

INDEPENDENT AGENT ORANGE NETWORK

Joe Cole

"An open letter"

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August 8, 1988

Re: Agent Orange Payment Program

Dear Readers,

In a letter dated 18 May 1988, Special Master Kenneth R. Feinberg, Esq. states; The "exposure test" that will be used by the Court in determining eligibility for payments (from the class action lawsuit) will not (and is not intended to) prove that a veteran was or was not exposed. Rather, the test is intended to indicate those veterans who are more likely to have been exposed based on their jobs or locations in Vietnam. In addition, claimants will be able to offer other evidence or reasons to support a claim of exposure. "The Court will not follow the Veterans Administration's definition of exposure", which appropriately acknowledges service in Vietnam, and exposure as one and the same.

Mr. Feinberg goes on to state: "As you know, with limited funds available for distribution, the Court was forced to make some difficult decisions about the priority of claims." On May 28, 1985 the Court Stated: "that disabilities and deaths occurring in a relatively young population (and soon after the return from Vietnam) are likely to be perceived as associated with Agent Orange exposure."

On September 30, 1986 Hellen Gelband, Director of the Agent Orange Projects, the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), stated that Vietnam veterans who were clinically diagnosed as having cancer prior to 1 December 1984, probably had their cancers prior to Vietnam service, because cancer was largely a disease of old age. Therefore, the Centers for Disease Control was correct in eliminating those veterans from their Agent Orange health studies.

For those Vietnam veterans who have the need for documentation of their possible toxic chemical exposures, I have extrapolated spray mission data from the herbs tapes, and declassified documents, which clearly establishes, that any attempts to deny compensation based on "AGE" or "LOCATION" can and will be challenged both in the courts and media.

1. Exposure estimates have been grossly under-estimated. 30 to 100 million gallons.

2. Mission locations and dates grossly under-reported. (Even the court recognizes spraying began in August 1961)

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3. Types and toxicity of chemical agents used grossly misrepresented.

Vietnam veterans are not responsible for the grossly inadequate funding provided by the Court, nor should Vietnam veterans be held ineligible for benefits based on deliberately withheld data or dates of birth.

Vietnam veterans need to lobby the truly guilty party, if they ever hope to receive just compensation for their Vietnam health related injuries. Sorry guy's, but Congress has far more liability for our injuries than the chemical industry. The documentation we have uncovered clearly underscores this as FACT.

In solidarity

Joe Cole

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