



Monday, March 11, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** Richard Wyman

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Plano, TX, 75074-1607

**Phone Number** (972) 523-8452

**Subject**  
Panama Comments

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

I was assigned as a MP on the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal Zone from 1971 to 1974. During that time my duties had me on Fort Randolph, France Field, Fort Gulick, Fort Davis and Fort Sherman. The areas I was in consisted of the main part of the forts and the more remote areas. Fort Sherman had the most jungle on the Atlantic side. Fort Sherman had a number of roads through the jungle and also included an area called the Gatun Drop Zone. The drop zone was an open area with jungle on three sides and Gatun Lake on the fourth side. The demarcation between the jungle and the drop zone was sudden. I covered all these areas in various roles including gate duty, patrol duty, stakeouts, traffic enforcement, and traffic accident investigation. This took me into areas off the roads.

For most of the time we used vehicles which were not air conditioned. The windows were open due to the hot humid climate both to be able to tolerate the weather in our starched uniforms and to keep the windows from steaming up.

I saw different types of spraying on a daily basis. This included men using hand sprayers, slow moving trucks spraying the side of roads and fogging trucks. The widest roads were two lanes and often had curves making it difficult to pass another vehicle. I recall following vehicles spraying the side of the roads. The smell was horrible and made me feel like I was gagging. I also operated radar. This was old equipment with the antenna hanging out the window. It required us to be stationary. This meant we would pull over to the shoulder of the road. The antenna had to be manually adjusted so we got out of the vehicle on the shoulder to do the adjustment. I had times I would be setup and a spray truck would appear and keep spraying around the vehicle as I sat there. I investigated several accidents involving vehicles that ran off a jungle road and down into the jungle. These accidents required going back and forth between the road and the wrecked vehicle. The fogging was done at night. It was not unusual to get fogged while in a vehicle. I also recall the encounters with fogging trucks while on gate duty. The trucks would come down the road to the gate, make a U-turn around the gate and go back up the road. They ran the fogging the entire time leaving you in a cloud of fog for some time.

I never gave all the spraying much thought while in Panama. It was obvious the jungle needed to be held back. It would rather quickly reclaim any open area along the edge. Also obvious was the need to control insects. I think we all assumed that whatever was being used would not be something that could harm us. I had digestive problems and was hospitalized at Coco Solo hospital. The problem let up somewhat and I was granted convalescent leave. The first night I was home I became very ill. The next morning, I was admitted to Valley Forge Army Hospital. After some time, I improved and was put back onto convalescent leave and returned to Panama after that. I later had problems with severe headaches and was admitted to Gorgas Hospital. I left Panama and was assigned to Presidio of Monterey. There I noticed problems with my legs but did not understand what was happening. I chalked that up to having hills to climb after the relatively flat terrain I had been in Panama. I also developed respiratory problems that persisted for some time. I was hospitalized at Fort Ord hospital. After some stops for different schools, I was assigned to Fort Campbell. I continued having problems with my legs but now attributed it to the way we did our PT runs in



formation. I developed sharp pain in my side and was hospitalized at the Fort Campbell hospital. I was sent TDY to Fort Devens. While there I started having times I could not feel when my foot was on the ground. I went to sick call and they said it was probably something like tendonitis. It did not clear up and I was ready to return to Fort Campbell. I was given a referral to Orthopedics there. I have needed to use a cane since then. I was then assigned to a detachment at Goodfellow AFB. I continued to have problems with my legs. I was referred to see another orthopedist at Fort Sam Houston hospital with no results. I was then referred to see a rheumatologist at Lackland AFB. That visit resulted in me being admitted to Willford Hall AFB hospital. I was poked and prodded there for several months followed by a Medical Evaluation Board recommending I be discharged. I then appeared before a Physical Evaluation board at Fort Sam Houston. They concurred I should be discharged and I was medically separated in 1979. The frustrating thing is that I just wanted the problem diagnosed and solved but it never was while in the military. I believe all the physicians did the best given what they knew. Part of that included that nothing harmful was ever used in Panama. I have continued to have progressively greater problems to this day. I have been seeing a neurologist at least every six months for a long time. Testing shows peripheral neuropathy in both legs. Both legs have nerves for which there is no longer any reading. I may be heading toward the day I can no longer walk.

