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Visitors [Regarding discovery of herbicide
contamination], November 16, 1984

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Description Notes Includes information, maps, and a cover letter from Alvin L
.Young to John P. Pearson dated January 23, 1985.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

January 23, 1985

Dear John:

Thank you for your letter. I now realize the concern that you have over the dioxin episode at Fort A.P. Hill. I have enclosed for you an information sheet prepared by the Department of Army that will provide needed assurances.

I continue to hear excellent reports on the way you and your staff support the needs of our veterans. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alvin L. Young', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alvin L. Young, Ph.D.
Senior Policy Analyst
for Life Sciences

Mr. John P. Pearson
Deputy State Service Office
North Carolina Department of Administration
Division of Veterans Affairs
Federal Building
251 North Main Street
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27155



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20310

AGENT ORANGE

DEC 03 1984

November 16, 1984

RECEIVED - (10A7)

SUBJECT: Information for Parents of Scouts and Fort A. P.
Hill Visitors

I know that the recent discovery of herbicide contamination at the site of the 1981 Jamboree at Fort A. P. Hill has caused a great deal of concern. We share this concern and have provided as much information as we have available to the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America and to various government agencies and civilian organizations so that they may help us resolve our concerns. I hope that the information in this packet will alleviate your fears about any possible health risk.

The contamination appears at present to be concentrated in a small area primarily under a storage shed located within a fenced area. The shed was used until 1978 for mixing and storing herbicides. While some of the Jamboree staff used the building for storing equipment, it was not used by or readily accessible to the scout youth at the Jamboree. Our preliminary soil samples indicate that some of the contamination has spread outward from the building, but in much lower levels than that directly under the building.

The attached maps show the location of the building relative to the camping areas of the Jamboree and the fenced compound. The campers nearest the contamination were staff members who were billeted adjacent to the compound fence and downhill from the building. They lived in Army tents equipped with plywood floors and slept on cots, so direct contact with the ground was minimal. The nearest scouts camped approximately 150 feet away uphill from or level with the shed. Most scouts camped even farther away.

The herbicides detected are broadleaf weed killers known as 2,4-D, 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP (silvex). 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP (silvex) are commonly contaminated with small amounts of dioxin, an impurity formed during the manufacturing process. The highest level of dioxin contamination discovered was 228 parts per billion (ppb) directly under the shed. This level decreases to 5.0 ppb approximately 20 feet downhill from the shed. By means of comparison, residents of the town of Times Beach, Missouri

were exposed to contamination levels of up to 980 ppb for up to 12 years. A recent study conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), did not demonstrate any adverse health effects in the Times Beach residents. The potential for exposure of the Boy Scouts at the Jamboree was far less than that of the residents of Times Beach.

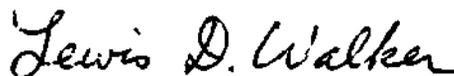
In summary, our findings thus far indicate that these very low levels of dioxin contamination are confined to a small area. This, coupled with the short exposure time (two weeks or less), show there is no likelihood of a health hazard. An independent assessment by the Centers for Disease Control supports this conclusion. Nevertheless, we are continuing to study the situation and welcome the initiative of the Boy Scout leaders to help our efforts.

I have attached a more detailed information sheet covering the history of the contamination, our plans to clean up the site before the 1985 Jamboree and a summary of the known effects of dioxin, prepared by the Office of the Army Surgeon General. I have also attached the announcement of the Centers for Disease Control findings.

We are proud of our association with the Boy Scouts and are working hard to ensure that the 1985 Jamboree is safe and successful. As more information becomes available we will share it with the Boy Scouts, other involved government and private agencies and the public.

I regret that this situation may have caused you alarm and hope that this information packet will help reduce your concern.

Sincerely,



Lewis D. Walker
Deputy for Environment, Safety
and Occupational Health
OASA (I&L)

Attachments

INFORMATION PAPER

Fort A. P. Hill is located in the northeastern portion of Caroline county, Virginia, 40 miles north of Richmond and 20 miles southeast of Fredricksburg. Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia was used as the site for the 1981 National Boy Scout Jamboree and is the planned location of the 1985 Jamboree. Public concern was generated when recent findings indicated that a herbicide contamination exists in a small area of this fort.

The presently identified area of contamination is limited to a storage shed (building 225) and some of the adjacent land downhill from the shed. The 17' x 32' structure is located within a fenced compound formerly used by the Fort A. P. Hill Forestry and Wildlife Branch. Records indicate that the shed was first used for mixing and storage of herbicide in the early 1960s.

Herbicides now known to have contained traces of dioxin were used in forestry management for underbrush control. The underbrush spraying operations at Fort A. P. Hill did not cause the recently discovered contamination. Dioxin decomposes rapidly when exposed to the ultraviolet rays of sunlight and contamination occurs when it binds with the soil as it did under the shed.

