



Uploaded to the VFC Website

▶▶ June 2014 ◀◀

This Document has been provided to you courtesy of Veterans-For-Change!

Feel free to pass to any veteran who might be able to use this information!

For thousands more files like this and hundreds of links to useful information, and hundreds of "Frequently Asked Questions, please go to:

[Veterans-For-Change](http://www.veteransforchange.org)

*Veterans-For-Change is a A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization
Tax ID #27-3820181
CA Incorporation ID #3340400
CA Dept. of Charities ID #: CT-0190794*

If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?

We appreciate all donations to continue to provide information and services to Veterans and their families.

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=WGT2M5UTB9A78

Note:

VFC is not liable for source information in this document, it is merely provided as a courtesy to our members & subscribers.



Item ID Number 04944



Not Scanned

Author

Corporate Author Veterans Administration, Agent Orange Projects Office,

Report/Article Title Agent Orange Program Fact Sheet: "A Summary of VA Agent Orange Activities"

Journal/Book Title

Year 1987

Month/Day January

Color

Number of Images 0

Description Notes



Agent Orange Program

FACT SHEET

"A SUMMARY OF VA AGENT ORANGE ACTIVITIES"

Prepared by:
Agent Orange Projects Office (10X2)
Department of Medicine and Surgery
Washington, D.C. 20420
Telephone: FTS 653-5047

JANUARY 1987

AGENT ORANGE

BACKGROUND

When the Veterans Administration became aware of the concerns of Vietnam veterans and their families about Agent Orange in 1978, the Agency took immediate steps in what has become a continuing search for answers. Vietnam veterans were reporting a myriad of medical problems and questioned whether some, if not all, of these difficulties were caused by Agent Orange exposure. The first step taken by the Agency was an extensive effort to gather authoritative information on Agent Orange and other known phenoxy herbicides from scientific literature and other sources. This led to the establishment of two special Agency committees (VA Agent Orange Policy Coordinating Committee and VA Advisory Committee on Health-Related Effects of Herbicides), development of an examination and registry program, Agency participation in an interagency committee (Interagency Work Group to Study the Possible Long-Term Health Effects of Phenoxy Herbicides and Contaminants, renamed Agent Orange Working Group), and initiation of a number of Agency research projects. Our knowledge about herbicides has expanded considerably since the early days of the controversy, but questions remain and the Agency commitment to the resolution of the problem is as strong as ever.

FACTS

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Public Law 99-272, the "Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985", enacted April 7, 1986, mandates the VA to provide for the conduct of an epidemiological study of any long-term adverse health effects experienced by women who served in the Armed Forces in Vietnam. The study is to examine health effects, particularly gender-specific health effects, which may have resulted from traumatic experiences during such service, from exposure during Vietnam service to phenoxy herbicides, including Agent Orange, to other herbicides, chemicals, or medications that may have deleterious health effects, or to environmental hazards or from any other experience or exposure during such service. If the Administrator, in consultation with the Office of Technology Assessment, determines that it is not feasible to conduct a scientifically valid study of an aspect of the matters described above, the VA is not required to study that aspect. Under the law, the study must be conducted through contracts or other agreements with private or public agencies or persons.
- Public Law 98-542, the "Veterans' Dioxin and Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act", enacted October 24, 1984, requires the VA to specify standards for deciding compensation claims based upon

exposure to Agent Orange and to radiation from participation in nuclear weapons testing or as a result of service with the occupation forces of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

The Act also required that a new "Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards" be created and consist of 4 lay and 11 scientific members. The purpose of the committee is to advise the Administrator on VA regulations, completed and ongoing research, and administrative and legislative initiatives.

In August 1985, following a period of public comments and consultation with the Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards, VA published final regulations for the adjudication of claims based upon exposure to Agent Orange (and to radiation). Under the regulations, which also contain criteria the Agency will employ in evaluating scientific studies, chloracne will be presumptively service-connected if manifest within three months of the veterans' departure from Vietnam. The Agency also specifically found that sound scientific and medical evidence does not establish a cause and effect relationship between dioxin exposure and porphyria cutanea tarda (a liver disorder), soft tissue sarcoma and any other disease except chloracne.

The Act also provided interim benefits for disability or death due to chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda. Under the interim benefits, which expired September 30, 1986, an allowance similar to compensation would have been paid to a veteran who manifests either of these conditions within one year of the veteran's departure from Vietnam.

