

971 Medsker Road
Sequim, WA 98382
April 23, 2014

Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Donley,

I am writing this letter to express my frustration at the way the Veterans Administration is treating herbicide related medical claims of Vietnam era Veterans who were stationed in Thailand. This is especially vexing because the vast majority of these Veterans were Air Force personnel. I was stationed at Takhli Royal Thai Air Base in 1969 – 1970 and have been diagnosed with medical conditions that, had I been stationed, or could prove I even set foot, in Vietnam would be presumptively approved disabilities. Instead Thailand vets have to prove, conclusively and individually, to the VA that they were exposed to herbicides for the same medical conditions to be considered. The internet and Thailand Veterans' message boards are rife with examples of denied claims and/or VA Citations that were approved only after years and multiple appeals. There are also various reports showing how Agent Orange and similar family herbicides were widely utilized on all Thai bases. The current VA logic that you must have been a Security policeman or dog handler to come be considered exposed to Agent Orange type herbicides just makes no sense.

I have enclosed the letter I sent to VA Secretary Shinseki and a summary of my disability claim as background for you. As outlined in my letter, the Veteran's AFSC (MOS) is one of the main determining factors in the denying medical disability claims. I am one of these Veterans but, it is the larger inequity that made write this letter. Air Force Thailand vets have been relegated to being viewed as third class participants in the Vietnam War by VA's actions and it is time for this to end.

It is my fervent hope that the Air Force can help persuade the VA to acknowledge our participation in the War and the herbicide risks face daily by Air Force Veterans stationed in Thailand. Thank you for your time and attention to my letter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require and additional information.

Respectfully,

David L. Gittleman

Enclosures