



Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014

Engineering, and Medicine National Academies of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, Board on the Health of Select Populations, Committee to Review the Health Effects in Vietnam Veterans of Exposure to Herbicides (Tenth Biennial Update)

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From 1962 to 1971, the US military sprayed herbicides over Vietnam to strip the thick jungle canopy that could conceal opposition forces, to destroy crops that those forces might depend on, and to clear tall grasses and bushes from the perimeters of US base camps and outlying fire-support bases. Mixtures of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D), 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T), picloram, and cacodylic acid made up the bulk of the herbicides sprayed. The main chemical mixture sprayed was Agent Orange, a 50:50 mixture of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. At the time of the spraying, 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD), the most toxic form of dioxin, was an unintended contaminant generated during the production of 2,4,5-T and so was present in Agent Orange and some other formulations sprayed in Vietnam.

Because of complaints from returning Vietnam veterans about their own health and that of their children combined with emerging toxicologic evidence of adverse effects of phenoxy herbicides and TCDD, the National Academy of Sciences was asked to perform a comprehensive evaluation of scientific and medical information regarding the health effects of exposure to Agent Orange, other herbicides used in Vietnam, and the various components of those herbicides, including TCDD. Updated evaluations were conducted every two years to review newly available literature and draw conclusions from the overall evidence. *Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014* is the final and cumulative report of the series.

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