In 1978, a herbicide monitoring study was conducted. The purpose of this study was to evaluate drift controls and potential environmental contamination. No residual herbicide levels were found which would restrict future uses of the installation. In October 1983, soil samples in the area of the amphitheater were tested for possible dioxin contamination. No dioxin was detected in any of the samples.

A small quantity of left over herbicide (approximately 95 gallons) was stored in the shed, until removed in 1978 and later disposed of properly. Since that time no herbicide has been stored there, and the use of this group of herbicides has been discontinued at the fort.

In April 1982, as part of the Army-wide program to assess environmental pollution at Army installations, the Army conducted a records search to assess the possibility of toxic and hazardous material contamination existing at Fort A. P. Hill. The results of this assessment, issued in December 1982, identified the shed as a possible site of herbicide contamination. The assessment report recommended soil sampling and analysis to determine if any contamination was present.

Fort A. P. Hill requested the Army's Environmental Hygiene Agency (USAEHA) to sample and analyze the area under and around the shed. The Fort A. P. Hill request was incorporated into the Army-wide program of environmental sampling. Soil sampling for residual herbicide was conducted in March 1984.

The results, received by Fort A. P. Hill in August 1984, indicated that the flooring and the soil under the shed were contaminated with 2,4-D, 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP (silvex) herbicides. The drainage areas around the building were not highly contaminated with the herbicides. Additional soil samples were taken and forwarded to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certified laboratory for analysis to determine the presence of dioxin, a known impurity in 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP (silvex), which is highly toxic in its pure form.

The results received on November 5, 1984 revealed that the soil under the shed contains 228 parts per billion (ppb) of dioxin residue and that soil down slope contains 3.2 ppb. Upon notification from the laboratory that the soil did indeed contain dioxin, Fort A. P. Hill directed this laboratory to send the samples to another EPA approved laboratory for verification of the analysis.

The verification was received on November 14, 1984, which confirmed earlier findings. This analysis assessed the contamination under the shed at 205 parts per billion (ppb) and down slope from the shed at 5 ppb. The slight difference in laboratory results is not unusual when dealing with such small quantities.

Based on the November 5 preliminary findings, Fort A. P. Hill initiated additional precautionary measures, extending the compound fence to surround the known area of contamination downhill from building 225, and posted warning signs.

The Army conducted meetings with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth of Virginia on Thursday November 8, and on Friday November 9, with representatives from the Boy Scouts. The purpose of these meetings was to pass on our information and begin developing a plan of action to collect additional samples to determine the extent of contamination.

The Army is developing a sampling plan with EPA, Commonwealth of Virginia, and Department of Health and Human Services, Centers of Disease Control, to determine the extent and degree of contamination. When planning is completed, sampling will begin immediately and the results of these analyses should be available within 30 to 60 days.

Also, the Boy Scouts of America have hired an independent engineering firm to assess the situation.

After determining the extent of contamination the Army will conduct a complete cleanup at the site, well before the 1985 Jamboree. Excavation, packaging, and transportation of contaminated soil and building materials will be conducted by a qualified contractor. The containers of contaminated material will ultimately be disposed of in a manner approved by EPA. Once cleanup has been completed, follow-up soil and ground water sampling will be conducted to confirm that all dioxin residues have been removed.

There have been no consistent medical findings about the effect of dioxin on humans except for a skin rash known as chloracne. It is difficult to clinically tell the difference between chloracne and the common acne of young adults. The body systems most prominently affected by extensive dioxin exposure in laboratory animals are the liver and immune system. There are no specific clinical laboratory tests or clinical findings to determine the degree of dioxin exposure or its toxic effects in humans.

Serious health hazard comes after prolonged exposure to high concentrations of dioxin. This usually results from direct contact with or after ingestion of contaminated materials. The scouts did not meet this criterion at Fort A. P. Hill. The contamination is at levels at which no harmful health effects would be expected. Most of the contamination appears to be confined to under the shed and the immediate vicinity of the shed. Further, the scouts were there less than two weeks.

The Army has provided the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) all available information concerning the contamination at Fort Hill. According to CDC, "...the chance for harmful dioxin exposure of scouts during the Jamboree is exceedingly remote. Therefore, medical examinations or laboratory testing of scouts at the Jamboree are not necessary or recommended. The risk assessment that CDC previously performed on dioxin was based upon a 70-year lifetime exposure. The maximum possible exposure for boy scouts at the Jamboree would be less than two weeks. It is our estimate that no harm was done."

This CDC assessment confirms the Army's belief that on the basis of information now available the Boy Scouts were not exposed to any health risks and that there is no need for physical examinations or laboratory tests on the scout population.

