

Vietnam defoliant first tested on Kauai

By BARBARA HASTINGS
Advertiser Staff Writer

Agent Orange, the extremely toxic herbicide used in Vietnam to strip away enemy cover, now under attack as a possible cause of birth defects and cancer, was tested on Kauai in 1967-68.

The herbicide was one of 20 chemicals tested for the Army by the University of Hawaii's Department of Agronomy and Soil Science. A series of four tests were conducted between July 24, 1967 and early 1968, according to the report prepared at the time.

The areas involved in the tests were all in the upper Wailua Valley on Kauai.

The first section was on the Sam Thronas leasehold in the Wailua Game Refuge, about two miles north of the U.H. Kauai branch agricultural experimentation center.

Part of the second series of tests were in this same general area, and the other part was about two miles south, just west of the Bauxite Reclamation Project.

Series three was in the Waikiki Block reforestation project, Hanahanapuni, and the fourth was at Hanahanapuni and at Moalepe.

At the time of the tests news stories reported the purpose of the chemical evaluation was to determine if aerial spraying would be effective for reclaiming jungle wetlands in the state.

The stories did not name the particular herbicides being tested.

The real reason the Army funded the project, according to Otto Younge, one of the four scientists who were in charge of the operation, was to see how effective the chemicals would be for defoliation in Vietnam.

"They (the chemicals) were sprayed mostly on jungle growth," said Younge, "we were trying to defoliate. The idea was to eliminate the forest cover for use in Vietnam."

Others, however, said that while the funding came from the Army for Vietnam-related research, what prompted local interest in the project was the hope of finding effective means of wetlands clearing.

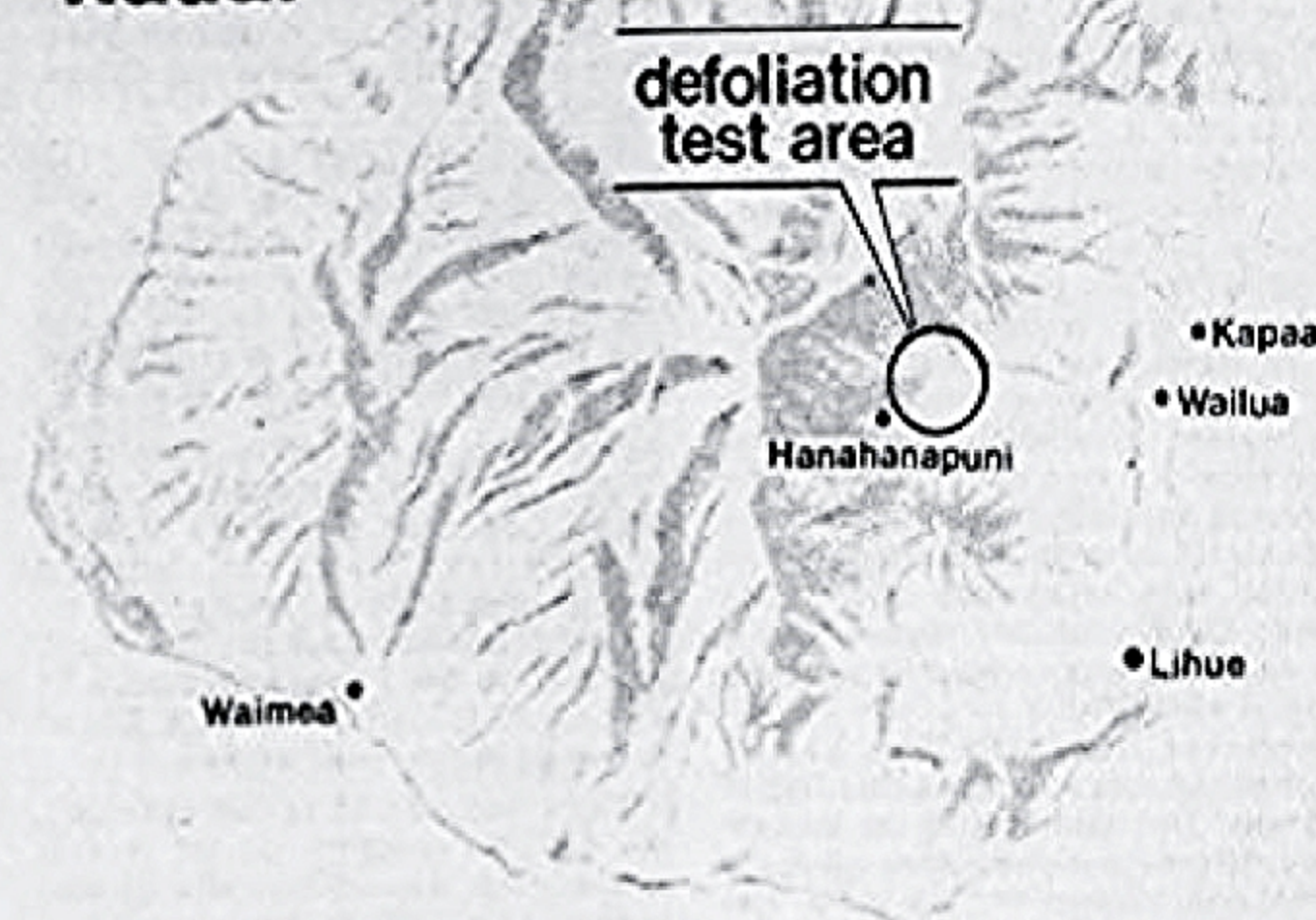
Besides Agent Orange, which is a mixture of chemicals 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T; at least two other herbicides containing 2,4,5-T were used.

