

**From Tom McVey
President Buckeye Wing**

Number 1 Tip.

Contact and work with your County Veterans Service Organization. They can help you with the paper work and provide support for you.

Instructions for writing a buddy letter.

- 1) Date letter
- 2) Include reference to location of service.
- 3) Describe the type of service work you as buddies did together.
- 4) Refer to unit alert plans if available.
- 5) Refer to flight hours that were on both UC-123K and C-123K aircraft.
- 6) Make a written case for how your buddy would have been exposure to Agent Orange.
- 7) Refer to other members in the unit that you served with. They can also be used for other buddy letters if needed.
- 8) Clearly indicate your name rank and years of service below your signature.

Resources to confirm service

- 1) Copies of records from ARPC.
[Location of Air Force Personnel Records - Military Veterans
military-veteran.com/records/airforce.html](http://military-veteran.com/records/airforce.html)

HQ ARPC/DPSCW

6760 E. Irvington Place, Denver, CO 80280-4600. Phone: [800-525-0102](tel:800-525-0102)

Department of Veterans Affairs Records Management Center

- 1) Copies of flight records
- 2) Buddy Letters
- 3) Copies of Buckeye Flyers in which you pictured or have a written article about you or the buddy how is writing your buddy letter. Many spray articles were in the Buckeye flyers from the 80's. They show guys working on planes and mixing chemicals for spary missions. Having names under the pictures will help a lot.

Date: June 8, 2015

SAMPLE BUDDY LETTER - AIRCREW

To: Whom it May Concern

This letter is to certify that **Rank First Name Last Name** served in the USAF Reserves with me at Rickenbacker ANGB, OH from 1975 to 1982. **Rank Last Name** was a loadmaster in the 355th Tactical Airlift Squadron. I have a 355th Unit Alert Plan from May 1, 1981. The plan **Rank Last Name** on page 2. **Rank Last Name** was number 13 on the list of squadron members. **Rank Last Name** and I flew on both C-123K and UC-123K aircraft. These aircraft were used for local and cross country missions. Our flights included airdrop, navigation over water and cargo missions. I personally remember being in many flights with **Rank Last Name**

Loadmaster duties were to attend mission briefings, pick up flight lunches. Perform pre-flight checks. Load cargo and airdrop items. Perform in flight checks. During airdrop missions we would open the cargo doors in flight and airdrop loads from the aircraft.

Our 355th squadron flew on both C-123K and UC-123K model aircraft. My flight records dated June 24, 1982 shows that over the time period of 1974 to 1982 that I flew a total of 1,507 hours on C-123 aircraft. I flew 773 hours on UC-123K aircraft. This is 51% of my total flight time. 49% of my flight time was on the C-123K aircraft. This flight hour information came from the Flight Management Data System PCN N352007. All of the loadmasters in the 355th including **Rank Last Name** would have a similar flight profile. **Rank Last Name** would have flown about 50% of his time on the UC-123K aircraft. The UC-123K aircraft were used in Vietnam in OPERATION RANCH HAND. The aircraft came from Vietnam and were contaminated with Agent Orange. **Rank Last Name** experienced exposure to Agent Orange by flying in UC aircraft that were embedded with the AO dioxin inside of the aircraft.

Rank Last Name and I were peers and we reported to SMSgt Dale Davis. SMSgt Davis was the Non Commissioned Officer in charge of the 355th loadmaster section. We also served with MSgt John Heise, MSgt Larry Bender, MSgt Jeffry Price, TSgt Kenneth Huff and TSgt Ronald England.

Rank Last Name continued to serve with me in the 40th and the 87th Aerial Port Squadrons until his retirement in 2004.

Buddy Letter writer Name

Rank USAFR Retired
1974-2007

Buddy letter should have specifics that tie service and exposure to UC-123K aircraft.

Oher Information

On Thu, Jun 18, 2015 at 10:00 PM, SHIRLEY RIBAK <afkernel06@yahoo.com> wrote:

If folks need records etc they can call ARPC in Denver and they will email about anything. All the operators are trained to assist all customers instead of transferring the caller all over.

sr

On Thursday, June 18, 2015 9:38 PM, Buckeye Wing <ohioairforce@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Shirley,

I think some will need your help.

I hear the VA is going to be asking people to prove they worked or flew on the UC-123K model airplane. The UC-123K was used in Ranch Hand.

the C-123K was not used in Ranch Hand to Spray Agent orange.

Some have told me they do not have their papers for then they flew.

Tom McVey
President 2014-2016

[Agent Orange C-123K List](#)

On Thu, Jun 18, 2015 at 9:21 PM, SHIRLEY RIBAK <afkernel06@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you so very very much! I worked at the Dayton Veterans Affairs for 30 years before retiring. If anyone needs help with telephone extensions or names I'd be happy to help. I was in the 67AES from 1979-1988.

