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Description Notes Announcement discusses the New Jersey State Agent Orange Commission press conference that announced the results of New Jersey's Agent Orange Vietnam Veterans Study. Also included in this item are several clippings, interviews, etc. on the New Jersey study.

Conference Call Announcement
New Jersey Agent Orange Study

I wish to bring to your attention this morning a significant development on the Agent Orange "scene," an event of which you may already be well aware as a result of news reports or contacts by the media or the general public with your facilities.

Last Wednesday, September 17, the New Jersey State Agent Orange Commission held a press conference to announce the results of a study, designated as the "Point Man" Study, to measure dioxin levels in fat and blood in Vietnam veterans. This study compared the levels of dioxin in fat of 10 Vietnam veterans with that of two control groups, that is, controls consisting of 10 Vietnam veterans who had no known exposure and 7 Vietnam era veterans who never served in Vietnam.

The study's investigators disclosed that the Vietnam veterans whom military records showed to have had high exposure to Agent Orange had statistically significant higher levels of the 2,3,7,8 dioxin isomer in their blood and fat than did the control groups. On the basis of their effort, they concluded that 2,3,7,8 tetrachloro-dioxin can be detected in blood and fat at extremely low levels (parts per trillion); that an analysis of blood can be performed to identify the presence of the Agent Orange dioxin isomer; and that there is a correlation between exposure to Agent Orange and the levels of dioxin found in the blood. The investigators stated that they had no information concerning whether there was a relationship between levels of dioxin found in the blood and the presence of adverse health. The second phase of their effort, assuming the state of New Jersey agrees to provide funding, will be to look at the medical information that was gathered from the study subjects and attempt to see if any such correlation exists. New Jersey currently has introduced legislation to support this effort.

Present at the news conference were members of the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission, Representative Florio from New Jersey (who has been active in environmental issues and issues relating to compensation for exposure to toxic substances) and Representatives Daschle and Edgar from the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. Mr. Florio praised the study as a first effort in what could eventually have profound impact on toxic litigation and legislation. Mr. Daschle and Mr. Edgar both expressed gratitude that progress is being made and stated that the CDC should give strong consideration to the New Jersey effort before making any final determinations concerning the termination of the Agent Orange study. The Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) will be asked to critically review the study.

Copies of New Jersey's study have not yet been made available to OTA, the VA, or for that matter, to any group or organization. We are in the process of attempting to obtain a copy for our own internal review. The study has been presented at the International Symposium on Dioxin now going on in Japan.

In the meantime you will undoubtedly receive media and other inquiries on this late breaking development. We have been advised by Ms. Donna St. John in the VA's Office of Public and Consumer Affairs that you should refer all media contacts to your respective Regional Public Affairs Offices. Inquiries

received within VA Central Office are being routinely referred to Ms. St. John. Public and Consumer Affairs is in the process of providing each of their regional offices with information relative to the press conference and the study.

Essentially, the VA's stance is that we are interested in the study and eager to have it reviewed by OIA, the VA's Advisory Committee on Health-Related Effects of Herbicides and the VA's Environmental Hazards Committee. It would be premature to comment on the results of the study, or of the reliability and validity of its methodology, until such reviews are conducted.

I'll keep you fully advised should anything further transpire which needs to be brought to your attention. If you have any questions concerning what I've just covered I'll be glad to respond to them at this time.

UPI, 9/17/86

Panel: High dioxin levels found in Agent Orange victims

By JOSEPH MIANOWANY

WASHINGTON (UPI) - The New Jersey Agent Orange Commission said Wednesday it had found abnormal dioxin levels could be detected in the blood of Vietnam veterans exposed to the herbicide ¶ a possible breakthrough in learning if exposure caused health problems.

Commission members, releasing in Washington the results of a three-year study, cautioned that the findings did not prove the dioxin levels found in the veterans were the cause of health problems.

However, they stressed that the fact the dioxin levels were detected 11 years after the end of the Vietnam War could be a crucial step in determining if exposure to Agent Orange, a defoliant used during the war, was responsible for a variety of health problems suffered by some veterans years later.

Reps. Tom Daschle, D-S.D., James Florio, D-N.J., and Bob Edgar, D-Pa., said they would ask the congressional Office of Technology Assessment to review the New Jersey study, labeled "The Pointman Project."

Daschle, a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said officials from the Centers for Disease Control, which is conducting its own Agent Orange study, told Congress three weeks ago that it seemed impossible to determine if exposure to the herbicide had caused health problems.

They said the biggest problem was that there was no way to differentiate positively between dioxin the veterans may have in their bodies because of exposure to Agent Orange and background dioxin to which they may have been exposed elsewhere.

