

"... The reports of serious deleterious consequences of herbicide spraying on humans, animals and plants are internally consistent ... reports of human illness following spraying are so striking it is difficult to dismiss them as simply the effects of propaganda, high normal death rates, or faulty understanding of cause and effects."

WAS THERE ANY CONCERN FOR THE SAFETY OF FRIENDLY FORCES DURING SPRAYING OPERATIONS?

If any further proof is needed that the whole defoliant-pesticide operation was an irresponsible, uncoordinated, ad hoc kamikaze attack from beginning to end, one need look no further than the United States COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT to the Hon. CHARLES PERCY, PERMANENT SUB-COMMITTEE on INVESTIGATIONS, COMMITTEE on GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, UNITED STATES SENATE and we quote:

"... Herbicide ORANGE was sprayed undiluted in VIETNAM at the rate of about 3 gallons per acre. Civilian application of this herbicide's components are usually diluted in oil or water. A Department of Defence Official said that the heavier application was needed to assure success of the operations."

Further on the report says:

"... Chemical Officers stated that troop commanders were notified 48 hours before an Air Force Herbicide mission, and were asked to keep troops clear of the area during the spraying. This was not to prevent troops' exposure but to prevent troops being wounded or killed by fighter aircraft protecting the spraying aircraft."

WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS' ATTITUDE TO VETERANS' CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION AND ASSISTANCE?

They are both trying to "keep the lid on" the issue. Many veterans suffering from some quite serious illnesses from chemical poisoning are getting the bureaucratic run-around. Both governments fear a "flood" of litigation if compensation is paid to any veteran for chemical poisoning. This creates a very serious social and moral dilemma for the Australian community comparable to the Thalidomide case.