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Review of Press

Over the past few weeks articles on Agent Orange have centered primarily around Agent Orange examinations. There appears to be considerable confusion among the veteran public concerning:

1. the accuracy of the exam;
2. the quality of the results;
3. the service provided at the hospitals; and
4. who pays for the examination.

POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS

VA is under constant pressure from the veteran public, veterans organization, and the press to make progress on the issue of Agent Orange. The issue has become a focus of discontent for Vietnam era veterans who criticize the VA's "lack of responsiveness." It creates a crisis of public confidence in the VA and by association, in the Reagan Administration. It leads to ill-advised legislation such as the House Veterans' Affairs Committee recently approved bill directing the VA to give "priority" medical treatment to veterans who believe their ailment (of whatever type) stems from exposure to Agent Orange.

The following groups are critical of VA efforts on Agent Orange:

- National Veterans Law Center
- Agent Orange Victims International
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- National Veterans Task Force on Agent Orange

In support of VA positions thus far are:

- AIM
- American Legion

Long range considerations: Claims from personnel of other countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop good press
Educate the public

Make immediate policy statement of concern for herbicide problems and in support of USAF Ranchhand Study and work of the Interagency Work Group.

Pre-empt criticism by generating support from veteran service organizations -

Voice support

Draw them into planning

Avoid singling out Vietnam era veterans as a minority group - emphasize "national herbicide problem" affecting agriculture and labor groups as well as veterans.

Another unfortunate legacy of the Vietnam conflict is the continuing concern of many veterans that they have suffered or may yet develop health problems as a result of long-term effects of certain chemicals to which they ~~were~~ ^{MAY HAVE BEEN} exposed while serving in Vietnam. This Administration is committed to the fullest possible scientific examination of these concerns, with the aim of insuring that this matter is dealt with fairly and equitably. The important scientific research being coordinated by the White House Interagency Work Group, including the Air Force Ranch Hand Personnel Study, will be a major priority of this Administration.

- 2

POSITIONS ON CURRENT LEGISLATION - AGENT ORANGE

S. 636 Purpose: provide medical care for veterans exposed to several toxic and environmental hazards including Agent Orange.

 Status: Failed in committee - Senator Cranston will introduce on floor - Mr. Berquist believes will pass on floor.

 Position: Oppose

H.R. 34-99 Purpose: directs VA to provide "priority" care for condition which may be associated with Agent Orange exposure.

 Status: passed committee - projected to pass on floor.

 Position: Oppose

Reasons for Positions: no credible evidence exists linking Agent Orange exposure to disease as disability.

 eligible veterans now receive care for any and all disease/disability found to be associated with military service, regardless of cause.

 wording too vague; with the present state of knowledge any or all disease/disability "may be associated."

Recommendations: VA work with committees to form acceptable compromise.



News Release

file

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In a continuing effort to help resolve remaining Agent Orange questions the Veterans Administration today announced the formation of a new office to deal exclusively with Agent Orange matters.

Charles T. Hagel, VA Deputy Administrator who heads the Agent Orange Policy Coordinating Committee, said creation of the Agent Orange Research and Education Office (AOREO) should ensure clear policy guidance and solid management of the many Agent Orange related activities in which the VA is involved.

"The Veterans Administration should lead the way in resolving the Agent Orange question through our medical and scientific research projects and I believe the formation of this new office is a step in the right direction," Hagel said.

"It is my intention that this new office become the single focal point for all VA Agent Orange matters and it provide guidance and oversight for all of these activities," Hagel continued.

The deputy administrator pointed out that VA's Department of Medicine and Surgery will continue to play a lead role in the VA's Agent Orange program and will work closely with the new office.

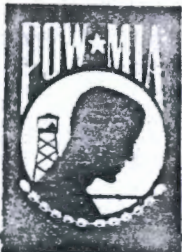
The office will be headed by Maurice LeVois, a Ph.D. candidate in health psychology and health systems research at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco. He will report directly to Hagel.

In announcing the appointment, Hagel said that LeVois' strong health research and management background and expertise in medical information systems and psychological artifact in medical research, makes him a well qualified person for the job.

Assisting in the Agent Orange efforts will be Theodore Woodward, M.D., one of the VA's Distinguished Physicians and Chairman of the Armed Forces Epidemiology Board along with Air Force Major Al Young, an expert on Phenoxy herbicides and one of the originators of the Air Force Ranch Hand Agent Orange Epidemiology Study.

#

February 25, 1982



File *sent to all IAF members 11/13*

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 (202) 223-6846

November 12, 1981

MEMO TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS
FROM ANN GRIFFITHS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RE INTERMENT OF VIETNAM WAR UNKNOWN

In recent months there has been a renewed effort on the part of Congressman William F. Goodling, (R-Penn.) to inter an unknown American from the Vietnam War in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. I understand the move has now reached Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh for a decision.

