emphasizes, as did the contracted private studies, that "very few POWs who have infiltrated ever mention the efforts of U.S. herbicide operations. Some state that they have seen areas where vegetation has been killed but do not mention any infiltration problems caused by the defoliation. There are indications that U.S. herbicide operations have had a negligible effect on NVA infiltration and combat operations."

Yet, while this report says, "herbicide operations . . . appear to cause temporary food shortages in the area defoliated, but have little lasting effect on the VC/NVA food supply," it nevertheless states, "the CINCPAC Scientific Advisory Group concludes, without qualification, that the crop-destruction program is an essential and effective part of the total effort in South Vietnam."

If there was ever any doubt about the ineffectiveness of U.S. defoliation operations, however, they were put firmly to rest in a MACV briefing paper dated December 1967. "Within the context of what has been studied, it would appear the crop-destruction effort may well be counterproductive. The VC continue to feed themselves, while the peasant bears the brunt of the

deprivation and doesn't like it." In other words, the U.S. policy of spraying Agent Orange over wide areas of South Vietnam in order to deny the VC and NVA the use of cover and food resources was not only not working and unnecessary, it was actually harming the American war effort.

While it was agreed by military planners in Saigon that the use of herbicides was successful in denying the enemy cover, there is abundant evidence that defoliants did not significantly deprive the Vietcong access to food stores. One of the most damning condemnations of the use of herbicides found in the National Archives came in a November 20, 1968, letter from Robert H. Harlan, USAID assistant director for economic planning and policy and embassy counselor for economic affairs to U.S. ambassador Ellsworth Bunker.

Harlan protested the expanding use of defoliants in Quang Duc and Phu Boa Provinces. "I feel compelled to nonconcur in both proposals," Harlan wrote. "Although crop destruction operations may have had some successes, we suspect their effectiveness in hampering enemy military operations may have been exaggerated. The Report of the Herbicide Policy Review Committee, itself, on Page 17 pointed out, 'herbicide crop destruction is only one aspect of the efforts to deny foodstuffs to the VC/NVA. The enemy relies on commercial purchases, imports, taxation, requisition, and confiscation for some 90 percent of his food requirement.'"

The negligible contributions of herbicide operations were equally evident with respect to the effect that herbicide operations were having on the Vietnamese population. In the early 1960's, a herbicide evaluation report noted, "the chief sufferer from crop-destruction operations is the local worker." Such findings con-

tinued to mount through the balance of the 1960's and up until the 1968 policy review.

The same inconsistencies found in the debate about the effectiveness of denying food to the VC/NVA were just as replete in the debate over the psychological effects the defoliants were supposed to bring. One MACV report, *Advantages and Disadvantages of the Use of Herbicides in Vietnam*, states, "the herbicide program does not loom large as a public-opinion issue at the present time." At the same time, a MACCORDS evaluation report was stating that "the herbicide program is one of the most widely known programs" among the population, and it "is a natural topic of interest with people whose livelihood is in the land."

"The principal effect on pacification is the animosity the peasant feels initially towards the U.S. for being responsible for the damage," the MACCORDS evaluation says, "and then toward the GVN for its failure to rectify the situation. There is nothing that can be done beforehand to head off the alienation the peasant develops when his crops are destroyed." The MACCORDS report then summarizes the inadequacy of South Vietnam government efforts to compensate anti-VC peasants for the inadvertent loss of their crops.

"The present system is completely unsatisfactory from the point of view of rectifying the economic damage and its psychological impact by demonstrating to the peasant the concern of the government for his welfare," the report states.

"The slowness and unfairness of this system usually result in further alienation of the peasant. He is left to his own devices to find the means with which to replant his crop, if there is enough time left in the growing season, or to find some other means of supporting his family. Even if his claim were approved, the time lapse between submission and payment and the fact that it represents only a fraction of the actual damage, have the result of leaving the peasant in the hole and bearing the responsibility for an act he was helpless to prevent. As long as the present system remains, the pacification program is going to suffer unpredictable setbacks which it is at present unable to alleviate with any effectiveness . . . The net effect is to alienate him further from his government."

