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LETTER REGARDING CONCERN FOR DISPOSITION PROCESSING OF HERBICIDE  
ORANGE NCBC GULFPORT MS  
12/12/1976  
GULFPORT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

THOMAS A. QUIGLEY, M.D.

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GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI 39501

Dec. 12, 1976

TELEPHONE  
(601) 837-5112

Maj. James Trembley  
Air Force Occupational and Environmental  
Health Laboratory  
Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas

Dear Maj. Trembley:

I am writing in regards to the concern of the staff of Memorial Hospital at Gulfport and several citizens of the neighborhoods surrounding the Naval CB Base, regarding the disposition of Herbicide Orange, as planned by the Air Force and Agent Chemical Corp.

Special concern is created by the following:

1. Chemical processing of raw, heated Herbicide Orange in the center of a large populous area and only two blocks from our two community hospitals. What are your estimates of the spillage of dioxin, vaporization of dioxin and herbicide in heating, and danger of plant accident or accident of nature?
2. Concentrating the dioxin on charcoal increases its danger of dispersal and toxicity. How stable is the adsorption of dioxin on charcoal? What about the dangers of dispersal of this mixture by accident at the storage at the base or in transportation through the city of Gulfport?

We will appreciate your answers to these questions and other information for our consideration.

Sincerely,

*Thomas A. Quigley*  
Thomas A. Quigley, M.D., M.P.H.

ATCH 2

## Backyard nerve gas

The Daily Herald:

The Mississippi Air and Water Pollution Board plans to issue a permit to allow Agent Chemical Co. of Texas to chemically reprocess 15,000 barrels of Herbicide Orange at Gulfport CB Base. A chemical called dioxin (TCDD) is to be extracted from the herbicide.

Dioxin has a toxicity to humans roughly equivalent to some of the deadliest nerve gases. Dioxin is "probably the most toxic known substance" (see Hospital Practice, Oct. 1976). Four pounds is calculated sufficient to kill 100,000 people. It is a deadly poison whether inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin.

Last summer in Italy four lbs. of dioxin were vaporized through a safety valve. Wind carried it 12 miles away (i.e. Biloxi) to a community and there scattered it over 320 acres. Within two weeks 500 people were being treated for kidney, liver, and disfiguring skin disease (Chloracne) and 50 were hospitalized. Several thousand will require lifelong medical observation.

Processing will include opening the drums of herbicide, heating to boiling point in a tank, filtering through charcoal. Last month in a

small trial chemical run in Gulfport, sufficient poison leaked in the air to cause vegetation to wither or die one-third mile away. After processing, approximately 1,000 cylinders (10 ft long by 30 in diameter) of deadly dioxin absorbed on charcoal must be stored at the base or moved out through the city. At present no other state will accept these cylinders or allow them to cross state lines.

I know of no consultation of medical authorities here regarding this process. Little or no representation has been allowed by the commission to the most interested parties concerned — that of the people living or working adjacent to the Naval CB Base. Few have been informed of the incredible toxicity of dioxin.

I believe that Agent Chemical Co. should not be allowed to process Dioxin here in the center of large residential areas and within two blocks of two community hospitals. Ship out the Herbicide Orange at once to Johnson Island in the Pacific Ocean where the other 25,000 drums are stored. Write at once or mailogram the Mississippi Air and Water Pollution Commission, P.O. Box 827, Jackson, Miss. 39205 and ask them not to issue this permit.

THOMAS QUIGLEY, M. D., M. P.  
H.  
Gulfport

# THE DAILY HERALD

Published by Gulf Publishing Co., Inc.

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Monday, December 13, 1978