In 2020 I attended a reunion in Panama. We visited Fort Sherman and I was surprised to see a number of rusted barrels with orange stripes being used for a barrier in the old enlisted housing area. I later saw a video that had a former member of a transportation company located at Fort Clayton describing his time in Panama. He talked about picking up barrels with orange stripes from a storage area at Corozal and hauling them to different locations in Panama. One of those was Fort Sherman. The routine was he would follow the spray team. They would fill up from the barrels he was hauling. At the end of the day, he was supposed to take the empty barrels back to the warehouse but he said they often threw them off the truck into the jungle to shorten their day. So, if the herbicide was never stored, used or tested in Panama, where did those barrels, I saw in 2020, come from?

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury



Sunday, March 10, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** Nick Falatic  
**E-mail** falatics@aol.com  
**Address** 3807 Lake st.  
Bridgman, MI, 49106  
**Phone Number** (269) 426-3224

### Subject

Panama Canal Zone, Howard Airfield, Albrook Airfield, Fort Clayton, Fort Amador, Rodman Naval Base, Empire Range, Fort Sherman, Fort Davis, Fort Gulick, Gatun Dam, Gatun Lake, Chiva Chiva Antenna field, Chiva Chiva tropical testing grounds. Puerto Rico, Vieques Island.

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

I was stationed in Panama 1984 to 1986. In the subject line, I was at one end to the other end of the canal zone. I dug, ate and slept in that dirt, mud and rain.

The whole time I was there, 2 C 123's were sitting at the end of Albrook Runway and didn't move and probably still sitting there today. Trucks sprayed everynight on Clayton and Chiva Chiva. On Fort Sherman there were barrels of agent orange around. Just laying around. Now they have the barrels holding up yellow tape in the old housing areas. When my Battalion went to Puerto Rico for our RTAP, it was the hardest inspection I ever went through in my military career. They weren't letting one speck of Panamanian Mud out of the country. Our gear was laid out on the runway and they picked us apart. Nobody cared about Puerto Rican mud coming back into Panama. Not one speck of dirt was on our gear. Then we spend a month on Vieques Island being the op 4 against the whole Puerto Rican National guard on a Amphibious Landing on the Island.

Dug in that dirt too. I am sick today from the agent purple, orange and God knows what else. Walked how many times down the powerlines to Chiva Chiva antenna field. Funny how nothing was growing in that place. the weeds died there too. I have seen it, lived it, and now living with it.

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury





Friday, March 8, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** William Petrere  
**E-mail** puckstopper131@gmail.com  
**Address** 43271 Oakbrook ct  
Canton, Mich, 48187  
**Phone Number** (313) 706-4247  
**Subject**  
Panama

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

Panama Comments.

I was there 1965-1967 they sprayed

And sent personal around with hand pumps. Wind carried the fumes into our barracks as we slept and got into our clothes.

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury



Wednesday, March 6, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** Joseph J Wilson Jr  
**E-mail** jjwilsonjr@yahoo.com  
**Address** 1530 Winnebago Road  
Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80915  
**Phone Number** (719) 310-3558

### Subject

Panama Canal Zone

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

While stationed at Fort Davis in the Canal Zone of Panama I lived in quarters at France Field & Fort Davis 1974 - 1977. I saw spraying across the street from the housing area all around the golf course. I find out that documentation shows that herbicides were being tested and used on Fort Davis, Fort Gulick and Fort Sherman during the time I was stationed there. All herbicides were tested in Panama before being sent to Vietnam and/or other places. It is obvious to me that with herbicides listed in the National Supply Catalog it is feasible and probable that they could be ordered the same as soap powder or engine oil anywhere in the federal supply system. Presumptive Exposure should apply to all military personnel and those who exhibit symptoms (illnesses) when connected with a medical doctor's NEXUS letter should be treated and compensated AUTOMATICALLY and without delay - before we die!

