

PROSTATE CANCER and AGENT ORANGE.....the last word

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The article on the following pages is the largest and most accurate study to date and I believe will be the final word on the topic of prostate cancer in service personnel and their to exposure agent orange. There should be no Vietnam Vet who goes untested in this country by the end of this year. Of the 58,000 or so who participated in that war, the number carrying cancerous prostates will be several thousand and they must be found and treated as there is no reason why they should die from that complaint if treated in time. Their deaths will be through sheer neglect on our part or on their own; so it is imperative that no blame be laid at our door through a failure to notify those personnel so exposed.

This information is so hot off the press it has not yet appeared in official medical journals but will do so in the 15th September, '08 edition of CANCER. Many Pension Officers around the country will be aware DVA has already accepted the link between the cancer and herbicidal exposure. What many do not appreciate is that this was done on statistical results, generously weighted in the veterans' favor by the assessing panel. This new research now fully supports what was formerly only a high index of suspicion, regarding the connection between disease and herbicide.

So my advice to every male who was in Vietnam, afloat or ashore, for whatever duration of time, go and have your LMO check your Prostate and seek a Prostate Specific Antigen blood test at the same time. This will need to be done for the remainder of your life at three yearly intervals. No buts just do it!

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PS. The term metastatic disease means that the cancer has spread beyond the prostate into bone, lung, liver. The prognosis in these cases is less than ideal; so we need to catch it earlier than this stage of development.

Exposure to Agent Orange linked to prostate cancer in Vietnam veterans

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Health

System

SACRAMENTO, Calif.) — UC Davis Cancer Centre physicians today released results of research showing that Vietnam War veterans exposed to Agent Orange have greatly increased risks of prostate cancer and even greater risks of getting the most aggressive form of the disease as compared to those who were not exposed.

The findings, which appear online now and will be published in the September 15 issue of the journal *Cancer*, are the first to link the herbicide with this form of cancer. The research is also the first to utilize a large population of men in their 60s and the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test to screen for the disease.

"While others have linked Agent Orange to cancers such as soft-tissue sarcomas, Hodgkin's disease and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, there is limited evidence so far associating it with prostate cancer," said Karim Chamie, lead author of the study and resident physician with the UC Davis Department of Urology and the VA Northern California Health Care System. "Here we report on the largest study to date of Vietnam War veterans exposed to Agent Orange and the incidence of prostate cancer."

Chamie also said that, unlike previous studies that were either too small or conducted on men who were too young, patients in the current study were entering their prime years for developing prostate cancer. There was also the added advantage that it was conducted entirely during the era of PSA screening, providing a powerful tool for early diagnosis and tracking of prostate cancer. More than 13,000 Vietnam veterans enrolled in the VA Northern California Health Care System were stratified into two groups — exposed or not exposed to Agent Orange between 1962 and 1971. Based on medical evaluations conducted between 1998 and 2006, the study revealed that twice as many men exposed to Agent Orange were identified with prostate cancer. In addition, Agent Orange exposed men were diagnosed two-and-a-half years younger and were nearly four times more likely to present with metastatic disease. Other prostate cancer risk factors — race, body-mass index and smoking — were not statistically different between the two groups.

"Our country's veterans deserve the best possible health care, and this study clearly confirms that Agent Orange exposure during service in Vietnam is associated with a higher risk of prostate cancer later in life," said Ralph de Vere White, UC Davis Cancer Centre director and a study co-author. "Just as those with a family history of prostate cancer or who are of African-American heritage are screened more frequently, so too should men with Agent Orange exposure be given priority consideration for all the screening and diagnostic tools we have at our disposal in the hopes of early detection and treatment of this disease." Now a banned chemical, Agent Orange is a combination of two synthetic compounds known to be contaminated with the dioxin tetrachlorodibenzo-paradoxin (TCDD) during the manufacturing process. Named for the colour of the barrel in which it was stored, Agent Orange was one of many broad-leaf defoliants used in Vietnam to destroy dense forests in order to better visualize enemy activity.

