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September 29, 1980

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Dear Rancheros,

We have learned that the Air Force study on the long-term health effects of herbicides will begin very soon. See below:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 16, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The Air Force has sought guidance from the Interagency Work Group on the Possible Long-Term Health Effects of Phenoxy Herbicides and Contaminants on whether it should proceed with the Epidemiological Study of Ranch Hand Personnel because the National Academy of Sciences review of the Air Force protocol had expressed concern about the credibility of the Air Force to conduct the study.

Ranch Hand personnel, who applied Agent Orange between 1962 and 1971 in Vietnam, are the only population whose frequency and duration of exposure to Agent Orange are known with any accuracy. The Interagency Work Group agrees with the Air Force that the results of the Ranch Hand study should provide valuable information about the long-term health effects of exposure by veterans to Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Over the past 20 months, the Air Force has made a conscientious effort to design a scientifically valid study responsive to the recommendations of five separate peer reviews, including that of the National Academy of Sciences. After a thorough review of the proposed final study protocol, which includes certain changes based on the separate peer reviews, and after consultation with the Air Force scientists responsible for the study, the Work Group recommended to me that the Air Force be instructed to carry out the Ranch Hand study. In light of the progress already made by the Air Force and the need to proceed expeditiously with this important study, Frank Press and I concur with the Work Group's recommendation.

There remains deeply felt concern among some Vietnam veterans and others about the objectivity of the Air Force to study the possible health effects of Agent Orange. While affirming the capability of the Air Force to assure the proper conduct of the study, the Interagency Work Group has suggested that this concern can be reasonably addressed by independent review and monitoring of the study. I believe that the Scientific Panel of the Interagency Work Group, which is already familiar with the Ranch Hand protocol, is the appropriate body to oversee the study and to provide technical assistance, as needed, to the Air Force scientists responsible for the study. For the purpose of assuring the public that the study results are reliable and valid, the Work Group plans to augment the Scientific Panel with reputable scientists from outside the government, including those suggested by veterans organizations.

The Interagency Work Group noted that the evaluation of Ranch Hand personnel may have to continue for a lengthy period of time in order to have a better chance of detecting latent or subtle health effects, particularly related to cancer. The Air Force, in consultation with the Scientific Panel, has already designed the protocol to reflect this recommendation.

I am advised that the Ranch Hand study presents a number of difficult technical problems. While recognizing the need to obtain study results promptly, the Air Force's primary responsibility must be to assure that the results will be reliable and valid. I urge the Air Force to utilize fully the expertise of the Scientific Panel of the Interagency Work Group to advise them on the difficult decisions that will surely arise during the course of the study.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm the importance of the Ranch Hand study to Vietnam veterans and their families. The Interagency Work Group and the White House are prepared to offer any assistance that the Air Force may require in discharging its responsibility to conduct a high quality scientific investigation.

Stuart E. Eizenstat
Stuart E. Eizenstat
Assistant to the President
for Domestic Affairs and Policy

The 14th annual Ranch Hand reunion will be held on 9, 10, 11 and 12 October in Tarpon Springs, Florida. The reunion will be hosted by Jim and Patricia Pochurek at the Gondolier Motel:

110 West Tarpon Ave.
Tarpon Springs, FL 33589
(813)937-6121/2

This reunion promises to be the best we've had yet. Those present will receive a briefing from Gen. Myers, AF SG, and others on the staff at Brooks School of Aerospace Medicine on the forthcoming USAF study. Contact Jim Pochurek and make your plans to attend!

Since 1966 the Ranch Hand Vietnam Association has tried to keep in touch with as many veterans of "the Ranch" as possible. Over the years this number has dwindled but again we'd like you to know the Association is alive and well. Annually since 1967 we gather for a reunion in mid-October.

Many of you have undoubtedly read some of the recent press concerning "Agent Orange" - the defoliant 24D/245T sprayed in Vietnam. For the past couple of years readers have been bombarded with vast amounts of sensationalized writing on the subject, which for the most part is scientifically flawed, emotionalized and often riddled with inaccuracies. In addition, some individuals are claiming that their present medical problems are a result from contact with the defoliant while serving in Vietnam. For this reason and others, the United States Air Force is going to perform the study outlined in the above White House memo.

Each of us will be asked to volunteer again for one last mission for "the Ranch". This time, however, the mission will not be over the jungles of SEA but here at home. The Air Force will be asking many of us to take part in their study. For some this may mean travel, and some minor pain! The Association believes it is our duty to answer the call as we did more than a decade ago.

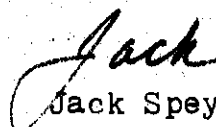
To date there is no valid scientific data to indicate that contact with the defoliant 24D/245T represented a health hazard or that it causes insomnia, sleepyness, increased sex drive, diminished sex drive, cancer, birth defects, etc. The emotional manner in which this subject has been treated in "journalistic circles" however, is in part responsible for the desirability of one "final" study.