The National League of Families strongly opposes such action, primarily as interment of an unknown will be billed as the "end of a sad chapter of American history" and otherwise promoted to "put the war behind us." In view of the fact that almost 2,500 Americans remain unaccounted for in Southeast Asia and the increasing evidence some of these men may still be alive, as well as the high priority now being assigned by the U.S. government to collecting POW/MIA intelligence, we oppose any move to prematurely bury an unknown.

Further, according to the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI - the U.S. organization of forensic specialists tasked with identifying remains) there are currently in U.S. possession only five bodies believed to be American, which have yet to be identified. They strongly oppose the interment of an unknown as they are optimistic they may be able to make positive identification. Also, too much is known for the bodies to possibly qualify as unknowns. In fact, some may be non-military casualties.

Following are the established criteria for selection of a Vietnam unknown.

- ...Recovered in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia
- ...Death occurred between August 1964 and March 1973
- ...Remains nearly complete (80%)
- ...Not commingled
- ...Personal effects establish that remains is military
- ...No possible identifying clues
- ...Circumstances must not lead to future identification
- ...Cremated remains eliminated

With the exception that the remains were recovered in Vietnam. Laos or

the criteria. For example, if the U.S. had "nearly complete remains (80%)" the tremendous advances in forensic science would render identification highly likely. Apparently Mr. Goodling is advocating waiving the criteria.

It should be noted that an empty crypt for a Vietnam unknown already exists at Arlington. It bears a plaque honoring those who served, were killed and remain missing due to the war. At this time, as far as the League of Families is concerned, that is sufficient.

I would be interested in learning your views on this matter and urge you to contact the secretary of the Army before an irreversible decision is made.

Plaque is actually located
in Amphitheater Memorial Display
Room, established by Pres. Carter.

American Fighting Men

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF VIETNAM UNKNOWN

(established by whom?)

1. RECOVERED IN VIETNAM, LAOS, CAMBODIA
2. DEATH OCCURRED BETWEEN AUGUST 1964 AND MARCH 1973
3. REMAINS NEARLY COMPLETE (80%)
4. NOT COMMINGLED
5. PERSONAL EFFECTS ESTABLISH THAT REMAINS IS MILITARY
6. NO POSSIBLE IDENTIFYING CLUES
7. CIRCUMSTANCES MUST NOT LEAD TO FUTURE IDENTIFICATION
8. CREMATED REMAINS ELIMINATED.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date: 4/4

TO:

Jawa

FROM: RED CAVANEY

Morton in this
loop too. What are
his thoughts?

Are these Feds?

Red

Mazelle Shortley

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jean Bernstein
Agent Orange
Australian Study
40,000

Findings are devastating
lellase is "innocent"
Dr. Peter Beach = Cancer

Office of Secretary HHS
Director Veterans Affairs, HHS.
Co-Ch. Under Sec Conf on Viet
Viet Nam Vets holding
Conf May 22-24
Agent Orange High on
priority. Viet Nam Conference.
WA Support to Schriber
Continued support for
task force

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TO: V.K.
FROM: PL-aw
DATE: _____

The attached is for your:

Information	<u>Review & Comment</u>
Direct Response	<u>Appropriate Action</u>
EHD Draft Letter	Signature
File	Other

Red
3/30

Comments: I contacted Jodie & she is coming in for lunch tomorrow to brief me on the issues of "Orange".

The issue for EHD is whether she will recommend W.H support for the continuation of the inter-agency "Work Group" to deal with Federal response to the Problems of Agent Orange. - Secty Schweiker has approved I but needs White House support. I recommend EHD gives it.
(VK)

LAW OFFICES
WALD HARKRADER & ROSS

Veterans Agent Orange file
Vietnam Veterans File

1300 NINETEENTH STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

AREA CODE 202
828-1200
CABLE ADDRESS: WALRUS
TELEX (RCA): 248591 (WHR)

March 23, 1981

Honorable Elizabeth Dole
Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Liddy:

I don't even know whether I have formally congratulated you on your spectacular appointment! And if I haven't, I assume you know you have my best wishes, my congratulations, and my warmest personal regards. Between the job, and Bob's recent illness you must be absolutely beside yourself! Lionel and I were really delighted that Bob came through the illness so well -- he's obviously full of his usual humorous venom which convinced me that he was really well again. If I had not been so persuaded I would have dispatched Dr. Bernstein, not with his sculptor's scalpel but with his bag of medical tricks to make sure he was alright. Please give him our very best wishes for a total and complete recovery.

How great to have Virginia back in town! Everything changes but in a way, everything stays the same. I had a wonderful lunch with J.D. and his friend Dan Oliver, General Counsel Designate of the Department of Education. It was great fund and I thoroughly enjoyed both of them.