The New Jersey study, done in conjunction with the University of Texas Medical School and the University of Umea in Sweden, tested 27 people from three groups: Vietnam veterans who were likely heavily exposed to Agent Orange, Vietnam veterans who were not exposed and Vietnam-war veterans who did not serve in Southeast Asia.

Toxicologist Ralph Fogleman, who worked on the study, said the findings showed the level of dioxin in the blood was much higher for the veterans exposed to Agent Orange than it was for the other two groups.

He said the results were similar for fat samples taken from the veterans. He stressed that the blood tests were simpler and less expensive.

Commission Chairman Allen Falk said he hoped the results could help change a May 1984 settlement of an Agent Orange lawsuit. That settlement, he said, was based on the presumption that there was no litmus test for determining if exposure to Agent Orange had caused health problems.

Florio called the New Jersey study "an historic medical research event" which he said could also help in dioxin exposure cases other than those related to Agent Orange.

"Agent Orange victims are the first cousins of prisoners of war," added Daschle.

BY BOB MCHUGH

WASHINGTON (AP) -- A GROUP OF VIETNAM VETERANS, SCIENTISTS AND CONGRESSMEN ON WEDNESDAY ANNOUNCED RESULTS OF A STUDY THEY SAID PROVES AT LAST THE DEADLY EFFECTS OF THE WARTIME HERBICIDE AGENT ORANGE.

SCIENTISTS SAID THE RESEARCH, FINANCED BY THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, SHOWS FOR THE FIRST TIME A BIOLOGICAL "FINGERPRINT" LEFT IN VETERANS' BLOOD BY DIOXIN, A KEY AGENT ORANGE INGREDIENT.

SCIENTISTS AND SPOKESMEN FOR THE N.J. (NEW JERSEY) AGENT ORANGE COMMISSION, THE STUDY'S SPONSOR, SAID THE NEW TESTING TAKES THE CASE AGAINST AGENT ORANGE TWO CRUCIAL STEPS FORWARD.

THEY SAID THE RESEARCH SHOWED TELL-TALE TRACES OF DIOXIN CAN STILL BE SUCCESSFULLY SEEN YEARS AFTER EXPOSURE. FURTHERMORE, THE TESTS FOUND LEVELS OF DIOXIN 10 TIMES HIGHER IN EXPOSED VETERANS THAN IN OTHER VIETNAM-ERA SERVICEMEN.

THE RESEARCH ON 10 HIGHLY EXPOSED VETERANS, HOWEVER, STOPS SHORT OF LINKING THEIR HEALTH PROBLEMS DIRECTLY TO THE WIDELY USED DEFOLIANT, THE SCIENTISTS ACKNOWLEDGED. BUT THEY ASSERTED AT A CAPITOL HILL NEWS CONFERENCE THAT THE STUDY REPRESENTED A "BREAKTHROUGH" IN EFFORTS TO LEARN THE TRUE EFFECTS OF THE HERBICIDE.

THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY, THEY SAID, SHOULD PROMPT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DROP ITS LONGSTANDING CLAIM THAT THERE'S NO WAY TO PROVE A CAUSE-AND-EFFECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGENT ORANGE AND POOR HEALTH.

"THE VIETNAM VETERAN HAS BEEN IN A LONG, DARK TUNNEL, AND MAYBE NOW WE SEE THE LIGHT," SAID CHARLES KRAUSS, A WAYNE, N.J., MAN WHO HANDLED AGENT ORANGE IN VIETNAM AND VOLUNTEERED TO BE TESTED.

VETERANS AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN DEADLOCKED IN THE DEBATE ABOUT THE DEFOLIANT USED TO CLEAR VIETNAM'S DENSE JUNGLES.

THE VETERANS CLAIM AGENT ORANGE IS THE CAUSE OF HEALTH PROBLEMS TO THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES, RANGING FROM SERIOUS ACNE TO CANCER.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS COUNTER THAT NO SUCH LINK HAS BEEN PROVEN -- A CLAIM THAT PREVENTS VETERANS BENEFITS FOR THE ILLNESSES.

A LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST SEVEN AGENT ORANGE MANUFACTURERS BY VETERANS FROM AMERICA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND RESULTED IN A \$200 MILLION SETTLEMENT IN 1984. THE LITIGATION, CURRENTLY UNDER APPEAL, INCLUDED 245,000 CLAIMS OF HEALTH DAMAGE.

KRAUSS AND NINE OTHER VIETNAM VETERANS WITH A HISTORY OF HANDLING THE DEFOLIANT SERVED AS PATIENTS IN "THE POINT MAN PROJECT," NAMED FOR THE SOLDIERS WHO DREW ENEMY FIRE AS LEADERS OF THEIR UNITS.