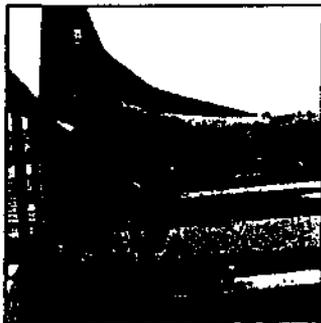
The report's conclusion seems to indicate that the spraying of Agent Orange was having more than just a slight impact on VC and NVA resources—it was actually turning pro-government peasants into anti-government guerrillas.

Col. Moran's report corroborates the MACCORDS evaluation. "The vast majority of the enemy's daily food requirement is procured through taxation of the people and purchases from the local markets," Moran wrote. "While the enemy's production capability has been reduced, his procurement efforts have enabled him to sustain his forces. The taxes levied on the people are in the form of food, money, and services. Through these measures, the enemy has been able to procure enough food from outside his areas to nearly offset his production losses."

"The obvious reaction of the peasant whose labors have been destroyed is one of bitterness and hatred. He will frequently direct this hatred toward the U.S./GVN for accomplishing the destruction. If he has previously leaned toward the VC, he is likely to side with them completely after the crop destruction."

"Captured documents and interrogation reports indicate that the detrimental effects of herbicide operations far outweigh the beneficial effects," Moran concludes. "Civilians living in VC/NVA-controlled areas, whose crops are destroyed by herbicide operations, have no recourse but to face famine and possible starvation as a result of Allied destruction of their crops."

The declassified documents clearly present a picture which shows that the U.S.'s defoliation program nullified pacification efforts by alienating the Vietnamese from not only the U.S., but from their own government as well. By the time the defoliation operations were stopped, the damage was irreparable. The documents also show that in other areas, the U.S. defoliation campaign was counterproductive to the U.S. war effort. The records show, for instance, that the destruction of valuable resources, such as harvestable timber and rubber trees, was far greater than was reported or admitted by the U.S. during the war.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

At right: USAF sprayers in stables in South Vietnam; they called for thousands of gallons. Below: Loading White on an Iroquois prior to defoliation mission. U.S. dispatched special chemical teams



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

**A**s public concerns over the use of herbicides intensified, the need for a policy was quickly recognized and embarked upon by the U.S. It is clear from the minutes of those meetings that the intent was to allay fears by not only continuing defoliation efforts, but by expanding them.

The first meeting on this subject took place on January 17, 1968, under the chairmanship of David Carpenter, political officer at the U.S. embassy. In a memorandum for the record distributed the following day by Col. Moran, he stresses that Carpenter "emphasized that if there should be a leak of this information to the press, the embassy would receive many inquiries which would be difficult to respond to."

Not only was the embassy keeping the true intent and purpose of the policy review from the press, it was also keeping it secret from the GVN. "Mr. Carpenter cautioned the members of the committee that there should be no release of the purpose and actions of the committee to the Republic of Vietnam," Moran wrote. "There may be a need to call on officials of the Republic of Vietnam for certain data; however, such contacts should be limited to the specific subject area involved without divulging any information of the policy review. He further requested that contacts with the Vietnamese government concerning these matters be conducted with his office."

Such secrecy contrasted with the U.S.'s repeated assertion that herbicide operations were strictly under the control of the GVN, with the U.S. providing only support and logistic roles. This was again reiterated at a September 20, 1968, background briefing for the press in Saigon following the policy review.

The answers provided to questions raised by the press during the briefing glaringly contradict information about the negligible effects of the defoliation programs. A memorandum to the secretary of state from Ambassador Bunker, drafted the week before the press briefing, establishes that the press, public, and even



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the GVN, were being deliberately deceived about the consequences of herbicide operations.

"We would prefer not to draw attention, even by implication, to the serious shortcomings the [policy] review revealed in the aspects of the [herbicide] programs," Bunker said.

Among the shortcomings that were being concealed was the growing concern over the economics of too much Agent Orange having been procured. By this time, "the entire commercial production of Orange [had been] diverted from domestic use to military requirements in Southeast Asia."

Throughout the late 1960's, beginning in 1967, military records declassified for the Veteran began to reflect that there were pressing economic reasons favoring the apparent unjustified reason to increase the use of defoliant, especially Agent Orange, which had wrongly been ordered in vast quantities because of a domestic shortage.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Left: Dr. James Brown inspects results of defoliant spraying. Below: Ranch hands inspect chemical storage tank onboard U.S. aircraft

In secret briefing papers prepared during late 1967, at a time when the Department of Defense was putting into motion an Agent Orange expansion program, it is evident that orders for Agent Orange had consistently far exceeded both the ability and capability for using this herbicide, which had caused an enormous surplus—a surplus that was only going to get worse with a new multi-million dollar, government-run Agent Orange production plant soon to come on-line as a result of the expansion program.