The Association presently has \$1100 in the Eglin Federal Credit Union. Contributions are needed to pay for this and future newsletters. There were over 800 announcements sent in this mailing. Your support is appreciated. Please make checks payable to Ranch Hand Vietnam Association.

Many of you will be happy to know that "Patches", C123, 56-4362, has flown her last mission at the age of 23. Her final sortie was flown by an AF Reserve aircrew from Westover AFB, NY, to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, where she is on permanent display. "Patches" fought long and hard for her country and it is heartwarming to know she secured her well-earned place in history.

We hope to see everyone in Tarpon Springs next month. If you can't be there, write us a note to be shared by all. Lets stay in touch.

To the Ranch,


Jack Spey

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850 Tarpon Drive
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(904)243-5696



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20 October 1980

Dear Rancheros:

This October's gathering of the "Tree Murderers" in Tarpon Springs, Florida, was an outstanding success. Jim and Patricia Pochurek and Pete and Kathy Spivey deserve a big "Well Done" and a sincere thanks from everyone. The entire weekend was fantastic. Rancheros present this year were:

Charlie and Beth Hubbs
Jim Umstead
Paul Cecil
Jim and Norma Arthur
Al and Emily Nicholas
Art McConnell
Lee Inman
Hal Luke
Dick and Carol Bennett
Bob and Bobbie Harrison
John and Betty Brady
Ed Muro
Les and Gracie Easton
Ralph and Dolly Dresser
Marshall and Molene Rothermal

Dale Johnston
Millard Gorman
Brad and Janet Elliott
George Ketlel
Bill Merritt
George Adams
Bill Coffey
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Pokluda
Mr. & Mrs. Stan Nelson
Jack and Marilyn Spey
Doug Davis
Bill Mikolasy
Pete and Kathy Spivey
Jim and Patricia Pochurek

Guests present:

Lt. Gen. Paul Myers (USAF/SG)
Col. & Mrs. George Lathrop (Chief, Epidemiology - Brooks AFB)
Maj. Will Flory (SG Office)
Maj. Doug Kennett (Media Relations - Sec. of AF)
Mr. Bruce Herbert (House of Rep. - Committee on Veteran Affairs)

Friday night included cocktails aboard a Greek sponge fishing boat while motoring down the Anclote River and then a magnificent Greek dinner on the Sponge Fleet Dock. Saturday was spent swimming, shopping and drying out prior to cocktails and dinner at the Elk's Club. Following an excellent dinner, we were honored to be addressed by Lt. General Paul Myers (USAF Surgeon General). Gen. Myers outlined the USAF study that is currently underway, and answered questions from the floor. The Ranch Hand II study is outlined as follows:

Each of us will soon receive official notification that the study is to be conducted. We will also receive a letter from Lt. General Myers outlining how the study will be conducted, what is desired of us, and the benefits to us. In March 1981 (approximately), by appointment and at our convenience, we will be interviewed by personnel from a nationally recognized medical survey organization working with a scientifically prepared health questionnaire. The survey will be done in the privacy of our homes, or a place of our choosing. After our medical history, past and present, is obtained, the information will be screened by computer and the first physicals can be expected to start in June 1981 (approximately). Physicals will be performed at a nationally recognized medical facility at a time convenient to each participant. Travel expenses and per diem will be paid by the USAF. A control group that has not had contact with the herbicide 24D/245T will be identified and will receive the same scrutiny. Each Ranchero will have counterparts who will receive the same intensive medical review. Ranchero and counterpart will be matched by age, race, time in Vietnam and job speciality, as well as physically. Follow-on examinations will be conducted at specific intervals over the next 20 years. By comparing histories and any current medical problems, any significant abnormality should be detected.

Having been privileged to learn more of the details of the Ranch Hand II study than space will allow at this time, I assure you that if in fact a needle does exist in the haystack and that needle is the defoliant 24D/245T, this study will in all probability find it. The science that has gone into this study is unprecedented and the protocol and methodology used has received the scrutiny of the nation's leading scientists.

Due to time limitations on my part, coordination with the USAF/SG on the above description of the Ranch Hand II study was not possible; and any errors, omissions and/or changes since the address by Gen Myers are mine.

As has been stated many times before, to date there is no valid scientific evidence that links the defoliant 24D/245T with alleged health problems. However, the current controversy can only be answered once and for all with the Ranch Hand II study. The single weakness in the study would be lack of participation of Ranch Hand personnel and personnel in the control group. The validity of the results is highly proportionate to the degree of participation. For this reason, it is desirable that each of us volunteer again as we did more than a decade ago and "Saddle Up" for one last mission with "The Ranch".

The Vietnam conflict created only 1,195 Ranch Hand veterans and Uncle Sam needs all of us again to make this study valid. Let's not let him or each other down.

News from Cowboys around the world:

HAL UNDERHILL: First, let's all thank Hal for his check for "100 clams". A regular for the past three years, Hal was unable to attend this year due to political commitments on the West Coast. Hal has sold his aircraft and plans to visit Jim Pochurek, John Brady and Jack Spey during a "lazy spring swing" through Florida. Thanks again Hal.

