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No One has proven that Agent Orange was NOT used on Guam.

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Agent Orange

Mike Leon on our staff has done quite a few recent articles on Agent Orange and how members of Congress, from both political parties, but surprisingly the Democratic Party want to place limits on NOT enhance Veterans claims for Agent Orange related diseases.

The last articles I did on Agent Orange were back on April 11, 2010, [VA Proposes Change to Aid Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange](#). AND January 25, 2010, [VVA's THE FACES OF AGENT ORANGE](#).

Between January 2010 and now, I was kind of optimistic about the prospects for Vietnam Veterans filing Agent Orange claims with the VA. However, much of what Mike is writing about now has shattered any illusions I had about our government doing right by those who not only have been exposed to Agent Orange and related Rainbow agents in Vietnam proper, but also those exposed to or may have been exposed to *dioxins outside of Vietnam*.

Another momentary illusion and optimism overcame us when Larry Scott at VA Watchdog announced way back in 2006 that *Agent Orange was used outside of Vietnam*. In an August 2006 article, Larry wrote, ["AGENT ORANGE OUTSIDE OF VIETNAM"](#) – A look at DoD's use of Agent Orange and other

herbicides outside of Vietnam...Florida, Georgia, Arkansas, Hawaii, Texas, Indiana, Utah, Maryland, Rhode Island, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Arizona, New York, Washington, California **and more...**

“I thought you would find it interesting to take a look at DoD’s use of Agent Orange and other herbicides outside of Vietnam,” said VA Watchdog.



AGENT ORANGE ON GUAM ???

In fact, the VA now uses the DoD listing of locations outside Vietnam to decide VA Claims and appeals. Unfortunately, the VA is using the official DoD listing to delay and deny more claims than enhance support for Vets who claim Agent Orange exposure on Guam. The problem is that not all locations where Veterans claim Agent Orange has been used, or Vets have given sworn testimony of using the herbicide themselves is on that list – Guam has been in contention based on the simple fact the Air Force, and DoD cannot find any documented evidence confirming Agent Orange use on Guam ever!

It is not the Air Force, or DoD’s obligation to confirm or deny Agent Orange exposure on Guam or anywhere else, that is the obligation of the Department of Veterans Affairs to make such determination. Not only that, but such determinations should be based on confirmation or denial **‘beyond a doubt’** that Agent Orange was NOT used on Guam, not some vague excuse from DoD or the Air Force that they cannot find records except probably stored on Guam during the Korean War for use on the Korean Peninsula. The DoD, and Department of the Air Force are not responsible for America’s Veterans that is the obligation of the VA who should not be collaborating with the Air Force or DoD as if they all have something to hide.

This story came to Veterans Today from several Retired Air Force Senior NCOs who filed claims with the VA providing evidence and **‘sworn testimony’** that Agent Orange was used at Anderson AFB, Guam. Guam is not on the official DoD listing that the VA overly depends on to make claims or appeals decisions.

Unsavoury Trends at the VA from Regional Office to Appeals Board = incompetence and lack of accountability or responsibility.

We at Veterans Today did a review of 156 VA Appeals documented on the VA website for noted trends in adjudication, delay, or remanding, and eventual denial. I did several articles about the Negative Anti-Veteran Attitudes found the the mainstream media and at the VA among Associated Press Reporters, VA adjudicators and other VA employees covering the period of the mid to late-1990s up to 2010.

<http://www.veteranstoday.com/2010/06/15/no-one-has-proven-that-agent-orange-was-not->



[used-on-guam/va-anger2-2/](#)

May 7, 2010 [Associated Press spreading RUMORS about PTSD fakers](#)

May 9, 2010 [PTSD is Real, PTSD Fraud is Not – Veterans rebuttal to AP](#)

May 14, 2010 [Hostile Attitude toward America’s Veterans Using the VA is Nothing New](#)

Although the focus of the articles was on PTSD, we believe that this anti-Veteran attitude spreads to Agent Orange, Gulf War Illness, Depleted Uranium, and whatever else will kill our troops 10, 20, to 30 years after they leave Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, we believe that such an entrenched anti-Veteran attitude continues today regardless which political appointees run the VA and that given the evidence provided by these Veterans in relation to Agent Orange and Guam, our review of the 156 VA Appeals reflects not so much a negative anti-Veteran attitude but a callous impersonal attitude to Veterans in which the word remand is thrown around like a buzz word for “let’s wait for they to die,” despite of Congressional correspondence from Senators and Congressman to expedite a decision or finding.