- Public Law 97-72, the "Veterans Health Care, Training and Small Business Loan Act of 1981," enacted November 3, 1981, authorizes the VA to provide treatment to any eligible Vietnam veteran who feels that his/her condition may have been caused by exposure to dioxin or to a toxic substances in a herbicide or defoliant used in Vietnam (see "Statistics on Veterans' Treatment and Examinations"). (This authority was extended through September 30, 1989 by Public Law 99-166).
- Public Law 96-151, the "Veterans Health Programs Extension and Improvement Act of 1979," enacted December 20, 1979, mandated the Administrator of Veterans Affairs to conduct an epidemiological study of the possible adverse health effects to exposure of persons who served in the Armed Forces in Vietnam to the class of chemicals known as "the dioxins" produced during the manufacture of the various phenoxy herbicides including the herbicide known as Agent Orange. Responsibility for the conduct of this study was transferred, via interagency agreement, to Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Atlanta, Georgia, on January 14, 1983 (see "Non-VA Research" Section). Public Law 95-151 also required the Administrator to conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of scientific literature relating to possible adverse health effects from exposure to the phenoxy herbicides or dioxins. Status - first two volumes of the Literature Review were published in October 1981 (Volumes I & II). Updates were published in 1984, 1985, and 1986 (Volumes III - VIII). Plans call for a further update of literature produced during 1986 (Volumes IX - X).

VA RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- Vietnam Veterans Mortality Study is designed to assess mortality patterns of U.S. servicemen who served in the Army or Marine Corps during the Vietnam era. The study will determine if "in-country" Vietnam veterans are dying from different diseases or other causes as compared to their counterparts who served elsewhere but during the same time period.
- Soft Tissue Sarcoma Study - In cooperation with the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) the VA is conducting a case/control study to determine if Vietnam service increases the risk of developing one of the rare types of cancer known as soft tissue sarcoma.
- Review of Soft Tissue Sarcoma Cases in Patient Treatment File (PTF) - In a parallel effort to the VA/AFIP soft tissue sarcoma study, the Agent Orange Projects Office, in collaboration with the VA's Pathology Service and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) has reviewed soft tissue sarcoma cases among Vietnam era veterans who have been admitted to VA medical centers during the period 1969-1983. The purpose of this effort is to compare anatomic site, histopathology and relative frequency of soft tissue sarcoma between Vietnam veterans and non-Vietnam veterans. This study has been completed and the results show that for this group of veterans, service in Vietnam has not increased the risk of developing this type of cancer. The study was published in the December 1986 issue of the Journal of Occupational Medicine (Volume 28, No. 12).
- Retrospective Study of Dioxins and Furans in Adipose Tissue - The VA, in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is in the process of performing a very detailed analysis of tissue specimens, from approximately 250 males of the Vietnam era age group. The specimens will be analyzed for 2,3,7,8-TCDD and several other related dioxins and furans to determine if service in the military, especially service in Vietnam has resulted in increased levels of these compounds as compared to civilians of the same age group. In addition, the study will help to answer the concerns of many veterans regarding the relationship between dioxin levels in their bodies and the risk of developing health problems.
- Specially Solicited Research - The VA is funding several investigator-initiated Agent Orange related research projects. These studies are designed to increase our knowledge base regarding the possible adverse health effects of exposure to Agent Orange and its dioxin contaminant. Individual research projects are in varying stages of completion.

OTHER VA AGENT ORANGE RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Agent Orange Registry - Initiated by the VA in mid-1978 as a service to Vietnam veterans concerned about possible health problems that may have been caused by herbicides, the Agent Orange Registry provides these veterans an opportunity to receive a complete health evaluation and answers to questions about the current state of knowledge regarding the relationship between herbicide exposure and subsequent health problems. Each veteran who participates in this voluntary program receives a physical examination and laboratory tests and is asked a series of questions about his or her medical history and military service, including contact with herbicides in Vietnam. Following the examination, the veteran is provided the results in a face-to-face discussion with a physician familiar with health aspects of the Agent Orange issue and through a follow-up letter summarizing the findings. Registry participants are placed on a VA mailing list which enables the VA to provide them with current information relating to the Agent Orange issue. The mailout listing provides the VA with a mechanism to contact veterans for further testing and follow-up examinations should continuing research efforts make this action advisable. More than 216,000 Vietnam veterans have chosen to participate in this program (see "Statistics on Veterans' Treatment and Examinations").
- Monograph Series on significant Agent Orange-related subjects is being developed by the VA as resource documents for the benefit of VA health care professionals. The first two of these monographs, Birth Defects and Genetic Counseling and Cacodylic Acid have been published. The next two will discuss the phenoxy herbicides and chloracne.
- Literature Review - Public Law 96-151 required the Administrator to conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of worldwide scientific literature related to possible adverse health effects in humans which might result from exposure to dioxins (see "Legislative Responsibilities" Public Law 96-151).

