

## **AGENT ORANGE'S LONG LEGACY**

### **NOW, AFFECTING THE VETERAN'S GRANDCHILDREN**

**SOURCE**



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Beginning in 1962 and continuing until 1971, the United States military, with the approval of President John F. Kennedy, sprayed over twenty million gallons of herbicide over more than four and a half million acres in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in order to defoliate the jungle and reduce the areas available for the North Vietnamese soldiers to hide in as well as to destroy crops. **The effects of that decision are still with us today.**

The cases of the children, and now the grandchildren, of the thousands of people exposed to the defoliants suffering from congenital disabilities and diseases, have reached an alarming level. But the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has continually dragged its feet regarding the acknowledgement of any correlation.

The most frequently used chemical was Agent Orange, a mixture of equal parts of two herbicides, 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D. The result of this mixture unintentionally created a highly toxic dioxin, tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, commonly known as TCDD.

The chemicals were sprayed by airplanes, helicopters, and boats. Not only were enemy targets sprayed, but the perimeters of camps and airfields were kept tidy using backpack spraying, too. Because it was believed the spray was essentially harmless, no masks or other safety equipment was used.

The numbers of both Americans and Vietnamese who were exposed to spray, residue, contaminated groundwater, and soil could not possibly be measured. Still, it's thought that over two million American service personnel have been affected.

Vietnam has reported that at least four hundred thousand people died or were disfigured by American herbicides.

The offspring of many of the veterans are born with physical defects such as spina bifida and other spinal disorders, extra fingers and toes, as well as fused digits, diseases including several different types of cancers such as leukemia, respiratory cancers, and prostate cancers.



*Stacks of 55-gallon drums containing Agent Orange during the war.*

Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Parkinson's Disease, Diabetes Mellitus Type 2, heart disease, and nerve and muscle disorders are also reported, and many have suffered psychological disorders.



*Defoliant spray run, part of Operation Ranch Hand, during the Vietnam War.*

Vietnam vet Mike Ryan, who was exposed to the herbicides, fathered a daughter after his return who was born with spina bifida, deformed extremities, a hole in her heart, and no lower digestive tract, among a host of other problems.

There were no problems on either side of the family, and the Ryans were considered healthy, with no drug or smoking histories. The Ryans made their plight public after hearing of more children of vets with similar problems.

In 1980, then President-elect Ronald Reagan met with the Ryans over their concerns. Later, the administration worked to block Ryan's class action lawsuit, which resulted in U.S. District Judge Jack Weinstein's ruling that direct payments could only be made to disabled veterans or survivors of those who had died.

That ruling conspicuously left out the descendants of veterans. According to Ryan, "They will never admit it because if they do, then America is admitting to drafting the unborn."

Veteran Royal Gee had a daughter before his service in Vietnam who is entirely healthy and a daughter born after his return who suffers from cysts, joint problems, and an immune system disorder. "They say it has nothing to do with my service in Vietnam, and it stops right there," said the former Marine. "There's got to be a reason."

Hundreds of studies have been conducted, and many point to the association between Agent Orange and congenital disabilities. In 2007, 2009, 2012, and 2014, the Federal Institute of Medicine's scientific panels recommended that the Veterans Administration "should review all the possible cognitive and developmental effects in offspring of veterans. Such a review should include the possibility of the impact on grandchildren.

The Veterans Administration still resists acknowledging the link between Agent Orange and the many cases of congenital disabilities and disease. Still, more and more people are coming forward with personal stories. **The VA may someday be pushed into admitting the long-term complications of Agent Orange.**

A Good video is available...

<https://www.cbs17.com/news/south/agent-orange-effects-being-seen-in-grandchildren-of-vietnam-war-veterans/1186857954>



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