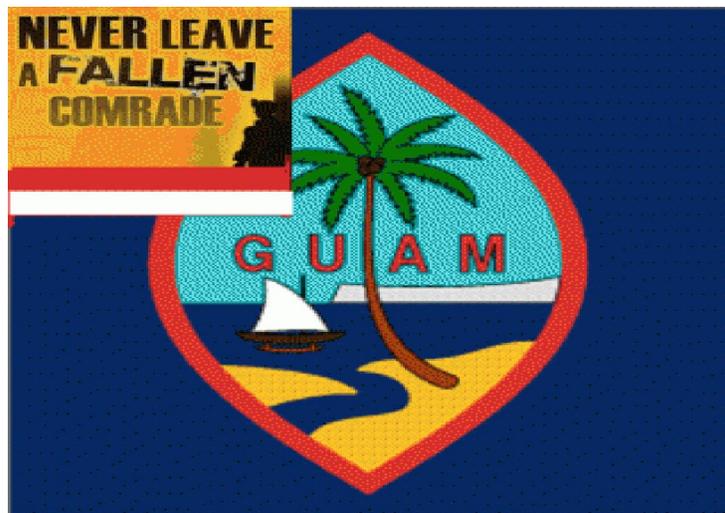


Rainbow Colored Chemical Agents on GUAM?

June 22, 2010 posted by [indythinker](#) · [Leave a Comment](#)



This will be the last in or series on Agent Orange on Guam until we get a response from our FOIA requests to DoD, and the Department of the Army. That said, we are not optimistic that the DoD, DoA, or Department of the Air Forces is going to want to fess up and open old wounds about Vietnam, Agent Orange, PTSD, or what have you while they are at war in Iraq and Afghanistan. But we shall see.

We believe the best course of action at this time is to keep a fire under the various Veterans Service Organizations you are members of to continue the pressure on Congress to demand that DoD provide more definitive answers than the Pentagon can neither confirm or deny the presence of the Rainbow Colored Chemical Agents on Guam or anywhere else outside Vietnam.

This provides a dilemma for our VSOs that cannot be ignored for this pits not only in-country combat Vietnam Vets against Vietnam Era Vets, but could potentially pit older Vets against younger Vets in a formula that has allowed our government now filled with people who never served, and anti-Vietnam war protesters like Bob Filner, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

I don't say this to instigate, the point is that closer scrutiny and examination into the presence of Agent Orange or the related colorful chemical agents OUTSIDE Vietnam is something our VSOs cannot ignore, and the controversy now goes beyond the Blue Water-Brown Water navy.

That said, my initial impression that the VSOs were doing nothing about this debate is WRONG. Upon closer examination of documentation, media releases, and testimony before Congress some VSOs have

taken up your cause but at a snail's pace. However, readers at a snail's pace has been all we Veterans have been able to accomplish except when it comes to crap that doesn't cost anything in \$\$\$ such as the Stolen Valor Act, and Flag Amendments.

My point is that look how fast we got the Stolen Valor Act, and though we did not get the Flag Amendment (want one or not) looked how fast our VSOs were able to move these through Congress compared to real Veterans Issues and it speaks volumes.

Below will focus on documentation coming out of Guam, testimony of a few VSO leaders, and even the support of a former Vietnam War protester turned politician Congressman Bob Filner to be fair to him.

Lastly, if readers, especially those in this situation, and VSO members reading this take nothing else away from the article please note that yes the presence of Agent Orange or what have you on Guam is questionable and debateable, but the presence of dioxins and chemical contaminants that could potentially kill everyone assigned to Anderson AFB, Guam in the past is an ongoing FACT given the Chemical cleanup now ongoing on Guam.

Robert L. Hanafin, Major, U.S. Air Force-Retired, [Veterans Today News](#)

<http://www.veteranstodaynetwork.com/>



Anderson AFB, Guam Remains on the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) for Dioxin Clean-Up

If you are a Veteran who served during the Vietnam War in combat support roles and missions launched out of Anderson AFB, Guam to either Thailand or Vietnam, chances are that you may have been exposed to Agent Orange or related dioxin trace materials found by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at AAFB, Guam. The base has been among many stateside bases ordered to clean-up its hazardous waste mess.

