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Military Investigation Continues Into Agent Orange *Key Colonel Flies Into Valley For Answers*

Morgan Loew and Tammy Leitner, CBS 5 Investigates

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PHOENIX -- Steve House has been living in fear since the veteran broke ranks to clear his conscience. "Your damn straight I'm scared," said House, a Valley veteran who revealed that he and other soldiers buried Agent Orange on a military base in South Korea.

A key Colonel flew into the Valley for an intense five-hour meeting with House.

"When did you do it?" House said the colonel asked. "Where did you do it? Do you remember who was in charge? What was the chain of command? How much? Do you remember the labels? And what part of the base it came on?"

House told the colonel what he told CBS 5 Investigates when we first began investigating months ago: that the soldiers were ordered to dig a deep ditch with a flat base. The plan was to neatly stack the barrels, but once they realized the sand was too soft for that, they resorted to using a bulldozer to push the barrels into the ditch. "I'd push it into the ditch so everything fell over and it was just laying there all jumbled," House said.

And that could make the cleanup more difficult. "I think they were wishing they could go in there and dig it out and bring everything out nice and clean and in one piece," he said.

But finding the right location might require House and his fellow soldiers to return to Camp Carroll decades later -- a chance to make an old wrong, right. "There was some mention if it came down to it, possibly getting all of us together and getting us on the site," said House.

He is admittedly cautious. "I've wanted the government to take care of this nightmare I've had to live with for the last 30 years. I don't want to poison kids or anything, and I don't want to hurt GIs," House said.

The U.S. Army acknowledged for this first time on Monday that it buried chemicals on the bases in South Korea three decades ago.

CBS 5 News broke the story of military veterans burying government toxic waste last week. Shortly after, protesters took to the streets outside the entrance to the U.S. military base Camp Carroll in South Korea and international media flooded the area.

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THE HANKYOREH

New Allegations Emerge of USFK Chemical Dumping

Following allegations of buried Agent Orange, the controversy may strengthen calls for USFK environmental accountability

The Hankyoreh



» A view of Camp Mercer in Bucheon, Gyeonggi Province. The U.S. military withdrew in 1992 and the facilities were handed over to the South Korean military. (Yonhap News)

By Kwon Tae-ho, Washington Correspondent

A retired U.S. military officer testified to the burial of large quantities of chemicals at a U.S. military base in Bucheon, Gyeonggi Province, it was belatedly revealed Monday. This revelation comes just after an eyewitness account stating that Agent Orange was buried at Camp Carroll in Chilgok, North Gyeongsang Province. While there was no way of confirming whether the chemicals in the latest account included defoliants, controversy is expected following the revelation of another instance of the USFK disposing of chemicals by burying them in the ground.

Korean-American Chi Yong An posted the account by a retired U.S. military officer on his web page Secret of Korea on Monday (local time). The author of the piece, which An titled “I buried hundreds of gallons of chemicals at Camp Mercer in Bucheon’s Ojeong neighborhood,” was Ray Bows, who said he worked at Camp Mercer between July 1963 and April 1964 as a member of the 547th Engineer Company, 44th Engineer Construction Battalion, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In the piece, which was originally posted in May 2004 on the website of the Korean War Veterans Association, Bows wrote, “We dug a pit with a bulldozer - donned rubber suits and gas masks and dump every imaginable chemical - hundreds of gallons if not more - into the ground.”

Bows also gave specifics about the location of the burial, which he described as “a knoll behind the second storage warehouse on the right” from the main entrance.

The U.S. returned Camp Mercer to South Korea in the early 1990s. The site, which measures 429,000 square meters, is current being used as a South Korean military camp.

Bows stated that the U.S. Army Chemical Depot Korea was located at Camp Mercer at the time and was moved the Camp Carroll, the suspected Agent Orange burial site, between March and April of 1964. He also reported hearing that the reason for the relocation was that the chemical depot was “too close” to the Demilitarized Zone.

Secret of Korea also posted a list of large quantities of waste materials disposed of between 1987 and 1989 by the USFK Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office (DRMO) at Camp Market in Incheon’s Bupyeong district, as ascertained through a 1991 document commissioned and published by the US Army Corps of Engineers Construction Engineering Research Laboratory. According to the document, more than 500 drums of materials such as mercury, spent batteries, outdated medications, solvent waste, asbestos, sodium sulfite solution, and waste oil were disposed of in 1987 alone.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government visited the house of former USFK soldier Steve House, 54, for more than four hours of questioning Monday. House previously testified to the burial of Agent Orange at Camp Carroll. The questioning Monday was reportedly conducted by three U.S. military officers, including a public information official, military waste treatment expert, and USFK official, with House’s attorney in attendance.

