

Thomas McVey
801 Cheltenham Place
Maineville, OH 45039



May 20, 2015

The Honorable Rob Portman
37 West Broad Street
Room 300
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator Portman:

I am writing to request your personal support, as well as the full and complete backing of your office, regarding the recent VA's consideration on Agent Orange claims for our 302nd Buckeye Wing Association personnel. Our association consist of the aircrews that flew the UC-123K aircraft, medical evacuation personnel, aerial port and aircraft maintenance personnel. All of our personnel were exposed to varying degrees of the hazardous dioxins of Agent Orange. The 302nd Airlift Wing, which was previously located at Rickenbacker ANGB, was the home of the only DOD Aerial Spray capable aircraft (see attached mission summary). These aircraft were previously used to spray Agent Orange in Viet Nam. The spray systems utilized were the same ones used to spray the HAZARDOUS Defoliant, AGENT ORANGE chemicals on 4.5 million acres of South Vietnam. Our Reserve personnel performed their assigned duties with pride and dedication, completely unaware of the fact the aircraft they worked on were still contaminated with dioxins from their wartime roles.

Agent Orange contains dioxin and about 20 million gallons of Agent Orange was sprayed in Vietnam. The planes were flown back to the USA without being decontaminated. In 1972, these former Ranch Hand aircraft were transferred to the USAF Reserves at three bases including Lockbourne AFB (now Rickenbacker AFB, Columbus, OH) and our 302nd Buckeye Wing reservists became exposed to the residue dioxin for the next 14 years.

Dr. Lurker, a retired USAF officer and former USAF civil servant at Wright-Patterson AFB and three professors published a peer-review journal article demonstrating dioxin exposure to these reservists in Feb. 2014. In response, the Veterans Administration (VA) chartered the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to ascertain whether these reservists were exposed. The IOM affirmed these reservists were in fact exposed in a final report released in January 2015. On April 23, 2015, a bipartisan group of Senators (Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR) are urging action from the VA for Care & Benefits of C-123 Veterans Exposed to Toxic Agent Orange (see attached).

We believe you may already possess some knowledge and understanding of Agent Orange issues and the VA's recent report on it and the impact it had on approximately 1,000 Reserve Air Force Personnel from the Great State of Ohio. We (Peter Lurker, SMSgt. Charlie Mercer USAFR Retired, CMSgt. Robert Bien USAFR Retired, MSgt Jeffrey Price USAFR Retired) stand ready to meet with you and your staff, to clarify any concerns you may have regarding this matter

We hope that you or your staff can find time to meet with us in your Cincinnati office in the month of June, 2015.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Thomas McVey
President, Buckeye Wing Association
MSgt USAFR Retired
(513) 377-0472

Enclosures:

302nd Spray Mission Summary
23 Apr 15 Senatorial Ltr to VA

CC: Senator Sherrod Brown

302nd Tactical Airlift Wing Spray Mission Summary

Brief synopsis of a few of the hundreds of high visibility missions flown by Rickenbacker Reserve Aerial Spray Unit, circa 1972 – 1983

By MSgt Jeffrey Price and CMSgt Robert Bien, May 20, 2015.

Tasking: During Vietnam refugee resettling into United States, they were first located on the island of Guam. During their interim stopped here it was discovered that they brought with them Dengue Fever, which began spreading rapidly over the island through mosquitoes. This situation not only posed a health to the local island personnel, it became a National Security Threat to us in the U.S. because these refugees were coming to our shores. By order of DOD, our UC-123 K Aerial Spray aircraft were dispatched to Guam, in an effort to stop the spread of disease.

Results: The disease threat was broken within 72 hours of commencing aerial spraying of the island of Guam. Both the indigenous Guamanians and the transient Vietnamese Refugees were made safe. Disease and death were stopped in their tracks and the Vietnam refugees were eventually cleared to migrate to the U.S.

Tasking: Dover-McGuire AFB became infested with Japanese Beetles, which began consuming everything Green. This began to severely impact the East Coast Agricultural industry. This pest was not native to Europe, yet it was about to pose a huge economic threat to them as well, if not quickly contained.

Results: Aerial spray was ordered by DOD to impact target pests during the height of their life cycle. After spraying of these entire facilities insect populations were quailed to the point ground spraying was effectively used to reduce the menace of this insect.

Tasking: Homestead AFB, FL. is inundated with many different species of mosquitoes', especially the Salt Marsh species, which carried disease. The infestation was so severe that the mechanics working on million dollar fighters were distracted from repairing the jets to swatting mosquitoes. Besides becoming sick and infected, the fear is they might accidentally leave a wrench in one of the jet engines.

Results: UC-123K Aerial Spray aircraft, from Rickenbacker Aerial Spray Unit, were deployed to break the cycle of mosquito born disease. Local population centers as well as the military installation were sprayed, eventually eradicating the pest and disease concerns.

Tasking: Parris Island Marine Corps Training Station has many Marine casualties in sick bay due to flea bites from training on a daily basis in areas with overwhelming populations of sand fleas. Aerial Spray Branch personnel developed spray tactics to quell the pest from interfering with recruit training.

Results: Aerial spray UC123K aircraft deployed from Rickenbacker ANGB, Ohio to spray entire facility thus eliminating this hated pest for the first time in Parris Island history

302nd Tactical Airlift Wing Spray Mission Summary

Tasking: The Langley area is host to many DOD assets least of which is USAF, Naval, and Coast Guard. Disease carrying Salt Marsh Mosquitoes are capable of vectoring disease to human populations and especially impacting the missions of the Navy and Air Force.

Results: UC-123K Aerial Spray Aircraft were deployed from Rickenbacker ANGB, OH to break the cycle of mosquito borne disease. Whole population centers were sprayed including DOD facilities, stopping the population of these kinds of mosquitoes.

Tasking: Azores Island Japanese Beetle infestation. These beetles were taking refuge inside our cargo aircraft, in the ailerons and elevators, which were transiting to this Portuguese owned island. Ordered by Secretary of State Kissinger, the Rickenbacker Aerial Spray Unit was dispatched to the island to eliminate the problem as quickly as possible, to forgo diplomatic tensions that could impact this way station for refueling of our cargo aircraft on their way to Europe.

Results: The Rickenbacker UC-123K aircraft deployed to the island and conducted immediate spraying of the target pest that is only above ground briefly. Effective spraying impacted the millions of Japanese Beetles population. Diplomatic Relations were restored.

Tasking: Gypsy Moth insects were eating the forest canopy over Camp David facilities and related DOD facilities, AS determined by DOD, Russian satellite surveillance could see sensitive guests visiting the president at Camp David. This infestation had to be stopped otherwise the Camp David facilities could not have foreign dignitary visits.

Results: UC-123K aircraft from Rickenbacker ANGB, OH were ordered by DOD to deploy to Hagerstown MD. to address these pests during the peak of their life cycle. The aerial spraying stemmed the life cycle to the point that it could further be managed by ground spraying.

Tasking: The Governor of Minnesota requested the President of the United States to declare a National Emergency in his state due to Horse (Equine) Encephalitis spreading further into the human population, as 1,200 horses had died along with over 300 humans. The President declared the emergency and ordered our UC-123K aircraft from Rickenbacker ANGB, Aerial Spray Unit into action.

Results: Three UC-123K aircraft deployed to Minnesota, Wisconsin and South Dakota. Thousands of acres were sprayed leading to the eradication of these disease carrying mosquitoes. Within 72 hours we broke the disease cycle and thousands of lives were saved.