See for yourself readers, glance through just half of these 156 cases, and note how many time an Appeals Judge will slam a VA Regional Office then remand an appeal a second, third, or even more time with the caveat that the case has a Congressional expedite as if Congress were a JOKE. Well???

[A review of 156 VA Appeals](#) by Veterans Today staff reflects several unsavory trends at the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), the Air Force, and DoD that continue today:

- a. VA Appeals Board has a bad habit of remanding [delaying] claims of Veterans who allege exposure to Agent Orange on Guam over and over, and over again, despite the consistent errors usually being on the VA’s part usually at Regional Office (RO) level. Despite having Congressional expedites, the VA tends to ignore the Congress and still remand a case two or three times, sometimes more before denying it.
- b. Several appeals were remained with the RO **(not the Veteran)** tasked to determine if there was a possibility of exposure to Agent Orange on Guam. In cases where the Appeals Court remained a case back to the RO it chastised the RO for ignoring procedures the VA had in place to determine Agent Orange exposure outside Vietnam. Veterans Today will be investigating what those procedures are, how efficient

and accurate they are, for records show that Regional Offices have not been using these procedures, so there must be a reason.

c. In at least one case, the VA Appeals Court remanded an appeal back to RO concerned that a Physician's Assistant had done the Veterans' record review and made the decision to deny co-signed by a MD who did not examine the patient. The Appeals Court was upset that someone at the VAMC not qualified to review the Veterans case had made a determination to deny. The Appeals Board kicked the appeal back with direction to have a qualified medical examiner (MD) do the evaluation.

d. Each time the VA makes an error, VA employees, be they at a VA Hospital, VA Regional Office, or even on the VA Appeals Court are not held responsible or accountable, but the Veteran or Veteran's family pays in having their claim delayed, delayed, delayed again until the Veteran dies.

e. Don't take our word for it, [skim through these 156 Appeals](#), and these are only appeals, we are sure that the number of Veterans who served on Guam claiming exposure to Agent Orange is much higher than this and likely to increase regardless what the VA, the Air Force, or DoD says about not finding any records of Agent Orange use on Guam.

f. [As you look through these 156 cases yourself](#), one thing becomes glaringly clear, and this is despite quite a few of these appeals having Congressional expedites, which literally are meaningless. The slogan that critics hit the VA with, regardless if we are speaking about the Bush administration or Obama administration, "delay, delay, deny until they die become much more than a bias slogan from whining Veterans.

Given these Veterans have either already passed on, or have medical conditions that are terminal in nature, all a VA adjudicator has to do is look at the date of birth of the Veteran, note what illnesses the Veteran is claiming, and simply out wait the Veteran until he/she dies. [These 156 cases speak for themselves](#).

g. Lastly, no one, we repeat no one, at VA, the Air Force, or DoD has stated unequivocally that Agent Orange WAS NOT used on Guam. The Air Force, and DoD conveniently point to an excuse that since there are no records of Agent Orange aircraft or operations being flown out of Guam, nor any records of storage of the chemical on Guam it stands to reason that Agent Orange never existed on Guam. However, the Air Force, DoD, and VA conveniently place the Veterans in a Catch-22 situation in which everyone can "neither confirm or deny," except America's Veterans.

The fact that no one has officially stated or documented that Agent Orange or related dioxins never existed on Guam is what this series of articles will be about. For we at Veterans Today contend that Veterans who served on Guam have provided enough documented evidence that Agent Orange and related dioxins were present on Anderson AFB, Guam during the Vietnam War, and may even have been stored there after given that the Air Force has been ordered to clean-up toxic waste disposal at several land fills on base that date back to the Vietnam Era, and contain trace elements of dioxins.