One of the conclusions of these briefing papers, which helped to prepare the way for the pending policy review, was that "MACV could be embarrassed if [the] plant expansion is carried out, and the programmed herbicide cannot be used."

A report prepared by USAF Col. H.F. Greenow, Material Division, put the economic reasons for unprecedented increase in the use of Agent Orange vividly in focus: "In view of the large inventory on hand, the huge investment in production capability, and the future low cost of Orange, it is imperative from an economic point of view that Orange be used to the maximum extent possible and that White be used only when there is a compelling operational requirement." Greenow stressed that "the MACV staff computing requirements need to be more accurate in their computations and project their requirements into the future and realize the dollar impact caused by changes in requirements."

By the time Greenow prepared his report, however, MACV's "overstatement of requirements" had caused "excess quantities [of Agent Orange] having been purchased," resulting in an 18-month supply on hand in the system, with an additional eight million gallons per year to begin being produced in December 1969 by the government's facility.

The pressure was on. Twenty-eight million gallons had been committed for the completion of this plant, located at Weldon Springs, Missouri, as a result of the deputy secretary of defense having, on erroneous information, ordered an Agent Orange expansion program on July 31, 1967, an order that came at a time when MACV was well aware that the use of Agent Orange was far less than it was forecasting, or had the capability to use. It was also at a time when the MACV secret briefing papers were pointing out that "MACV could be embarrassed if plant expansion is carried out, and the programmed herbicide cannot be used."

By early 1969, the problem with the surplus of Agent Orange was embarrassingly out of hand. Communications traffic during this time period was frenetic with requests and discussions about reducing the surplus of Agent Orange. As a result, Agent Orange began to be used for every defoliation purpose. The use of all other herbicides was brought to an abrupt halt, while a number of policies governing the use of defoliant were relaxed in order to deplete the Agent Orange surplus.

Since "Agent Orange stocks were in long supply, and costly contract terminations were involved," one memorandum states in communications used in the decision to halt the use of other defoliant, the termination of the use of other herbicides "should result in considerable dollar savings from acceptance and max-

imum use of Orange."

Another memorandum emphasizes the need to use "Orange in lieu of White to avoid further procurement of White." Contracts for Agent Orange were having to be "terminated at costs in excess of 1.5 million dollars," with "ultimate" contract terminations costing the government \$19.1 million—a reflection of the US government's inability to draw-down the Agent Orange surplus.

"Considerable dollar savings may be expected from acceptable and maximum use of Orange," another memorandum states. "Forestalling potential future criticism of herbicide procurements should result if Orange can be employed to a greater extent . . . request review of requirements for both Orange and White herbicides and recommendations concerning possible means to increase substitution of Orange for White."

Memorandum after memorandum reiterates the surplus problem. "White is being consumed at higher than forecast rates and is in short supply, while Orange is heavily overstocked," one report notes. "Every effort must be made to schedule herbicide operations in such a manner that White will not be used in lieu of Orange," another report says.

"Considerations argue strongly for use of Orange, which is overstocked," wrote Army deputy assistant chief of staff, MACV, Brigadier General John G. Wheelock, III.

Finally, on April 14, 1969, the U.S. embassy suspended its policy requiring the use of Agent Orange on certain restricted defoliation targets, such as rubber plantations and other valuable natural resources, and allowed the "use of Orange herbicide on all defoliation targets," adding, "for economic reasons, the use of Orange is preferred."

**W**hen concerns about the dangers dioxin posed to human health began to explode seven months later, in late 1969, there was still little attention paid to the ramifications of the all-out effort to deplete Agent Orange stockpiles. A memorandum from the deputy secretary of defense to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent to CINCPAC concludes that "large-scale substitution for Orange will not be permitted."

Despite the fact that the memorandum prints out (even at this early time) that the National Institutes of Health had presented evidence that 2,4,5-T "can cause malformation of offsprings and stillbirths in mice, when given in relatively high doses," and that "this material is present in defoliant Orange," the large-scale, and apparently counterproductive, spraying of the chemical went forward.

