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22 December, 1981

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Mr. J. Richard Munro
President, Life Magazine
Rockefeller Center
New York, New York 10020

RE: Article, "Tracking Agent Orange"
December, 1981 issue

Dear Mr. Munro:

Unfortunately, the prestigious magazine "Life" has succumbed to the mass media hype over "Agent Orange" and neglected the volumes of science concerning the safety of the herbicide 24D/245T and mans' association with it.

The herbicide 24D/245T was widely utilized for twenty years throughout the United States and free world before it's use in Southeast Asia and the safety and effectiveness were amply demonstrated during that period. All credible science to date supports the premise that 24D/245T was and is a safe chemical in spite of the presence of a minute amount of dioxin (a trace production contaminant measuring a scant 2 parts per million).

Throughout the history of the Viet Nam conflict, 1300 men served proudly in a unique United States Air Force unit known as Operation Ranch Hand. Operation Ranch Hand's mission included enemy crop destruction and denial of concealment to the enemy by defoliation. No one can challenge the fact that the personnel of Operation Ranch Hand had the greatest degree and frequency of contact with herbicides during the Viet Nam conflict. In spite of our often daily contact with those chemicals, no unusual health problems such as chloracne were observed then, and to date, preliminary information from ongoing scientific studies of our group shows that health problems we may currently have are within the norm statistically when compared against the general population.

The veterans of Operation Ranch Hand are tired and disgusted with the way this subject has been treated in the mass media. We believe the existing science and not media sensationalism.

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Responsible journalism may better serve the public by searching beyond a "media file" on a subject; and on a scientific question such as this, by researching the relevant science. Had this been done, "Tracking Agent Orange" would not have contributed to the Agent Orange Hoax.

Sincerely,

JOHN R. SPEY, Major, USAF (Ret.)
President, Ranch Hand Viet Nam Association

JRS/mjm

This letter may be used as a Letter to the Editor.