



**Paul Osborne - 1/2/42**  
**Mark Weber - 1/2/56**  
**Larry Hamblin - 1/4/47**  
**Mark Popp - 1/6/50**  
**John Haynie - 1/8/54**  
**Virgil Dughi - 1/10/47**  
**Michael Waterpaugh - 1/10/49**  
**Osca Hines - 1/11/24**  
**Terry Rice - 1/11/47**  
**Jerrol Woods - 1/11/48**  
**James Summers - 1/11/49**  
**Frederick Overson - 1/11/52**  
**Lowell Jones - 1/12/42**  
**Gregor Dumas - 1/13/47**  
**Howard Sherwood - 1/13/48**  
**Bart Dolman - 1/15/51**  
**Albert Putney - 1/16/47**  
**Bud Regelin - 1/16/47**  
**Ervin Kroeker - 1/17/41**  
**Tom Chechowitz - 1/17/42**  
**Will Cunningham - 1-18/48**  
**James Kurth - 1/19/40**  
**James Olivieri - 1/19/45**  
**Peter Folley - 1/19/46**  
**Gary Dirks - 1/19/49**  
**Tim Wheat - 1/19/49**  
**Roger DeValle - 1/20/31**  
**Charles Fuchsel - 1/20/45**  
**James Forgette - 1/20/50**  
**Jerry Kniffen - 1/21/48**  
**Kenneth Dalton - 1/21/48**  
**Roger Peterson - 1/21/48**  
**Alan Winters - 1/22/47**  
**Gary Cavaliere - 1/23/48**  
**Bert Flowers - 1/25/41**  
**Ruben Garcia - 1/27/46**  
**Bud Gross - 1/27/47**  
**Mark Hopkins - 1/29/43**  
**Russ Williams - 1/30/45**  
**Sanuel Ramirez - 1/30/54**

# AO record of neglect

Dioxins, a group of defoliant chemicals now considered the most toxic ever created by man, are linked to a higher risk of multiple cancers, birth defects and other conditions that are contributing to a dramatic increase in financial compensation for U.S. veterans and their families. Service-related disability payments to Vietnam veterans have surged 60% since 2003, reaching \$13.7 billion last year, and now account for more than half of such payments the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides to veterans of all wars. The average compensation payment for Vietnam vets is 41% higher than that for World War II veterans and 35% higher than for those who served in Korea. Those disability checks do not include the billions spent on health care for Vietnam veterans. The price tag is only expected to escalate as scientists learn more about the effects of dioxin, as veterans are stricken late in life and as the children of veterans discover they are sick. In September of last year, three more diseases were added to the list of illnesses for which the VA provides compensation — an expansion the agency estimates will affect roughly 200,000 veterans and cost billions of dollars annually. Thousands more will be added once the ‘Blue Water’ sailors (those on ships stationed at sea around Vietnam) are granted compensation once it’s proven that the AO blew out into the ocean. An aircraft carrier was checked for dioxins and it was found at high levels in their water supply. Meanwhile, untold numbers of Vietnamese — including many who weren’t even alive during the war — also suffer from maladies associated with the defoliants. Tens of thousands more are at risk today from dioxin that remains in the environment at dozens of former U.S. military bases. Yet in the 30 years since Agent Orange (AO) was recognized publicly as a potential health threat, the federal government has established a record of neglect.

For Vietnam veterans, the

ongoing drama over Agent Orange can be broken into three acts. In the first, soldiers are totally unaware of the dangers posed by dioxin-laced defoliants sprayed in Vietnam. With the second comes outrage at the belated discovery of harm. And the third act is frustration with the maddening bureaucracy set up to help veterans seeking compensation for their illnesses which delays adjudication of their claims. As long-dormant effects of Agent Orange begin to surface in many Vietnam War veterans, the backlog of disability claims has been growing fast, despite the VA’s adding more than 3,000 employees to handle the traffic jam. “They’re overwhelmed,” said Joe Moore, a former VA attorney who now represents veterans in cases against the agency. “They simply can’t do the decision-making fast enough.” A DEC 08 lawsuit, filed by the Vietnam Veterans of America and Veterans of Modern Warfare in U.S. District Court Washington, argues that “thousands of veterans die each year” before the VA acts on their disability claims. The lawsuit alleges the VA takes at least six months to consider an initial request, and appeals can drag on for years. In response, the government acknowledged that “certain diseases for Vietnam-era veterans” are contributing to the backup. It is now a million claims backlogged and it’s taking over a year for approval even though AO is considered presumptive.

In Vietnam, children sing songs of the devastation caused by Agent Orange and government officials wonder how the U.S. can avoid fully addressing the health and environmental havoc wreaked by the chemicals, even as the two nations foster stronger trade and military ties. Since the countries normalized relations in 1995, Congress has

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