

# Lawsuit charges liability for Vietnam vets' ills

Second of two parts  
By SANDRA ARMBRUSTER

Kenneth Boling thinks he's being used as a guinea pig. And he wants something done about it.

Boling says that he and other Vietnam veterans are experiencing "common symptoms."

"There is no test for it, but these guys are getting skin rashes, stomach and liver trouble and cancer that spreads rapidly," he says.

"Research data on Agent Orange will be available soon. We veterans want an answer as to what the problem is," adds Boling, who is organizing a local chapter of Agent Orange Victims International.

Agent Orange is a chemical defoliant sprayed in Vietnam to clear out underbrush used by the Viet Cong to hide from U.S. forces.

Veterans say they're angry over what they believe is a lack of information and medical help being given to Vietnam veterans.

"The veterans administration (VA) is using us as guinea pigs. They're against us," charged Boling. "It (help) is so tied up with who's to blame in the VA is a government regulated organization, and they're limiting information they give."

While a VA spokesman denies the charges, some veterans have begun to take action on their own behalf.

A GROUP CALLED Citizen Soldier is trying to get information about Agent Orange out to veterans who may have been exposed to it. The group also is suing for damages on behalf of individual veterans.

Founder of the group, Tod Ensign, has co-authored a just released book titled "GI Guinea Pigs." Part of the book discusses veterans who have been exposed to Agent Orange.

Other veterans are joining the growing ranks of those who are suing companies that manufactured the chemical.

At least one company, DOW, denies

any responsibility for health problems veterans claim they are having.

That doesn't deter veterans like Tim Rea, a former Redford resident now living in Hazel Park.

"I don't have too much faith in government anymore," said Rea. He believes he was exposed to the chemical and, consequently, wonders if he has passed genetic damage along to his two preschool children.

"I'm suing the VA, the American government and five chemical companies. I filed suit three months ago," Rea added.

Handling Rea's case, among others is Southfield attorney Arthur Woll.

"These guys need a lot of help. There's very little to go on," Woll explained. "Rea is one of 110-115 veterans — or their wives and children — in Michigan who have filed class action suits in Flint and Detroit federal courts."

WOLL ESTIMATES there are 7,000 to 8,000 such suits that have been filed nationwide. In a "multiple litigation" case such as this, Woll said that one attorney in New York is trying to prove the liability of the chemical companies and the government involved with the chemical.

The companies, according to Woll, are DOW, Hooker, Hercules, Diamond Shamrock, Monsanto, Uniroval and Thompson-Haywood.

If the New York attorney, Victor Yano, who also is a chemist, is able to prove liability, then damage suits will

be tried in federal courts across the country. Woll said he expects a ruling on the liability case sometime next spring. He estimates that damage suits could amount to \$4 billion.

"I know it's a long uphill battle, but we're committed to it. I want to do it and so do my people," said Woll. "Sure we'll make a fee, but we aren't thinking about that."

"If you'd see these people, you'd know they have to get help," he added.

Woll estimates that there may be more than 200,000 people in Michigan suffering from exposure to Agent Orange.

"Sometimes we get 25 calls a day from people who have heard what we're doing," Woll continued. "We don't look around for clients. They come by word of mouth."

BUT A SPORESMAN for DOW Chemical disputes those estimates as well as responsibility for any veterans' health problems and research claims about the product.

Phillip Schneider, manager of corporate media relations, said that DOW was asked to produce the two component herbicides in Agent Orange according to government specifications.

"The military mixed them according to its formula, diluted it with water and determined how to use it there (in Vietnam)," Schneider explained.

"We just don't believe that Agent Orange can be the cause of these maladies," he added. "We don't dispute that veterans may have health problems,

but we don't believe that Agent Orange is the cause of these health problems."

Schneider said that the chemical is made with two herbicides known as 2,4,5T and 2,4D. He said that the herbicides have been used "safely and prevalently" in the U.S. for more than 30 years along highway and railroad rights of way. He added that it is still used in range land and in rice growing fields.

"There are 40,000 papers and studies on these products and Agent Orange. There is no medical evidence or linkage that these people attribute to Agent Orange exposure," Schneider continued.