And last, I wanted to take just one minute of your time to make sure that you or other appropriate people involved with domestic policy were aware of the existence of the Interagency Work Group on Agent Orange. Very briefly, when I was at HHS I was asked by the Secretary and Stuart Eisenstat to establish and chair a work group to deal with the government's response to the "Agent Orange" controversy. Several agencies were involved including the V.A., the DOD, EPA, DOA and of course HHS. The Work Group served to coordinate research efforts within the government and to make sure appropriate people were communicating with each other.

3/25

WALD, HARKRADER & ROSS

Honorable Elizabeth Dole
March 23, 1981
Page Two

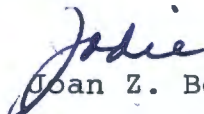
Many Vietnam veterans, their families and concerned members of Congress felt the government, especially the V.A. had failed to respond to this issue. I don't want to inundate you with too much information, but have enclosed two brief documents for your information: (1) a memo of mine to Secretary Schweiker and (2) a letter supporting continuing this group to Martin Anderson from Senator Cranston. I really wanted your Administration to know how effective the Group was. We made alot of progress in de-escalating the hysteria which surrounded the controversy and conducted a rational exchange of views. All of the members of the Work Group were unusual and competent people -- for the most part they are scientists in the various agencies and departments. As you will see, it has not only coordinated existing studies but recommended and authorized additional studies, the results of which will be very helpful. We testified several times before both House and Senate Veterans Committees and were well received at all times.

The reasons for calling it to your attention is that I don't believe it can really continue to function effectively without top level support. The Secretary has already approved it but without a signal of White House support, it probably will not be able to serve the Administration so well. I have also heard from Bob Mueller, executive director of the Vietnam Veterans of America whom I met in connection with the Work Group. He will soon ask for a meeting with you to support the continuation of the Work Group. He has been in my judgment an articulate and responsible spokesman for Vietnam Veterans and their families. You will find him as I did to be knowledgeable, informed with great personal integrity.

I know that all of you must be up to your ears in a million other things and therefore this issue may not have come to your attention.

I suggested lunch for you, me and Virginia to Virginia -- I know lunch with you may have to be postponed for several years.

Love,


Joan Z. Bernstein

JZB/bb

Enclosures

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

THE GENERAL COUNSEL

9 JAN 1981

Memorandum for the Secretary-Designate

From: Joan Z. Bernstein, General Counsel and Chair,
Interagency Work Group to Study the Possible
Long-Term Health Effects of Phenoxo Herbicides
and Contaminants

Joan Z. Bernstein

The purpose of this memorandum is to describe briefly the functions and accomplishments of the Interagency Work Group to Study the Possible Long-Term Health Effects of Phenoxo Herbicides and Contaminants and to suggest that an early expression of support for the Work Group by you and the White House would materially aid its continued effectiveness.

The Work Group is chaired by HHS' General Counsel and includes scientific and legal representatives from HHS, DoD and VA. Representatives from OSHA, OSTP, EPA, USDA and Congress' OTA have observer status, and actively participate.

The Work Group was established by the White House in 1979 in response to public and Congressional concerns about adverse health effects among Vietnam veterans following their actual or presumed exposure to Agent Orange. Agent Orange is a herbicide consisting of approximately equal parts of two phenoxo herbicides: 2,4,D and 2,4,5-T. During the manufacturing process, 2,4,5-T is unavoidably contaminated with 2,3,7,8-TCDD, a highly toxic form of dioxin.

Approximately 100 million pounds of Agent Orange were used in Vietnam between 1964 and 1970. Its use was halted when scientific reports indicated an association between exposure to 2,4,5-T of laboratory animals and birth defects in their offspring.

In 1978, the Veterans Administration began to receive claims from veterans alleging health effects resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. The specific health concerns voiced by veterans which they believe are a result of Agent Orange include cancer, birth defects in their children, loss of sex drive, liver dysfunction, sleeplessness and a tingling sensation in fingers and toes.

In order to award disability claims, the VA by statute must find that the disability arose coincident in time with or soon after military service. That statutory requirement is difficult to meet in cases of health effects having a significant latency period. In addition, statutory periods of presumption of service-connection are generally not of long enough duration to take account of latent health effects. Of the thousands of Agent Orange claims received, the VA awarded disability in approximately two dozen cases. Many Vietnam veterans saw the VA as unresponsive, unfeeling, and unsympathetic to their very real health concerns.

Widespread distrust of DoD and VA began among Vietnam veterans: DoD because it directed the use of Agent Orange and VA because it has not appeared to veterans to be sympathetic to their health concerns. With HHS as the lead agency on the Work Group, much of the acrimony accompanying the veterans' distrust of government health studies on Agent Orange has dissipated. HHS is perceived to be credible and as having no institutional conflict of interest in the outcome of the studies. DoD and VA have welcomed HHS' participation, in part because HHS' role has lent credibility to their scientific and other activities.

