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# Agent Orange Zone

a place for up-to-date information on the health consequences  
of military service....

AUGUST 4, 2021

## Just in case you have forgotten...

### Agent Orange Presumptive Conditions

\*Exceptions: osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, and mesothelioma  
This is an up-to-date list of conditions on the VA's Agent Orange presumptive list.

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Year Added</u>
AL Amyloidosis	2006
Chronic B-Cell Leukemias	2003
Chloracne	1991
Diabetes Mellitus Type 2	2001
Hodgkin's Disease	1994
Ischemic Heart Disease	2010
Multiple Myeloma	2016
Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma	1991
Parkinson's Disease	2010
Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset	2013
Porphyria Cutanea Tarda	1994
Prostate Cancer	2013
Respiratory Cancers	1994
Soft Tissue Sarcomas*	1991
Bladder Cancer	2021
Hypothyroidism	2021
Parkinsonism	2021

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## Toxic burn pit exposure: Afghanistan and Iraq veterans' hidden cost of war

As our 20 years of war in Afghanistan draws to a close, we must never forget the more than 2000 U.S. service members who died there—nor the 20,000 who



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service members in Iraq and nearly 62,000 suffered injuries.



Many of those who served in those theaters returned home wearing the scars of battle—loss of limbs, disfigurement, loss of sight, and other physical injuries. Then there are the other injuries that are not quite as obvious—the emotional and mental injuries that reveal themselves as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD).

However, a lesser-known category of injuries exists that Congress must acknowledge and address immediately. These injuries result from exposure to burn pits that existed in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last 20 years.

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## Vietnam locks down capital Hanoi for 15 days as cases rise

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam announced a 15-day lockdown in the capital Hanoi starting Saturday as a coronavirus surge spread from the southern Mekong Delta region.

The lockdown order, issued late Friday night, bans the gathering of more than two people in public. Only government offices, hospitals and essential businesses are allowed to stay open.

Earlier in the week, the city had suspended all outdoor activities and ordered non-essential businesses to close following an increase in cases. On Friday, Hanoi reported 70 confirmed infections, the city's highest, part of a record 7,295 cases in the country in the last 24 hours.

Nearly 5,000 of them are from Vietnam's largest metropolis, southern Ho Chi Minh City, which has also extended its lockdown until Aug. 1.

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## How the U.S. unleashed hell's agent: It left a trail of appalling birth defects in Vietnam

When Carol Van Strum moved to Five Rivers, Oregon, in 1974, she thought she had found the perfect rural idyll.

Surrounded by National Forest, her four young children could grow up close to nature. They loved fishing and playing by the river, fascinated by the little 'dipper' birds that sat on the rocks.



'They knew everything that lived down there,' she recalls. 'There were beavers and otters in the river, and all the fish and herons and ospreys. So they just were part of that.'

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Down at the river, Carol heard a sound of devastation — a sound of ducklings, crayfish and trout. The cause seemed fairly obvious: a U.S. Forestry Service helicopter had been flying overhead the day before, spraying something over the land.

Nobody knew what it was but, ‘a lot of people assumed, “Well it’s the government doing it, it must be OK,”’ says Carol. ‘We called the fire service and they said: “Oh no, it’s perfectly safe.”’ But it wasn’t.

The chopper was spraying a herbicide known as 2,4,5-T — the highly toxic main ingredient of Agent Orange, the notorious chemical defoliant used to blanket swathes of South-East Asia during the Vietnam War.

A helicopter in Oregon in 1974 was spraying a herbicide known as 2,4,5-T — the highly toxic main ingredient of Agent Orange, the notorious chemical defoliant used to blanket swathes of South-East Asia during the Vietnam War.

The U.S. military had stopped using it in 1971 because of growing public health concerns — but here it was being used in the U.S.

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## Canada and Agent Orange

Agent Orange is a mix of herbicides (plant-killing chemicals) and defoliant (a chemical used to remove leaves from plants and trees). It was used by the US military during the Vietnam War to destroy plants in large quantities. Agent Orange was one of the “Rainbow Herbicides,” alongside Agent Purple and Agent White. These herbicides were used and tested at Canadian Forces Base Gaagetown, New Brunswick. Agent Orange was incorrectly claimed to have been used to clear public land in Northern Ontario between the 1950s and 1970s. It is unclear how many Canadians were exposed to the potentially deadly chemical. Nor do we know how many may have died as a result.



### Use in Warfare

Chemical herbicides were first used in warfare by the British during the Malaya Emergency (1948–1960). Herbicides were employed to destroy both jungle cover and agricultural plants that might be used by Malayan guerrillas. The British experience using herbicides served as a precedent for American use during the Vietnam War. Agent Orange was used in Vietnam from 1962 to 1971. The chemical was used to destroy the dense jungle canopy that provided shelter and cover for the North Vietnamese military and Vietcong guerrillas. Agent Orange was also used against agricultural plants and to control weeds around American military bases. It is believed that upward of 72 million litres of Agent Orange was sprayed over Vietnam and surrounding countries. Over 25,000 square kilometres of forest was defoliated.