A review of 156 VA Appeals by Veterans Today reflects that the Department of Veterans Affairs in conjunction with the Air Force, and Department of Defense (DoD) has followed a trend of either endlessly delaying a Veterans claims of Agent Orange exposure on Guam until the VA eventually denies it, or has used statements from the Air Force or DoD to delay or deny a Veteran's claim based solely on the assumption that Agent Orange was never stored, used, or transported through Anderson

AFB, Guam. However, no one within the VA, Department of the Air Force, or DoD has made any conclusive statement that Agent Orange was never used or existed on Guam. In other words, no proof has been presented by DoD, the Air Force, or the VA that Agent Orange never existed on Guam leaving at least 156 Veterans most likely a fraction of the actual number in limbo with a Catch-22 of

Department of Defense CHECKMATE on any VA Claims related to the on going Hazardous Waste Clean up on Guam and elsewhere.

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 referenced 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.

What exactly were these burn pit?

To what extent has the chemical contamination harmed base residents?

Public exposure may not be expected Today, but what about during the Vietnam War or shortly thereafter?

The VA's convenient cop out is this vague and diversionary DoD response:

Data from the Department of Defense does not show any use, storage of tactical herbicides, such as Agent Orange, at any location on Guam were present there. The Joint Services Records Research Center informed us research of available historical information does not document the spraying, storage of Agent Orange at Anderson Air Force Base, Guam.

With no documented herbicide exposure, service connection for **WHAT EVER** denied on a presumptive basis.

As we all know, the VA will continue to use BS reasons to deny these claims, but we have to keep pushing. Small victories start to add up, and eventually the VA damn will break. Anyone who served in South East Asia or the Pacific during Vietnam will tell you Agent Orange was not just present in Vietnam, but also in Guam, Thailand, Korea, Japan, for the very simple and logical reason that — it had to be STORED somewhere!

DoD and the VA are smart enough to know that no Veteran's unit records is going to include documentation of Agent Orange storage or the specifics of use!!! It is a load of BS for sure. But you must keep hitting back.

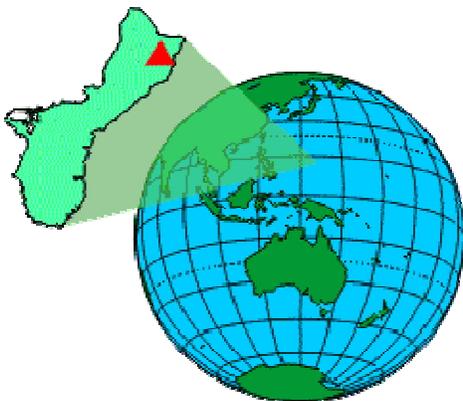


According to the Environmental Protection Agency on Guam working with the Air Force to clean up the toxic waste at Anderson AFB, “during the decades of military use, chemicals were

used and stored in various locations on the base and spilled during routine aircraft, vehicle, and ground maintenance operations. Wastes from military and housing operations were buried in two landfills at the south end of the North Field runways from 1946 to the late 1970s. Soil and groundwater beneath these landfills, and in dozens of other areas on base, may have been contaminated over the years by routine waste disposal, military operations, and occasional fuel spills. Ten acres in the North Field area still serve as a sanitary landfill for Andersen AFB's non-hazardous waste. Hazardous waste is now disposed of offsite in compliance with federal law (USAF 1992a; SAIC 1991).

http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/anderson/and_toc.html#loa

However the Air Force conveniently notes that just because poisonous toxins including dioxins are present in hazardous quantities on Anderson AFB, Guam does not mean they were of the Agent Orange variety, yet the Air Force can't prove they are not?



Andersen AFB was placed on the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's \(EPA's\) National Priorities List \(NPL\)](#) on October 14, 1992, due to the extent of groundwater contamination under the base (USAF 1992b). The NPL is part of EPA's [Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act \(CERCLA\)](#), commonly known as [Superfund](#).

The Air Force entered into a Federal Facility Agreement (FFA) with EPA Region IX and GEPA on March 30, 1993 (USAF 1992a, 1997). EPA and GEPA share responsibilities in overseeing environmental investigations and cleanup at Andersen AFB. The FFA outlined a comprehensive strategy for environmental restoration of Andersen AFB and identified the underlying groundwater aquifer and 50 sites on Andersen AFB property *where hazardous materials* may have been disposed of, spilled, or stored. These 50 sites were later reorganized to create a total of 39 sites scheduled for further RI/FS activities (USAF 1996). All IRP sites have been posted with signs to warn anyone approaching the areas, and several areas are fenced or are located in areas of restricted access (e.g., the Andersen AFB Landfill Complex).

http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/anderson/and_toc.html#loa

Herbicide Orange (also known as Agent Orange) is a 50:50 mixture of 2,4-**dichlorophenoxyacetic** acid (2,4-D) and 2,4,5-**trichlorophenoxyacetic** acid (2,4,5-T) (HSDB2002a, 2002b). It is a reddish-brown to tan colored liquid, and was named after the orange stripe on the 55-gallon drum in which it was stored.