NON-VA RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- CDC Epidemiological Study - This project, mandated by Public Law 96-151 enacted December 20, 1979, and amended by Public Law 97-72, is actually three studies: the Vietnam Experience Study, designed to evaluate the overall impact of military service on Vietnam veterans; the Agent Orange Study, intended to assess possible adverse health effects on Vietnam veterans of exposure to the herbicide; and the Selected Cancer Study, designed to determine the risk of developing specific types of cancer among Vietnam veterans.

The Vietnam Experience and Selected Cancer Studies are proceeding on schedule. Progress on the Agent Orange study, however has been slowed by significant problems related primarily to the difficulty of

identifying adequate numbers of study subjects with known exposure to the herbicide. A special Agent Orange Validation Study is currently being conducted by CDC to determine whether or not the conduct of the Agent Orange Study component is scientifically feasible. This effort is expected to be completed by June 30, 1987. A decision as to whether or not this study can be continued will be made following an analysis of results. In the meantime, this issue and related problems remain under close review by the Domestic Policy Agent Orange Working Group (AOWG) and the Office of Technology Assessment.

- Air Force Health Study ("Ranch Hand") - One of the most important research efforts focusing on the effects of Agent Orange exposure is the Air Force Health Study (Ranch Hand II). This is a long-term investigation of the possible adverse health effects of herbicide exposure on Air Force personnel attached to Operation Ranch Hand, which was responsible for the great majority of herbicide spraying missions in Vietnam. While this study will be on-going through the end of the century, investigators released interim study results in 1983, 1984, and 1985. These efforts have revealed no indication that Ranch Hand personnel have thus far experienced increased mortality rates or any unusual causes of death when compared to closely matched comparison group. Analysis of the morbidity data does not suggest a cause and effect relationship between herbicide exposure and adverse health effects among Ranch Hand personnel.
- CDC Birth Defects Study - The possibility of adverse effects of Agent Orange on the children of Vietnam veterans has been a major concern among many of these veterans. In 1984, CDC released the results of a large-scale study designed to answer the question: Are Vietnam veterans at an increased risk of fathering children with birth defects? Investigators concluded that Vietnam veterans, in general, did not have an increased risk of fathering babies with defects. A large-scale study conducted in Australia to address the same concern resulted in the same conclusions.
- Other Federal Research Efforts - In addition to the scientific investigations described above, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, National Cancer Institute, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and several other agencies are pursuing research to discover more about the possibility of health effects of Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam. It is hoped that this concerted Federal effort in conjunction with international and state investigations will produce meaningful results in the relatively near future.

STATISTICS ON VETERANS' TREATMENT AND EXAMINATIONS

Public Law 97-72:

	<u>FY 1982</u>	<u>FY 1983</u>	<u>FY 1984</u>	<u>FY 1985</u>	<u>FY 1986</u>	<u>CUM TOTALS</u>
Inpatient Admissions	9,400	10,900	3,800	1,400	750	26,250
Outpatient	369,000	332,000	342,000	102,000	99,100	1,244,100

Agent Orange Registry Examinations:

	<u>FY 1980 (Est.)</u>	<u>FY 1981 (Est.)</u>	<u>FY 1982</u>	<u>FY 1983</u>	<u>FY 1984</u>	<u>FY 1985</u>	<u>FY 1986</u>	<u>CUM TOTALS</u>
Initial	33,156	34,223	30,024	28,197	31,946	46,759	11,850	216,155
Followup	6,000	6,159	9,675	7,941	6,813	7,990	2,342	46,920

Prepared by: Layne A. Drash, Chief, Administrative Support
Agent Orange Projects Office (10X2)
DM&S, VA Central Office
FTS 653-5047