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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 17, 2007

Honorable Daniel L. Cooper
Under Secretary for Benefits
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Admiral Cooper:

I have recently received correspondence from a veteran who provided information concerning the use of herbicides at certain military bases in Thailand during the Vietnam conflict, copies of which are enclosed. These documents indicate that herbicides were used for perimeter control at a number of locations in Thailand, including Korat AFB, U-Tapao RTAFB, Ubon AFB, Udorn Air Base, and Nakhon Phanom RTAFB

These documents are consistent with the acknowledgement by the Secretary of the Air Force to the Honorable Lane Evans in a June 30, 2005 letter which stated that “[C]ommanders were at liberty to use herbicides for defoliation around their activities using either handheld or vehicle mounted units, with no accountability required” While the Secretary of the Air Force “did not have any more specific information” at that time, the documents submitted by the veteran appear to provide specific information with respect to the above named locations.

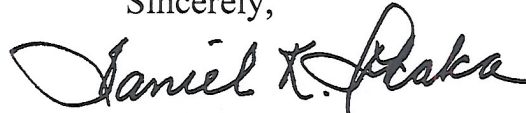
In addition, the documents reference the use of herbicides at Pran Buri in Thailand and at locations in Laos, primarily near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. As the documents are primarily ones obtained from the United States Air Force under Freedom of Information Act requests, I expect that you will be able to obtain official copies if needed.

Please have these documents reviewed by appropriate Compensation and Pension staff for consideration as evidence of herbicide usage in Thailand for veterans claiming such exposure. I note that similar

concessions have been made for veterans who were exposed while serving along the Korean Demilitarized Zone during the Vietnam Era.

I would appreciate a response to this request by January 21, 2008. If you have any questions about this request or need further information, please have your staff contact Mary Ellen Mc Carthy, Special Projects Counsel, at 202-224-9126. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel K. Akaka". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Daniel K. Akaka
Chairman