We have sent a request into The Research Branch of the Air Force Historical Studies Office, but in the event we get no response, get ignored, or get the same non-committal answer, we will follow up with a Freedom of Information Request demanding all supply, herbicide, and chemical records related to Ranch Hand and

Guam, or Agent Orange and Guam, or one of the many Rainbow colors and Guam or for the Air Force to officially state Agent Orange never existed on Guam.

As I tried, and I highlight tried, to research this topic, we've had lawyers who challenge the VA contact us, Agent Orange advocates (real ones) contact us, and of course the Veterans involved anxious for us to do this story given the timing when Congress is fighting against expansion of Agent Orange presumptions in order to save money to continue fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the backs of America's Veterans.

That is my opinion only and may or may not be shared by all writers or editors on Veterans Today or the Veterans below.

Robert L. Hanafin, Major, U.S. Air Force-Retired, Veterans Today News

There is strong evidence that Agent Orange was present on Guam during the Vietnam War.

No One has proven that Agent Orange was NOT used on Guam, including the Air Force or DoD, but we intend to prove that indeed dioxins related to Agent Orange and other Rainbow agents were not only used on Guam for Vegetation Control, but that trace dioxins remain at several land fills on Anderson AFB, Guam that continue to be cleaned up and monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The EPA cannot say unequivocally or definitively that Agent Orange was or was not used on Guam but dioxins related to the various Rainbow Agents remain in the soil of Anderson AFB long after the Vietnam War. However, EPA reports on Guam indicate the presence of significant amounts of **tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD) remain in soil samples at the Urunao Land Fill on Anderson AFB that would make the probability of Agent Orange storage high.**

During the manufacturing process of Herbicide Orange (Agent Orange) 2,4,5-T, a contaminant 2,3,7,8-dioxin 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.

In relation to the dioxins found on Anderson AFB, the EPA notes that 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).

The second part of my article will provide more detail on the current clean up of toxic waste at Anderson AFB, Guam which sites on base have traces of dioxin and which time frame the sites were used. This time frame will include the Vietnam War Era.

At this point I'd like the Retired Senior NCOs who approached us to tell their own stories in their own words. Most of the evidence pointing toward the probability of Agent Orange in Guam during the Vietnam War comes from both Veterans who have served but one tour on Guam and career Air Force NCOs.

MSgt. LeRoy G. Foster, U.S.A.F.-Retired

"I am ashamed that our leaders did not have the decency to do something, anything about admitting the use of Agent Orange on Guam. The first step is acknowledgment. I am looking for acknowledgment from our

leaders in Washington, the Department of Defense, and the United States Air Force. I would like an apology from Dow Chemical and Monsanto, and I expect them all to do the Christian thing to do Honor and Cherish Human Life.” LeRoy G. Foster, MSgt, U.S. Air Force – Retired

MSgt. LeRoy Foster is someone I can relate to in many ways beyond being a fellow military retiree, he can articulate himself, tell his story, and make readers understand this situation is not just about LeRoy Foster.

When MSgt Foster first contacted me, he had this story to tell by way of making a point. Major Hanafin, My step son lost his father in 2006 to esophageal cancer, prostate cancer and dementia. He was Blue water – Brown water Navy Vet during the Vietnam War. He was denied by the VA his entire life. He ended up in a nursing home paid for by Chautauqua county social services in New York state. He died without knowing anyone even his son. His grave went unmarked for more than three years when I began writing Congressmen and Senators to get him a headstone marker as a Vietnam Vet. The local VSOs wouldn't do anything include the New York state veterans affairs department. I finally goaded them long enough and embarrassed them to the point of doing something for a fellow Vet who had passed on. Sir, his grave was just a piece of dirt blowing in the wind. No stone, no flag, nothing. You wouldn't even know a man was buried there near a cow pasture.

My point Sir is that we have Vietnam Veterans dying every day from Agent Orange exposure without one blink of the eye from those who are our leaders in DoD, the Air Force, Army, Navy or Marine Corps much less the VA or Congress.

Not one apology nothing. The Governor of New York did make a proclamation for Flagman Harold C. Bentley, Jr. to recognize his death and the Order of the Silver Rose given to his son. But to the day he died the VA denied him. He served aboard the LST 1122 and the ammo ship USS Pyro AE24 which 90 % of the crews are dead now from cancer and heart disease. MSgt Foster.