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury



Sincerely,

M.K. Moore

Date: 24 July 2018

From: Michael K. Moore Sr.  
1600 Evers Haven  
Cantonment, FL 32533  
Mkmoore57@gmail.com  
(850) 324-1051

To: Donna Tornoe, President of the Panama Canal Zone Veterans  
Association Canal Zone

Subject: Details of my possible Herbicide exposure in the Panama Canal Zone

I originally thought I would write a funny story so everyone would read it, but the end result of my story wasn't so funny!

My name is Mike Moore. I was stationed in Panama from December 1976 through December 1979. My duty station was at the Navy Transmitter site in Summit, which was actually out in the jungle across from the Summit zoo, before you reach Gamboa. At Summit, I lived in the barracks and worked shift work as a VLF/HF/MF transmitter operator. Our VLF site had multiple 600ft towers and our MF site had an 800ft tower. We had over 20 antennas scattered out supporting our HF transmitters. We had to make periodic rounds to the VLF and MF site and worked shifts at both locations, though our main work location was at HF building. The reason I am going into detail about the antennas is that the local Public Works team worked with the locals to spray some type of herbicides to the jungle foliage to keep it down in the antenna farms. I grew up on a farm so I know a little bit about herbicides, but never encountered any like the type they used at Summit. After they got done spraying, within hours, you could see the foliage browning up and dying. The next day or so it was totally killed. I've never see anything work as strong on jungle foliage as this stuff! I recently met a guy on Facebook who was stationed at Summit and was actually part of the Seabees that sprayed at Summit. I am sure his statement goes into more detail as to what they actually used.

The barracks we lived in was sprayed for insects every few weeks. The smell was so chokingly strong that you had to wait several hours after they sprayed before you could even sleep; it didn't matter to anyone how and when they sprayed. You could be coming off a mid watch and walking right into your room after they had sprayed!

Now for the part of the story that continues to impact me on a daily basis--my health! When I retired in 1999, I had borderline Glaucoma, was put on High blood pressure medication and had one knee where the cartilage had worn out. Since this time I have had:

- a) Large B Cell Follicular Lymphoma (NHL) at age 57
- b) Bilateral knee replacement at age 59
- c) Shoulder surgery – my bicep was totally shredded so badly that the surgeon was unable to repair at 59
- d) Full Glaucoma at 59
- e) Cataracts both eyes at age 50
- f) Neuropathy in both feet and hands at 57
- g) Deep vein thrombosis in my leg and multiple Pulmonary emboli in my lungs, which has been suspected of causing two micro-hemorrhages in my right and left front part of my brain, resulting in significant short term memory loss at 57
- h) Diabetic for over a year but now with medication and some exercise, I only have to take pre-diabetic medicine since age 57
- i) Severe arthritis in my lower back. I have to take injections about every 6-9 months since I was 58



- j) Constant fatigue and joint pain since coming off of Chemo at age 57
- k) Sleep Apnea at age 50

I cannot prove what they used, but no one should have gone through all these major health issues at 57. I came from a large family of 6 boys and 2 girls; and none of them have been diagnosed with these health issues.

I have already filed for disability with the VA almost a year ago; and I was immediately turned down because I didn't have these symptoms when I was on active duty. I'm currently in an appeal state but I am not very optimistic that the government I proudly served for over 23 ½ years will do the right thing and compensate me for what little time I have left on this earth!

Sincerely,

M.K. Moore

Enclosure (1)

Enclosure (2) Agent Orange background facts  
as researched by Ms. Donna Tornoe

Hi Mike,

Ask all congressional reps/senators you can to introduce a bill to help these veterans and dependents. Check out the DoD link below. I've only shared that link with a couple people. It should be enough to prove the DoD is guilty of contaminating our environment.

Here is the email and you can direct the representative to my page or I'm happy to do a three-way call. I'm not going to attach all the documents because they are too large, but if he's interested in helping us, let me know. Some of these can be seen from my Reference tab on my website [www.donnatornoe.com](http://www.donnatornoe.com). If he wants to help and see a specific document, he can contact me.