THE VETERANS WERE STUDIED ALONG WITH 17 "CONTROL" CASES, INCLUDING VETERANS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM WITHOUT DIRECT AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE, AND VETERANS OF THE ERA WHO DID NOT SERVE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

LEVELS OF A DIOXIN FORM KNOWN AS TCDD AVERAGED ABOUT 48 PARTS PER TRILLION IN EXPOSED VETERANS, COMPARED TO ABOUT 4 OR 5 PARTS PER TRILLION IN THOSE WHO SAW NO VIETNAM SERVICE, SAID TOXICOLOGIST RALPH FOGELMAN.

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Dioxin Found in Vietnam Vets

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Los Angeles Times

A medical study released yesterday verifies for the first time that Vietnam veterans who were exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange still carry high levels of poisonous dioxin in their systems.

The report is considered a breakthrough in the difficult effort to link veterans' ailments to the wartime herbicide.

"We have found some startling evidence that we believe will reopen the Agent Orange issue," said Allen Falk, chairman of a New Jersey commission that organized a three-year investigation of selected veterans by U.S. and Swedish scientists.

The New Jersey study was based

on a new high-technology method of measuring tiny amounts of dioxin in tissue. Samples of blood and fat were taken from three groups of veterans: 10 who the Pentagon confirmed had handled Agent Orange regularly, 10 who served in Vietnam but had little or no exposure to the defoliant, and seven who were not stationed in Vietnam.

The study found that the average dioxin level in the high-exposure group was seven times higher than the low-exposure group and 10 times higher than the group outside Vietnam.

Dioxin has been linked scientifically to cancer, and veterans have claimed they also have suffered from nerve defects, skin conditions and defects in offspring.

Faith Daniels: Agent Orange -- It's one of the most bitter legacies of the Vietnam War. It's been at the center of controversy and medical confusion ever since the troops came home. There is still no direct medical link between Agent Orange and the diseases that afflict so many Vietnam vets. But today scientists are now seeing an important step toward finding that link. Dr. Bob Arnot is here to tell us about it. Good morning.

Dr. Arnot: Good morning, Faith. When Agent Orange was first produced for the Vietnam War a highly toxic biproduct called dioxin appeared during the manufacturing process. Now until recently it was assumed that if you were exposed to dioxin it disappeared within several years. Now for the first time researchers announced they have found large quantities of dioxin still present in soldiers exposed to it in Vietnam. These are not the findings of government researchers, but that of a private research group headed by Vietnam veterans and funded by the State of New Jersey.

Wayne Wilson, New Jersey Agent Orange Commission: I wish that Vietnam veterans were healthy. I wish that all of us were able to put this Vietnam War behind us, and that we can get on with our lives. But the fact is there appears to be large numbers of Vietnam Veterans who are sick. They turned for their government for some understanding and for some help. And the federal government turned its back on them.

Dr. Arnot: So Wilson and his colleagues at the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission launched their own research under the help of the Vietnam Veterans. That was two years ago. Twenty-seven carefully selected men checked into a New Jersey hospital. Ten of the men were known to have been heavily exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam. Seventeen others were not. The men were subjected to two days of testing and a surgical procedure, parts of a new technique to measure dioxin in fatty tissue and blood.

Charles Price: In 'eighty-one I had a tumor removed from my jaw. 'Eighty-two, had a huge one under my arm that was removed.

Dr. Arnot: Charles Price was part of the study. He, like many vets, believes Agent Orange has made him sick. Price was a flight engineer for the Air Force. From 1969 to 1970, he flew the Ranch Hand mission, spraying gallons and gallons of Agent Orange on the dense Asian jungle. Price says the chemical defoliant sprayed in his face through the open cargo doors, soaked his clothing -- and he even waded through it on the ground. Now he knows his body is full of dioxin.

Price: If I thought about it, a lot of it would probably drive me nuts. So I just go along every day and just try to remove it from my mind.

Dr. Peter Kahn: And look at spray handlers, men who handled the spray on a regular basis throughout their time in Vietnam. And we matched them against unexposed, control veterans.

Dr. Arnot: Dr. Peter Kahn was the principal organizer of the experiment. A biochemist at Rutgers University, he supervised the surgical procedure to remove the sample and some preliminary lab work. The samples were then sent to the laboratories of Dr. Christopher Rappisch(sp), in Umea, Sweden. He pioneered the new dioxin test.

Dr. Rappisch: What we aimed at was to see whether chemical analysis could be used to identify exposed Vietnam veterans. And when the studies were complete, I think we could have an answer on that -- yes or no.