The Work Group has been exceptionally successful in reducing the level of near-hysteria and vituperativeness surrounding the issue. This was apparent at the Work Group's public meeting held last September, at which veterans' statements evidenced serious concern, but without the anger and bitterness that characterized the public meetings previously held by the VA.

Much of the Work Group's success can be attributed to its serious efforts to identify and fill the gaps in scientific knowledge about the long-term health effects of Agent Orange. During this process, the Work Group has neither leaped to conclusions not supported by scientific evidence, nor dismissed the veterans' health concerns. While the Work Group is aware that answers to all the questions already raised may never be found, it has stimulated the needed scientific work that will enable policy makers ultimately to make reasoned judgments on the underlying compensation issues.

The Work Group has also proven to be a unique and valuable resource. It is the only mechanism within the Federal government which brings together scientists from the relevant agencies who are knowledgeable about phenoxy herbicides and dioxins. Its mandate and scientific effort extends not only to Agent Orange concerns but also to the broader spectrum of public health concerns about these chemical compounds. Recently, the State Department indicated it is planning to ask the Work Group to work with the

Canadian government in conducting risk assessments of levels of TCDD which have been found in the Great Lakes.

All of the member and observer agencies represented strongly support the continuation and enhancement of the Work Group. Accordingly, an early expression of Secretarial interest in, and support of, this effort would be especially useful.

If you would like any additional information, I suggest that Leslie A. Platt, Deputy General Counsel for Legal Counsel, be contacted. Mr. Platt has served as Staff Director for the Work Group.

STEWART THORNDIKE, S.C.
ROBERT T. STAFFORD, VT.
ROBERT W. EASTEN, JR., WIS.
JEREMIAH DENTON, ALA.
FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, ALASKA
ARLEN SPECTER, PA.

ALAN CRANSTON, CALIF.
JENNINGS RANDOLPH, W. VA.
SPARK M. MATSUMURA, HAWAII
DENNIS DE CONCHINI, ARIZ.
GEORGE J. MITCHELL, MAINE

KENNETH P. BERGQUIST, CHIEF COUNSEL

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 27, 1981

Mr. Martin Anderson
Assistant to the President
for Policy Development
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Martin,

I am writing in connection with a matter that is of great importance to our Nation's Vietnam veterans and a deep concern of mine on the Veterans' Affairs Committee -- Agent Orange. As you know, Agent Orange, the defoliant used by our Armed Forces in Vietnam, was contaminated by dioxin, one of the most toxic substances ever identified by the scientific community.

On December 11, 1979, President Carter established, through his Assistant for Domestic Affairs and Policy, an interagency work group to assure that all Federal efforts in the area of dioxin-related research are fully coordinated and that there is a wide and ongoing consultation among all the agencies involved. The President appointed the then-Department of Health, Education, and Welfare -- an agency well-equipped, in my view, to deal with the difficulties involved and one not generally perceived as having an interest to defend in these matters -- as the work group's chair agency.

On December 20, 1979, the Veterans' Health Programs Extension and Improvement Act of 1979 (Public Law 96-151) was enacted with provisions, in section 307(a), mandating the VA to design and conduct an epidemiological study on Agent Orange. In addition, for purposes of assuring that any dioxin-related study conducted by the Federal Government would be scientifically valid and conducted efficiently and objectively, section 307(c) of this law required the President to assure that the VA study is fully coordinated with all other Federal agencies' studies regarding the health effects in humans of dioxin exposure and that all appropriate consultation and coordination take place among the heads of Federal agencies involved in the design, conduct, monitoring, or evaluation of such dioxin studies. For your reference, I have enclosed a copy of section 307 of Public Law 96-151.

Since the interagency work group on dioxin (formally the Interagency Work Group on Phenoxy Herbicides and Contaminants) was created, it has issued six progress reports dealing with the many dioxin-related activities of the Federal agencies, including long-term research proposals and various clinical projects of a shorter length, which may

help to provide the answers we seek about the possible health effects of exposure to substances containing dioxin. In addition, the work group has itself reviewed and commented on certain of these research proposals. I believe these reports and comments have been of definite value to the agencies involved in terms of the rapid dissemination of useful information, to the Congress in terms of providing members with succinct, periodic updates, and, finally, to the public, in terms of widespread concern that the studies be as objective and useful as possible and that no unnecessary delays occur in the Federal Government's pursuit of answers in this area. I also believe that the work group could appropriately serve as the means of the President carrying out his statutory responsibility under section 307(c) of Public Law 96-151.