Veterans Today Editorial Comment: When we at Veterans Today read the DD-214 for the Sailor mentioned above, we noted that he EARNED the Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. Yet, because of a bureaucratic technicality that he never set foot in Vietnam proper his VA Claims for Agent Orange were consistently denied. In fact, the VA takes the position (probably supported by some VSOs) that just because one has the Vietnam Service Medal, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal does not necessarily mean one stepped foot on Vietnamese soil. SO WHAT?

This is what happens when the intent of VA bureaucrats is to save money (cost savings over American Veteran saving, supporting, or helping) .

It unfortunately is too late for this loyal member of the Blue Water-Brown Water Navy, and the collective we have an uphill battle for those Vietnam Era Veterans who remain, left behind, their service slighted, by us other Veterans to do battle with a corrupt and inefficient VA system most Vets know little about.

Especially now given the climate in DC when Congress wants to limit Agent Orange presumptions, it is clear that the politicians in Washington, even one who served in Vietnam wants to save money at the VA in order to help defray the cost of Obama's continued wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We suspect that members

of Congress may even be putting pressure on mainstream VSOs chartered by Congress to lay low on Agent Orange.

Nope it is not too late to go to bat for MSgt Foster, and others who served on Guam, they will all testify under oath that they were exposed to or actually handled Agent Orange on Guam, if they are found out to be liars then the VA and courts have recourse for this called the Stolen Valor Act among other legal remedies. Simply throw the bums in jail if Veteran lie to our government.

The VA in fact makes the lame claim that Veterans who allege Agent Orange exposure or use on Guam are not qualified to even recognize what Agent Orange looks like let alone know they were using it even if they were.

This while at the same time an unqualified VA nurse practitioner is taking the word of the Air Force that there is no record of Agent Orange use on Guam.

Take note that the never ending response from DoD and the Air Force is a convenient one. They do not specify or state Agent Orange was not used on Guam only that there is no record of it. That is about the same as the Military Records Depository, Air Force, or DoD telling the VA that since they cannot find a record on a Veteran, or it was burned in some fire, he/she never existed.

MSgt Foster: It is living my life in pain and suffering all those years, even on active duty, and being treated incorrectly for those diseases and illnesses, because the medical staff of the United States Air Force was kept in the dark as well as those handling the crap (Agent Orange).

They didn't know we were exposed to that crap and the first appearances for me were the chloracne and sterility on the onset as shown in my Air Force Medical Records, and then the degeneration of my body and the onslaught of the dioxin in my body with an undetectable autoimmune disease Mixed Connective Tissue Disease.

Veterans Today Editorial Comment: The EPA reports coming out of Guam indicate that one of the ways that dioxins are introduced to the body is via injection through the skin. MSgt. Foster will swear under oath that he sprayed herbicide in areas around Anderson AFB, he has the evidence to prove it including Airman Efficiency Reports that reflect he carried out Vegetation control.

Though it could be argued that MSgt Foster used Weed B Gone, or some other commercial product available today, Dow Chemical Company, Monsanto, and a few other companies with Air Force and Army contracts were producing Agent Orange not Weed B Gone. The dioxins in the soil on Anderson AFB reflects that toxins were used in both herbicides and pesticides used on Guam that would eventually be outlawed in America.

One long time Agent Orange legal advocate said it this way, "I think everyone knows that dioxin is still used in commercial herbicides, but is diluted to what legally meets an acceptable parts per million. The concentrated brands require dilution under penalty of law, with warnings etc. Actually, I would love to have a VBA or BVA lawyer or judge argue commercial exposure, it would blow the "tactical herbicide" argument out of the water forever. I can hear them now, "Your honor, the VBA's stance is that despite the DOD expert inventing the term "tactical herbicide" which we have used repeatedly to deny legitimate

claims, we would like to make a motion that the Board accept that exposure to Ortho Weed-Be-Gone is sufficient to have the Board deny direct exposure to herbicides.”