Dr. Arnold: And the answer was yes. Dr. Rappisch found high levels of dioxin stored in the fat of all but one exposed veteran. But most alarmingly, he also found that dioxin continued to leak out of fat into blood twenty years after exposure to Agent Orange. The highest blood concentration? 180 parts per trillion.

Dr. Kahn: The normal values are typically around 5 and may run as high as 10. And for the heavily exposed men the mean is, I can't remember exactly, but it's around 40.

Dr. Arnold: Now that the dioxin has been found, what does it mean? The vets claim that it has caused cancer, liver damage, nerve disorders and birth defects in their children.

Dr. Kahn: There is a growing body of literature linking exposure to chemicals that contain dioxin as contaminants to a number of forms of cancer. with incubation times on the order of 15 to 20 years. Malignant lymphoma, soft tissue sarcomas have all been mentioned.

Dr. Arnold: But so far, dioxin has only proven to be cancer-causing in animals, not in humans. And yet another question has been raised. What if a Vietnam Veteran returned to the United States, and lived and worked in an area with high dioxin emissions? How can we be sure of the source of his exposure? The New Jersey study claims to have the answer. With a technique so sensitive it can differentiate between Agent Orange dioxin and other dioxins. And this gives him a big boost in future research.

Dr. Kahn: If you are concerned about your personnel health, don't think Agent Orange, think dioxin. And in that regard, Vietnam veterans have been, as Dr. Arnold suggested, the point man for every citizen of this country.

Dr. Arnold: Now there are only 1275 "Ranchhandlers" who were exposed to the high concentration of dioxin during the war. But there are over 200,000 claims made by veterans and their families. This check will now make it possible to identify which ground troops were exposed to high levels of dioxin in the fields. That then can help scientists to link dioxin levels with instances of cancer and other illnesses. And it also will help to follow exposed veterans with signs of disease in the future.

Faith Daniels: Bob, dioxin is believed to be a cancer-causer. Why isn't it proven?

Dr. Arnold: The reason is that the incidence of these kinds of cancers is so low -- you know, one or two per hundred thousand -- and an increase of three or four per hundred thousand wouldn't be seen unless we studied huge numbers of people. This test will now allow the government and other researchers to study those huge numbers of people to try and find that link. Not that it doesn't exist, they just couldn't look for it before.

Faith: All right. Thank you very much, Dr. Bob Arnot.

Researchers Report Finding Telltale Sign of Agent Orange

WASHINGTON, Sept. 17 (AP) — A group of Vietnam veterans, scientists and members of Congress today announced the results of a study they say may finally prove the deadly effects of the wartime herbicide Agent Orange.

Scientists said the research, financed by the State of New Jersey, showed for the first time a biological "fingerprint" left in veterans' blood by dioxin, a key ingredient of Agent Orange.

Scientists and spokesmen for the New Jersey Agent Orange Commission, the sponsor of the study, said the research showed that traces of dioxin could still be successfully seen years after exposure. Furthermore, the tests found levels of dioxin 10 times higher in exposed veterans than in other servicemen of the Vietnam era.

The research on 10 highly exposed veterans stops short of linking their health problems directly to the widely used defoliant, the scientists acknowledged.

Findings Termed Breakthrough

But they asserted at a Capitol Hill news conference that the study represented a "breakthrough" in efforts to learn the true effects of the herbicide.

They said the results of the study should prompt the Federal Government to drop its longstanding contention that there was no way to prove a cause-and-effect relationship between Agent Orange and poor health.

"The Vietnam veteran has been in a long, dark tunnel, and maybe now we see the light," said Charles Krauss, a resident of Wayne, N.J., who handled Agent Orange in Vietnam and volunteered to be tested.

Veterans and the Government have been deadlocked in the debate about the defoliant used to clear Vietnam's dense jungles to deprive the enemy of cover.

The veterans say Agent Orange is the cause of health problems for them and their families, ranging from serious acne to cancer. Government officials counter that no such link has been proved, a position that prevents the veterans from receiving benefits for the illnesses.

\$200 Million Settlement

A lawsuit filed against seven Agent Orange manufacturers by veterans from the United States, Australia and New Zealand resulted in a \$200 million settlement in 1984. The litigation, now under appeal, included 245,000 claims of health damage.

Mr. Krauss and nine other Vietnam veterans with a history of handling the defoliant served as patients in the study.

Levels of TCDD, a form of dioxin, averaged about 48 parts per trillion in exposed veterans, as against about four or five parts per trillion in test subjects who saw no Vietnam service, said Ralph Fogelman, a toxicologist.

The cost of the research, about \$400,000, was paid for through legislation passed by the New Jersey Legislature. The tests were begun last year at Barnert Memorial Medical Center in Paterson, N.J.

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