Herbicide Orange was sprayed from airplanes, helicopters, trucks, and backpacks in Vietnam from 1965 to 1970 to kill unwanted plants and remove leaves from trees (VA 2001, 2002). Use of 2, 4, 5-T is currently restricted in the United States (ATSDR 1998).

During the manufacturing process of 2,4,5-T, a contaminant 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD) was produced in small quantities (ATSDR 1998). Many of the health effects resulting from exposure to Herbicide Orange are attributed to the presence of this contaminant.

Many effects have been observed in animals following exposure to TCDD, and this contaminant is considered more toxic than the pure components of the herbicides used in Vietnam (NAS 2000).

Veterans Today Editorial Comment:

TCDD has been found in soil contamination on at several land fills on Anderson AFB along with Trichloroethylene, Tetrachloroethylene, Dioxins have also been detected at Land Fill-2, in soil samples at other land fills dioxin was detected at concentrations above comparison values in surface soil, 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA), carbon tetrachloride (CCl₄), in other soil sample noted by the EPA there have been semi-volatile organic compounds (up to 42 ppm), metals, and dioxins detected in yet another land fill, with dioxin levels up to 19,000 ppm.

In yet other soil samples total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) reflect dioxin levels up to 94 ppm, and metals were detected at levels above comparison values. Another site soil sample had dioxin levels up to 120 ppm, and metals (lead levels up to 15,700 ppm) were detected at levels above comparison values. Lastly, the EPA found in soil sample at another location on Anderson AFB dioxins levels up to 0.78 ppm, volatile organic compounds up to 9.8 ppm, semi-volatile organic compounds up to 1.8 ppm, pesticides up to 12 ppm, and metals (chromium levels up to 830 ppm) were detected, some at levels above at comparison values.

[SOURCE: EPA Conclusions about Hazardous Waste Clean Up on Anderson AFB, Guam](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/anderson/and_p3.html#F4A)
http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/anderson/and_p3.html#F4A

The above scientific jargon aside, which most of our readers can't understand, and I had to pull out a dictionary, the fact of the matter is that although the EPA reports do not mention Agent Orange, or any of the other Rainbow Colors, specifically, the significant presence of dioxins at so many different locations at land fills used during different historic time frames, including during the Vietnam War, and dioxins in concentrations that can compete with or surpass many major regions in Vietnam where Ranch Hand and related Herbicide Warfare missions took place, common sense tells one that there is more to this than what the Pentagon is telling the VA, and Veterans who served on Guam during the Vietnam War.

Point: The scientific evidence of the significant presence of dioxins that the EPA has found on Guam goes beyond the Pentagon's explanation of burn pits. It would behoove VSOs and Congress to work more closely with the EPA that is not under command and control of the Pentagon to determine the extent or use of Agent Orange related chemicals on Anderson AFB to include at least two land fills found UNDER base housing areas prior to construction and base personnel (military families) moving in. What we have here is a Pandora's box and the Pentagon fears opening it. The VA is simple taking

advantage of the box being closed and working closely with the DoD to delay, delay, and deny until you die Veterans claims.

Researcher at the University of Guam WARNED to back off on claims of Agent Orange exposure on Guam then terminated

We are forwarding detailed research done by Medical Doctor Luis Szyfres, M.D., M.P.H. Clinical Epidemiology; Clinical Pathology; Clinical Research at the University of Guam who has done extensive research in Hazardous Waste contamination on Guam in general, and Anderson AFB in particular for several years.

We believe that given the political climate on Guam today where some of the population and government officials are concerned about the expansion of a military (Marine) presence on Guam given the Toxic Waste clean up by the Air Force that Dr. Szyfres has been warned by University administration to back off on his study and claims of Agent Orange exposure.