I will cover the EPA reports in more detail in the second installment of these articles, as we consult with lawyers representing Veterans who have served on Guam during the Vietnam War and believe they have been exposed to Agent Orange, and other Rainbow colors produced by the U.S. Chemical Industry for profit during Vietnam. The most damning evidence we found that refutes the 2003 DoD position that no records exists of Agent Orange use comes from then Agent Orange producer Monsanto that in a 2004 risk assessment to investors indicated that Agent Orange not only was used on Guam but trace elements are showing up in the population of Guam outside of Anderson AFB.

MSgt. Foster: The Erie VAMC tested me for Mixed Connective Tissue Disease a few months ago, the VAMC said, but I don't think they really did, or they didn't know how to test for it. It should have come up positive. The only disease in the world that connects other Vets claiming exposure to Agent Orange on Guam and I is Autoimmune Disease MCTD because of their related lupus, diabetes II, lymphoma, peripheral neuropathy, heart disease, ankylosing spondylitis, spinal stenosis, osteoporosis, and my heart disease, spinal stenosis, edema, ankylosing spondylitis, osteoporosis, peripheral neuropathy in my limbs, eye sight loss, hearing loss, immune problems, anaphalactic shock air way closure, constant hives, etc.

Major, it is a progressive degenerative attack on the human body killing it just like it does the jungle overgrowth. It speeds up the growth to reverse it and kill it which is how it was developed in England but was originally developed to enhance growth of plants and vegetables and make them bigger so we could feed the world and instead we killed entire generations of humans.

Veterans Today Editorial Comment: I ran across a VVA Media Release that I got from Agent Orange Zone in which John Rowan at VVA stated (among other things) that, “VVA contends that many Vietnam-era veterans were also exposed [to Agent Orange] in their service elsewhere in Southeast Asia during the war, including in Thailand and Laos , and aboard Navy vessels off the coast of Vietnam , as well as certain military bases located in the continental U.S. and its territories.” Although VVA did not mention Guam specifically as a U.S. territory, we believe that it is a recognized territory of the United States. VVA of course may have been referring to Puerto Rico and or Johnson Island. Agent Orange had to logistically be stored somewhere in proximity to Vietnam for operational use in Vietnam. The closest territory to S.W. Asia, and a logistics pipeline during the Vietnam War was Guam and Okinawa. I believe the collective we need to hammer this point – Agent Orange had to logistically be stored somewhere in proximity to Vietnam – more than we do unless I've missed something.

A one to two sentence mentioning of Agent Orange being sprayed outside of in-country Vietnam in a media release that is about 10 paragraphs long IS NOT enough for VVA to hammer the point. More needs to be done NOW.

VVA and the other Veterans groups, ‘no ALL Veterans groups even those not recognized as ‘politically correct’ by the Congress or VA (VVAW, Veterans for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), Military Families Speak Out (MFSO) an so on,’ WE better set aside our differences over how we view our wars and begin looking out for one another, because as the precious few (what less than one percent of the U.S. population now?) become even fewer with attrition from Agent Orange, Gulf War Illness, PTSD, and so on. However, I'm not too optimistic that will ever happen for obvious political reasons.

Mark my words, no one else in our American society is going to watch our backs.



MSgt. Foster: Major Hanafin, The plight of every veteran exposed to these dioxins is not in the hands of the VA or Congress. We know what they will do which is “NOTHING”. **The record of the last 40 years speaks for itself.** They are waiting for the Vietnam War army to die, and their children, grandchildren, etc will become extinct with disease, sterility, birth defects, etc.

Where these descendants will realize that like the Vietnamese people have chosen to do with forced sterilization and abortion of fetuses none to be carrying the defective Agent Orange DNA Altered Genes, and the resulting human suffering.

I am Ashamed of Our Government, the Air Force, DoD, and the VA

I am ashamed that our leaders did not have the decency to do something , anything, the first step is acknowledgment. I am looking for acknowledgment from our National Leaders in Washington, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the United States Air Force.

I would like an apology from Dow Chemical and Monsanto, and I expect them to do the Christian thing to do – Honor and Cherish Human Life. They should be held just as accountable as BP OIL. It is the same scenerio with massive environmental contamination and loss of life.