I am the wife of a veteran who has become a crusader for justice after finding concrete evidence pointing to a coverup by the VA/DoD. I gave this proof to the VA, and my husband was denied, all because of one man who has been responsible for denying thousands of other veterans for decades. These Veterans who were willing to serve deserve the truth. I wrote a book called "The Travels of Orange," because Veterans deserve the truth. I became President of an Association with a Veterans Attorney to try to help these veterans. Panama, Thailand and many other countries should be added to the CFR or whatever it is called as a place where Agent Orange was also used.

I am hopeful with this evidence that you might be able to introduce a bill in Congress to help the Panama Veteran, the Thailand Veteran and really any veteran who served in the Armed forces during the Vietnam era, before or after. It turns out that Agent Purple (which is way more toxic than Orange) was first shipped in the 1940s to Panama and many other countries. It was first tested in the Panama Canal Zone as referenced in my book, The Travels of Orange. It was shipped around the world for decades as shown on the U.S. Census Bureau. Panama continued to be shipped 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T, either purple or orange almost every month from the 1940s until at least December 1977. Half of Agent Orange, 2,4-D was used to kill the Hydrilla in our drinking water source in the Canal Zone beginning in 1948. We were also exposed to chlordane in our quarters for termites, as well as DDT sprayed all around our quarters in 1974-1977 while we were living there, even after DDT was banned in the United States in 1971, as well as many other



pesticides as reports I have found show. We who lived and worked in the Canal Zone couldn't have lived in the jungle without these pesticides/herbicides/fungicides to control the jungle and bugs. After Agent Orange was banned, Nixon said "it is only being used on bases where military are stationed." Yet, the VA/DoD denies Agent Orange was ever there.

Alvin Young throughout the years has said that there was a difference between the "tactical" herbicide 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T used in Vietnam and the 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T "commercial" herbicide used for vegetation control on base. This is incorrect. Here is the Nexus that connects ALL 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T shipments throughout the decades as one and the same, per he himself Alvin Young. He's known this fact since at least the time of his 1978 report (Attachment 1).

Therefore, it is my belief that this could be criminal to know there was no difference between any 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T as far back as 1978, and yet write report after report saying just the opposite. See his report on Panama Canal Zone at Attachment 10. I feel any Veteran with a Presumptive disease to herbicide exposure on any base should be backdated to their disease date if it is after the Vietnam veterans date they won. It is shameful it took 20 years for the Vietnam Veteran to prove their case and it has been over 40 years for the rest of the Veterans so afflicted.

1. In Attachment 1, Alvin Young sources the Pesticide Review and says in his 1978 report on page V-3 (Attachment 1A) in Table 1 he reports that this information is taken from the Pesticide Review and shows the Rainbow herbicide production and Exports. Note also he never mentions the word "tactical herbicides" throughout this 1978 document.
2. In Attachment 2, the Pesticide Review that he sources as listing the production and exports of the Rainbow Herbicides, SOURCES the U.S. Census Bureau Commodity by Country Exports FT-410 throughout the years as the EXPORTS of this same item, what he claims to be the Rainbow Herbicides and Agent Orange, 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T.
3. The Pesticide Review also states that these shipments of these Rainbow herbicides include the Exports to Vietnam. And as we see on the FT-410s, 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T is both shipped to Panama and Vietnam and Thailand. (See Attachments 4-6.)

Attachment 3 is also from the Pesticide Review and shows that 1958 was the first year that 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T was split off as its own SIC (International shipping code). Prior to those years, 1940s-1958, 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T was shipped together with the other herbicides being shipped as NEC (Not Elsewhere Classified).

Therefore, there was never any difference between tactical herbicide and commercial herbicide, and AO and many other herbicides were used on base for vegetation control, they were all chemical herbicides with unknown dioxin content. As shown in the FM3-3 training manual obtained from the VA Medical Library (Attachment 7) "Tactical Employment of Herbicides", it says "Herbicide Orange Commercially available." Interesting this training document is dated 1971, so the VA Medical Center knew in 1971, therefore the Surgeon General certainly knew in 1971 there was no difference.

My contention is had Alvin Young been truthful in putting together ALL DOCUMENTS as his VA contract (Attachment 8) requested and paid him to do, and had he brought forth all documents, including the Pesticide Review and the FT-410s, which he must have been aware of, since he SOURCED the Pesticide Review in this 1978 Report, then the Veterans would have won decades ago. Was this purposeful not to put forth these documents and to continue to deny until we all die?

