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Description Notes Report is included with form and discusses disposal of
toxic chemicals among other topics

Military Insecticides
Use In Vietnam
AOPO/November-December 1983

Document Source

END of TOUR REPORT

14 Jun 72

Col Sommer

Date of Document

Insecticides Mentioned
(Type/Quantity/Use)

Disposal of Toxic Chemicals

Other Information If Available

Method of Application

Location of Application

Military Unit if Different from Above

Names of Personnel Mentioned

Significant Event(s) - Spill, Fire, Explosion, Clean-up

AVHSU-PM
Surgeon

End of Tour Report
C, PvntMed Div

14 June 1972
COL Sommer/dwg/2420

1. **GENERAL:** The major and very basic objectives which governed much of the 1971 - 1972 USARV Preventive Medicine Program were a planned and orderly draw-down of preventive medicine assets in USARV in parallel to troop drawdown, a realignment of preventive medicine objectives primarily towards those problem areas associated with drawdown and relocation of units, and preparation of a preventive medicine capability suitable and adequate to support the remaining US Forces in RVN.

2. **PERSONNEL:** Drawdown of US Forces throughout the past year has required a continuing assessment of requirements for preventive medicine personnel and location and size of preventive medicine units and their subsections. Of necessity the approach to the drawdown of unit and selective curtailment of personnel has been extremely fluid with consideration of several alternative drawdown plans.

a. Preventive Medicine Division, Office of the Surgeon. The position of the Entomology Consultant in the Preventive Medicine Division, MEDCOMV was abolished effective 1 May 72 in line with the overall drawdown of MEDCOMV and reorganization into the Health Services Group Vietnam. At year end the position of Sanitary Engineering Consultant was similarly abolished. Because of prior commitments, it was not possible to assign the Preventive Medicine Officer to the position of DCO of the Health Services Group effective 1 July as originally planned. Consequently it was decided to assign the PMO as commanding officer of the 20th Preventive Medicine Unit and designate him staff preventive medicine officer for the Health Services Group.

b. Preventive Medicine Units and 9th Medical Laboratory.

(1) The major drawdown took place in the 172d Preventive Medicine Unit. In July 1971 it consisted of the parent organization located at Red Beach, a military quarantine subsection in Da Nang, and subsections at Quang Tri, Phu Bai, Chu Lai and Qui Nhon. Successively the subsections at Quang Tri, Chu Lai and Phu Bai were withdrawn. The unit was drawn down in two steps to zero strength and its functions in the Da Nang and Qui Nhon areas were assumed by the 20th Preventive Medicine Unit to which it had been assigned prior to final draw down in March 1972.

(2) During Increment XII, in effect during the last six weeks of FY 72, the 20th Preventive Medicine Unit was drawn down 40 spaces to a 71 man organization.

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that knowledge of the presence of such nonmedical sources of ionizing radiation in country is essential to preclude recurrences of such overexposures.

f. **Industrial Hygiene:** During the year a certain number of problems of an industrial hygiene nature arose which required expeditious evaluation and resolution. These included a variety of chemical exposures, noise exposures, ventilation and lighting problems. Although preventive medicine personnel were on hand who were capable of evaluating these problems, the necessary equipment was not immediately available. In one instance the equipment could be borrowed from the Air Force; in another the equipment was obtained on temporary loan from USAEHA. Consideration should be given to expanding the organic capabilities of Preventive Medicine Units in this area.

g. **Disposal of Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Materials.** (1) During the peak of activity in Vietnam, sizeable stocks of chemicals, insecticides, herbicides, and rodenticides accumulated in depots and property disposal yards. Deterioration of containers accelerated the rate at which quantities of FSN 6800 chemicals became available for disposition. The ban on sale and disposal of certain pesticides and an embargo on retrograde shipment of many chemical items out of country created the inevitable vacuum in which chemicals continued to accumulate.

(2) The Preventive Medicine Section in cooperation with DCSLOG, and the Inventory Control Center Vietnam developed alternative methods of disposal for each identified compound. The methods proposed were burial, controlled dilution in water or sewage, burning, retrograde to designated sites for ultimate disposal, and surface spreading, windrowing for natural destruction followed by burial. Department of the Army approval was received to proceed with disposal plan for those identified stocks in excess of need.

(3) The ultimate disposition of chemicals, considering the developed plan, included donation or sale through property disposal, limited burial at depot sites, and retrograde out of country. Indiscriminate dumping of large chemical stocks with the associated environmental damage could have resulted were it not for the anticipatory action taken.

5. **ENTOMOLOGY.** (a) **Surveillance Program.** Programs were initiated, or reinitiated, to conduct adult and larval mosquito surveys; rodent and rodent ectoparasites surveys; field tests to evaluate effectiveness of materials; equipment and technique of aerial spray applications, insecticide resistance tests and rodent bait acceptance tests. The data collected were utilized to determine priorities of control measures based on disease potential and best possible use of resources for