



National Patron
RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA®

ABN 19 068 073 450

NATIONAL COUNCIL

INCORPORATED IN NSW

Web Site: <http://www.vvaa.org.au>

President

Brian McKenzie OAM
16 Elinga Street
HOWRAH TAS 7018
Phone (03) 6247 7778
Fax (03) 6247 7778
eMail vvaanatpres@bigpond.com

Secretary

Geoff Trevor-Hunt OAM JP
PO Box 8108
WARNBRO WA 6169
Phone (08) 9594 0429
Fax (08) 9594 0429
eMail vvaasec@bigpond.com

MEDIA RELEASE - 17 December 2002

NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS DRANK DEADLY COCKTAIL

The National President of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Brian McKenzie, said today that Vietnam Veterans who served in the Australian Navy in Vietnam waters were more likely than not, ingesting a lethal cocktail comprising dioxins, Agents Orange and Blue, via drinking water.

Mr McKenzie was commenting on a recently released study report by The National Research Centre for Environmental Toxicology, Queensland Health Scientific Services which conducted research on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The aim of the study was to investigate the potential for exposure of sailors to contaminants via drinking water

Overall the findings of the study demonstrates that evaporation distillation equipment used onboard our Navy and Army small ships does not remove, but in fact enriches certain contaminants such as dioxins in drinking water.

'In 1997 a study report of Australian Vietnam Veterans revealed a greater than expected mortality level, with the highest overall levels of mortality among Royal Australian Navy personnel – and we now know why', Mr McKenzie said

Mr McKenzie said; Many of our ships, while anchored in Vietnam waters, took on water for distillation, which was contaminated by the spaying of mangroves with deadly dioxins, which due to an ineffective distillation process poisoned veterans with cancer causing dioxins.

Those soldiers and airmen who travelled to and from on ships such as HMAS Sydney, Escort ships and other sea transport would also have been exposed to this deadly cocktail.

The majority of our sailors could not have been exposed to overhead spaying or other direct contacts with dioxins.

The findings of this study, I am sure will cause the Department of Veterans Affairs to carry out modifications to some administrative processes, to ensure that Veterans and their widows affected have a clear passage to their rightful compensation, Mr McKenzie said.

Mr McKenzie said; the findings of this study may also have implications for current serving members of Royal Australian Navy and the wider community.

Media Contact: Brian McKenzie 0439 030 429