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*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

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THE UNDER SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR BENEFITS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20420

OCT - 1 2012

Mr. Wesley T. Carter  
2349 Nut Tree Lane  
McMinnville, OR 97128

Dear Mr. Carter:

Thank you for your service. I am responding to your inquiry regarding potential Agent Orange exposure among stateside crewmembers who served from 1972 to 1982 aboard C-123 aircraft previously flown in Vietnam. These planes were used for the Operation Ranch Hand tactical herbicide aerial spray missions over Vietnam between 1962 and 1971.

The 1991 Agent Orange Act, which governs Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Agent Orange policies, provides a presumption of herbicide exposure for any Veteran with duty or visitation within the country of Vietnam, or on its inland waterways, between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975. Currently, there is no equivalent legal basis for acknowledging "secondary" or "remote" Agent Orange exposure, such as that from contact with material or equipment previously used in Vietnam.

Dioxin, also known as TCDD, is the toxic contaminant in Agent Orange. However, the VA Office of Public Health concluded that existing scientific studies and reports support a low probability that dioxin was biologically available to humans in these planes. Therefore, the potential for exposure to dioxin from flying or working in contaminated C-123 aircraft, years after use in Vietnam, is unlikely to have occurred at levels that could affect health.

In summary, VA is unable to extend the presumption of Agent Orange exposure to crewmembers of post-Vietnam C-123s or acknowledge Agent Orange-related disabilities as a result of this service. If there is evidence that a Veteran was exposed to herbicides during service, VA will acknowledge the exposure in evaluating any claimed disability that is presumptively associated with herbicide exposure.

I hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison A. Hickey", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Allison A. Hickey