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PEACE  
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JUSTICE  
FOR  
GUAM  
AND THE  
PACIFIC



**Friday, June 23, 2006**

## **Agent Orange Contamination in Guam**

Marbo Property May be Contaminated

By Mar-Vic Cagurangan/Variety News Staff  
from *The Marianas Variety*, <http://www.mvariety.com>

Soldiers stationed on Guam who handled Agent Orange in the late 1960s have become ill and symptoms of dioxin poisoning became apparent in the general population of the island, according to the Dow Chemical Investor Risk Report.

Ruben Van Sanderson, a retired Navy sailor stationed on Guam in the 1960s, told Variety that the Marbo area in Yigo — where the government is planning to build a new high school — was among the locations where Agent Orange was stored.

The new information surfaced as the Guam Legislature prepares for the introduction of a resolution to ask Congress to include the island in the investigation into the chemical or biological warfare testing projects secretly conducted by the Department of Defense in various locations from 1954 to 1973.

The investigation seeks to declassify more information about Project 112 and the Shipboard Hazard and Defense or Project SHAD, which involved chemical weapon test projects that made use of biological or chemical agents, simulants, tracers, decontaminants, pharmaceuticals or herbicides.

According to the Dow Chemical Risk Report, concerns about Agent Orange — a herbicide used in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969 — affected not only U.S. Vietnam war veterans but “has become an issue for military personnel stationed outside of combat zones and for U.S. civilians as well.”

Van Sanderson, who was stationed on Cocos Island for a Department of Defense experiment in March 1966, said Agent Orange “was used, stored and quite possibly disposed of on Guam.”

“The Agent Orange is in the Navy wells. The Air Force either didn’t test for it, or is withholding the information. But Agent Orange was or is in the Marbo complex, albeit in small amounts,” Sanderson said in an e-mail to Variety.

The Dow Chemical Risk Report, prepared by the Innovest Strategic Value Advisors and released in April 2004, is being used by the U.S. Veterans Affairs Office to further its cause for U.S. veterans.

The report stated that dioxin contamination that resulted from Agent Orange handling has been measured at up to 1,900 ppm in some areas of Andersen Air Force Base.

“Given that safe levels of TCDD (dioxin) have been placed at below 1 ppb by the (Environmental Protection Agency) and even lower by many state regulatory agencies (toxic effects have been measured at parts per trillion), this implies an extraordinary level of contamination,” the report stated.

“Dioxin has been shown in laboratory animals to have multigenerational impacts, not just on the offspring of exposed animals, but on the next generation as well,” the report added. Van Sanderson, who was sent to Cocos Island, said Guam was used a staging area for weapons testing after World War II.

“The lagoon was dead then. I learned through research that Cocos and Apra were used in this manner. Tests done on the base that was on Cocos Island, Naval Station Guam Cocos Island, left high amounts of Sr 89 and 90 at over 4,000ppm,” Sanderson told Variety.

Sanderson said those past military activities could explain the Coast Guard’s recent discovery of the high amounts of PCBs in Cocos Island.

“These contaminants and others would be expected with all the naval activity after World War II. Guam was a staging area for weapons testing after World War II,” Sanderson said.

He recalled that by law Guam couldn’t ship its toxic waste off-island until the late 90’s. The chemical disposal had to be done on island.

“Andersen was a burning pond. Before the Clean Water and Air Act, GEPA and the military did things very differently with contaminants such as waste oils, pesticides, contaminated fuels and so forth,” Sanderson said.

He said “everything was dumped or burned before 1978 and the practice even continued for many years after.”

Posted by [Michael Lujan Bevacqua](#) at [9:15 AM](#)