In light of the immediacy of the issues involved -- the VA will, after great delay, shortly sign a contract for the design of the protocol for its study -- and their great importance to Vietnam veterans and their families and to the health of many other segments of our population, I believe that the President should reauthorize the interagency group under the chairmanship of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, designating the group as the body responsible for assuring that the provisions of section 307(c) of Public Law 96-151 are fully implemented. Such a designation -- accompanied by the appropriate delegation of the authority -- would enhance the authority of the group and give greater weight to its recommendations as well as provide needed assurance of full implementation of those provisions.

I would very much appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience about these matters and learning of your response to my recommendations.

With warm regards,

Cordially,


Alan Cranston
Ranking Minority Member

Enclosures

cc: Honorable Richard S. Schweiker
Edwin Meese III
James Baker
Rufus Wilson

Sec. 307. (a)(1) The Administrator of Veterans' Affairs shall design a protocol for and conduct an epidemiological study of persons who, while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during the period of the Vietnam conflict, were exposed to any of the class of chemicals known as "the dioxins" produced during the manufacture of the various phenoxy herbicides (including the herbicide known as "Agent Orange") to determine if there may be long-term adverse health effects in such persons from such exposure. The Administrator shall also conduct a comprehensive review and scientific analysis of the literature covering other studies relating to whether there may be long-term adverse health effects in humans from exposure to such dioxins or other dioxins.

28 USC 219 note.

(2)(A)(i) The study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be conducted in accordance with a protocol approved by the Director of the Office of Technology Assessment.

(ii) The Director shall monitor the conduct of such study in order to assure compliance with such protocol.

(B)(i) Concurrent with the approval or disapproval of any protocol under subparagraph (A)(i), the Director of the Office of Technology Assessment shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report explaining the basis for the Director's action in approving or disapproving such protocol and providing the Director's conclusions regarding the scientific validity and objectivity of such protocol.

Reports to congressional committees.

(ii) In the event that the Director has not approved such protocol during the one hundred and eighty days following the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director shall (I) submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report describing the reasons why the Director has not given such approval, and (II) submit an update report on such initial report each sixty days thereafter until such protocol is approved.

(C) The Director shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress, at each of the times specified in the second sentence of this subparagraph, a report on the Director's monitoring of the conduct of such study pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii). A report under the preceding sentence shall be submitted before the end of the six-month period beginning on the date of the approval of such protocol by the Director, before the end of the twelve-month period beginning on such date, and annually thereafter until such study is completed or terminated.

(3) The study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be continued for as long after the submission of the report under subsection (b)(2) as the Administrator may determine reasonable in light of the possibility of developing through such study significant new information on the long-term adverse health effects of exposure to dioxins.

Reports to congressional committees.

(b)(1) Not later than twelve months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report on the literature review and analysis conducted under subsection (a)(1).

(2) Not later than twenty-four months after the date of the approval of the protocol pursuant to subsection (a)(2)(A)(i) and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report containing (A) a description of the results thus far obtained under the study conducted pursuant to such subsection, and (B) such comments and recommendations as the Administrator considers appropriate in light of such results.

Coordination of studies.

(c) For the purpose of assuring that any study carried out by the Federal Government with respect to the adverse health effects in humans of exposure to dioxins is scientifically valid and is conducted with efficiency and objectivity, the President shall assure that—

(1) the study conducted pursuant to subsection (a) is fully coordinated with studies which are planned, are being conducted, or have been completed by other departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the Federal Government and which pertain to the adverse health effects in humans of exposure to dioxins; and

(2) all appropriate coordination and consultation is accomplished between and among the Administrator and the heads of such departments, agencies, and instrumentalities that may be engaged, during the conduct of the study carried out pursuant to subsection (a), in the design, conduct, monitoring, or evaluation of such dioxin-exposure studies.

Appropriation authorization.

(d) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for the conduct of the study required by subsection (a).

March 26, 1981

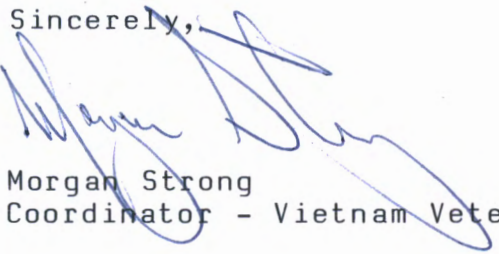
Mr. Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

Enclosed please find the letter and the list of issues, with which we are concerned. As per our discussion, only one remains to be addressed, i.e. Agent Orange, no mention of the approach to be undertaken has been made by the Administration. It is understandably difficult to engage the issue lacking a Chief Administrator for the V.A. In view of the elimination of funding for the several programs, it could be advantageous to consider substantive effort to resolve the question of Agent Orange.