BILL KNOTHE: Bill and Shirley have been regulars for the past three years also but just moved to Universal City, TX. Bill teaches with F. Wensel at the university there and says he likes the climate better than Florida.

REX STONER: Rex was forced to cancel his plans to attend at the last minute. He has rid himself of the Ford dealership in Southern Pines, NC, to devote his time entirely to his lovely new bride. Congrats Rex -- but no last minute excuses next year!

HOWIE BOWLES: After Howie left the Ranch and USAF in 1967 he went with Pan Am, but the economy and frequent furloughs forced him to work at non-flying jobs recently. Howie, we all hope the merger with National and an upturn in the economy will put you back behind the yoke again soon.

BERNIE DALLAS: Bernie regretted but sends his best to all.

JOHN RICHMOND: John and Lois, after not missing a reunion in recent memory, were on the West Coast this year and not able to make it. John sends his best to ALCON.

JACK BAILEY: Ranch Hand's own "Burt Lance" is again in the banking business -- this time in San Angelo, TX. Being relatively junior he couldn't break away but did juggle the books to allow for a nice contribution. The knowledge that Jack was again in the banking business, recently prompted the F.D.I.C. to raise the limit on insured savings to \$100.00!

HANK GOOD: Henry K. and Jeanie leased a villa south of Florence, Italy, and left in Sept. to vacation there. After hunting with friends in Germany, they'll return home for Thanksgiving. Hank advises that Frank Almeter just made O-6.

CARY LAHMOM: Cary was attending his son's wedding at Keesler AFB the weekend of our reunion so couldn't join us. Both of Cary's sons are in uniform for Uncle Sam.

EUGENE S. ROBERTSON: Eugene's wife has been transferred from Washington to Scott AFB so they are presently living and working in Belleville, IL.

HAROLD HOYLE: Hal is retired and living in Westville, NJ. He sent his best to all, along with \$25. Thanks Hal!

RICH WINFIELD: Since retirement, Rich has been working as a "wrench bender" for American Airlines in L.A. He's an antique A/C buff and will vacation in Europe this fall visiting old haunts.

TED BUCK: Ted retired in '72 and is farming in southern Illinois. His cattle are up to their udders in weeds since the EPA's ill-advised ban on the use of 24D/245T, but they're hanging in! Thanks Ted for the fifty!

BILL COOLEY: Bill (Nav '69) is the Dean of the Business School at Jackson State U. in Jackson, MS. Glad to hear from you Bill.

JOE O'CONNOR: Joe is going to school full time working for his MBM in finance in Sacramento, CA. He sends his best to all.

BILL "THE SPOOK" SPEIGHT: Bill is up to his "purple scarf" in the export business -- doing well and "loving it". "The Spook" recently completed a 40 million dollar agreement to export the Carter family to Chad but the deal was blocked by the State Dept. after it was learned of "The Spooks" links with the Republican Party, and the Chad Government's threats to break diplomatic relations.

LARRY WALTERS: Larry and Ann are both working on their degrees in logistics in California.

BOB OBA: "To the Ranch" plus \$10. Thanks Bob!

B/G JERRY WATSON: Gen. Watson was the Army Chem. Corps Liaison Officer to the Ranch as a Capt. in '65. Agent Orange didn't hurt him! Gen. Watson is presently Dep. Comm. for Training at Fort McClelland, GA (MP school). Good to hear from you Jerry.

VERNE UHLER: As always, we got a great letter from Verne. He's still in college near his farm. Verne promises to join us just as soon as they build a road out of Knob Noster, Missouri!

JIM PEROT: Jim retired in '73 and is working for the Columbia State School for retarded children. He sent his best to all.

MILES "BURGIE" BURGENHEIM: Burgie retired an L/C in '74 and is working for Rockwell on the B-1 at Edwards. He was with us in spirit and sent a nice contribution.

ARTHUR G. REESE: Art is retired in Schleswig, IA, and is busy raising his children. Good to hear from you and thanks Art for the contribution.

LEO GAGNON: Leo's pen ran out of ink just after writing a check for \$10. Thanks Leo; next time send words also.

Short notes/calls/contributions were also received from:

RALPH WALKER
TROY SMITH
RON PETERS
D. G. RIFFEY
FLOYD HEFFNER
BILL DOLLAR

BRAD ELIOT
LLOYD HAMMERSTROM
FRANK W. LOWD
WILLIAM O. BRADFORD
LEN BOCHICCHIO
WALLACE S. KNIGHT

MATTHEW H. FEIERTAG

In case I failed to mention anyone, the Association thanks all of you for your contributions.

The Association currently has \$1,299.42 in the credit union. Your contributions are appreciated. Keep your cards and letters coming in.

To the Ranch,


Jack Spey

Ranch Hand Vietnam Association
850 Tarpon Drive
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548
(904)243-5696