In Dr. Szyfres research study and report "GUAM.... THE LAND OF THE ROSARIES," this scientist and medical doctor with twenty-six years (last sixteen years in managerial positions) in private, public, academic, and international organizations, including: The Johns Hopkins University/Medical Center and SPH (Baltimore, Maryland), BIMC and Mount Sinai Medical Center/City University of New York (Manhattan, NY), IT&E International Corporation (San Jose, CA), US Department of Health and Human Services, DHHS/OMH (Washington, DC), World Health Organization (WHO) specialized agency of the United Nations (UN), Washington, DC. Director, World Health Organization (WHO) / United Nations (UN), Strategic Center for Bioinformatics & Publications, for the United States & its territories AND Member Guam's Legislature: Guam Right to Know Commission. Hagatna, Guam AND A. Professor, College of Natural & Applied Sciences. University of Guam (UOG) should be threaten, warned to cease his research on the relationship between Agent Orange and Guam. AND we believe Dr.Szyfres may have been terminated for his refusal to remain SILENT.

Why the enthusiasm about silencing such an experienced researcher into Agent Orange on Guam?

The cover sheet of Dr. Szyfres' study reads:

It is a very sad & dramatic situation, the University of Guam has been conducting studies for more than 30 years, involving more than 20 professors.

All these studies prove that the environment of Guam is heavily contaminated with very toxic chemical, and their association with very severe diseases and/or death. But instead of informing their own students (more than 3,000) their families, and the community how to prevent and treat the constant accumulation of these deadly poisons in their bodies... UOG published an editorial in the newspaper (M. VARIETY) denying any contamination of the food they eat, and the water they drink.

Veterans Today Editorial Comment: Dr. Szyfres' concerns may be reinforced by what the EPA found on Anderson AFB, this is not only a health issue but a political issue, thus we believe he is being silenced. However, it was his views on Agent Orange on Guam that caught our eye for he is not a Veteran, but

believes the dioxins found on Anderson AFB are related to the family of Agent Orange chemical use and storage and set out to prove it thus the attempt to shut him up.

His cover sheet also states that:

EXAMPLE OF THE CONCENTRATIONS, DISPERSION, AND ASSOCIATED DISEASES OF A TOXIC CHEMICAL IN GUAM – DIOXINS, TCDD, AGENT ORANGE

Federal Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR)

TCDD: sites, dates, and concentrations/comparison values (CVs).

One of the most toxic man made substances known.

Veterans Today: Damn the politics on Guam or anywhere else, our VSOs, the U.S. Congress, and the EPA on Guam need to at the minimum scrutinize Dr. Szyfre's findings are accurate enough to add Guam to the listing of preemptive assumptions of locations where Agent Orange existed or was used. The very fact that efforts have been made to silence him convinces us at Veterans Today that he is onto something and on the right tract.

Veterans Service Organizations, Congress, and the VA take Note Dr. Szyfre's is not under Pentagon or VA command and control

Dr. Szyfre's findings are that:

Three ounces of dioxin can kill in excess of one million people.

The toxicity of TCDD is 1,000 times more lethal than potassium cyanide.

Shallow Subsurface Soil testing on Anderson AFB

GUAM, YIGO – (SITE NO. 26) Fire Training Area No.2-Operable Unit. [Anderson AFB] Main Base: used between 1958 and 1988. TCDD: concentrations “above” CVs — up to 19,000 ppm

GUAM, YIGO – (SITE NO. 35) Waste Pile No.1-Operable Unit. [Anderson AFB]Main Base: Several thousand deteriorated drums of asphaltic tar from unknown dates are at this site. TCDD: concentrations “above” CVs — up to 87 ppm

GUAM, MARBO – (SITE NO. 37) War Dog Borrow Pit-Operable Unit. [Anderson AFB]MARBO Annex. Its contents and dates of operation are unknown. TCDD: concentrations “above” CVs — up to 94 ppm

GUAM, NORTHWEST FIELD – (SITE NO. 31) [Anderson AFB] Chemical Storage Area No. 4. Operable Unit. Northwest Field: waste oils and solvents were stored at this site. TCDD: concentrations “above” CVs — up to 130 ppm

GUAM, YIGO – (SITE NO. 2) Landfills No.2/Landfill No.4/Landfill No.5 (4 & 5 are contained within 2)-Operable Units. [Anderson AFB] Main Base: used from 1947 to 1975, with a small area remaining active until 1982.. Materials disposed of at this site include, petroleum, oil, lubricants, solvents,

pesticides, ferrous metal, construction debris, and unexploded ordinance. TCDD: present/concentration not-specified

GUAM, HARMON – (SITE NO. 19) Landfill No.24-Operable Unit. Harmon: holds sanitary trash and possibly other types of debris from the 1950s. TCDD: present/concentration not-specified

GUAM, NORTHWEST FIELD – (SITE NO. 21) Landfill No.26-Operable Unit. Northwest Field: is filled with sanitary trash and construction debris from 1966.
TCDD: present/concentration not-specified

GUAM, YIGO – (SITE NO. 5) Landfill No.7-Operable Unit. [Anderson AFB]Main Base.