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## State Environmental Officials Take First Steps to Clean Up 23-mile Stretch of Water Leading to Newark Bay

NEWARK, NJ – Years of industrial processing which has contaminated miles of water along the Lower Hackensack River stretching from Oradell Dam to the mouth of Newark Bay is now planned to get cleaned up with some help from federal officials.

State Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette announced on Friday that cleanup for the target area will start through a federal process required to list the Lower Hackensack River as a Superfund site.

If approved, designating the river as a Superfund site would provide critical funding to the state for remediation efforts and leverage the Environmental Protection Agency to hold the parties responsible for the contamination to either perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanup work.

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## Afghanistan's unfolding tragedy summons memories of Vietnam 1975

Though separated by nearly half a century, the parallels between 1975 and today are eerie. In the White House, then as now, the new president in office for less than a year — his predecessor an impeached and hugely controversial figure — is widely viewed as a decent and affable man, but many, even within his own party, fear that he is not fully up to the job and overmatched by cascading events, foreign and domestic, and the swirling passions of his deeply polarized countrymen who are unable or unwilling to heed his urgent calls for unity and healing.

The veterans who returned from the lost war in Vietnam were greeted not by parades or honors but frequently by mockery or contempt, and those who dared to wear their uniforms in public risked being spat upon by angry members of the now triumphant leftist, anti-war movement — many of whom artfully avoided the draft by going to college or Canada, thereby laying the foundation of the class war that now is so toxically embedded in our national culture.

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## Vietnam curbs movement in southern areas as COVID-19 cases hit record

HANOI (Reuters) – Vietnam will impose restrictions on movement in 16 southern provinces for two weeks from Monday as the country faces its worst COVID-19 outbreak so far, the government said on Saturday.

Vietnam has managed to keep coronavirus cases relatively low due to targeted mass testing and strict contact tracing,

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“The current outbreak we are facing is getting more complicated,” the government said in a statement. “The curbs are to protect people’s health.”

The Southeast Asian country reported 3,718 new infections, the highest daily increase and the third straight day it has recorded more than 3,000 cases.

Three-quarters of the confirmed cases were detected in southern areas, especially Ho Chi Minh City, and the Health Ministry said it

had deployed at least 10,000 health workers to hard-hit provinces.

Vietnam, which has a population of 98 million, has recorded 47,904 infections in total and 225 deaths.

The current surge in cases has increased pressure on the government to boost vaccines supplies and accelerate inoculations, with less than 300,000 people fully vaccinated so far.

Vietnam has received nearly 9 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, and the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi said the United States would provide an additional three million Moderna vaccine doses to Vietnam via the international COVAX programme.

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## Female Vets in Congress Decry Proposal to Disband Pentagon’s Advisory Panel on Women

A 70-year-old Defense Department panel focused on women's personnel issues that has advocated for expanded opportunities for female service members must be preserved, say the six female veterans currently serving in Congress.

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) has been suspended temporarily and its membership dissolved as part of a cost and efficiency review of the Defense Department's 42 advisory committees that began in January.

But six members of Congress, led by Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Virginia, and Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, say the committee's work is too important for the panel to be dissolved or rolled into the newly formed Defense Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.

“We are the faces of what DACOWITS has meant for women in the military,” wrote the lawmakers. “As women veterans in Congress, we know the value of expanding opportunities within the services for women and the value that, in turn, has brought to our Armed

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## Court decides millions of veterans are eligible for more GI Bill benefits

WASHINGTON — A new court decision, if it holds, would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide billions of dollars in education benefits to more than 1 million post-9/11 veterans.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit decided Thursday that veterans who qualify for both the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill for multiple periods of military service should be allowed to draw benefits from each. Since the newer Post-9/11 GI Bill became effective in 2009, the VA has limited veterans to benefits from one program, not both.

Under the ruling, veterans who qualify for both programs would be eligible to use one year of benefits from the Montgomery GI Bill program on top of the three years of tuition and housing assistance available through the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

“We are extremely pleased with the outcome of this case and what it means for our country’s veterans,” said Timothy L. McHugh, the attorney on the case. “An estimated 1.7 million post-9/11 era veterans could benefit from this ruling, so it is truly an impactful decision for those who have bravely served.”

The court upheld the ruling from the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, which also ruled against the VA’s interpretation of the law. The VA could next try to take the case to the Supreme Court. It was uncertain Monday whether the department would continue to appeal.

If the VA doesn’t appeal, the new ruling could go into effect in time for the fall semester.

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