It is estimated that more than 20 million gallons of the chemicals, also known as "rainbow herbicides," were sprayed between 1962 and 1971, contaminating both ground cover and ground troops. Most of the rainbow herbicide used during this time was Agent Orange. In 1997, the International Agency for Research on Cancer reclassified TCDD as a group 1 carcinogen, a classification that includes arsenic, asbestos and gamma radiation.

The study was funded by the UC Davis Cancer Centre. In addition to Chamie and De Vere White, study authors were Bryan Volpp, associate chief of staff, clinical informatics, VA Northern California Health Care System; Dennis Lee and Joonha Ok, UC Davis resident physicians with the Department of Urology; and Lars Ellison who, at the time the study was conducted, was an assistant professor with UC Davis and chief of urology with the VA Northern California Health Care System. Ellison is now affiliated with the Penobscot Bay Medical Centre in Maine and a major in the U.S. Army Reserve currently serving active duty in Iraq. A copy of the study can be requested by emailing Amy Molnar at amolnar@wiley.com.

Prostate cancer is the second most common malignancy and the second leading cause of cancer death in American men. It is estimated that there will be about 186,320 new cases of prostate cancer in the United States in 2008 and about 28,660 men will die of the disease this year.

Designated by the National Cancer Institute, UC Davis Cancer Centre is leading the way in identifying the molecular pathogenesis of carcinoma of the prostate, enhancing therapeutic response and identifying chemoprevention. For more information;

Visit: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/cancer.

**Taken from Vietnam Veterans of America
Phil Smith August 07 Chapter 267
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PER ASSOC. PRESS (JULY 20, 2007 SAN FRANCISCO)- AN APPEALS COURT CHASTISED THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ON THURSDAY AND ORDERED THE AGENCY TO PAY RETROACTIVE BENEFITS TO VIETNAM WAR VETERANS WHO WERE EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE AND CONTRACTED A FORM OF LEUKEMIA.

“THE PERFORMANCE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HAS CONTRIBUTED SUBSTANTIALLY TO OUR SENSE OF NATIONAL SHAME,” THE OPINION FROM THE 9TH US CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS READ. IT IS NOT IMMEDIATELY KNOWN HOW MUCH THE DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE TO PAY UNDER THE ORDER OR HOW MANY VETERANS WOULD BE AFFECTED. VA SPOKESMAN PHIL BUDAHN SAID LATE THURSDAY THAT OFFICIALS WERE REVIEWING THE RULING, AND DECLINED FURTHER COMMENT.

THE VA AGREED IN 2003 TO EXTEND BENEFITS TO VIETNAM VETS DIAGNOSED WITH CHRONIC LYMPHOCTIC LEUKEMIA, KNOWN AS CLL. US TROOPS HAD SPRAYED 20 MILLION GALLONS OF AGENT ORANGE AND OTHER HERBICIDES OVER PARTS OF S. VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA IN THE 1960S AND 70S TO CLEAR DENSE JUNGLE AND RESEARCHERS LATER LINKED CLL TO AGENT ORANGE BUT THE VA DID NOT RE-EXAMINE PREVIOUS CLAIMS FROM VETERANS SUFFERING FROM THE AILMENT, NOR DID THEY PAY THEM RETROACTIVE BENEFITS, WHICH WAS THE HEART OF THE LATEST DISPUTE. THURSDAY’S OPINION WAS ON A TECHNICAL MATTER INVOLVING A LANDMARK AGREEMENT IN 1991 ON BENEFITS, STEMMING FROM A CLASS-ACTION LAWSUIT ORIGINALLY FILED IN 1986. THE APPEALS COURT SIDED WITH THE VETERANS GROUP WHO SAID THE VETERANS WERE ENTITLED TO RETROACTIVE BENEFITS.

