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If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?

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Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry
Atlanta, GA 30333

August 9, 2011

Wesley T. Carter, Major, USAF, Retired
2349 Nut Tree Lane
McMinnville, Oregon 97128

Dear Major Carter:

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your letter refers to airmen and flight nurses who flew C-28K/UC-123K *Provider* aircraft from 1972 through 1982. You state that their service led to exposures to Agent Orange (AO). You state that they operated aircraft that had not been adequately decontaminated after serving in Vietnam and spraying AO during operation *Ranch Hand*. Your correspondence includes substantial information to support your claim.

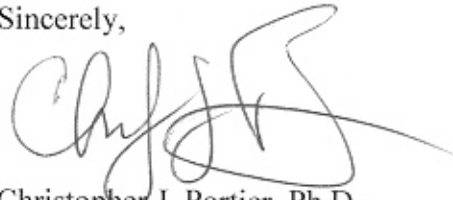
You ask that the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) provide emergency assistance by recommending that the Department of Defense (DOD) designate these contaminated aircraft as *Agent Orange Exposure Sites*. I am unable to fulfill your request. ATSDR does not designate Agent Orange exposure sites. I understand that the Department of Defense does evaluate information of this type and determine if an AO exposure occurred. Should DOD confirm past AO exposures, the U.S. Department of Veterans Administration (VA) applies this designation in determining a *service connected* illness. ATSDR has forwarded your information to the VA and requested that it be forwarded to the appropriate office in DOD.

Your letter concluded by stating that VA will automatically deny any Agent Orange exposure claim by a veteran without service in Vietnam. The VA's website provides the presumptive service connection for AO exposure has been extended to veterans deployed in the Korean Demilitarization Zone between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971. In addition, veterans involved in duty on or near the perimeters of military bases in Thailand may qualify for benefits. These veterans must show a on a factual basis that they were exposed to herbicides between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975.

Page 2 – Wesley T. Carter, Major, USAF, Retired

The effort made by you and your colleagues to collect this information is remarkable. I greatly appreciate the service you and your colleagues have given to our country. I believe the information you have provided should be carefully considered by the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,

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

Christopher J. Portier, Ph.D.
Director, National Center for
Environmental Health, and
Agency for Toxic Substances and
Disease Registry