TCDD: concentrations “above” comparison values EXPOSURE

2, 4-D is an herbicide, that was a component of the Agent Orange defoliant used during the Vietnam war and it frequently is contaminated with traces of TCDD/Dioxin, which is one of the most toxic man made substances known.

A major route of current and past exposures is from the movement of dioxin from soil into water sediment, then into fish, and from fish consumption...into people.

Dioxin released into the atmosphere contaminates the rivers and soil. Because dioxin compounds do not break down easily, they eventually find their way into the food chain in fish, crops, and other produce.

Dioxin is lipophilic, which means that when it is assimilated into the human body, the heaviest deposits are to be found in body fat, or in the case of lactating women, in their milk.

Among his findings of dioxins present on Guam:

US. CONGRESS

1979: a National Veterans Task Force on Agent Orange was formed and legislation was passed by Congress to commission a large-scale epidemiological study of veterans who had been exposed to the herbicide.

1984: Congress passed Public Law 98-542, designed to provide compensation for soft tissue sarcoma, and required the VA to establish standards for general Agent Orange and atomic radiation compensation.

WHITE HOUSE in 1986: the House Energy and Commerce Committee learned that the White House’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) was trying to stop all dioxin research, claiming that enough research had been done.

GUAM: Unknown to 165.000 civilians who live, breath, eat, drink water, and bath in a virtual omnipresent mist of the rainbow herbicides. To the present, no action has been taken by the government.

Sources of Pollutants in Sediments [in addition to Agent Orange found on Anderson AFB]

Garbage dumps by the U.S. Military on Guam included the Navy Orote Landfill, which from 1944 to 1969 deposited many tons of discarded metals, as well as industrial and construction wastes (Navy Energy and Environmental Support Activity, 1983). Contaminants in this waste include PCB'S, PAH'S, ORGANOCHLORINE PESTICIDES, DIOXINS, FURANS, and METALS.

The Navy supplied nuclear submarines and other surface ships at Apra Harbor, operated dry cleaning and printing plants, treated building materials with preservatives, stored and operated floating power plants, transferred ammunition and possibly nuclear weapons, etc.

There are numerous studies on the contamination of Guam with toxic chemicals conducted by US. Federal Agencies: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances & Diseases Registry (ATSDR), the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of the Navy, etc.

All the specialized federal agencies concur in that the environment of Guam is contaminated....

Veterans Today Editorial Comment: Dr.Szyfre's refusal to remain silent on the association of Agent Orange and Guam led to his termination by the University of Guam and this more than anything tells us that pressure was placed on the University to silence or fire the researcher and scientist. When it comes to attempts to prove a relationship between Agent Orange and Guam every where we turn some institution of our society has something to hide.

Guam and Agent Orange

<http://www.guamagentorange.info/home>

http://www.guamagentorange.info/guam_the_land_of_the_rosaries

The Guam and Agent Orange Website is a fusion center for anyone who wishes to tell their story of exposure to Agent Orange on Guam be they Veterans, Civilians, or U.S. Contractors working on Guam. We at Veterans Today believe that VSO leadership, and members of Congress need to closely scrutinize the stories being told by this source to determine if the probability of Agent Orange related exposure on Guam leans heavily in favor of those claiming exposure and related health or genetic problems because of it. We at Veterans Today are convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that Agent Orange existed on Guam during the Vietnam War, despite the DoD being able to provide records that confirm or deny the presence of these chemical contaminants on Guam. Evidence we have reviewed goes far beyond the Pentagon's cop out of burn pits to appearance that the DoD has something to hide on Guam.

