

[Switch back to normal view](#)

SECTION: [Canadian News](#) | GEOGRAPHY: [Atlantic](#); [NB](#); [Gagetown](#) | TOPICS: [Gagetown](#) • [Defoliant](#) • [Canadian Military](#) • [Agent Purple](#) • [Agent Orange Alert](#) • [Agent Orange](#)

SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

Veterans Say Agent Orange Settlement Falls Short

Government compensation a diversion, say former Gagetown veterans

by [CHRIS ARSENAULT](#)

The Dominion - <http://www.dominionpaper.ca>

Notorious for its devastating use by the U.S. military in the Vietnam War, the toxic defoliant Agent Orange was tested and sprayed extensively in Canada by both the Canadian military and its U.S. counterpart in the 1950s, '60s and '70s

Recently, some Canadian veterans received a long-awaited compensation package, but veterans' advocates say the reparations do not go nearly far enough.

In 1966, Ken Dobbie and thousands of other young men spent summers hacking foliage soaked in Agent Orange while clearing forests at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown in the province of New Brunswick.

'We never had any protection; we would handle this stuff [brush covered in Agent Orange] with our bare hands,' Dobbie told *The Dominion*.

'We were never told these chemicals were dangerous, and now I am living in constant pain,' said Dobbie, 58, who is sick with brain atrophy, neurological disorders, thyroid growths, toxic hepatitis, and type 2 diabetes he blames on the time he spent working and living at Gagetown.

In 1966-67, the U.S. military, invited by the Canadian government, tested Agent Orange and Agent Purple on 83 acres at Base Gagetown.

UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION UNCLASSIFIED
 LE DIVULGUÉ DE LA LAI RENSEIGNEMENTS NON
 100

ANNEX A
 TO
 DATED:

QUANTITIES OF RESIDUE CHEAT PROGRAMME 1956 - 1984

YEAR	L	AREA	CHEMICAL TYPE(S)	QUANTITY	TOTAL NO. OF BARRELS
1956	19,492	3,887 Ac	2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T	48 OZ/Ac	24
1957	31,334	3,870 Ac	2, 4-D and 2, 4, 5-T	48 OZ/Ac	25
1958	47,738	8,018 Ac (Hayes)	Agent Orange + 2, 4, 5-T	30 OZ/Ac	20
1959	--	--	--	--	--
1960	67,697	9,079 Ac	2, 4, 5-T	30 OZ/Ac	60
1961	32,365	9,183 Ac	2, 4, 5-T	48 OZ/Ac	34
1962	--	--	--	--	--

Declassified Canadian government memos reveal that the Canadian military sprayed over a million litres of chemical defoliants at Base Gagetown.

PHOTO: [AGENT ORANGE ALERT](#)

The term 'Agent Orange' originated from the 45-gallon orange-striped barrels Monsanto and Dow Chemical used to market and ship the roughly 1:1 chemical mix of dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T). Dioxin, a known carcinogen linked to cancer and other ailments, is a component of Agent Orange and Agent Purple.

Last week, Canada's Veterans Affairs Minister Greg Thompson announced a 94.5-million-dollar compensation package, offering lump sum payments of 19,700 dollars to some veterans and civilians who were at the base in 1966-67. 'We are proud to announce a plan that is fair and shows compassion to the thousands of Canadians whose lives have been so affected,' said Thompson in a statement.

'We may never fully know what happened when Agent Orange was tested at the Canadian Forces Base in Gagetown in 1966 and 1967, but our government has always stood firm,' said Thompson, a member of Canada's ruling Conservative Party. The federal government reportedly expects about 4,500 people will qualify for the package.

Veterans, however, say the Canadian government is using the compensation, which is only available to victims of U.S. spraying in 1966-67, to divert attention from a larger issue.

