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INTEGRITY RESPECT RESULTS

Decision Issued on Herbicide Exposure at Fort Drum

Thursday September 20, 2018



Veterans who served at Fort Drum, New York during certain years may have been exposed to Agent Orange, a toxic herbicide used during the Vietnam War.

Documents Show Herbicides were Tested at Fort Drum

A document from the Department of Defense (DoD) shows that a formulation of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, the two ingredients in Agent Orange, were tested by the U.S. Army Chemical Corps in an approximately four square mile area of Fort Drum in the summer of 1959. According to the document, thirteen drums totaling 715 gallons of Agent Purple, made up

of concentrated butyl esters of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, were sprayed by helicopters over 2,560 acres of Fort Drum.

Court Issues Decision Detailing Herbicide Use at Fort Drum

The Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims recently issued a decision in a case in which a veteran claimed service connection for multiples conditions due to exposure to Agent Orange at Fort Drum. The Court's decision discussed numerous documents that the veteran submitted for his claim which detail the use of Agent Orange and other herbicides at Fort Drum as early as 1959 up to the 1970s.

Summary of the Case

The Veteran served in the United States Army from February 1971 to December 1972. He then entered the US Army Reserves and spent two weeks training at Fort Drum, New York in August 1974. In December 2004, he applied for service connection for diabetes mellitus, a heart condition, hypertension, and erectile dysfunction due to exposure to Agent Orange at Fort Drum. He was denied service connection and eventually appealed twice to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

Veteran Submitted Evidence of Agent Orange at Fort Drum

To support his claim of exposure to Agent Orange, the veteran submitted a report from the Chemical Systems Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Ground dated for July 1981, which discussed investigators finding ten five-gallon metal cans which contained chemicals found in Agent Orange. The report discussed how the herbicides were not properly stored at the base. The report also detailed testing in 1961 of an "experimental defoliant mixture" along the road of the base, and an herbicide that was similar to Agent Orange being used during the 1950s up to the early 1970s. Finally, from 1969 to 1978, herbicides similar to Agent Orange were also used along certain roads in the main impact area of Fort Drum.

According to the documents detailed in the Court's decision, Agent Orange was not only tested at Fort Drum, but it was also used for maintenance and to increase visibility around the base.

<https://cck-law.com/news/decision-issued-on-herbicide-exposure-at-fort-drum/>

DOD TACTICAL HERBICIDE SITES

Site 8

Location: Fort Drum, New York

Dates → May – October 1959

Activity Description: The basic consideration in aerial applications of liquid sprays for vegetation control is to secure maximum deposition of the delivered agent on the selected target. In the summer of 1959, a 2,4-D/2,4,5-T formulation was evaluated for its operational use in defoliating or killing trees growing in an area of about four square miles in an impact zone (an area receiving explosive ordnance) at Camp Drum, New York.

Assessment: Thirteen drums (715 gallons) of the concentrated butyl esters of 2,4,D and 2,4,5-T (Herbicide Purple formulation) were aerielly applied by helicopter over 2,560 acres of Fort Drum's deciduous forested area in the summer of 1959. The area selected for treatment was an area isolated from combat maneuvers. The tests were conducted by US Army Chemical Corps personnel, and the Purple Herbicide formulation was surplus herbicide from an inventory manufactured in 1953-1954 period for potential use in the Korean Conflict. The rates of deposition and the flow rate calculations were instrumental in subsequent defoliation tests in both the Continental United States and in Southeast Asia.

Sources: Brown JW (1962): Section VI. Vegetation Control, Camp Drum, New York. IN: Vegetational Spray Tests in South Vietnam. US Army Biological Laboratories, Fort Detrick, Frederick, Maryland. *The document unclassified but subject to export control. Available from the Defense Documentation Center, Accession Number AD0476961.*

Minarik CE (1964): Crops Division Defoliation Program. IN Proceedings of the First Defoliation Conference, 29-30 July 1963. United States Army Biological Laboratories, Fort Detrick, Frederick, Maryland. *The document is unclassified but subject to export control. Available from the Defense Documentation Center, Accession Number AD0427874.*