Statements of leaders of Veterans Service Organizations who are convinced their members are telling the truth about Agent Orange on Guam

Statement of Richard F. Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America

Hearing before the Full House Veterans Affairs Committee on May 25, 2010

Subject: Health Effect of the Vietnam War – The Aftermath

Extract:

“The need is for full disclosure of all use of any form of Agent Orange, other herbicides, or pesticides, or other toxins, wherever they were used in the world on military bases. There is absolutely no national security reason that would legitimately prevent such full disclosure. During the Vietnam war, there is reported use of herbicides in Thailand, Okinawa, the Philippines, *Guam*, and many other locations on the Pacific rim. There is also evidence that in addition to Eglin AFB there was extensive use of said herbicides on other military bases in CONUS during the same time period.

This evidence from DOD records must be made available to VA, as well as to the public, prompting action by the Secretary to extend service connected presumption to veterans who served in those locations.”

Veterans Today Editorial Comment: this tells us at Veterans Today that the Pentagon has something to hide behind it’s statements that no records exist reflecting the existence of Agent Orange on Guam during the war despite scientific evidence to the contrary, and successful attempts to silence one scientist scrutinizing the situation on Guam.

“It is also clear,” Rick Weidmann continues, “that there is strong evidence, reinforced by the latest Institute of Medicine (IOM) report that the so-called “blue water” Navy veterans should be included in the group of those who are included in the presumptive group of those who are considered to be “in-country” Vietnam veterans for purposes of service connection, along with their brethren in the Army and Marines. The evidence from the desalinization units on board ships resulting in even higher exposure to dioxin than many on land is clear.”

<http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/Testimony.aspx?TID=61265&Newsid=571&Name=%20Richard%20F.%20Weidman>

Statement of Joseph L. Wilson, Deputy Director, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, the American Legion before the same full committee hearing as Rick Weidmann of VVA on May 25, 2010.

Though not mentioning Guam specifically, it is clear from this testimony before Congress that the American Legion believes its members who served on Guam when they say they have been exposed to or used Agent Orange on Guam or anywhere else. The Legion like the VVA tends to believe that DoD is not forth coming on accurate and timely information, especially as it relates to Guam, hiding behind such non-committal statements that neither confirm or deny is nothing but a diversionary cop out. If it were ever proved by an outside source that the probability of exposure to Agent Orange or related poisons on Guam is relatively high, it could appear the Pentagon intentionally provided vague statement to could not prove Agent Orange was not used on Guam or anywhere.

“Herbicides Used Outside of Vietnam

The American Legion is also extremely concerned about the timely disclosure and release of ***all information by DOD*** on the use and testing of herbicides in locations other than Vietnam during the war. Over the years, the American Legion has represented veterans who claim to have been exposed to herbicides **in places other than Vietnam**. Without official acknowledgement by the Federal government of the use of herbicides, proving such exposure is virtually impossible. Information has come to light in the last few years leaving no doubt that Agent Orange, and other herbicides contaminated with dioxin, were released in locations other than Vietnam. This information is slowly being disclosed by DOD and provided to VA.

In January 2003, DOD provided VA with an inventory of documents containing brief descriptions of records of herbicides used at specific times and locations outside of Vietnam. ***The information, unlike the information on the Korean DMZ, does not contain a list of units involved or individual identifying information. Also, according to VA, this information is incomplete, reflecting only 70 to 85 percent of herbicide use, testing and disposal locations outside of Vietnam. VA requested that DOD provide it with information regarding units involved with herbicide operations or other information that may be useful to place veterans at sites where herbicide operations or testing was conducted. Unfortunately, as of this date, additional information has not been provided by DOD.***

Veterans Today Editorial Comment: Based on this lack of accurate and detailed data from DoD that the VA requested, VA Claims should be adjudicated in favor of Veterans claiming exposure on Guam instead of waiting for the DoD to deliver or the Veterans to die whichever comes first. This is bullshit plain and simple.

“Obtaining the most accurate information available concerning possible exposure is extremely important for the adjudication of herbicide-related VA disability claims of veterans claiming exposure outside of Vietnam.” Wilson continues, “For herbicide-related disability claims, veterans who served in Vietnam during the period of January 9, 1962 to May 7, 1975 are presumed, by law, to have been exposed to Agent Orange. Veterans claiming exposure to herbicides outside of Vietnam are required to submit proof of exposure. This is why it is crucial that all available information relative to herbicide use, testing, and disposal in locations other than Vietnam be released to VA in a timely manner. **The American Legion urges congressional oversight to assure that additional information identifying involved personnel or units for the locations already known by VA is released by DOD, as well as all relevant information pertaining to other locations that have yet to be identified. Locating this information and providing it to VA must be a national priority.**”

<http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/Testimony.aspx?TID=61266&Newsid=571&Name=%20Joseph%20L.%20Wilson>

Opening Statement of Hon. John J. Hall, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York

The time has also come for the VA to acknowledge that dangerous Agent Orange exposure goes far beyond veterans who set foot on Vietnamese soil. Passing Chairman Filner’s Blue Water bill, H.R. 2254 would be an important step in this direction, but veterans who served in Guam, Thailand, and even airbases on US soil may have been exposed to toxic herbicides. Establishing their exposure may be difficult, but we owe it to these brave men and women to raise this issue.