Within a few years, though, the outrage over using chemical defoliant had grown so intense, both back home and in the world community, that the U.S. was forced to cancel its defoliation operations. But, by that time, following a decade of having negligently saturated Southeast Asia with the chemical, the damage had already been done by a program, the objectives of which all along were not being achieved. ■

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20510

November 22, 1988

Honorable Donald M. Newman  
Chairman  
Agent Orange Working Group  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Don,

As Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, we are writing to request that the Agent Orange Working Group review and provide comments on five studies recently published in "Environmental Research." (A copy of the journal is enclosed.) The studies examine the health effects of herbicide exposure and service in Vietnam based on questionnaires completed by American Legion members. We would appreciate your comments with respect to the scientific methods used, the validity of the statistical analyses, and the strength of the studies' findings.

As always, we appreciate your continuing cooperation and support. We look forward to your response.

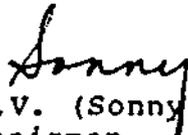
With warm regards,

Cordially,



Alan Cranston  
Chairman

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G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery  
Chairman

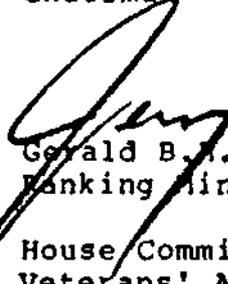
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Frank H. Murkowski  
Ranking Minority Member

Senate Committee on  
Veterans' Affairs

8811280044



Gerald B.J. Solomon  
Ranking Minority Member

House Committee on  
Veterans' Affairs

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# NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS COALITION

1000 Thomas Jefferson St., Sixth Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20007  
(202) 338 NVVC

J. Thomas Burch, Jr.  
Chairman

November 1988

No. 48

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## AGENT ORANGE Pending New Legislation

The omnibus veterans benefits legislation contains the following new provisions on Agent Orange:

(T)his agreement (i.e. the bill) would extend, from September 30, 1989 to December 31, 1990, the authority to provide basic VA health-care services for veterans' disabilities if it is found that the veteran, during active duty, may have been exposed in Vietnam to any toxic substance in a herbicide or defoliant. . . .

(T)he agreement also includes a provision that states that amounts received as part of the settlement of the agent orange product liability litigation will not be considered as income for purposes of any of the needs-based programs administered by the VA, including nonservice-connected VA pension.

(T)he proposed amendments would require the VA to conduct an outreach program to Vietnam veterans oriented to notifying them of health risks, if any, resulting from exposure to herbicides in

Vietnam, as information on such health risks becomes known. In order to facilitate such an outreach effort, the bill would require the VA to take reasonable actions to organize and update the information contained in the VA's agent orange registry, particularly the addresses of veterans listed in the registry. (Remarks by Rep. G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery, Congressional Record, Oct. 19, 1988, H10353.)

The committee report accompanying the legislation includes the following comments:

Section 1203 of the bill treats Agent Orange payments "as reimbursement for prior unreimbursed medical expenses." (Id., H10338, 10555) (Ed. Note: The bill, however, does not make a similar exception for Social Security disability pensions or food stamp eligibility.) . . . .

After February 28, 1989, not less than one-third of the total number of members of the Ranch Hand Advisory Committee shall be individuals selected by the Secretary of Health and Human Services from among scientists who are recommended by veterans' organizations . . . . (Id., H10334, H10339)

The House . . . rejected a Senate bill that, for the first time, would award disability benefits to veterans exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War [i.e., for soft tissue sarcoma, no-Hodgkins lymphoma] (Rep. Sonny) Montgomery said further studies were needed to prove a connection between various diseases and Agent Orange. (Philadelphia Inquirer, Oct. 20, 1988)

#### "Sprayed and Betrayed" - Round II

More newly declassified documents emerge from the National Archives:

The State Department was involved in policy-making re spraying operations. "On 14 April 1969, the U.S. Embassy suspended its policy requiring the use of WHITE herbicide on certain restricted defoliation targets and will now allow use of ORANGE herbicide in all defoliation targets. For economic reasons, the use of ORANGE is preferred . . . . We respectfully request that you assure WHITE stocks are kept available for use should the policy be deinstitutioned." (Memorandum for Col. Tran Dinh Tho from Col. Harold C. Kerne (?), Jr., "Use of Defoliants ORANGE and WHITE (V), 17 April 1969). LTC John A. Sullivan, CONVSNAVCV notes in a memo to CINCPAC "Ambassador Sullivan's approval has been requested for the use of CS in those areas of Laos approved for spray operations. ("Use of Riot Control Agent CS," undated)