“WE WOULD HOPE THAT THIS LITIGATION WILL NOW END, THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WILL NOW RESPECT THE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS IT UNDERTOOK IN THE CONSENT DECREE SOME 16 YEARS AGO, THAT OBSTRUCTIONIST BUREAOCRATIC OPPOSITION WILL NOW CEASE, AND THAT OUR VETERANS WILL FINALLY RECEIVE THE BENEFITS TO WHICH THEY ARE LEGALLY AND MORALLY ENTITLED,” JUDGE STEPHEN REINHARDT WROTE IN THE COURT’S OPINION . RICHARD SPATARO, A LAWYER WITH THE NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM, SAID THURSDAY’S RULING COULD FINALLY HALT YEARS OF LEGAL BATTLES- IF THE VA DOES NOT APPEAL TO THE US SUPREME COURT. SPATARO SAID IF RESEARCHERS LINK OTHER DISABILITIES TO AGENT ORANGE THE DECISION WILL PREVENT THE VA FROM DENYING RETROACTIVE BENEFITS FOR THOSE VETERANS ALSO.

AGENT ORANGE NEWS~ HAS BEEN KNOWN TO BE FOUND ON OKINAWA, SO ANY OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN STATIONED ON OKINAWA AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, AND HAVE THE CONDITIONS OF THOSE THAT SERVED IN VIETNAM..... CAN APPLY FOR DISABILITY. A RECENT BVA DECISION PASSED THAT.

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ALSO LISTED UNDER AGENT ORANGE "PRESUMPTIVE" CAUSED CONDITION IN CERTAIN FORMS IS HYPERTENSION~ KNOWN TO THE VA AS HERBICIDE DIOXIN EXPOSURE. IF YOU HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED BY YOUR PRIMARY/FAMILY DOCTOR AS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE THAT'S HARD TO CONTROL- FILE A CLAIM FOR DISABILITY WITH THE VA, ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE HAD HYPERTENSION WITH A HEART ATTACK! IF YOU ARE ALREADY SEEING VA DOCTORS- BRING THIS TO THEIR ATTENTION.

PARASITE WARNINGS SOMETHING THE VA HAS FAILED TO INFORM OUR VIETNAM VETERANS ABOUT- AGAIN. THE DRINKING WATER POSED A RISK HAZARD TO YOU, LARGER THAN YOU KNEW, NOW – SOME 30- 40 YEARS LATER .

THERE IS A CANCER, CHOLANGIOCARCINOMA. IT IS A RARE TYPE IN USA BUT PREVALENT IN VIETNAM AND SURROUNDING COUNTRIES. THERE ARE TWO CAUSES OF THIS CANCER: ONE IS CONTACTING HEPATITIS C THE OTHER IS - THE DRINKING WATER IN VIETNAM. THERE ARE PARASITES IN THE WATER THAT DIE OFF BUT LEAVE BEHIND "DAMAGED CELLS" IN THE LIVER BILE DUCTS. MANY YEARS LATER WHEN THE VETS ARE 55-70 YEARS OLD THEY START SHOWING SIGNS OF JAUNDICE AND OTHER SYMPTOMS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO DIAGNOSE. NO ONE SEEMS AWARE OF THESE DAMAGED CELLS IN THE BILE DUCTS OF THE LIVER HAVE NOW GROWN INTO CANCEROUS TUMORS. IT IS HARD TO IDENTIFY AND OFTEN GO TOTALLY UNKNOWN UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE BY THE TIME THE VA FINALLY SAYS "THIS IS SERVICE RELATED". WHEN THEY SHOULD BE WARNING OUR SERVICE VETERANS WHO SERVED ANYWHERE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO ASK FOR A TEST/SCREENING OF LIVER FUNCTIONS ETC. PLEASE READ THIS AND MAKE SURE YOU ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT THIS TEST. CONTACT YOUR VA AND ASK ABOUT IT- SEE WHAT THEY CAN DO TO IDENTIFY IT FOR YOU! A GOOD "YOU'RE CLEAR" WILL HELP YOU SLEEP BETTER.... AND AS ALWAYS- EARLY DETECTION IS THE KEY TO EVERYTHING!