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27 July 2009

MEMO FOR THE RECORD

TO: Mr. William H. Boor  
Systems Program Manager  
AFMC 505 ACSS/CL  
Hill AFB, UT

FROM: Dr. Alvin L. Young

SUBJECT: Recommendations on the Disposal of UC-123K Aircraft

Dear Buddy,

Thank you for the e-mail message and telephone conversation on Friday, 24 July. The visit to Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson by Dr. Wayne Downs and Mr. Jim Malmgren certainly supports the proposal that there are immediate procedures for the disposal and recycle of the 18 UC-123K aircraft remaining from Operation RANCH HAND and from the Air Force Aerial Spray Flight. I concur and support the following recommendations:

- The sampling data collected from the aircraft in Phase I likely represented the typical data that would be collected from the remaining 14 aircraft. There are no reasons to suspect that the data would vary significantly if additional samples were collected; indeed I would conclude that the analytical data from Phase I is a sufficient statistical representation for the remaining aircraft. It is important to note that the last mission of Agent Orange was in April 1970 in Vietnam, thus almost 40 years ago. These aircraft were essentially cleaned prior to leaving Vietnam, and those involved in Aerial Spray Flight were subsequently cleaned before they were retired to the "Bone Yard". What has changed in the intervening years is our ability to detect even lower levels of dioxin. Moreover, these aircraft have been sitting in the Arizona sun for more than a decade and the heat has likely volatilized any remaining Agent Orange, so that any remaining dioxin residues on the inside surfaces of the aircraft would be minimal, and any health risks essentially negligible. Thus, I recommend **NO ADDITIONAL SAMPLING**.
- The report by Dr. Downs and Mr. Malmgren confirms that there are appropriate procedures and technology available to chop up the entire UC-123K aircraft including the engines, any remaining spray tanks and spray booms, and recycle all of the metals and materials to an appropriate smelter. The very process of chopping up the aircraft will allow the sunlight to destroy (via photodegradation) any remaining volatilized or surface dioxin residues. In addition, the mixing of all of the chopped materials should reduce any concentrated residues to negligible levels. Thus, I recommend that the Air Force proceed to **DESTROY ALL** of the UC-123K aircraft by the **APPROVED PROCEDURES NOTED ABOVE**.
- The question of adverse publicity related to additional sampling or the immediate destruction of the aircraft is important to address. **Clearly the Public Affairs Office needs to be involved in either course of action. The longer this issue**

**remains unresolved, the greater the likelihood of outside press reporting on yet another “Agent Orange Controversy”. I recommend the IMMEDIATE DESTRUCTION OF ALL THE UC-123K AIRCRAFT. Public Affairs should prepare a news release in the event that there is a press inquiry. The key issues to emphasize in a press release are “that these old and obsolete aircraft sprayed defoliants in Vietnam 40 years ago”, “they were retired to Davis-Monthan AFB many years ago”, and “that recent analytical data from sampling a representative number of the aircraft indicated that only negligible levels of contamination could be detected.” Thus, “they were destroyed in an approved method used for the destruction of all obsolete aircraft at Davis-Monthan AFB.”**

I hope these recommendations are helpful to you. If I can be of further service please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Al Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alvin L. Young, Ph.D.  
Former Visiting Professor of Environmental Toxicology, University of Oklahoma,  
Colonel, USAF Retired  
Senior Executive Service Retired  
Consultant on Agent Orange to the Office of the Secretary of Defense