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NCBC GULFPORT
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD REGARDING UNACCOUNTED FOR HERBICIDE NCBC
GULFPORT MS
3/6/1985
U S AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Media Query on Missing Herbicide Orange drums during Hurricane Camille (Aug 1969)

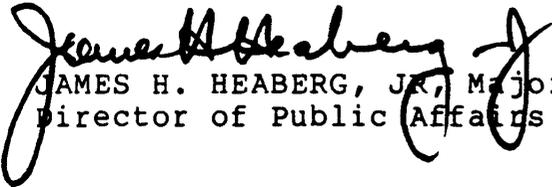
FROM: AFESC/PA

1. On 26 Feb 85, we received a call from Tom Charlier of the Gulfport (MS) News Herald regarding subject. He had found a reference to same in an Historical Monograph covering H.O. disposal operations (1971-1979), and wanted to know what ever happended. He had the monograph as a result of an earlier query while covering the testing for dioxins at Navy Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport.
2. AFESC is conducting the research and testing of the former storage site at NCBC, as well as at Eglin AFB and Johnston Island (Pacific). Our on-site scientists suspected an area adjacent to the fenced prime storage area as being contaminated, also. Subsequent preliminary samples have(are) upheld this suspicion. The Navy had placed a temporary cordon around the area as a precaution (pending lab results) and posted the area off-limits.
3. These two incidents tie together in the fact that on 27 Feb we called Charlier to tell him that we had nothing new on the suspect area (the results came in late on the 28th) and that our preliminary research showed that all drums of Orange and Blue had been accounted for. He said he was grateful for the information and indicated that he wasn't currently working a story. He said he'd wait until all test results were in and for the 'technology' demonstrations sometime in June for his next major piece. We agreed to call him back if any new information developed.
4. On 1 Mar 85, we got a call from the AU Research Library at Maxwell with an answer to an earlier request I had made for Agent Orange information dealing with Gulfport and Hurricane Camille. Essentially, it appears that 74 barrels of Orange and 171 barrels of Blue were lost during the hurricane. (or at least the "material" was declared a loss...). Close reading of the herbicide management section of the SAAMA FY 70 history does not clear up what exactly happened to the missing material. Additionally, it appears that more than 800 'emptied' barrels were crushed by a bulldozer and buried in a "Hurricane Camille dump area...." We've not been able to talk with anyone (as yet) who was part of the clean up operations, so we can find out how the drums were cleaned, where, and where the dump area was/is. Talking with the regional EPA compliance people, they don't seem too concerned unless the barrels were not properly cleaned (decontaminated) and are now buried under a school, etc. We do have the name of a man at Gulfport who was part of the operation, but haven't been able to contact him as of this date.

*Per my telecon w/ Mary Kay... here it is -
MSgt. Denny*

5. The pressing questions deal with the newer 'suspect' area of the former storage site. The Navy is pressing for some kind of release (both public and from liability) so they can remove some 100 peices of exccesed equipment, some of which has been sold to private individuals, and some of which the Navy wants soon to support missions in Italy.

6. We are requesting SAF/PA support in dealing with CHINFO and USAF/SGES for a determination on direction to proceed; who should provide the public(media) release, and who should provide the release of liability for the equipment. The health issues regarding both the missing drums/dump site and regarding the excess equipment need to be addressed. Attached is a list of questions developed by PA and JA which will (should) be answered before any type of release is made. Please advise.


JAMES H. HEABERG, JR, Major, USAF
Director of Public Affairs (HQ AFESC)

Qs & Qs for NCBC activities:

1. Specifically, what happened during hurricane Camile, lost drums, what was in them, where did they go, etc.?
2. What are you doing about finding the lost drums?
 - 2a. Were the salvaged/buried drums properly handled IAW approved EPA procedures? Were any drums sold to private parties? Who's liable?
3. Will you perform a "formal" Phase I IRP study for NCBC now?
4. Why didn't you do a Phase I to begin with?
5. Who picked NCBC for this test program, and why?
6. What have we found so far at NCBC (prepare to answer same question for Eglin & Johnston Island)?
7. What have you done about the NCBC problem so far?
8. After finding out about the "additional" area of contamination, what did you do? What did you find? What do you plan to do about it? Does this indicate there may be even more areas on NCBC?
9. Has anybody ever had any problems from contamination received at the NCBC site? Who, When, Where, Etc.
10. What is Herbicide Blue & is it as dangerous as Herbicide Orange?
11. Do you have the technology to deal with Agent Blue contamination? Have you ever had to deal with this before?
12. Does the AF have any more agents blue or orange (if so, where, how much, what's being done, etc. - if not, how can you be sure?)
13. Does this mean the costs for cleaning up NCBC will be higher than you had planned? Do you have enough money to get it done?
14. If the planned technology demonstrations are successful, and you start using one or another to clean up dioxin contaminated sites, where are you doing to start? Who's mess will you clean up first? How many spill sites does the AF have around the country; around the world? (a sharp reporter will ask for data on both herbicide orange and blue).

QUESTIONS FROM AFESC/JA:

1. What is the likelihood of health risk from vehicles sold from the storage lot at NCBC?

2. What is the likelihood that this health risk, if once present, still exists?
3. Is there a list of buyers of equipment which has been removed from the storage lot?
4. Can the "contaminated" vehicles/equipment be decontaminated? If so, how? Who should pay for it? Should contractors waiting for equipment they have paid for be repaid/refunded, pending decontamination?
5. The reportable quantity for TCDD under CERCLA(Superfund) is one pound per day. Has this quantity been exceeded? If so, are we required to notify the National Response Center?
6. Which employees have been affected? Over what period of time? From an occupational health standpoint, should they be tested periodically, or included in the on-going H.O. studies? What is AF policy on notifying employees? Navy policy? Who pays for the tests and record keeping?

While this is not an all-inclusive list covering the new H.O. site outside the "fenced" area at NCBC or the "lost" barrels from Hurricane Camile, it will give an indication of the questions which must be answered before responding to the public or the media.