I thank you for your concern and your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Morgan Strong", is written over a rectangular area that has been highlighted with a light blue background.

Morgan Strong
Coordinator - Vietnam Veteran Coalition

Enclosure
cth a22

MIAs AND POWs

A deliberate and sustained effort to locate and return our prisoners should be made. No question remains as critical.

AGENT ORANGE

The final resolution of this agonizing issue can no longer be delayed. We are in unanimous agreement to remove the programs of research from the authority of the Veterans Administration. We propose that coordination of research and an evaluation of medical procedures of the Veterans Administration be undertaken by the National Academy of Science.

That an appointment of a Veterans Advisory Board be made to effect a realistic and substantive program for those veterans suffering symptoms of exposure.

That additional funding be diverted to allow this program development.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

The maintenance and expansion of the Veterans Outreach Program Centers. This program is of singular value, and purpose, and must not be allowed to cease operation. The several centers should be supplemented by additional staff. Revision of the criteria to define service, i.e. sheer numbers served, should not be of consideration. Veteran knowledge of the centers is lacking, a program of information must be undertaken to provide the centers with the optimum utility.

This program should be extended to assist veterans incarcerated in this nation's prisons, many of whom suffer from trauma connected with their service in the war.

VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT

The further development and enforcement of the existing Federal statutes to effect employment by Federal Contractors of Vietnam Veterans. These programs if substantially effected would reduce the debilitating effects of unemployment among the Vietnam Veteran population.

The concerns we have indicated are not great in number nor insoluble. The solutions are easily determined. Particular elements of our proposals to resolve these issues will be submitted to you at your request.

To The White House
February 16, 1981

Dear Mr. President:

The Vietnam Veterans, those of us who fought in that war, are addressing our several concerns to you in the hope of remedy.

It has been over eight years since the end of that divisive war and throughout that time we have been silent. It is the stimulus of recent events that has drawn us together in shared experience and common purpose. The sense of estrangement and alienation we share is that bond which unites us. We have quietly borne the guilt of a nation, disgraced by our sacrifice, denied value and welcome. The nobility of service should not be diminished by strident claims of a dishonorable war, events have proven the contrary.

It is now that those who fought and those that gave their lives in that war be recognized for their service to country. They ask nothing more than that afforded those who fought and those who died before them. It is time that they rejoin the society that has excluded them.

It is time to address the very real concerns of those War Veterans. It is with the faith in these ideals of country that has sustained us through these bitter years, that we in common strength of purpose will resolve them.


VIETNAM VETERANS COALITION



ERICSON
YACHTS

Red Cavaney
President

3/31

Dear Mark —

found background +

rec. draft response.

Thanks

THE WHITE HOUSE
VETERANS COORDINATING COMMITTEE
WASHINGTON

March 27, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Elizabeth Dole
Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison

FROM: Dennis K. Rhoades *DKR*
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Interagency Working Group on Dioxin

The White House Veterans Coordinating Committee has been kept fully informed of the progress of the Interagency Working Group on Dioxin (Agent Orange), a matter of concern to many Vietnam era veterans and their families. We have additionally enjoyed a close working relationship with the Group and we believe this important work must continue.

As you may know, the Work Group is chaired by the Department of Health and Human Services and includes scientific and legal representatives from DoD and VA. Representatives from Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Science and Technology Policy and Congress' Office of Technology Affairs have observer status, and actively participate.

The Work Group was established by the White House in 1979 in response to public and Congressional concerns about adverse health effects among Vietnam veterans following their actual or presumed exposure to Agent Orange. Agent Orange is a herbicide consisting of approximately equal parts of two phenoxy herbicides: 2, 4, D and 2, 4, 5-T. During the manufacturing process, 2, 4, 5-T is unavoidably contaminated with 2, 3, 7, 8-TCDD, a highly toxic form of dioxin.

Approximately 100 million pounds of Agent Orange were used in Vietnam between 1964 and 1970. Its use was halted when scientific reports indicated an association between exposure to 2, 4, 5-T of laboratory animals and birth defects in their offspring.

In 1978, the Veterans Administration began to receive claims from veterans alleging health effects resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. The specific health concerns voiced by veterans which they believe are a result of Agent Orange include cancer, birth defects in their children, loss of sex drive, liver dysfunction, sleeplessness and a tingling sensation in fingers and toes.

In order to award disability claims, the VA by statute must find that the disability arose coincident in time with or soon after military service. That statutory requirement is difficult to meet in cases of health effects having a significant latency period. In addition, statutory periods of presumption of service-connection are generally not of long enough duration to take account of latent health effects.

MAR 31 Rec'd

Of the thousands of Agent Orange claims received, the VA has awarded disability in approximately two dozen cases.