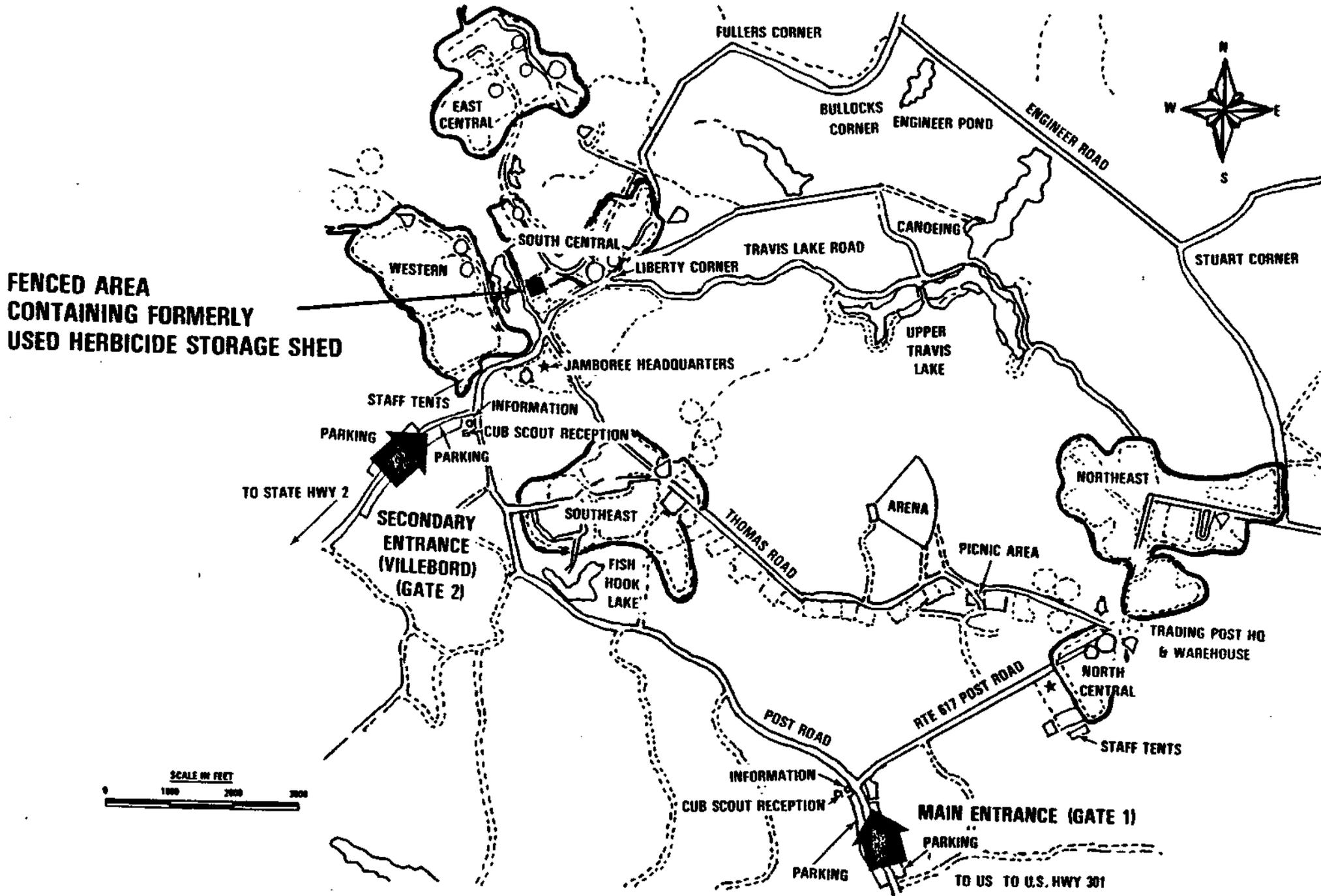


The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has been contacted by the Department of the Army Surgeon General's office and the Boy Scouts of America regarding dioxin contamination at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. Preliminary findings at the fort indicate that dioxin was detected in soil near a herbicide storage shed in a fenced enclosure in the vicinity of where a National Jamboree was held in 1981.

Based upon the information we have, the chance for harmful dioxin exposure of scouts during the Jamboree is exceedingly remote. Therefore, medical examinations or laboratory testing of scouts at the Jamboree are not necessary or recommended.

The risk assessment that CDC previously performed on dioxin was based upon a 70-year lifetime exposure. The maximum possible exposure for boy scouts at the Jamboree would be less than two weeks.

It is our estimate that no harm was done. If any information is obtained to alter this opinion, CDC will revise its recommendations.



FENCED AREA CONTAINING FORMERLY USED HERBICIDE STORAGE SHED

