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Agent Orange tested secretly in Panama

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The US military tested Agent Orange and other herbicides by secretly spraying them in Panama at the height of the Vietnam War, according to the DALLAS MORNING NEWS. Members of the U.S. military, as well as civilians, may have been exposed to the extremely toxic chemical. Though it says all reports are unproven, the military reportedly tested the chemical over Panama because its tropical forests are similar to those in Vietnam. In Vietnam, The US sprayed Agent Orange to rapidly kill the tropical forests in which they suspected Viet Cong guerillas were hiding.

According to one American veteran, the military sprayed Agent Orange near populated areas in Panama, including a beach, a club, and a lake from which Panama City gets its drinking water. In addition to those who may have been exposed to the chemical in the '60s and '70s, an environmental sciences expert said Agent Orange could last in the soil for decades.

Panama is already seeking up to \$500 million from the US for cleanup, and they expect claims of personal damages as well. Some point out that the US did not know how dangerous Agent Orange could be for those exposed. The Veterans Administration now recognizes nine diseases and disorders to be linked to Agent Orange exposure.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/world/0820int1panama.htm>