The issue of Agent Orange is therefore one of high public visibility, fueled by misinformation and lack of hard scientific data on the long term health effects of dioxin. Many of the groups concerned with Agent Orange have a deep seeded distrust of the VA and the Department of Defense and the efforts of the two agencies to conduct research into the problems.

The Work Group has been successful in beginning to reduce the level of near-hysteria surrounding Agent Orange. Much of the Work Group's success can be attributed to its serious efforts to identify and fill the gaps in scientific knowledge about the long-term health effects of Agent Orange. During this process, the Work Group has neither leaped to conclusions not supported by scientific evidence, nor dismissed the veterans' health concerns. While the Work Group is aware that answers to all the questions already raised may never be found, it has stimulated needed scientific work that will enable policy makers ultimately to make reasoned judgments on the underlying compensation issues.

The Work Group has also proven to be a unique and valuable resource. It is the only mechanism within the Federal government which brings together scientists from the relevant agencies who are knowledgeable about phenoxy herbicides and dioxins. Its mandate and scientific efforts extends not only to Agent Orange concerns but also to the broader spectrum of public health concerns about these chemical compounds.

All of the member and observer agencies represented strongly support the continuation and enhancement of the Work Group. Accordingly, an early expression of White House interest in, and support of, this effort would be especially useful. I would be remiss if I too did not add my full endorsement of this effort. It is imperative that we not delay in reaffirming our commitment to the Vietnam veterans and their families.



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20330

JUN 15 1981

*File
Agent
Orange*

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: The Ranch Hand (Herbicide Orange) Epidemiology Study: Request for Presidential Signature on the Initial Contact Letter - ACTION MEMORANDUM

During the last Administration, the Air Force was tasked by the Secretary of Defense to conduct the Ranch Hand Epidemiology study. This resulted from guidance received by the Secretary's office from the White House (Memorandum to the Secretary of Defense from the Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and Policy, September 16, 1980, Atch 1).

Normally, I think it is wise to completely disassociate the Presidency from requests such as this. However, Agent Orange is a highly emotional issue. Unless its importance is stressed by the President, the results of the survey could be greatly skewed by responses from only those who have a particular interest in one side of the issue. If we fail to get a broadly representative cross section of veterans who are willing to cooperate, the entire study will be nonrepresentative of the population exposed.

The Air Force Surgeon General has requested that the initial contact letter to potential study participants be signed by the President (Atch 2). I agree that a letter signed by the President will be of major importance.

Accordingly, request that you sign the attached memorandum to the President (Atch 3).

Verne Orr
Verne Orr

3 Attachments

1. Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs & Policy Memo, Sept 16, 1980
2. Proposed Presidential Contact Letter
3. Proposed Memo to the President w/atc



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the issue of Herbicide Orange continues to be a major concern of the Vietnam Veteran. The Department of Defense is playing a major role in the National effort to determine if exposure to Herbicide Orange did cause or is causing adverse health effects in Vietnam Era military personnel or their families. The Air Force Ranch Hand Epidemiology study will evaluate the past, present and future health status of Air Force personnel who were most heavily exposed to the Herbicide in Vietnam. During the period 1962 to 1970, the Ranch Hands were responsible for disseminating 44 million pounds of 2,4,5-T, the Herbicide Orange component which contained TCDD (dioxin), over 6.5% of the land mass of Vietnam. The Ranch Hand study has received numerous scientific and policy reviews, the most recent policy reaffirmation being that of the Office of Policy Development, Ms Shanon Fairbanks, Senior Policy Advisor.

To achieve the best possible scientific study, the participation of all Ranch Hands (1198) is critical. Since participation is voluntary for all study subjects, every effort must be made to enlist the aid of this very select group of present and former military professionals. It will be necessary to convince some of these individuals that this study is of National priority and interest. For some, participation will be perceived to, if not in fact, constitute some personal risk, i.e., loss of occupation resulting from a medical finding previously unknown to the individual or his employer, and a degree of hardship. The patriotism and commitment of these individuals called upon once before during the Vietnam War may again be of pivotal importance in their decision to participate.

After careful consideration, I request that you continue to indicate your personal commitment for resolution of this issue and that you specifically enlist the participation of the Ranch Hand study participants by signing a letter similar to the

attached proposal. If you agree, my staff will make the necessary coordination and logistic arrangements for mailing the letters at the appropriate time.

Respectfully yours,

1 Enclosure
Proposed Initial Contact Letter

THE WHITE HOUSE
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC

Dear (Name of Ranch Hand or Control)

The Air Force will soon begin conducting a very comprehensive health assessment of certain Air Force members who served our Nation in the Republic of Vietnam. This health assessment is part of a medical study designed to help determine if you or your fellow Vietnam veterans may have had any compromise to your health as a result of exposure to the complex environment of Southeast Asia.

