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Agent Orange-The Story of Two Soldiers

<http://hubpages.com/hub/Agent-Orange-The-Story-of-Two-Soldiers>

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By mquee



The Ongoing Plight of Some Vets

Sadly many veterans are still affected by and haunted because of the service they rendered during the Vietnam Era. Generally the soldiers who get the most attention (and rightly so) are the combat soldiers of that conflict. The fact is though, there are many veterans that have been devastated with lasting disabilities, illness and diseases, as well as a limited capacity to earn a livable income. A key player regarding this is the herbicide, Agent Orange. The more one reads about and studies the Vietnam War, the more one understands that the U.S. government is not always totally committed to assisting the soldiers that became disabled as a direct result of their military service. It is often difficult to get the government to be forthcoming in explaining how some military installations were used during this conflict.

The Two Soldiers

In 1969, Sgt. LeRoy G. Foster was stationed at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. He worked in the 43rd Supply Squadron Fuels Division Storage Section. His duties included the preparing, mixing and spraying of the herbicide Agent Orange. He sprayed both on and off base. Spraying around security fencing, pipes and pipelines, hydrants, pumps, tank farms, fuel delivery systems, around the airfield, and in the barracks area. At times he sprayed with a handheld sprayer, but at other times he used a truck equipped with a 750 gallon tank to spray. Spraying was done once every ninety days.

During this same period, Sgt. Ralph Stanton was stationed at Andersen AFB. He was assigned to the 43rd CES Squadron Fuels maintenance shop. He maintained and repaired liquid fuel systems. His responsibilities included the maintenance and repair of fuel storage tanks, pipelines, valves,

pumps, hydrants, and other fuel delivery systems. There were many instances where Sgt. Stanton had to lay on the ground to adequately perform his duties.

During this time, while Sgt. Foster and Sgt. Stanton were performing their duties, the U.S. government was still not acknowledging the harmful effects associated with Agent Orange.

One of the areas sprayed by Sgt. Foster.



“Data from the Department of Defense does not show any use, testing, or storage of tactical herbicides, such as Agent Orange, at any location on Guam.

The Joint Services Records Research Center informed us that research of available historical information does not document the spraying, testing, or storage of Agent Orange at Anderson Air Force Base, Guam.

With no documented herbicide exposure, service connection for type 2 diabetes mellitus is also denied on a presumptive basis.” - - Statements from the VA

“The above inaccurate statements are being used by the DoD and the VA to deny what happened on Guam during the Vietnam War. The VA refuses to look at any of the mountain of evidence and eye witness testimony we have.” – Ralph Stanton

Proving a Case

Although many of the Air Force personnel stationed in Guam have given witness to the fact that Andersen AFB was used as storage facility for Agent Orange and other herbicides, the government has refused to acknowledge this. Even with photos presented showing this to be the case, the government is in denial.

In the meantime and over the years, Sgt.s Foster and Stanton have fought a continuous battle on two fronts. On one hand, they are both fighting illnesses and diseases acquired through contacting and breathing Agent Orange, while on the other hand they are trying to get the VA to acknowledge their condition is a result of being contaminated with the toxic herbicide.

LeRoy Foster (now MSGT RetAF) has been diagnosed with ankylosing spondiolitis, spinal stenosis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, chloracne, and ischemic heart disease along with having emergency open heart surgery. He has also experienced memory loss, hearing loss, eyesight loss, and a host of other illnesses. Sgt. Foster's daughter has multiple birth defects and her daughter also has multiple birth defects, all attributed to Sgt. Foster's contact with Agent Orange.

Sgt. Stanton has all the same diseases that Sgt. Foster has; in addition he has lupus, diabetes type 2, and scleroderma. Although Sgt. Stanton has several letters from a doctor attesting that his illnesses and poor health are a direct result of coming into contact with Agent Orange, both mens' claims have been denied by the Veteran's Administration. Our veterans deserve better consideration than this.

Although this article focuses on Sgt.s Stanton and Foster, so many more that have been stationed at Andersen AFB have been contaminated with Agent Orange. We have not even mentioned the family members or even the people of Guam, but all deserve consideration.

"It appears to me that there are people at VA, with the help of the DoD, that are breaking the laws of our country. I would appreciate any help I can get to try and pin point where these felons are hiding. It's bad enough we were exposed to all of the herbicides, chemicals, fuels, and radiation that will and has shortened so many of our lives, but trying to live with all the pain and disability without the proper help we were promised from our country is so dishearting. It makes me feel like the VA thinks I am a disposable like a beer can. The government has had forty plus years to study the health effects of these poisons and all they have done with the results that they have gotten is try to hide and cover them up. They have done no testing on the cocktail effect of the multiple exposures to multiple chemicals we all were exposed to."-- Ralph Stanton

See "Reasonable Doubt Regulation" below.

The VA even refuses to follow the regulation for “Reasonable Doubt”

38 CFR 3.102 - Reasonable doubt.

3.102 - Reasonable doubt.

It is the defined and consistently applied policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the law under a broad interpretation, consistent, however, with the facts shown in every case. When, after careful consideration of all procurable and assembled data, a reasonable doubt arises regarding service origin, the degree of disability, or any other point, such doubt will be resolved in favor of the claimant. By reasonable doubt is meant one which exists because of an approximate balance of positive and negative evidence which does not satisfactorily prove or disprove the claim. It is a substantial doubt and one within the range of probability as distinguished from pure speculation or remote possibility. It is not a means of reconciling actual conflict or a contradiction in the evidence. Mere suspicion or doubt as to the truth of any statements submitted, as distinguished from impeachment or contradiction by evidence or known facts, is not justifiable basis for denying the application of the reasonable doubt doctrine if the entire, complete record otherwise warrants invoking this doctrine. The reasonable doubt doctrine is also applicable even in the absence of official records, particularly if the basic incident allegedly arose under combat, or similarly strenuous conditions, and is consistent with the probable results of such known hardships.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501) [50 FR 34458, Aug. 26, 1985, as amended at 66 FR 45630, Aug. 29, 2001]

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