MIAs. During the week ending 4 Feb. 67, the following defoliation missions were flown in Laos with C-123 aircraft:

31 Jan 3 sorties . . . Acft 611 lost to ground fire. 5 KIA (Ed. Note: the five men are now on the MIA list) (Memorandum from Maj. Philip L. Boster, COMUSMACV to NMCC, "Herbicide Report (V)," undated. Access Number (?) 0380818)

The Empty Drums. The New Jersey Agent Orange Commission interprets other reports:

"It seems that as far as the US Government was concerned, "empty" Agent Orange drums were the property of the ARVN, and they could dispose of them anyway they chose. The problem was the drums weren't really empty, and each contained about 2.2 gallons of Agent Orange that was not pumped out. The ARVN, in their constant quest to turn an extra buck, sold the drums to anyone who wanted them, generally civilians for about \$2 each. The creative Vietnamese civilians used them for all sorts of things, spilling the residual Agent Orange all over the place and seriously damaging plants and shade trees throughout the city of Danang. The defoliant was even killing the civilians' vegetable gardens. Since we were using about 1000 gallons per day of herbicide out of Danang at the time, about 20 "empty" drums of Agent Orange were hitting the streets of Danang every day!! to compound this lunacy even more, it seems that the Vietnamese Navy compound purchased some of the drums to store gasoline for their generators. The result is that they ended up fogging their entire compound through the generator exhaust with Agent Orange, effectively killing all vegetation in sight!!

"The report recommended that the practice of allowing the ARVN to sell the drums be discontinued, but we're not sure that ever happened. It also should be mentioned that Agent Orange was also stored at Bien Hoa, Phu Cat, Nha Trang, and in Saigon and was presumably disposed in the same manner." (NJAOC, Agent Orange Update, Oct. 1988)

#### Miscellaneous

1. From studying the injuries among the tens of thousands of Kurdish refugees, the doctors believe the Iraqis are using a mixture of herbicide and a form of tear gas known as CS to drive the Kurds from their mountain villages. (Edmonton Journal, (?) Sept. 21, 1988)

2. (Vietnam veteran Ron Heiman) was 38 years old when he died in January of this year . . . . The doctor put as the cause of death, on his death certificate, the type of cancer that killed him, and added that it was a direct result of Agent Orange poisoning. This is the first time such a statement appeared in an official record.

Well, the Death Certificate on file at the County Medical examiner's office has been changed! Any reference to Agent

Orange has been removed from the official files! (Attachment to letter from George L. Claxton, Oct. 19, 1988)

3. Was the morbidity of women Vietnam-era veterans affected by assignment in Vietnam? . . . (N)o remarkable differences (between a control group of 720 U.S.-based Vietnam-era veterans and a study group of 28 Vietnam veterans) are seen in the percentage of those who had an acute illness, GYN condition or miscarriage.

However, three interesting differences are observed. First, a higher percentage of those who were assigned in Vietnam have chronic conditions and disabilities, and they have more of them. Second, a higher percentage have been told they have cancer. Third, although a smaller percentage of Vietnam-assigned women ever had a baby, a higher percentage of those who did have children born with defects and/or die before their first birthday. (Le Donne, Trends in Morbidity and Use of Health Services by Women Veterans of Vietnam, Navy Medicine, May-June 1988, p. 24)

4. What's Evidence?, by Joe Cole (Mahess Productions, Inc. states: "blows the lid off") Send \$15.00 to Joe Cole, 6806 36th Ave., S.E., Olympia, Washington 98503

5. As part of a budget austerity program in Massachusetts, the state's funding of its prestigious Agent Orange Commission has been reportedly "substantially reduced."

6. The Washington (Me) Sunrise Memorial: Made of two large, rugged stones, standing like the tattered pages of an open book, the memorial carries three messages: one for those who are still missing in action or prisoners of war; one for all the men and women who served in Southeast Asia; and one for the veterans who have died, and the veterans and their families who continue to suffer, from medical and psychological problems associated with exposure to the chemical defoliants, such as Agent Orange, used in the war. (Bangor Daily News, Oct. 24, 1988) (Ed. Note: This is claimed to be the first memorial in the country to honor Agent Orange victims.)