Between 1956-1984, the Canadian military sprayed 1,328,767 litres of chemical defoliants on 181,038 acres (an acre is slightly smaller than a football field) of Base Gagetown, including Agent Orange, Agent White and Agent Purple, according to a 1985 declassified briefing to the New Brunswick provincial government obtained by *The Dominion* through Canada's Access to Information Act.

'Restricting [compensation] payments to a few weeks in 1966-67 is dishonest,' said Tony Merchant, a lawyer representing some 3,000 veterans and civilians in a class action lawsuit against the companies who manufactured Agent Orange, including Dow Chemical and Monsanto, and the Canadian government.

'If the companies created dangerous products that hurt people than those companies are responsible,' Art Connolly, a military veteran and vice president of the Agent Orange Association of Canada, told *The Dominion*.

Connolly says the recent compensation package is 'part of a government campaign to bewilder, bedazzle and confuse.'

Veterans groups are pushing for a full public inquiry into the spraying of defoliants and compensation for all affected people, not just those who were sprayed in 1966-67.

In 1985, Dow Chemical and other firms paid 180 million dollars to U.S. veterans of the Vietnam War, settling a class action lawsuit. However, both Monsanto and Dow still deny Agent Orange is dangerous.

'When we allowed Americans to spray Agent Orange on a Canadian Base in 1966, the U.S. Congress had passed a law barring the spraying of Agent Orange on military bases in the U.S.' Merchant told *The Dominion*. 'The problems with these defoliants were known and appropriate care wasn't taken.'

In April 2007, the British government awarded a special pension to Keith Pilmoor, a British soldier, who said exposure to Agent Orange at Canada's Base Gagetown in 1966 left him sick for decades.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) in the United States compensates U.S. service members who may have been exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War for health

conditions including chloracne, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx and trachea), soft-tissue sarcoma, type 2 diabetes and prostate cancer.

Peter Stoffer, Veterans Affairs critic for Canada's New Democratic Party (social democrats), called the compensation package 'political perjury'.

'It is unconscionable that you can treat veterans and civilians in this manner,' Stoffer told *The Dominion*. 'Spraying took place in the 50s, 60s and 70s, not just in 1966-67.'

Canadian Agent Orange survivors have been in close contact with their Vietnamese counterparts.

In a 2006 interview in Vietnam, Le Duc, manager of the Ho Chi Minh City Agent Orange Association, told *The Dominion*, 'I call on the Canadian people to work with the Vietnamese people to take on the American chemical companies.'

An earlier version of this article appeared at [Inter-Press Service](#)

Agent Orange Settlement Falls Short

Submitted by Kenneth Young (not verified) on Thu, 2007-09-20 12:38.

Mr. Thompson suffers from grand elusions of Gagetown closure.

Today I listened to CBC information morning from Saint John, New Brunswick and Veterans Affairs Minister trying desperately to sell the Canadian public on his compensation package as fair, full and compassionate. In my opinion I think that Mr. Thompson suffers from grand elusions of closure.

Even his explanation as to why the compensation package was only for the Victims from the US 66 & 67 spraying, stating that the NB. Hydro, the NB. Railways and others were doing the same is ludicrous at best. I am no lawyer but just because others are murdering people doesn't give me the right to do so, just because others are endangering their employees' doesn't give Ottawa the right to do so and just because Ottawa (in My opinion) negligently register a product which wasn't completely or properly tested back then shouldn't give them immunity from liability today.

Greg should maybe also do his homework because if I remember correctly, NB. Hydro did compensate their employees' and without all the Bull dropping clauses and exemptions that are in Mr. Thompson's package.

Cpl. Kenneth H. Young CD (Ret'd).

Post new comment

[Log in](#) or [create an account](#) to attach a consistent, verifiable name to your comment.

Your name:

E-mail:

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Homepage:

Subject:

Comment: *

- [Input format](#)

Notify me of follow-up comments posted here.

The Dominion is relying on reader contributions to distribute our special issue on the Tar Sands. Please [make a donation!](#)

Goal: \$4000

Funds raised: \$560