

VVAG - VIETNAM VETERANS ACTION GROUP



From the Desk of the Secretary

The Reasons for suing the New Zealand Government for compensation

- 1/ The MOU in the 15 months since it was implemented has only looked after about 1% of affected persons. Many of the Veterans can not afford to go to Tribute 08.
- 2/ Failure of Duty of Care—Too many have died unnecessarily and too many are suffering from life threatening illnesses, many of those that have died because of the NZ Governments misfeasance would still be alive today and the Veterans and their families would have been spared the traumas arising from PTSD, death, disabilities and lost earning capacity.
- 3/ Death and ill health have prevented many of the Vietnam Veterans and their family members the earning capacity normally available to healthy persons. The loss of income has put many Vietnam Veterans and their families on or below the poverty line.
- 4/ We were in a war zone our allies did not pay tax we did! Part of the compensation package sought is our tax back with interest estimated at \$10,000 per person who did a tour of duty and the deceased Veterans families to receive the same.
- 5/ The NZ Government allowed the manufacture and supplied the chemical known as Agent Orange being a mixture of 24D/245T to the Americans for use in the Vietnam War.
- 6/ Up to the HSC Report in 2003/4 the NZ Government to a large degree ignored the effects of Dioxin poisoning brought most about through the effects of Agent Orange, with Agent Blue and Agent White. The spray maps show that very little of the then Phuoc Tuy province escaped from any fallout and most of the province was covered by all three.
- 7/ There is not enough being done for family members that are suffering from the Vietnam Veterans exposure to the deadly cocktail of poisons. Health is a major problem.
- 8/ The MOU is a bandaid solution that requires major surgery. The decades of misfeasance and failure of duty of care is unacceptable. The abuse we suffered from on arrival home and for the next 35 years from the NZ Government and the public is unacceptable. Too many have died and too many are dying too young because of the NZ Governments misfeasance.

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9/ The only way left is to sue the NZ Government and expose the perpetrators of the misfeasance and have criminal charges laid if necessary. Section 116 of the Crimes Act Perverting the Cause of Justice carries up to 7 years jail if found guilty. This is only 1 of the many charges that could be laid. This issue needs to be finalised and all New Zealanders should be made aware of the details of the NZ Governments complicity and duplicity.

10/ The fact the 24D/245T was processed too quickly and creating dioxin as the unwanted bi-product this would put the chemical on the illegal use list as this is in breach of the Geneva Convention which would make this a war crime. The Chemical Company Ivon Watkins Dow and the NZ Government were aware that the faster you processed the herbicide the higher the Dioxin levels. A German company Bohringer Sohn had perfected a method that removed the dioxin or at least considerably reduced the amount of Dioxin to a negligible level by using a slower production process.

11/ The Chemical Companies and the NZ Government knew in the 1960's. The NZ public were advised in 1971 by Dr Mann a biochemistry lecturer and Professor Elliot the head paediatrician at the Auckland Medical School of the dangers of 24D/245T and the huge effect that Dioxin poisoning had on the health of our families and future generations. The NZ Government allowed the manufacture to 1987, 17 years after it was banned in the USA. The spraying of Agent Orange was also stopped in Vietnam 1970. This the most likely and logical reason for the decades of denial. But what makes this worse is now they do know and are still doing very little to address the health problems. The 5 conditions accepted for ex gratia payments are too narrow and discriminates against Veterans who suffer from the other life threatening accepted associated cancers, heart and health issues.