

## What Happened to the 5,000 barrels of Purple on Guam?

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of herbicides were returned to the main land US.

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the 5,000 barrels of purple herbicides on Guam: “Unfortunately, despite the  
review of thousands of physical and digital records, we were unable to locate  
anything responsive to your request.”

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Agent Orange By Alvin Young 2009, States; “At the close of the Korean Conflict  
(1955) much of the stockpile of Purple was disposed of.” Could those 5,000 barrels  
of herbicides be one of the sources of high dioxin level on Guam?  
“Although the records were not complete, it appeared that in 1961 at least a portion  
of remaining stocks of Purple removed from Guam in 1955 and stored at Fort  
Detrick were sent to Eglin AFB, Florida, for use in the test and evaluation programs  
of the spray equipment for use in Vietnam (Young 1974).”

It seems that most of the info on this traveling herbicide is coming from Alvin Young  
with an undocumented story that varies with who he is working for at the time.



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

ACQUISITION,  
TECHNOLOGY  
AND LOGISTICS

The Honorable Lane Evans  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
335 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

SEP 23 2003

The DVA is aware that the list of places outside of Vietnam where herbicides were used "does not contain any references to routine base maintenance activities such as range management, brush clearing, weed killing, etc., -- records-- were generally kept no longer than two years." (see attached memo)

Dear Congressman Evans:

This is in response to your letter to the Secretary of Defense concerning the use and storage of Vietnam-era herbicides, including the contaminant dioxin on Guam. I am responding, on his behalf.

The Department has found no record of the use, storage, or testing of Herbicides Orange, Blue, or White on Guam. In 1952, roughly 5,000 drums of Herbicide Purple were transported to Guam and stored there in anticipation of use on the Korean Peninsula. The herbicide was never used and was returned to the United States. Although other herbicides may have passed through Guam during the Vietnam Conflict, we have no record of long-term storage or use of these herbicides on Guam.

The presence of dioxin contamination at a site does not necessarily indicate that Herbicide Orange was used or stored at that site. According to Air Force studies, the dioxins at sites references in the Public Health Assessment were associated with burned material. Access to sites on Guam with elevated dioxin levels is highly restricted and public exposure is not expected.

A summary of information obtained from a search of the records at the U.S. Army's Center for Unit Records Research on the use Vietnam-era herbicides in the other locations you requested is attached and has already been supplied to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sincerely,

Philip W. Grone

Principal Assistant Under Secretary of Defense  
(Installations and Environment)

The Department of the Army, after reviewing thousands of physical and digital records, were unable to find any evidence of the 5000 barrels of purple herbicide being returned to Fort Detrick from Guam. (see attached letter)

The VA has used this unsubstantiated story over and over to turn down Guam Veteran's herbicide cases.

Attachment:  
As stated





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY GARRISON  
810 SCHREIDER STREET  
FORT DETRICK, MD 21702-5000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

August 9, 2011

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/  
Privacy Act (PA) Office  
**FOIA Case F06-11**

Mr. Vancil Sanderson  
6330 Leon Dr.  
Sun Valley, NV 89433

Dear Mr. Sanderson:

This letter is a final response to your FOIA request, F06-11, received on February 24, 2011. In your FOIA, you requested:

"All documents pertaining to the shipping, storage and destruction of Agent Purple and all rainbow herbicides from Guam." Also, a more complete description of the records you requested is:

"I've sent 2 attachments of documents. The first is from Phillip Grone of the DoD about the 5000 barrels of Agent Purple that was stored on Guam. Next is from the Alvin Young collection (contracted by the government) about the 5000 barrels. If you go to pages 8, 11, and 15, it's said by Mr. Young that the barrels of Agent Purple stored on Guam for use in Korea weren't used and were sent to Camp Detrick after the Korean War, which was from 1950 thru 1953. The agent purple would have been sent back after that, when, I don't exactly know, but probably between probably 1953 and 1975. At some point, it may have been sent to Eglin from Camp or Fort Detrick. Agent Purple is one of the rainbow herbicides."

After a comprehensive search, we have been unable to locate any records responsive to your request. The search was conducted by FOIA personnel and staff at the U.S. Army Garrison (USAG), Fort Detrick, as well as at U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC) and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID). The search included the following:

- A hand search of the USAMRIID archives at USAMRMC headquarters. This search was conducted in consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who have previously conducted a hand search and inventory of all records within this archive.
- A hand search of archived records under the custody of the Director of the USAMRIID Office of Human Use and Integrity for any records relating to tactical herbicide exposure to humans or the environment.
- A hand search by the USAG records custodian of Records of Transmittal and Receipt, which denote the historical transfer of records maintained within the USAG.

The Department of the Army, after reviewing thousands of physical and digital records, were unable to find any evidence of the 5000 barrels of purple herbicide being returned to Fort Detrick from Guam.

- A digital search through the entire USAMRIID accident database as well as a physical search through archived files and records at the USAMRIID Safety Division employing search terms identified by reviewing your FOIA request.
- Consultation with the USAMRIID librarian for a review of library archived records.

These search efforts comprised a search through all locations where responsive records might reasonably be held and contact with all personnel who might reasonably have custody of responsive records. Unfortunately, despite the review of thousands of physical and digital records, we were unable to locate any responsive to your request.