WOLL ARGUED, however, that other studies, such as one by a University of Wisconsin professor, correlate experiments "with real life."

The Observer confirmed that James Allen had conducted experiments at the University of Wisconsin. However, he is no longer with the university and was unable to be reached for comment.

Argument over the chemical centers on a substance found in the 2,4,5T herbicide called dioxin.

Schneider said dioxin is a "trace of impurity in minute amounts that occurs naturally in the manufacturing process — created through combustion."

"The Environmental Protection Agency has suspended some permanent uses until hearings are concluded on its safety," said Schneider. "The concern is that dioxin could be the cause of the

maladies.

"But much of the data has been discredited by independent scientific bodies," he continued. "Incidences of gross amounts of dioxin (have shown) in all cases that other than chloracne (a skin rash), no health effect is apparent."

Schneider said that DOW commissioned a study conducted by a professor at the University of Michigan. That study questioned, according to Schneider, whether death rates for Vietnam vets are "above or below the norm" for others the same age group during the years 1970-79.

DOW also argues that the "probability of exposure is fairly remote," said Schneider.

"No more than 1 1/2 percent of the country was sprayed in any one year. Theoretically since it was done by American troops, they should know the target area," he added.

Schneider said there is a lot of confusion over two types of spray used in Vietnam. One, which Schneider said was "frequent and widespread," was to control insects.

During the years 1966-70 that Agent Orange was sprayed in Vietnam, DOW estimates that six ounces of dioxin "at most" was contained in the five million pounds of the chemical used.

Schneider compared that six ounces to a pinch of salt in 10,000 tons of potato chips and to one lob in 1.2 million tennis matches.

## WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

# JAZZ ENSEMBLE

THURSDAY, JUNE 12-7:30  
SOMERSET MALL

BIG BEAVER RD. at COOLIDGE, TROY  
SUNDAY 12:5/ MONDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY 10:59/ OTHER DAYS 10:6

## STEVE PETIX FATHER'S DAY

DAMON  
A Great Combination  
of  
Quality and Style  
In 60% Polyester &  
40% Cotton  
White  
Camei  
Light Blue



Regular Price \$25.00  
Father's Day Special \$20.00



Steve Petix 3145 Southfield Rd. Birmingham, MI 48009 Between 12&14 Mile Rds.  
Open 9:5 daily 10:5-9:30 Sat 10:9 There. Ample parking and Credit cards accepted 855-5500

Herbert W. Armstrong reveals God's plan for man.

Tune in...

# THE WORLD TOMORROW



Tune in Monday thru Friday 11:30 P.M. - Midnight

## WCZY AM 1500

# VIC TANNY, A GREAT PLACE TO GET IN SHAPE FOR SUMMER



The only Bloomfield-Birmingham area health & racquet club offering dual facilities 7 days a week!

We offer the newest and finest exercise equipment available. Vic Tanny is the perfect place to get in shape for summer.



Professional racquetball courts  
Enjoy an exciting game of racquetball. The vigorous activity of fast-paced racquetball is great on our professionally designed courts.



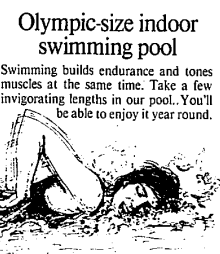
Group aerobic exercise classes  
Enjoy aerobic dance or ballet exercise classes led by professional instructors. You'll have fun toning up while you participate.



Steam, sauna and whirlpool facilities  
Choose among three ways to relax: the sauna, with dry heat in natural reamwood surroundings...the warmth of our steamroom...or the whirlpool.



Men's and women's dual exercise areas  
Get in shape with professional equipment in gyms for men & women. Tone up with our fast, effective progressive resistance exercise.



Olympic-size indoor swimming pool  
Swimming builds endurance and tones muscles at the same time. Take a few invigorating lengths in our pool. You'll be able to enjoy it year round.



Banked, indoor jogging track  
Keep in shape by running on our specially designed jogging track. Whether you're a novice or an experienced runner, you'll enjoy our jogging track.

Men... Women Call Now!

## VIC TANNY BLOOMFIELD EXECUTIVE HEALTH & RACQUET CLUB

6420 Telegraph Rd. at Maple Rd. 855-2300