

8-month investigation turns up no Agent Orange at S. Korean base

By [ASHLEY ROWLAND](#)

Stars and Stripes

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Steve House, center, points to an area at Camp Carroll's helipad, where he claims he buried barrels of Agent Orange in 1978. Behind him is Col. Joseph Birchmeier, a U.S. Forces Korea engineer.

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An eight-month investigation has found no evidence that Agent Orange was buried at a small U.S. Army base in South Korea more than three decades ago as alleged by several former U.S. soldiers, according to a joint U.S.-South Korean team that announced its final report at a press conference Thursday.

The investigation began earlier this year after one of the soldiers, Steve House, told an Arizona television station that he was one of a handful of soldiers who were quietly ordered to bury hundreds of barrels of the defoliant at Camp Carroll in 1978. Agent Orange was used extensively during the Vietnam War and has since been linked to heart disease, diabetes and a number of cancers.

House's claims -- backed by at least two other soldiers -- prompted the U.S. and South Korea to begin extensive soil and water sampling near the base's helipad, where the veterans say they dug a ditch a city block long and buried often-damaged barrels of Agent Orange over a period of several months.

The testing found no sign of the drums, according to the investigation team.

"Considering all the information, we have found no definitive evidence that confirms the burial of Agent Orange at Camp Carroll at any time in the past," a press release from the joint investigation team stated. "Consequently, there is no identified health risk related to Agent Orange."

In addition, "interviews with 172 former Camp Carroll employees, as well as document research by 32 organizations, revealed that herbicides, pesticides, solvents and other chemicals - not Agent Orange - were buried in Area D (where the burial allegedly took place) and later excavated and shipped to the U.S.," the press release said.

A spokesperson for South Korea's Ministry of Environment said Thursday that the government supported the investigation team's findings, and -- despite widespread complaints from some lawmakers and the media -- believed South Korean officials were given enough access to the base to adequately and independently test for the chemical.

U.S. military documents supported the veterans' claims that a large number of chemical barrels were buried near the helipad in 1978, though the documents do not state what the barrels contained. According to the documents, barrels were removed from the site in 1979 and 1980 along with 40 to 60 tons of soil. The fate of those barrels -- and what was inside them -- has been a key question in the investigation.

8th Army officials have said the barrels were likely taken by military transport to Pusan and then shipped to the U.S., likely to Tooele Army Depot in Utah.

Groundwater testing at one spot found trace amounts of 2,4,5-T -- an herbicide that is a component of Agent Orange -- this summer, but neither U.S. or South Korean officials detected the chemical during later retesting, according to the press release. Soil sampling in the same area also found no evidence of the herbicide.

The allegations prompted fear among nearby Waegwan residents that they may have been exposed to Agent Orange through groundwater contamination. The South Korean government will complete an ongoing health assessment of area residents "to ensure their health and safety," according to the press release.

The U.S. government has acknowledged that some veterans stationed along the Demilitarized Zone were exposed to Agent Orange during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this story.

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By [Gl Korea](#) on December 29th, 2011 at at 4:04 am

[Investigation Concludes Agent Orange Was Not Buried At Camp Carroll](#)

It is official the joint US-ROK investigation has concluded that Agent Orange was not buried at Camp Carroll:

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'No sign of Agent Orange found in U.S. military camp'

By Kim Tae-jong

A joint investigation team announced Friday they had found no Agent Orange in a U.S. military camp where American veterans claimed they had buried drums of the toxic defoliant three decades ago.

The announcement followed months of a joint probe by the team, composed of Korean experts and U.S. military officials, at Camp Carroll in Chilgok, North Gyeongsang Province.

They said that official records show that 380 drums of Agent Orange were shipped to Korea and used in the demilitarized zone in 1968 by the Korean Army, but they had found no signs of the drums, citing the results of investigations through a geophysical survey and soil

coring at the alleged area.

“Considering all the information, we have found no definitive evidence to prove the burial of Agent Orange at Camp Carroll at any time in the past,” the team said in the final announcement of the joint investigation result. “Consequently, there is no identified health risks related to Agent Orange.”

The investigation began in May after former American soldiers, including Steve House, told a U.S. television station that they helped bury hundreds of drums containing toxic chemicals under the heliport inside Camp Carroll in 1978.

Following the allegation, the Korean government and the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) formed a joint investigation team of 16 Korean and 10 American specialists.

The team conducted soil and water sample analysis and tests at the suspected areas using ground-penetrating radar and measuring electrical resistivity.

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