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NEW JERSEY
AGENT ORANGE
COMMISSION

COMMANDER'S / PRESIDENT'S

UP DATE ON AGENT ORANGE

VOL. 3 - No. 1

March 1984 Issue

From the Executive Director:
Wayne P. Wilson

Throughout the many months of tracking HR 1961, we have had numerous occasions to touch base with members of the New Jersey Congressional delegation. They were responsive and informed. Sometimes when it is all over and done, we forget to say Thank You. Well, to the fourteen members of the New Jersey Congressional delegation, we say

⊕ ⊕ THANK YOU ⊕ ⊕

James J. Florio
William J. Hughes
James J. Howard
Chris Smith
Edwin B. Forsythe
Marge Roukema
Robert A. Roe

Robert Toracelli
Peter W. Rodino, Jr.
Joseph G. Minish
Matthew J. Rinaldo
James A. Courter
Frank J. Guarini
Bernard J. Dwyer

Commission Phone Numbers

(609) 984-7396 answering machine
(609) 984-7397
(609) 292-1443

••HOUSE SAYS YEA ON AO

As many of you may know by now, the House of Representatives voted in favor of HR 1961, the Agent Orange Presumptive Bill. The House action, by a voice vote, came on January 30th and now puts the spotlight on the Senate.

A Bill similar to HR 1961 was introduced by Senator Cranston of California on July 20, 1983 and is awaiting action by the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. The Bill number is S 1651.

New Jersey Senator Lautenberg has provided us with a copy of the Bill and indicated his strong support of 1651. New Jersey's other Senator, Bill Bradley, has also been an advocate of Agent Orange legislation and we are fortunate to have that kind of strong support from our two legislators. Our office will gladly provide a copy of S 1651, just drop us a note. We would encourage letters of support for S 1651 and they may be mailed to:

The Honorable Alan K. Simpson, U.S. Senator
Chairman - Committee on Veterans Affairs
414 Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

ADDRESS UPDATES

Newark VA Vet Center - Their new address is:

75 Halsey Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101
Phone Number: (201) 622-6940

New Team Leader is Mr. Horace Bracy.

The Jersey City VA Vet Center has a new Team Leader. Her name is Ann Talnage-Clark. The Vet Center address is still:

626 Newark Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306
Phone Number: (201) 656-6986

Changes in Agent Orange scheduling at VA Facilities:

Philadelphia Outpatient Clinic - Monday and Friday only in the a.m.
New Scheduling Number - (215) 597-7674

Lyons VA Hospital takes walk-in Agent Orange exams only. No scheduled appointments.

IN THE NOT SO GOOD CATEGORY ...

The Veterans Administrations' lack of communication with the membership of their own VA Advisory Committee on Herbicides. Several Members of the Committee have commented that the only time they hear from VA Central Office is to review the transcript of the previous meeting for errors and a notice telling them the date of the next meeting. That's not-so-good!

A Vietnam Veteran VA employee was "docked" one hour sick leave in order to take an Agent Orange Screening exam. Apparently, those running the Out-patient Clinic in Florida where this occurred chose to ignore the February 1983 Memorandum from VA Administrator Harry N. Walters. In the memo, Mr. Walters stressed the need "to deal sensitively and compassionately with the deeply felt concerns of Veterans". It would probably be fair to assume that Mr. Walters meant for that same sensitivity and compassion to be extended to Vietnam Veterans employees of the Agency. It's not-so-good to cross the big boss and it's not-so-good for the Vietnam Veteran.

Lastly, in the "not-so-good" category is the VA's newest Agent Orange film. The Veteran organizations members of the VA's Advisory Committee on Herbicides were promised they would get to see the film before final editing and release. It's not-so-good to break promises (which the VA) did because now a lot of folks don't like the VA film and want it sent to the dusty shelf.

IN THE REAL GOOD CATEGORY ...

During recent visits to New Jersey by VFW National Commander-in-Chief Clifford Olson and Sr. Vice Commander Billy Ray Cameron, the issue of Agent Orange was discussed on numerous occasions. Both leaders knew the issues, addressed them and voiced the strong position their organization is taking on the issue. Just before the National Officers came into New Jersey, State VFW officers spent a day visiting the Trenton VA Vet Center. It's real good to see that kind of committment.

It's real good to say Thank You to some deserving folks, so here goes:

Thank You Vietnam Veterans of Central Florida.

Thank You Senator Dalton and Senator Van Wagner.

Thank You to the N.J. Veterans Service Council.

Thank You to American Legion, Camden County Sr. Vice Commander Mildred DiFante.

Thank You Burlington County Times for an excellent editorial on Agent Orange.

Thank You Margaret Finch for all the research work at the Rutgers Library.

And to so many other people who support the work of this Commission.

COMMISSION EXPANDED TO NINE MEMBERS

Legislation introduced by then Assemblyman Richard Van Wagner and Senator Daniel Dalton called for expanding the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission from seven members to nine members. The legislation received quick action in both the Assembly and Senate and was signed into law by Governor Kean on December 14th. As we go to print with the Update, one of the two additional appointments have been made and there are indications that the remaining vacancy may be filled soon.

All Members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor and are unsalaried. By law, six of the nine appointments must be Vietnam Veterans. The eight Members are:

- * Allen E. Falk, Esquire
- * James Credle
- * Robert P. Marasco
- * Guy A. Wiener
- Laura E. Morrow, M.D.
- Ralph W. Fogleman, DVM
- Peter Kahn, Ph.D.
- * Paul Licitra
- * Dr. Michael Gochfeld serves as Special Consultant to the Commission
- * Denotes Vietnam Veteran

NEW COUNSELING RESOURCE

The Veterans Administration has recently awarded two contracts in South Jersey specifically geared at providing community-based re-adjustment counseling for Vietnam Veterans. Vietnam Veterans need not be service connected to utilize the counseling programs. We would encourage community mental health providers, legislative offices and the Veterans organizations to "spread the word" concerning the availability of this new service.

In Burlington County, the contract provider is Drenk Memorial Guidance Center and in Camden and Gloucester Counties, the provider is Family and Psychological Services of Cherry Hill. Vietnam Veterans must make the initial contact with the Philadelphia VA Vet Center. Their phone number is (215) 672-0238.

Reunion - Vietnam - Former Members of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade.
For information concerning unit reunion, contact: Mr. John C. Donahue
11 Ahern Avenue
Windsor Lock, Conn. 06096