Following the questioning, House called the meeting “productive” and said his understanding was that the contents would be reported to Seoul and Washington.

Please direct questions or comments to [englishhani@hani.co.kr]

http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/479638.html

Plot Thickens Over Camp Carroll Agent Orange Dump

The Love Canal environmental disaster at the Niagara Falls area of New York state in 1978 may be linked to the burial of toxic defoliants by the U.S. military in Korea, experts speculate. The Love Canal disaster, in which 21,000 tons of toxic chemicals were found buried in the area, coincides with the timing when large amounts of the defoliant Agent Orange were buried at Camp Carroll in southeastern Korea in 1978.

In the 1940s, an American chemical company called Hooker Chemical buried toxic chemicals, including dioxin, which is used to produce Agent Orange, in the Love Canal site which was turned into a chemical dumpsite after the construction was aborted, causing damage years down the line to students at a nearby school and residents in the area. After the scandal broke in 1978, the U.S. government designated the area as an environmental disaster zone and relocated 235 households and tore down homes and the school.

That incident may have prompted the U.S. government to dispose of toxic chemicals at U.S. military installations overseas instead.

Experts say the Agent Orange used by the U.S. military was in liquid rather than powder form and could end up contaminating soil or underground water supplies, prompting officials to rush to dispose of the toxic chemicals. It was also in 1978 that the damage from Agent Orange became known as Vietnam War veterans from the U.S. and Australia began to complain about side effects and file lawsuits against its manufacturers.

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http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/05/25/2011052501123.html

South Korea Probes Allegations of Buried Chemicals at ex-US Base

*By ASHLEY ROWLAND AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes
Published: May 25, 2011*



U.S. Forces Korea is trying to verify a report from an Arizona television station that says the U.S. military buried Agent Orange in the late 1970s at Camp Carroll, shown in this 2009 aerial photo. - Courtesy of the U.S. Army

SEOUL — Sparked by a posting made seven years ago on a veterans' website, South Korea on Wednesday began investigating the possible burial of chemicals at a former U.S. base nearly five decades ago, according to an official from the prime minister's office.

A former soldier stationed at Camp Mercer posted a comment in May 2004 on the Korean War Project website that said the U.S. buried hundreds of gallons of chemicals at Camp Mercer — a small installation in Bucheon that was turned over to South Korea in the 1990s — while he was stationed there in 1963 and 1964.

“We dug a pit with a bulldozer, donned rubber suits and gas masks and dump every imaginable chemical — hundreds of gallons if not more — into the ground on a knoll behind the second storage warehouse on the right,” retired Master Sgt. Ray Bows wrote.

Bows' comments attracted widespread attention in South Korean media this week following recent allegations that the U.S. buried the defoliant Agent Orange at another base, Camp Carroll, in 1978.

Three U.S. veterans told a Phoenix television station that they helped bury large amounts of the chemical in a ditch there and continue to suffer health problems from their exposure to it.

The 8th Army said this week that a large number of drums containing pesticides, herbicides and solvents were buried at Carroll in 1978 but were removed the following two years, along with 40 to 60 tons of soil. Officials say they do not know if Agent Orange was among those chemicals.

The military found trace amounts of dioxin, a component of Agent Orange, in 2004 in one of 13 test holes bored at the site, but determined that the amount was too small to be a health threat. Officials had not answered a query from Stars and Stripes as of Wednesday night asking what had prompted that testing.

About seven South Korean officials toured former Camp Mercer, now home to a South Korean engineering unit, on Wednesday to familiarize themselves with the former base, according to a Ministry of National Defense official who said the inquiry had not yet reached the level of an official investigation. He said U.S. military officials did not participate in the tour.

Jeff Buczkowski, 8th Army spokesman, said Wednesday in an email that commenting on Bows' statement would be "pure speculation."

"8th Army is focused on the allegations of Agent Orange buried on Camp Carroll," he said. "Other actions may be addressed through the SOFA Environmental Subcommittee."

Both the prime minister's office and the Ministry of National Defense said Wednesday that they had not interviewed Bows and did not know how to reach him.

The alleged burial of Agent Orange has been one of the top news stories in South Korea, and several small protests have been held outside Camp Carroll and the U.S. Embassy in Seoul in the past week.

Lee Jae-hyuk, head of the Daegu branch of the environmental activist organization Green Korea United, said there is growing anger among South Koreans who believe U.S. Forces Korea has not acted swiftly or transparently enough to resolve the question of whether Agent Orange is buried at Camp Carroll.

He said millions of South Koreans are worried that they are drinking contaminated water from the Nakdong River, located near Carroll, and he believes the U.S. government owes South Koreans an apology.

rowlanda@pstripes.osd.mil

chang.yookyong@pstripes.osd.mil

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