We need our government to be on America’s Veterans side. I want our leaders to be on our side We Veterans that stool up and answered our country’s call to duty, and the Vietnam War Draft. We stood up for

the American people, our government, and our nation. We do so HONORABLY, so why does our government behave so DISHONORABLY?

We stood up for America, and we got blamed for doing so. Please, please stand up for us and our children and grandchildren. Don't leave another Veteran behind like we did Navy Flagman Harold C. Bentley, Jr.

It is not our government's financial responsibility for the BP Oil spill no more than it is for Agent Orange to some degree. This shared responsibility must be taken on by Dow Chemical and Monsanto. They know in their investor risk reports that they are liable and accountable. It is our U.S. Congress that must bring the chemical companies to hearings to help our children and future generations they have poisoned. Please.

I believe the key to our collective problems as American Veterans is that we are our worse enemy. There remains lack of support from our fellow Veterans I am a member of the Air Force Association (AFA), the Air Force Sergeants Association, and the American Legion. It was because of all the support these VSOs failed to give me that I hired an attorney for my fight with the VA.

MSgt. Ed Jackson, U.S. Air Force-Retired



Good morning sir. It is always good to hear from another USAF Retiree. I am Ed Jackson, a retired USAF MSgt. I got your e-mail address from e-mails I receive from retired USAF MSgt. Leroy Foster. Like Leroy, and many other veterans from all of our military forces, I was exposed to Agent Orange while I was assigned to Andersen AFB, Guam. Other veterans were exposed there on Guam's other military installations, or in Okinawa, Thailand, South Vietnam, US Navy and US Coast Guard ships off the coasts of SEA countries, South Korea, Johnston Island, Hawaii, CONUS bases, and other places we all were sent to.

What is at issue is the political position taken by the VA to ignore and deny the health issues of America's Veterans.

To me the legacy of Agent Orange (AO), or the other "Agent Rainbow" herbicides is not the real issue. What is the issue is the political position taken by the VA to ignore and deny the health issues of veterans, and the US Governments responsibility and collaboration in this, and a host of other causes of health issues caused by other wars and other causes.

In addition to the AO exposure issues, there is the unaddressed issue of confirmed hazardous chemicals that polluted some 59 US CONUS bases, also.

It is here that the VA forces America's Veterans to jump through a host of hoops set up by bureaucrats, many of whom never served and can not relate to us. I understand the need to address fraud in claims, but what is the percentage of fraudulent claims to legitimate ones?

I suspect it is very low. The VA is faced with some 2 million pending claims, or appeals from veterans from all services and every war and military experience since the 1930s. Only a very few claims seem to be found to be fraudulent each year, in numbers that always seem to be less than about 20, or so, that seems to make the news media, and even many of those are fraud activities committed by VA employees.

The current “wait until they die” attitude at the VA

[The VA has EARNED a negative reputation among most America’s Veterans](#) by maintaining a never ending **wait until they die” attitude entrenched within the VA system** when addressing claims by veterans that is shameful and disgusting.

But the primary motivation for this, by the VA, is to ensure future work and employment of its bureaucrats and keeping its hard working employees busy. The average employee who receives a claim from a veteran simply becomes a collection receptacle for the information, it is their managers who make the decisions on claims, not them. The managers have a budget to watch, and a career to protect. Political appointees of the Bush administration made of secret of the emphasis on COST SAVINGS OVER VET SAVING, and the Obama political appointees who now run the VA seem impotent to do anything about this entrenched attitude within the VA Claims adjudication system. In fact, the Obama political appointees are about as impotent at cleaning up the anti-Veteran attitude at the VA as they are about cleaning up the BP Oil spill.

Veterans get no help from the Congress, either. All of the Congress, or people running for Congress give us is unfulfilled campaign promises and speeches. Well, even with the advanced technology of health care in the US, a speech has never provided the care our veterans need, either medically or financially.

Even President Obama ran on a platform of “hope and change”. Well Veterans have always had hope, but the change has increased our public debt pass some \$13 Trillion in inept programs and proposals to include a bloated defense budget that does nothing for America’s Veteran except collaborate with the VA in denying VA Claims. But, this is not just President Obama or the Democrats who control the Congressional checkbook today.

