



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

MAR 4 2004

The Honorable Lane Evans
Ranking Democratic Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Evans:

Thank you for your inquiry about our instructions to Regional Offices when exposure to herbicides in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is claimed.

In March 2003, we reminded Regional Offices (RO) about the information we have regarding the use of herbicides along the DMZ. The Department of Defense (DoD) provided us with the names of units that were rotated into the DMZ during the applicable time period. Those units include members of the 3rd Brigade of the 7th Infantry Division; specifically, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 17th Infantry, the 1st Battalion of the 73rd Armor, and the 2nd Squadron of the 10th Cavalry.

RO personnel were advised to contact the Compensation and Pension (C&P) Service in claims of herbicide exposure outside of Vietnam when such exposure has not been confirmed. When a veteran claims service at the DMZ, but his or her unit is not identified by DoD as one that was potentially exposed, RO personnel are being advised to contact the Center for Unit Records Research for verification.

In January 2004, C&P Service again contacted DoD to identify any additional units present at the DMZ during the period when herbicides were used. We are awaiting a response from DoD. In addition, C&P Service is in the process of drafting written instructions for RO personnel on the proper development and adjudication of all claims of herbicide exposure outside of Vietnam.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel L. Cooper".

Daniel L. Cooper
Under Secretary for Benefits