<http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/OpeningStatement.aspx?OSID=10524&Newsid=571&Name=Hon.%20John%20J.%20Hall,%20a%20Representa>

JOINT HEARING TO RECEIVE THE LEGISLATIVE
PRESENTATION OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

[Draft Transcript - note reference to Vietnamese Veterans as opposed to Vietnam Veterans - oops]

House of Representatives, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Joint with United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, D.C. The committees met, pursuant to notice, at 2:06 p.m., in Room 345, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Bob Filner [chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs] presiding.

Present: Representatives Filner, Michaud, Herseth, Sandlin, Hall, Perriello, Walz, Adler, Kirkpatrick, Miller and Boozman.

Senators Akaka and Burr.

[EXTRACT THAT MENTIONS AGENT ORANGE USE ON GUAM]

The Chairman [Bob Filner]. Thank you, [Congressman John] Hall [of New York].

Thank you to all the committee members.

I just want to make a few comments if I may, Mr. [DAV] Commander, for your reaction.

I know the answer I am going to get, but how many of you are Vietnam veterans?

Virtually everybody. We thank you so much.

Let me just say, as someone who has been now studying this for 18 years, this country made a large error when we did not welcome you home as heroes. We did not do the job we should have done.

Many of us who opposed the war -- and I was one of them -- failed to distinguish between the war and the warrior. The warriors were heroes, and we are paying a very heavy price for not doing that job right when you all came home. I mean, the homeless on the street, half are Vietnam vets. The suicide rates are just incredible for veterans of the Vietnam era. So we have a lot to say we are sorry for. And I think we should not just say that I am sorry or thank you. **We should do things in deeds.**

Let me give you the best example that I can think of and a few others. Let me hear from you. ***The Agent Orange situation has been,*** as [Congressman John] Mr. Hall [of New York] said, has been improved somewhat lately. But we have set up a whole set of obstacles and hoops for our Vietnam vets to jump through, and people have been fighting that situation sometimes for decades, and fighting a bureaucracy sometimes is more damaging to your health than the original injury. It seems to me we should get rid of all those barriers.

I have a slogan like: **Get it right the first time.** I have a slogan that says, if you were there, we should

care. I don't care if you were -- if your boots were on the ground, if you were in the blue waters offshore, if you were in the blue skies up above, if you were in Cambodia or Laos *or you were handling Agent Orange in Guam or on our soil*, there was damage done. We should pay the disability claim now, in my opinion.

Now, I have two pieces of legislation, one that expands the boots-on-the-ground requirement to everybody else who was in theater and could or possibly could have been exposed to Agent Orange. But I also have one that says, let us just end the -- I will say the suffering of all of you and your comrades who have had injuries which could be traceable to Agent Orange or you think are traceable. The suffering should end for you all, and we should pay these claims now. That would, I think, bring the backlog by half or something like that. **So if we are talking about the claims' backlog, honoring the Agent Orange ones now would be an incredible move toward fixing that situation.**

So I am trying to find ways to say thank you to our Vietnamese vets in concrete ways. We can never repay, I think, the damage we have done by not welcoming you home as heroes. But we have to try to do the things that you are going through now to say and finally thank you so much, our Vietnamese veterans.

Veterans Today: Keep in mind the above is a DRAFT so ignore the typos and focus on what Congressman Filner is saying. That said, when the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee or any member for that matter indicates they can only make suggestions to the VA, then why have a House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee at all if they do not have BITE. The cop out the VA now uses to delay, delay, then deny claims of Vets who served outside Vietnam is based on incomplete data provided by DoD circa 2003, and as the response from the Department of the Air Force clearly shows the DoD is going to continue hiding something from our Veteran's population in vague or neither can confirm or deny responses that should be adjudicated by the VA in favor of Veterans who have nothing to hide but everything to lose.

Robert L. Hanafin, Veterans Today News Network