Although we were unable to locate records responsive to your request, our search did reveal that other Federal agencies have collected information on tactical herbicides once stored at Fort Detrick. There is not sufficient information for us to refer your FOIA agencies directly to these agencies, but we can suggest that you contact them to assist in your research.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Plant Disease Laboratory, at one time tested tactical herbicides in a program operated at Fort Detrick. I recommend you contact the USDA and, or, submit a FOIA request to their agency. The point of contact for the USDA FOIA officer is: Ravoyne Payton, Room 408W - Whitten Bldg., Washington DC 20250; Tel. 202-720-8755; Fax 202-690-0068; Email: [Ravoyne.Payton@ocio.usda.gov](mailto:Ravoyne.Payton@ocio.usda.gov) and [USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov](mailto:USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov). Further USDA FOIA information can be found on their website: <http://www.dm.usda.gov/foia.htm>.

Additionally, tactical herbicide records from Army programs once operated at Fort Detrick were transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) around approximately 1969. The NARA maintains records for the public, and I recommend you contact them as a next phase of your research. The point of contact for NARA is: [foia@nara.gov](mailto:foia@nara.gov). Further NARA FOIA information can be found on their website: <http://www.archives.gov/foia/>.

Furthermore, all information regarding the past disposal of waste at Fort Detrick can be found in the Fort Detrick Installation Restoration Administrative Record located in the Maryland Room of the Frederick County Public Library. Summaries for each of the sites referenced are found in the appropriate final Remedial Investigation Report document.

I sincerely apologize for the delay in providing this response. As mentioned in previous update letters, this search has involved the review of a significant number of records, many of which are not digitized because of their age. Additionally, the Department of the Army has been engaged in a department-wide endeavor to catalogue and determine the proper releasability of records related to Agent Orange and other tactical herbicides. Our effort to respond to your request has been closely linked with those larger efforts; we have been limited in our ability to respond by the demands of coordinated action across multiple Army components. This is all not to serve as an excuse for our delay, but merely to inform you of our diligent efforts to search through a considerable amount and array of material.

Because this constitutes a "no records found" denial of your request, you are advised of your right to appeal this determination to the Secretary of the Army. If you decide to appeal at this time, your appeal must be submitted within 60 days of the date of this

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letter. In your appeal, you must state the basis for your disagreement with the denial and the justification for the release of information associated with your request for this command. Your appeal should be addressed to the address below for forwarding, as appropriate, to the Office of the Secretary of the Army:

U.S. Army Medical Command  
Attention: Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts Office (MCPA)  
2040 Stanley Road  
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

There were no fees associated with this FOIA request.

You may reach the FOIA Liaison Officer, Ms. Jill Piercy, at 301-619-8095.

Sincerely,

//Signed//  
JILL L. PIERCY  
Freedom of Information Act/  
Privacy Act Liaison Officer

As noted from Table 1.1, Chapter 1, 365 drums (75,920 l) of Herbicide Green; 1,315 drums (273,520 l) of Herbicide Pink; and 12,405 drums (2,580,240 l) of Herbicide Purple were used in Vietnam from late 1961 through mid-1965 (Young et al. 2008). The fourth tactical herbicide deployed to South Vietnam was a powdered commercial formulation of cacodylic acid (or Ansar 138®).

**Herbicide Purple** was first formulated in early 1950s in anticipation of use in the conflict in Korea and the possible need for vegetation-control systems. Purple was selected as the agent of choice in 1951, and by 1952 the first spray device, the MC-1 or Hour-glass System was released for prove out and acceptance testing. **During 1953 operational capability was completed and the herbicide and spray system was deployed to Guam for anticipated use in the Korean Conflict, although it was never used. At the close of the Korean Conflict (1955) much of the stockpile of Purple was disposed of and the spray units placed in storage (Irish et al. 1969).** Purple was approved for military procurement on 27 January 1953 (Department of Army, 1970). Purple was formulated to contain 1.04 kg/l of the active ingredients 2,4-D (510 g/l) and 2,4,5-T (530 g/l) (Darrow et al. 1966). The percentages of the formulation were:

n-butyl 2,4-D 50%  
n-butyl 2,4,5-T 30%  
iso-butyl 2,4,5-T 20%

**There appears to be controversy over what actually happened to the 5,000 barrels of Agent Purple. See Attachments.**

**Although the records were not complete, it appeared that in 1961 at least a portion of remaining stocks of Purple removed from Guam in 1955 and stored at Fort Detrick were sent to Eglin AFB, Florida, for use in the test and evaluation programs of the spray equipment for use in Vietnam (Young 1974).** Subsequent Purple was purchased in FY (Fiscal Year) 1961–FY 1964 (calendar year 1962–1965) for use in Vietnam.

**Herbicide Pink** was a formulation of 2,4,5-T used extensively in the early RANCH HAND operations (Brown 1962; Collins 1967), and in the defoliation test programs of 1963 in Thailand (Darrow et al. 1966). Pink was formulated to contain 971 g/l active ingredient 2,4,5-T. The percentages of the formulation were:

n-butyl 2,4,5-T 60%  
iso-butyl 2,4,5-T 40%

The first mission spraying Herbicide Pink was on 29 December 1961 “(the first use of an approved ‘tactical herbicide.’)” A C-47 aircraft with modified spray equipment was used to spray the herbicide north of Route 15 between Bien Hoa and Long Thanh. Three passes over a test site disseminating a total of almost 200 l of concentrated Pink formulation resulted in a rating of “poor” (Brown 1962). It appeared that the deposition was sublethal, and although the swath was visible in the first week, it failed to develop with time (Brown 1962).

**Herbicide Green** was a single component formulation consisting of the n-butyl ester of 2,4,5-T. It was used in limited quantities in 1962. Green contained 971 grams/liter active ingredient 2,4,5-T [Brown 1962]. After arrival of the Green Herbicide in November 1961, apparently all of it was