The chemicals 2,4,5-T and Silvex were recently placed on "emergency suspension" by the federal Environmental Protection Agency because there is a possible link to miscarriages. Studies are to be made to determine if the use of the herbicides should be banned forever.

These particular herbicides, and Agent Orange, have a deadly impurity called Dioxin connected with them. Dioxin poisoning has been identified as a severe health hazard, but generally in fairly large doses.

Some Vietnam veterans who came in contact with Agent Orange have charged that illnesses they suffer were caused by their handling or

kauai



nearness to the defoliant.

The Kauai test report mentions no analysis for presence of Dioxin at the time of the tests, but several chemical experts contacted recently said they doubted there would be any buildup of dioxin since not that much of the herbicides was sprayed in the study.

In the Kauai tests, caution was taken to protect those directly involved in the project, according to the report. During the testing "complete precautions were taken in handling the chemicals. Each person was required to wear gloves, goggles, respirators and aprons or coveralls. Aircraft props were cut-off during loading to ensure safety from chemical backwash and carelessness."

The chemicals were sprayed from an airplane by Murrayair Ltd.

Other agents that were sprayed during the testing were Diquat, 2,4-D butyl ester, diesel oil, several name brand surfactants, paraquat, cacodylic acid, picloram-potassium salt and a few more.

Analysis was made of the chemicals by themselves and in conjunction with others on how well they eliminated the ground cover and tree leaves. There were about 23 types of vegetation in the areas studied, ranging from trees to ferns to grasses.

Some of the areas used in the testing are currently pasturelands. The countryside was burned off following the defoliation, and reseeded with grass. Cattle now graze on the lands, apparently with no ill effect.

Areas in the reforestation areas also were to be burned off and planted with more native vegetation, but rains prevented this.

As a result, melastoma, a hardy shrub which will grow densely into thickets, has overwhelmed the land, according to Ralph Daehler, Kauai district forester.

Daehler did say the defoliation "helped reduce costs of site preparation," and that most the herbicides were consumed by the vegetation that was subsequently killed, and not by the soil.

Rep. Kamalii speaks out

Mob's misuse of aloha deplored

Hawaiian concepts of aloha, "ohana" and "kokua" have been used to justify the existence of organized crime in Hawaii, Republican State Rep. Kinau Kamalii has charged.

"What must be condemned is the mistaken and dangerous linkage of authentic cultural statements with organized crime," Kamalii said in the text of a speech yesterday to the Daughters of the British Empire meeting at Liberty House.

"It is an insult to the dignity and pride of all Hawaiians to condone or excuse criminal activity because it masquerades as an expression of native values."

Recent interest in "localism" and Hawaiiana — the "Hawaiian Renaissance" — has been "abused by some" to justify criminality and violence, Kamalii said.

"In particular, I am outraged by those who tolerate organized crime in Hawaii because it is 'local,'" she said.

She pointed out that "localism"

became an issue in the recent extortion trial involving Takeo Yamauchi and Gordon Nagata. One of the issues in the trial was that the jury may have believed Nagata violated the gambler's code, Kamalii said.

"Was this a jury that voted to uphold the gamblers' code instead of the law?" she asked.

Beyond that, however, Kamalii complained that the trial may have been a case of "local" versus "outsider."

"As Advertiser reporter Walter Wright persuasively argued in a commentary last Sunday, the trial was also consciously cast as a local-versus-Mainland haole confrontation," she said.

"In effect, the jury actually may have voted against Mr. (Michael) Sterrett, the prosecutor in the trial and the head of the FBI strike force in Hawaii."

Another community value which has been "subverted" to crime is the concept of "ohana" or extended family, Kamalii said.

Ohana embraces within it the idea of taking care of your own, Kamalii said, which fits the interests of organized crime. Obligations are incurred, favors granted and crime extends its hold, she suggested.



This Waiwi tree, or strawberry guava, is bare of leaves three months after being sprayed with Agent Orange on Kauai in 1968.



Kamalii

"Thus, to kokua — to help or assist someone in need — also becomes a perverse contradiction of the original notion. Not exactly a pay-off or bribe, to kokua may be the most insidious access point of organized crime into our social and governmental circles."

"Is the syndicate active in Waikiki showrooms? Well, if they are, it's only to kokua local entertainers, to assure that they are not replaced by vacationing Las Vegas acts. They're only protecting our own, another version of ohana."

"And if a political candidate needs big-name local entertainment? Well, the entertainers will kokua if they're

asked by the same people who protected their jobs."

Once the candidate is elected, the influence extends even further to board and commissions where "even more contacts can be made and more favors given," she said.

An answer to the problem, Kamalii concluded, would be to beef up the state Crime Commission and give it civil immunity to report on the activities of organized crime.

"Our pride in being na keiki o ka aina, children of the land, demands that we freely and openly investigate, prosecute and inform all of the people when the fine lines of ohana, kokua and aloha are violated."

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