Shirley Ribak MSN RN
Colonel (ret) USAFR NC
afkernel06@yahoo.com

On Thursday, June 18, 2015 6:56 PM, Buckeye Wing <ohioairforce@gmail.com> wrote:

Good Evening,

Below is a email that was sent to me today about the VA and a change in benefits for Agent Orange exposure. Please read carefully and feel free to share with any of your friends. I am sure you may get this from many sources. You will hear of it on TV, radio and in newspapers. I ask you to reach out to your pals that served in the C-123 and make sure they know about this.

Phone numbers, web links are listed below in this email.

Thanks to all who helped to get us to this point. We especially need to thank Major Wes Cater for his efforts to win this benefit for us.

Tom McVey
President
Buckeye Wing Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 18, 2015

VA Expands Disability Benefits for Air Force Personnel Exposed to Contaminated C-123 Aircraft

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today published a new regulation that expands eligibility for some benefits for a select group of Air Force Veterans and Air Force Reserve personnel who were exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange through regular and repeated contact with contaminated C-123 aircraft that had been used in Vietnam as part of Operation Ranch Hand (ORH).

VA published this regulation as an interim final rule so that it could immediately begin providing benefits to eligible Air Force veterans and Air Force Reserve personnel who submit a disability compensation claim for any of the 14 medical conditions that have been determined by VA to be related to exposure to Agent Orange.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald made the decision to expand benefits following receipt of a 2015 report by the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (IOM) on Post-Vietnam Dioxin Exposure in Agent Orange-Contaminated C-123 Aircraft. This VA-requested report found evidence that as many as 1,500 to 2,100 Air Force and Air Force Reserve personnel who served as flight, medical and ground maintenance crew

members on ORH C-123 aircraft previously used to spray Agent Orange in Vietnam were exposed to the herbicide.

“Opening up eligibility for this deserving group of Air Force veterans and reservists is the right thing to do,” said Secretary McDonald. “We thank the IOM for its thorough review that provided the supporting evidence needed to ensure we can now fully compensate any former crew member who develops an Agent Orange-related disability.”

Under this new rule, Air Force and Air Force Reserve flight, medical and ground maintenance crewmembers who served on the contaminated ORH C-123s are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides during their service, thus making it easier for them to establish entitlement for some VA benefits if they develop an Agent Orange-related presumptive condition. In addition, for affected Air Force Reserve crew members, VA will presume that their Agent Orange-related condition had its onset during their Reserve training. This change ensures that these reservists are eligible for VA disability compensation and medical care for any Agent Orange-related presumptive condition, and that their surviving dependents are eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

The interim final rule can be found on the Federal Register: www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection. VA will immediately begin processing claims and issuing benefits to eligible Air Force crew members.

VA encourages reservists who were assigned to flight, ground or medical crew duties at Lockbourne/Rickenbacker Air Force Base in Ohio (906th and 907th Tactical Air Groups or 355th and 356th Tactical Airlift Squadron), Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts (731st Tactical Air Squadron and 74th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron) or Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, International Airport (758th Airlift Squadron) during the period 1969 to 1986, and developed an Agent Orange-related disability to file a disability compensation claim online through the joint VA-Department of Defense web portal, eBenefits (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>).

VA also has identified several active duty locations where ORH C-123 aircraft may have been used following their service in Vietnam. Active duty personnel who served in a regular USAF unit location where a contaminated C-123 was assigned and who had regular and repeated contact with the aircraft through flight, ground or medical duties during the period 1969 to 1986, and who develop an Agent Orange-related disability, also are encouraged to apply for benefits. For more information on applying for these benefits, including the affected units, Air Force Specialty Codes and dates of service for affected crew members, and a listing of Agent Orange-related conditions, visit www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/claims-postservice-agent_orange.asp.

In order to avoid unnecessary delay of benefits, claimants should annotate “(C-123)” after each Agent Orange related disability in *Part II, Block 14* of [VA Form 21-526](#) or *Section I, Block 11* of VA

Form [VA Form 21-526EZ](#) when filing on eBenefits. Example: Diabetes (C-123). If claimants have any of the following documents, they should be attached to their application:

- Discharge, separation papers, (DD214 or equivalent)

- USAF Form 2096 (unit where assigned at the time of the training action)
- USAF Form 5 (aircraft flight duties)
- USAF Form 781 (aircraft maintenance duties)
- Dependency records (marriage & children's birth certificates)
- Medical evidence (doctor & hospital reports)

VA will process all claims related to C-123 exposure at the St. Paul, Minnesota, VA Regional Office. Claims not filed through eBenefits should be mailed to the following address (or faxed to 608-373-6694):

Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
Attention: C123 Claims
PO Box 5088
Janesville, WI 53547-5088

Individuals with specific benefit questions related to herbicide exposure on C-123s may call VA's special C-123 Hotline at 1-800-749-8387 (available 8 a.m. – 9 p.m. EST) or e-mail VSCC123.VAVBASPL@va.gov.