

---

# THE KOREA TIMES

**08-21-2011 16:24**

## **Truth About Alleged Burial of Agent Orange**

The truth about the alleged burial of deadly herbicides at a U.S. military base in South Korea decades ago has not been revealed three months after the allegations were raised by Steve House and other retired U.S. veterans who worked at the base about 300 kilometers southeast of Seoul in the 1970s.

In response to the allegations, the U.S. military quickly announced it would launch a joint investigation with South Korean officials and experts, inspiring hope for a quick answer to the allegations. The U.S. military, however, has tried to evade the truth by refusing to directly investigate the area the American veterans pinpointed.

In an interim report, the joint investigation team said on July 8 investigators found some metallic objects underground in several areas of Camp Carroll in Chilgok, North Gyeongsang Province, but that there was no trace of the toxic agent.

The finding of metallic objects underground raises questions about the credibility of the allegations by Steve House and other retired American soldiers, who claimed that drums containing Agent Orange were buried inside Camp Carroll during the 1970s.

The U.S. military is known to have sprayed herbicides south of the Demilitarized Zone from 1968 to 1969 to allow easier detection of North Korean infiltrators into the South. Some news reports here raised the possibility that the U.S. military might have hurriedly buried the defoliant here in 1978 as lawsuits related to contamination began around that time.

Instead of digging up the area where the U.S. veterans pinpointed, the investigation team said there was no trace of Agent Orange based on the result of their sample surveys.

However, there is a need to investigate if the environmental pollution in and around the camp threatens the health of residents. A survey of 58 residents in a village near the camp showed a 12-year-old girl was suffering from leukemia and another 12-year-old boy had aplastic anemia. The survey was conducted last month by environment experts and doctors affiliated with the committee to cope with Agent Orange problems. The survey also found that a 20-year-old man was died of acute myelogenous leukemia in 1990. Since 2009 five residents aged between 40 and 60 years old have died of lung and liver cancer and a brain tumor. More than 70 residents are suffering from various cancers, skin diseases and central nerve ailments.

The frequency of malignant diseases among the residents is a significant problem. Whether there is a correlation between the burial of the toxic chemicals around the camp and the diseases should be confirmed.

The South Korea-U.S. joint investigation of the allegations seems to be led by U.S. military. The investigators should quickly finish the probe about the environmental pollution and the U.S. military should then take measures to rid the area of pollution.

We hope the U.S. military shows sincerity in its investigation of environmental contamination in and around Camp Carroll. The South Korean authorities participating in the joint investigation also should play their own role to protect the safety of the area residents.

*The article was published and distributed by Yonhap News Agency.*

[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2011/08/137\\_93206.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2011/08/137_93206.html)