

## 2012-2013 HERBICIDE ORANGE INVESTIGATION

Summary of allegations and findings:

### **Allegation 1. Herbicide Orange and other tactical herbicides were tested and evaluated in the jungle areas of Okinawa in 1961-1962.**

- There were no records or correspondence that indicated any testing and evaluation of Herbicide Orange in Okinawa. Herbicide Orange was tested in South Vietnam, not Okinawa, as part of Project AGILE. Additionally, Herbicide Orange was not used in Vietnam until 1965.

### **Allegation 2. Beginning in 1962 in Project AGILE, Herbicide Orange and other tactical herbicides were shipped to or through, unloaded on or used in Okinawa by the DoD during the Vietnam War. The merchant marine ship SS Schuyler Otis Bland (T-AK277) transported Agent Orange from the US to Okinawa in the early 1960's.**

- The log books and shipping documents required for shipping herbicides show that Herbicides Pink and Purple were transported directly from San Francisco to Vietnam on the SS Bland in Dec. 1961, arriving in Vietnam on Jan. 16, 1962 and were subsequently completely offloaded in Vietnam. The SS Bland later arrived in Naha, Okinawa with a cargo of shipping containers and petroleum products on Jan. 31, 1962. There is nothing in the records to support an allegation that the ship's logbook shows that the SS Bland returned to Okinawa and unloaded a classified cargo under armed guard at White Beach on Apr. 25, 1962. Additionally, Herbicide Orange was not used in Vietnam until 1965.

### **Allegation 3. That the Port of Naha, the adjacent US Army's Machinato Supply Depot (now Makiminato Service Area, part of the US Marine Corps Camp Kinser, bordering Urasoe City), and Kadena Air Base were used to receive and store large quantities of Herbicide Orange for subsequent shipment "on merchant ships such as the USS Comet, SS Sea-Lift and the SS Transglobe" or by air transport to Vietnam during the Vietnam war.**

- There were no records found that authorized the shipment of tactical herbicides by these three ships. These types of ships were unsuitable for transporting the types of heavy barrels that herbicides were shipped in. Source records show that tactical herbicides shipped to Vietnam were transported under the highest priority of shipment; thus they would not have been delayed by unnecessary stops, unloading/transloading or storage. Tactical herbicides were shipped to Vietnam on ships, not sent by air.

### **Allegation Number 4. That shipments of the remaining surplus inventory of "25,000 barrels" of Herbicide Orange from Vietnam were sent to Okinawa prior to shipment to Johnston Island in 1972 during Operation RED HAT.**

- Herbicide Orange was shipped directly from Vietnam to Johnson Island as part of Operation PACER IVY, not Operation RED HAT. Operation RED HAT occurred in 1971 and involved the removal of nerve gas from Okinawa to Johnston Island. Regarding

the 2003 report “An Ecological Assessment of Johnston Atoll,” the report’s statement about storage of Herbicide Orange in Okinawa is inaccurate and does not reflect the facts as known to the Army or to the U.S. Government. The report was an independently prepared report funded by the U.S. Army that evaluated the ecological conditions and impacts on Johnson Atoll from military activity. The report was never intended to document the history of Herbicide Orange.

**Allegation Number 5. That large quantities of Herbicide Orange were buried “in and around Chatan Town at Hamby Air Field,” and/or “buried at White Beach near the Machinato Supply Depot (Service Area),” and/or “buried near the Futenma Air Station near the city of Ginowan.”**

- There was no evidence that Herbicide Orange had been found or buried on the MSA shoreline or any mention of pesticides, Herbicide Orange, dioxin, or PCBs in the cleanup operations near the Futenma Air Station.

**Allegation Number 6. That an American Cargo Ship was stranded on a reef near Naha and drums of Herbicide Orange were recovered and subsequently buried on Okinawa.**

- There is no historical evidence of drums, Agent Orange, or the description of “other cargo” noted in either the history of the LST-600 or the *USS Current*. *USNS LST 600* went aground at Kanno Se Reef near Naha on Dec. 22, 1968 and was refloated on 17 January 1969. The *USS Current* arrived on Christmas Day to off load cargo from the *LST 600*. The barrels offloaded were petroleum products. Additionally, the last shipment of Herbicide Orange to Vietnam was in May 1968.

**Allegation Number 7. That numerous US Vietnam-era veterans stationed in Okinawa handled and sprayed Herbicide Orange, or were witnesses to it being sprayed by a C-123. Moreover, some veterans claimed that they cleaned the contaminated aircraft at Kadena Air Base.**

- No evidence was found that validated this claim. However, approved insecticides, not herbicides, were sprayed in Okinawa. Repairs of the RANCH HAND UC-123-B and K models were conducted in Taipei, not Okinawa.

**Records located at the following archives were searched during the course of the most recent investigation:**

- The United States Army & Joint Records Research Center, Springfield, VA
- The National Agricultural Library, Bethesda, MD
- The Armed Forces Pest Management Board Literature Retrieval System, Silver Spring, MD
- National Archives and Records Administration
  - National Archives at College Park, MD
  - Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD

- National Archives, Washington, DC
- Southwest Regional Archives, Fort Worth, TX
- The Office of Air Force History, Washington, DC
- Office of History, Air Force Logistics Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio
- Fort Detrick Records Manager, Ft. Detrick, MD
- US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
- Institute for Public Health
- US Army Public Health Command
- Naval History and Heritage Command
- RANCH HAND Vietnam Association
- Records Managers, United States Forces Japan