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NAVY SHIPBOARD VIETNAM CANCERS LINKED TO WATER

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By: *Simon Kearney*

SAILORS who served on naval ships during the Vietnam War have been told their ships' drinking water, which was contaminated with Agent Orange, could be causing their cancers.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is investigating a link between the number of cancers among sailors and the desalinated water on board some ships, which contained dioxins from the deadly defoliant.

The alarm relates to ships that took on water in Vung Tau harbor in Vietnam between 1965 and 1972, specifically HMAS Sydney, which made 23 trips to Vietnam during the war, and her escort ships

Between 1980 and 1994 as many as 170 navy personnel died from cancers potentially related to the water on the ships, according to the Mortality of Vietnam Veterans cohort study.

An updated mortality study on Vietnam veterans is due to be released later this year.

The problem was identified nearly three years ago when the National Research Center for Toxicology found that desalinated drinking water taken from the estuary was contaminated with Agent Orange, which was sprayed widely across the country during the war.

Our own less than forthcoming collaborative US Government/Chemical companies duo; knew this fact decades ago.

One of the more bizarre aspects of the report from the CDC was the claim that those veterans who suffered most from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma had served on Navy ships off the coast of Vietnam. It said that those who had served in III Corps, which had some of the heaviest Agent Orange spraying of the war, seemed to be at lower risk.

This is classic US government BS logic.

In context: This was before the admission of non-hodgkin's lymphoma in those that were geographically in Vietnam and the government was still in the complete denial mode of any toxic chemical damages and used this example as "see how can it be associated and common?" Once again our honest government at work.

Any "sane person," not trying to cover up these issues after making the statements above, would with logic and purpose once it was concluded that there was a connection and the water was indeed found to be contaminated would say to themselves; Why does the Navy personnel seemed to be more involved with this disorder. Is this an anomaly or is for other reasons such as:

- Maybe the ships that got water from Vietnam or other geographical areas such as Guam that the water was proven contaminated may just have been the worst contaminated.
- Maybe the Navy personal were exposed in a different form such as "drinking the swill" the whole time they were on board.
- Maybe the dose rate would be cumulative to the holding tanks as every time the ship took on water the dose rate would be elevated. No different than our "water buffalos" the ground troops used in country.
- It could be feasible that those transport ships that had made several trips to Vietnam and other places where the ground water was contaminated and then transported our ground troops over "as units" such as my 2/94th artillery unit which was transported along with the 1/40 artillery; would have immediately been exposed the minute the ship set sail for Vietnam. Although with our ship that probably did not happen since the last use of that ship was the Inchon landings during the Korean war. However, that does not mean it would not be possible for those ships that did meet the criteria.

(Please note: the CDC reports as well as Rand Hand reports were and are highly dubious as to integrity and directly charged with scientific misconduct, including White House involvement.

Probably not the United States Government you envisioned when you Veterans put your ass on the line for these less than honorable politicians and Presidents that dropped you like a hot potato as they realized the impacts of what that arrogant Johnson and McNamara had actually created.

The *Institute of Medicine in the weeks before the CDC released its results of blood tests wrote a stinging rebuke of the CDC's tests methods. It said that none of the CDC's conclusions was supported by scientific data. The CDC refused to turn this report over to the White House.

"Either it was a politically rigged operation or it was a monumentally bungled operation," said Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY), chairman of the Government Operations Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee.

Other information began turning up that there were concerted efforts by various agencies of the government to conceal records and information about the effects of Agent Orange.

Daschle learned that there were major discrepancies between a January 1984 draft of the Air Force's Operation Ranch Hand study and the February 1984 report. According to Daschle, the draft showed there were twice as many birth defects among the children of Ranch Hand participants. "The draft also reported that the Ranch Handers were less well than the controls by a ratio of 5 to 1," said Daschle.

But these results "were deleted" from the final Ranch Hand report, which said there had been no adverse effects from exposure to Agent Orange. {That Veterans is what I call "criminal with criminal intent" on behalf of the United States Government to include giving no warning and being culpable in the death and disablement of those involved. If that had been a civilian entity the lawyers would still be filing lawsuits for "contributing to" or "allowing the death of" their client.}

"The Air Force deleted these findings from the final report at the suggestion of a Ranch Hand Advisory Committee set up by the White House Agent Orange Working Group," said Daschle.

