

Herbicide Exposure on Okinawa

PROBLEM:

Between January 9, 1962 (and possibly earlier) the herbicide Agent Orange was shipped to, stored upon and used on United States military installations on Okinawa. Agent Orange Barrels were actually discovered on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in August of 1981 and at a soccer pitch in Okinawa City (previously part of Kadena Air Force Base) in June of 2013.

BACKGROUND:

The VA has approved a rulemaking request but has yet to issue any rules. The extensive rulemaking request is shown at https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/uploads/3/4/1/0/3410338/mva_rulemaking_request_to_va_secretary_6_18_21.pdf. Evidence in the request included a form DD 250, clearly showing that 2,4,5-T was shipped to Okinawa in July of 1966. It further includes excerpts from Jon Mitchell's excellent analysis, *Poisoning the Pacific*. This book provides documentary and photographic evidence of the presence of herbicide on Okinawa during the Cold War. It also contains the later excavations of Agent Orange herbicide at MCAS Futenma and Kadena AFB.

The investigation of the former Kadena discovery is memorialized in a survey by the Okinawa Defense Bureau, entitled *Former Kadena Airfield (2 5) Soli Investigation Survey (Part 2)* which is also included in the rulemaking request along with a news article in *Stars and Stripes*, confirms toxic levels of 2,4,5-T, 2,4-D and its by-product 2,3,7,8-TCDD (dioxin).

The rulemaking request also contains sworn affidavits from Gerald Balmes, the MVA Section Chief for Veterans of Okinawa, and Allan Davis who served on Okinawa to confirm their personal observations concerning the use of herbicide.

SOLUTION:

Amend 38 U.S.C. § 1116 to codify herbicide exposure on Okinawa.