These are extenuating circumstances that should be found in favor of the Veteran, and those Veterans so afflicted should be backdated due to this finding that the VA paid contractor misled, covered up, or plain out lied for the VA.

Attachment 9 is a letter of support for my husband's Notice of Disagreement, which has been with the Regional Office for over one year. This letter is written by Dr. Wayne Dwernychuk, Senior Environmentalist and Agent Orange Expert, who he and his partner Hatfield were the Environmentalists who found evidence of TCDD in Vietnam. He has read my book and wrote this letter that anywhere 2,4,5-T is introduced into the environment, the dioxin TCDD is also present. Update as of today February 20, 2018, my husband was again denied that Agent Orange was ever in Panama.

Attachment 10 and 11 are from the Nixon Archives at the Nixon Library. I found both documents in the



same containers labeled "Chemical Warfare and other toxins." Attachment 9 is a memo from General Haig to Secretary Kissinger; subject: Emergency Meeting regarding on the Defoliants dated April 13, 1970 where it states that the new test, just completed, however, confirms that 0 dioxin level still resulted in deformities in test animals.....the implications of this, internationally, are quite severe...."

And in that same container I found what I believe to be the beginning of Global Warming Committee, Attachment 11, in which began the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS), in which was said that NY would be underwater by the year 2000. Could it be the fish and bees weren't dying by the millions because of automobile exhaustion and cow farts, but because of our environment being destroyed by pesticides?

See attachments:

1. Report by Alvin Young dated 1978 and page V-3 where he sources the Pesticide Review, where no where in this 1978 report does he use the word "tactical herbicides"
2. Pesticide Review situation for 1962-1965 page 21 says these shipments include military shipments to Viet-Nam and SOURCES the U.S. Exports of Domestic Merchandise FT-410
3. Pesticide Review situation 1958-1959, where it says "Exports of 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T were in 1958 for the first time reported separately from other herbicides."
4. U.S. Exports of Domestic Merchandise showing 82080 (2,4-D & 2,4,5-T) shipped October 1959 to Panama. This is Purple, due to the year it was shipped.
5. U.S. Exports of Domestic Merchandise showing 82080 (2,4-D & 2,4,5-T) shipped September 1964 to both Panama and Viet Nam.
6. U.S. Exports of Domestic Merchandise showing 5120620 (2,4-D & 2,4,5-T) shipped December 1969 to Panama and Thailand.
7. FM3-3 Training Manual for Tactical Employment of Herbicides: "Herbicide Orange – Commercially Available," Copy made by VA RMC, St. Luis, from a record in VA's Possession dated 1971
8. Alvin Young's contract where he was paid by the VA to bring together ALL documents related to AO
9. Letter in support of my husband's Notice of Disagreement now filed with the RO for over one year from Dr. Wayne Dwernychuk, Agent Orange Expert and the Senior Environmentalist who proved TCDD's existence in Vietnam
10. Report on Panama Canal Zone by Alvin Young, where he sources a 2006 DoD/VA document to say no AO in Panama where he is also the author
11. Beginning of Global Warming Committee, CCMS

Oh, and check out this link. This proves the DOD damn well knows about "agents" used at military installation and is afraid of future lawsuits, especially by civilians who lived in government housing. I have many civilians who have registered at pczva.com who also suffer from diseases of unknown causes. As a wife of a Veteran and for all the wives who have been left destitute over the years and all the dependents now suffering, what is their remedy?

[https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/departments/departments-of-defense/office-of-the-secretary-of-defense/rg-0330/n1-330-88-005\\_sf115.pdf](https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/departments/departments-of-defense/office-of-the-secretary-of-defense/rg-0330/n1-330-88-005_sf115.pdf)

I have much, much more evidence to offer and I am now writing another book as a co-author about the coverup. It saddens me that our government would turn its back on their Veterans who served honorably. My own husband lives every day without a pancreas. He suffered 24 years of routine hospital stays, never knowing there were 14 stones growing inside his pancreas. Please see my story at [www.donnatornoe.com](http://www.donnatornoe.com). Panama veterans can register at [pczva.com](http://pczva.com) and Thailand veterans can register at [thailandvets.com](http://thailandvets.com). We are gathering steam with this evidence in hand. Many of the registrants have contacted their respective congressional representatives.