Air Force scientists involved in the study said they were pressured by non-scientists within the Air Force and the White House to change the results and delete critical information for the final report. Daschle says he has even obtained two versions of the minutes of the meeting in which that pressure was applied. One confirms what the scientists told him. Another set deletes that information.

"What happened there was a fraud perpetrated by people whose names we still do not know," said Daschle.

Part of the fraud appears to have been perpetrated by the Monsanto Corp., which produces a number of chemicals containing dioxin. Monsanto knowingly rigged test results of employees who had been exposed to dioxin to make the effects of it appear far less than it actually was, according to a February 23, 1990 Environmental Protection Agency memorandum.

"There is no risk in this study associated with (dioxin) exposure," said Dr. Daniel Hoffman of the CDC.

"The conclusion seems to fly in the face of other scientific studies, which indicates there is a connection between Agent Orange and cancer, birth defects and other disorders. It makes it sound like Agent Orange is like orange juice, healthy for you instead of harmful."

*Institute of Medicine (IOM)

I think it is obvious that once the IOM became the government contractor in 1991 for establishing the associations and presumptions of disorders caused by the toxic chemicals (plural) swell they then changed their spots and became a total allies of the government; not science. Amazing how money does that very thing.

``We are investigating what the issues associated with water and water taken from Vietnamese waters are, and the RMA (Repatriation Medical Authority) have made some progress in that in terms of providing some linkages," Department of Veterans Affairs secretary Mark Sullivan said in a Senate budget estimates hearing last month.

He said drinking the water was linked to prostate cancer, bone marrow cancer, and two cancers of the lymphatic system, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and Hodgkin's lymphoma.

``It (RMA) is still considering the medical and scientific evidence for the inclusion of a potable water factor in the investigations for malignant neoplasm of the lung (lung cancer), soft tissue sarcoma, malignant neoplasm of the larynx (throat cancer) and acute myeloid leukemia," Mr Sullivan said.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is urging former navy personnel who have these conditions and served on ships that anchored in Vung Tau harbor to submit or resubmit claims.

``What we encourage all veterans to do, if they are unwell or have a condition or disease and they have any suspicion that that condition is related to their service, is to put in a claim. We will investigate it," Mr Sullivan said.

However, Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia president Ron Coxon said the Government had not gone far enough because veterans had to prove they spent a total of 30 days drinking the water.

"They talk about 30 cumulative days but we don't know how much of the dioxin actually settled in the tank because they never cleaned them," he said.

(We do know that the toxic chemical swill testers at Fort Detrick, MD sent out an emergency directive to Military Army Command Vietnam (MACV) in mid 1969 on how it was imperative to decontaminate the 55 gallon drums of these toxic chemicals and how that should be accomplished. Of course for the Veterans serving in country from 1962 to mid 1969 it was just a tad bit late for us. And we are talking about 55 gallon drums not holding tanks in ocean going vessels.

The next logical question should be did our MACV pass this Fort Detrick, MD concern on to our allies major commands and of course the Department of the Navy of not only our own Navy but our allies such as the Aussies.)

The initial toxicology report found that distilling seawater concentrated the dioxins in the water navy personnel were drinking and washing in to above safe levels. The report was an attempt to explain why more navy personnel were dying after the war than other veterans.

{The obvious question should be is what are "above safe levels." How was this determined? Who was involved in the determination of such scientific rhetoric. Especially since our EPA as well as several other studies have concluded their is no quote "safe level" end quote. That just going from 5 parts per trillion to 10 parts per trillion in the noise background can create cancers long-term. Especially when one considers the level of our Nam vets would be at a greater initial baseline level than the generic public.)

Of the 55,000 Australians who served in Vietnam, 12,376 were in the navy.

Opposition veteran's affairs spokesman Allan Griffin said the Department of Veterans Affairs was not being active enough about warning veterans who might be at risk.

{Gee, I think we just discussed that very issue regarding our own government called "OUTREACH".)

{I would also think that includes any ships that stopped in "Guam for stores and potable water".}

Simon Kearney
The Australian newspaper
2 Holt Street
Surry Hills
NSW 2010

E-mail: kearneys@theaustralian.com.au

Best to all,

Kelley