The Republicans also have ignored the veteran too. The Republican controlled Congresses of the 1990s and early 2000s and Presidents Bush 41, and Bush 43 (along with Democrat President Clinton) did nothing either in regards to AO.

At least Clinton initiated an open door policy allowing more Vets access to the VA that was quickly shut once the Bush appointees took over the VA with COST SAVING on their minds. What mainstream VSO does not remember the disdain most American Veterans had against the Veteran on the House Veterans Affairs Committee they love to hate – Congressman Steve Buyer of Indiana. Buyer was sent in as Bush point man in Congress to cut cost at the VA encouraging the spread and entrenchment of the anti-Veteran attitude by VA bureaucrats and even a few Veterans. How many times have we heard the refrain from a few partisan politically oriented Veterans that so and so Veteran thinks our government owes us something. Most of us tend to be of the consensus DAMN right our government owes America’s Veterans something for all the lies and deceit.

There has been nothing passed by the Congress about AO exposure since 1990 when the “presumption” of exposure was granted only if the veteran stepped foot on Vietnamese soil according to the VA’s very strict interpretation of the act.

Was that really the “intent of Congress”?

Government agencies of the DoD, EPA, and others have conveniently not been able to find any documentation or records on AO or other chemical pollution by our government or military. Why?

The VA maintains that because of this convenient lack of documentation or records from the Air Force, Army, Marines or DoD in general there must not have been any chemical pollution at all. Nothing is further from the truth.

The fact that official Air Force or DoD documents have not been “located” does not mean anything, except they were somehow lost or destroyed because of a political decision made years ago to sweep Agent Orange under the carpet. It is far from meaning those documents and records never existed. No one really knows what records are stored in the national archives, not even the government. One thing is for sure no one including the VA, Air Force, or DoD has looked very hard for such records either. Why?

My own experience and claim is consistent with all other claims from Guam, and elsewhere. So, how can as you note 156 Veterans, who did not know of the other veterans experiences and locations ever manage to tell similar stories?

We all can’t be lying, and the simple truth as even most lawyers who successfully challenge the VA, Air Force, DoD, and our government is that AGENT ORANGE HAD TO BE STORED SOMEWHERE.

Major Hanafin you have hit the nail on the head as to why the mainstream VSOs cannot, or will not, help and I quote, “The reason I seriously believe that none of the Military Retiree or Veterans groups are going to go beyond lip service on this is that: Taking a position that our government cannot be trusted to take care of America’s Vets runs counter to the war efforts of the precious few we depend on to now fight our wars **(THE DRAFT will never again happen).**”

Major, what I think is most disturbing is all of us answered our government’s call, and our government(s) made promises they knew they could never keep politically. Yes, the federal government has limitations and political priorities keeps it from doing what it needs to do for those who have made sacrifices for this great nation.

Does that mean people like these Veterans like you, and me, or others here on Veterans Today, military.com or elsewhere would not do what were told to again, knowing what we know today? Of course not. But the military would also have to provide more protection for each of us from hazardous materials and chemicals.

Veterans are a small voting block, compared to other groups, and getting even smaller, so we have a small voice. This leaves our only recourse to bring attention to our problems with the VA is to use “the squeaky wheel gets all the grease method”.

It is a method I personally dislike, but this may become necessary. That means the loudest group gets its demands heard. Using news media outlets is one way to begin, writing Congress critters and Senator critters helps to.

MSgt Foster is very good at this, much better than I am. The plight of all veterans will only get worse, and the numbers of future veteran claims will further slow the VA wheel, which is already inefficient at best.

Of the 59 bases that are know to be polluted with chemicals and bad water, every base I was assigned to during my 22 year USAF career is on that list (Castle AFB, CA, Plattsburgh AFB, NY, Pease AFB, NH, and Carswell AFB, TX). I was assigned to Pease and Castle twice, and yes, I spent my whole career in Strategic Air Command, first as a Transportation truck and bus driver, then 18 years as a Boom Operator on KC-135s.

Ed Jackson, MSgt (RET), USAF

Posted by: Robert L. Hanafin, Major, USAF-Retired, Veterans Today News

(The next installment of this series will detail the evidence provided by Veterans claiming Agent Orange was used on Guam. Major Hanafin)