I don't know what our next step is. Dr. Shulkin had my link to my book and was told in an email last year that Agent Orange was also in Panama by Dr. Dwernychuk, the Canadian Agent Orange expert who found it in Vietnam, who was asked for an opinion in support of the Blue Water Navy veterans. When my husband got denied, the VA had the shipping record of proof Agent Orange was indeed in country. I did a FOIA and have a document I can also share with you where the VA asked someone by email "do we have to concede that Agent Orange was in Panama and whoever it was replied, no, because it was called a pesticide and AO is a herbicide." I don't know who called it a pesticide in this email the VA was speaking of, clearly the evidence I gave them, the U.S. Census bureau calls it a herbicide that we submitted. And in my research, even Aberdeen Proving Ground lists herbicides under pesticides and so does the dictionary. I don't know if the VA is playing semantics or they are just lying. When they returned my husband's case, they made no

mention of the shipping records I had given them by title of U.S. Exports, but just called all those shipping records "document." We are now 8 months waiting at the BVA to be heard.

Thank you for any assistance getting this information in front of the right committee members so that Panama, Thailand can be added to the list where Agent Orange was shipped/stored and used according to the U.S. Census Bureau FT410s for decades.

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury





Thursday, February 22, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** Elizabeth Hardy  
**E-mail** ehardy60@yahoo.com  
**Address** 7 Rodeo Drive, apt 18  
Deadwood, SD, 57732  
**Phone Number** (802) 624-3771

**Subject**  
herbicide exposure at Ft Clayton Panama

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

Herbicides were regularly sprayed at Ft Clayton, Panama 1985-1986 while walking to barracks they would drive by and spray from the truck everywhere and I felt nauseas n sick more than once n broke out in hives many times and today i have a hypo thyroid condition that i never had when i joined the military... i was also exposed to burn pits while deployed to Mosul Iraq 2004-2005

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury



Wednesday, February 21, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** Carlton Phelps  
**E-mail** Leicadaddy1@gmail.com  
**Address** 908 Westminster Dr.  
Richardson, TX, 75081  
**Phone Number** (863) 670-2256  
**Subject**

Panama Comments

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

I was placed on guard duty, June of 72.

I was guarding a chemical storage building that was located near the end of Howard Air Force base runway.

The building is now shown in one photograph to be slowly disintegrating.

Inside the building in 72 there were leaking 55 gallon drums. They were a dark color with orange bands running around them.

The building had a strong chemical smell and I could see when the chemicals were leaching out of the building into the soil.

I wasn't told what I was guarding. This was the only location that I guarded.

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury





Tuesday, February 20, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** Philip Nickisch  
**E-mail** pjnickisch@aol.com  
**Address** 538 swains loop Rd Lot 22  
Jacksonville, NC, 28546  
**Phone Number** (402) 250-0781  
**Subject**  
Panama

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

My initial claim for toxic exposure was quickly denied however, in my nearly 400 page appeal there seems to be ample documentary and photographic evidence to contradict the opinion of the DOD that Agent Orange was shipped to and used in Panama. Certainly it seems to be evidence supporting the inclusion of Panama as a "Presumptive Area". It has been 3 years since my initial claim and 18 months since my appeal was filed but I hold little hope of a positive resolution much less any resolution at all. Sincerely,  
Philip R. Nickisch, MSgt USAF (ret)

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury



Tuesday, February 13, 2024

## Toxic Exposure Rule Comment Form

Please read the Toxic Exposure Rule Instructions above for guidance on filling out this comment form.