Scientists at the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine have been given the responsibility for conducting this important project. The Air Force Surgeon General will contact you soon with more details and ask for your voluntary participation.

I have spoken many times of the need of our Nation to stand behind the 2½ million American men and women who served so valiantly in Southeast Asia. This study represents a small but important part of the commitment we owe each of you. I hope you share this feeling and will enthusiastically support this important effort.

Sincerely

Enter Agency Work

10:00

HHS

7th Floor

Gen ~~Gen~~ Counselor

~~He~~
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JUN 1 1981

VIET NAM VETERANS OF AMERICA M LANE
329 8 ST NORTHEAST
WASHINGTON DC 20002

THIS MAILGRAM IS A CONFIRMATION COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

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FOR 2138243132

RON KOVIC AND RON BITZER, CARE WILLIAM ANDERSON DIRECTOR COPY MESSAGE, O
R 2138243134

WADSWORTH VAMC 11301 WILSHIRE BLVD
LOS ANGELES CA 90073

THIS COMMUNICATION IS TO ADVISE YOU OF OUR HOPE THAT YOU WILL DISCONTINUE YOUR PROTEST AT THE VA HOSPITAL. THE VIET NAM VETERANS OF AMERICA DOES NOT SUPPORT YOUR CONTINUING PROTEST FOR SEVERAL REASONS. WE FEEL THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS ACTED IN A COMMENDABLE MANNER BY RESPONDING TO THE REQUESTS OF MARLIN ATKINS AND JOHN KEAVENEY. DR CUSTIS, ACTING VA ADMINISTRATOR, HAS COMMITTED THE PRESIDENT TO THE MOST SIGNIFICANT GOALS VIET NAM VETERANS HAVE BEEN LOBBYING FOR OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. THE COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE THE INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP AS A MOVING VEHICLE TO RESOLVE THE AGENT ORANGE ISSUE PLEASES US GREATLY, AS DOES THE EXPANDED BUDGET FOR AGENT ORANGE RESEARCH. THE ADDITIONAL COMMITMENT TO HONOR CONGRESSIONAL INTENT IN CONTINUING TO OPERATE THE VET CENTERS IN THEIR PRESENT FORM, AS STORE FRONT FACILITIES, AT THE FULL LEVEL THAT CONGRESS APPROPRIATED FUNDING FOR, IS A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH. TO CONTINUE A POSITIVE DIALOG BETWEEN VIET NAM VETERANS AND THE ADMINISTRATION REQUIRES VIET NAM VETERANS ALSO TO ACT IN GOOD FAITH, AND, TO CONTINUE PROTESTING, IN LIGHT OF THE VERY SIGNIFICANT COMMITMENTS THE HUNGER STRIKERS WERE GIVEN, IS UNWARRANTED. ANY CONTINUED ACTION ON YOUR PART WILL ONLY SERVE TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF DIVISIVENESS AND UNREASONABLENESS ON THE PART OF THE VIET NAM VETERAN COMMUNITY.

HOPEFULLY YOU WILL RECONSIDER YOUR ACTIONS BEFORE SERIOUS AND IRREPARABLE DAMAGE IS DONE TO THE VIET NAM VETERAN COMMUNITY.

CC PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN
CC ELIZABETH DOLE-WHITE HOUSE
CC DR DONALD CUSTIS ACTING, ADMINISTRATOR VACO
CC SHAD MESHAD, VAMC WADSWORTH
CC WILLIAM ANDERSON, DIRECTOR, VAMC WADSWORTH
ROBERT O MULLER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VIET NAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

18121 EST

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JOAN M MAIMAN
300 NORTH STATE ST APT 3409
CHICAGO IL 60610

THIS MAILGRAM IS A CONFIRMATION COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

3128289563 NL TCBN CHICAGO IL 02 06-01 1126P EST

PMS HUNGER STRIKERS, DLR
WADSWORTH VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL
WILSHIRE AND SAUTELLE AVE
LCS ANGELES CA 90073

THE VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE STRONGLY URGES THOSE VIETNAM
VETERANS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE HUNGER STRIKE TO CONSIDER OTHER
OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS CLR CONCERNS WHILE WE SHARE YOUR
FRUSTRATION REGARDING PAST INACTION ON AGENT ORANGE AND RELATED
ISSUES WE CANNOT IN CONSCIENCE ENDORSE ANY ACTION WHICH MAY BRING
FURTHERING SUFFERING OR HARM TO ANY PERSON WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM WITH
OR IN SUPPORT OF US MILITARY FORCES

JOAN M MAIMAN CHAIRMAN 312-828-9563
VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
VINCENT RICS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR WESTERN REGION VLC
PETER TIFFANY, DIRECTOR WESTERN REGION VLC

23:27 EST

MGMCOMP