

Hello to All Veterans,

I would like a brief moment to introduce myself. My name is Kurt Priessman I am a retired Air Force Master Sergeant who served from 1970 to 1990. Much of my career was spent in places where herbicides, insecticides, and toxic petroleum by-products were used, stored, or dumped; from Mather AFB, California to Korat RTAFB, Thailand to Taegu AB, Republic of Korea. I traveled across the entire Pacific theater during the final years of the Vietnam War and have transited the Pacific six times.

I was exposed to herbicides (agents orange, white, and blue at a minimum), Malathion, and other chemicals that cause cancers, diabetes-mellitus, and attack the nervous and immune systems.

Like many of you, I suffer from diabetes-mellitus with neuropathy, nephropathy, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and Gastroparesis. I also suffer from secondary symptoms such as Dupuytren's contracture, Peyronies disease, and a rare blood disease called polycythemia vera.

And like many of you, after thirty five years, the paper trail is lost. There are parts, but nothing like the evidence (without the benefit, the assistance, and honesty) the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense requires. I have already done research on routes to Southeast Asia, the use of herbicides in Thailand, and am now seeking people who want to help.

In my research using the Freedom of Information Act, available archives, and many veterans organization's websites, I have found that the Department of Defense (Marines, Navy, Air Force, and Army) and the State Department have maintained the classification of documents that should have been declassified between 1975 and 1985 and were not. I have found that histories exist that hold the truth.

Where you may ask? I found them in the histories themselves, in footnotes of documents and reports, and in messages between. While there is sometimes anger, frustration, and yes, even disbelief at why this has happened, I believe that the full truth is there, waiting for someone to ask for the release of the right document.

So what can you do you ask? Help to research, cross-reference, and link these documents so that specific FOIA requests can be made that will finally tell enough of the story that they can no longer deny claims for benefits.

Why you ask? The truth is for us, for our comrades in arms, both those still living and those who have past, for those who fought in the Gulf War, and for those serving today. We served to protect our country, our democracy, our way of life and now as we look back at what the government has done, what they have not done, and what it appears they fully intend to keep doing, our only solution is to band together as brothers to fight until we see the light of a new day. A day where the treatment we receive is documented whether the diagnoses is compensable or not, a day when after the documentation is complete, treatment, compensation, and dignity are given back to us.

If you want to help, contact me at kpriessman@msn.com or kpriessman@yahoo.com. Give me some idea of what you would like to help with, and a phone number where you can be reached. Today, we do have heroes, we do have some support, and we cannot give up, we can never give up.