**Name** Kris Lewis  
**E-mail** kris\_lewis@yahoo.com  
**Address** 6830 Turnbull Mill Rd  
Alpena, MI, 49707  
**Phone Number** (989) 356-9638

### Subject

Panama Comments

### Toxic Exposure Rule Comments

To: Veterans Administration Reviewer

Date: 08/15/2022

From: Kris Vance Lewis -SSGT Air Force Veteran

Re: Request for further clarification of exposure to herbicides & other chemicals

Dear Reviewer,

I, Kris Vance Lewis, was assigned to and stationed at Howard AFB, Panama Canal Zone from June of 1976-78. My MOS at the time was an Environmental Support Specialist. My duties in Panama were with the 24th Civil Engineering Squadron and assigned to the Wastewater Treatment Plant as a Plant Operator. These duties also included maintenance of wastewater treatment distribution systems. The wastewater treatment plant is located at the back of the former base, bordering the former Ft. Kobbe to the south and the south end of the runway northwest of the plant at the former Howard AFB. This area at the time was jungle and the wastewater treatment plant was surrounded on all four sides with dense jungle vegetation. As part of our duties, we maintained the grounds of the wastewater treatment plant. We cut the grass and edged along the sidewalks with machetes but never cut back the encroaching jungle. That was done through spraying with a herbicide usually done during the dry season where the rain would not wash the herbicide off the vegetation. A Panamanian civilian would spray the perimeter of the plant as well as along the small stream where the effluent from the plant emptied out to and transversed to the Pacific Ocean near the town of Vera Cruz. This is where my primary exposure to the herbicides came from. Some of our locations of sampling around the plant at various stages of treatment were from that sprayed stream that our effluent emptied into. We would have to grab water samples at the outlet as well as various places along the stream for any suspended solids and for chlorine residual. The outlet sample was taken daily and downstream samples monthly if my memory is correct. I remember that because I used to hate to do the downstream sampling since even though the vegetation along the stream was dead from spraying you still had elephant grass beyond the sprayed areas and it was an area that snakes were numerous. I did not like snakes! Luckily I received my third stripe and no longer had to do that sampling. The vegetation at the effluent of the plant grew much faster because the presence of phosphates in the wastewater. Phosphates came from soaps, detergents and other things that were introduced through household & shop drains.

What I recall of the spraying of the herbicides, if memory serves me, is that Pavement & Roads with the Civil Engineering squadron did the spraying. They sprayed from a truck with drums on the rear bed and also from hand held sprayers with a tank that would be carried on their back. The civilian doing the spraying last name was Domingas? I remember this since he was a frequent visitor at the plant. We were at the back of the base where no one really visited and he took his breaks there. I remember it was a musty chemical smell when he sprayed. The kind of smell that left a taste in your mouth even though you may never of had breathed it in. I think within a week or so after spraying, the areas of vegetation sprayed was dead or dying. I was also exposed to insecticides that I was told that contained DDT that



were sprayed in the barracks, the plant laboratory and various other locations on the base. Entomology which was also with our civil engineering squadron sprayed the insecticides on a monthly basis. I was told (I do not recall who it was) that the insecticides used contained DDT after one of the Entomologists was shipped stateside due to "his insides were all messed up". The comment made was it was from spraying that DDT "s\*\*t" from one of the NCO's at the CES shop. The fact that it contained DDT I cannot confirm since I personally did not see the barrels the insecticides came from. During my term they also sprayed Malathion through foggers to kill mosquitoes. The strange thing I remember about my tour in Panama is that I do not recall ever being bitten or bothered by mosquitoes while there, but do remember being chewed up by sand fleas in the evening hours working afternoons at the plant. Besides Herbicides & Insecticides in Panama, I was also exposed to asbestos from pipe insulation on raw & treated water lines at the water treatment plant when stationed at Kunsan AB, Korea and possibly at ICBM Launch Control Facilities when stationed at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota. The pipe insulation was a sort of paper wrap over what I describe as white molded pipe insulation which had a consistency of drywall. When doing water line repairs oft times we would have to cut into this insulation to do the repairs and it would crumble and create a powdery dust. These repairs were not numerous and thus my exposure was of a limited nature.

This is my recollection of my exposure to hazardous substances to the best of my knowledge given it was over 45 years ago. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectively submitted,  
Kris Vance

submitted under 28 USC 1746 under penalty of perjury