

Agent Orange in Vietnam, “Apocalypse Still”. The Children of War Bear Silent Witness to the Scourge

By [Global Research News](#)

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By VAL***

As a result of her high profile helping the people of Vietnam, [Le Ly Hayslip](#) of Global Village Foundation often receives letters from Vietnamese families asking for help. She recently received one such letter from a husband and wife with two twenty-eight year old sons who suffer from the effects of Agent Orange. The family has at least four letters from different doctors confirming that Agent Orange caused the genetic problems.

The father worked for the American military during the Vietnam War, running missions searching for Viet Cong after the Americans defoliated a forest by dumping Agent Orange from the air. The father still has his official papers from the US military.

Given our interest in Agent Orange, Le Ly arranged for us to visit the family at their home in a remote village near Hoi An. After a 3 hour drive, and a one-hour walk through the rice paddies under the hot Vietnamese sun, we interviewed the parents and met their sons.

Firstly, for some background about Agent Orange in Vietnam, please read “[Apocalypse Still](#)” by investigative reporter Robert Dreyfuss in Mother Jones in 2000:

In the years since the war’s end, however, the reality of America’s chemical warfare in Vietnam’s forests and rice paddies has slowly begun to unfold. Though thousands of American veterans of the war now receive government compensation for illnesses linked to Agent Orange, the United States has yet to accept responsibility for the devastating effects of its campaign on Vietnam. Millions, perhaps tens of millions of Vietnamese, combatants and civilians alike, were showered with Agent Orange, and then lived, worked, and breathed amid the residue of an especially virulent form of dioxin, a byproduct of one of the defoliant’s chemical components. This poison, a carcinogen once described as “the most toxic molecule ever synthesized by man,” infiltrated the country’s water and soil, entering the food chain and accumulating in people’s tissues, even passing from mother to child through breast milk. According to Vietnamese estimates, the millions of gallons of Agent Orange that soaked the southern half of Vietnam during the 1960s eventually killed or injured 400,000 people and reportedly contributed to birth defects in 500,000 children. Chillingly, its effects are still being felt, not only among older Vietnamese, whose cancers and other illnesses are often linked to Agent Orange, but among second- and third-generation children of the war, whose twisted bodies and crippled minds bear silent witness to the scourge.

Please [read the rest](#), which Dreyfuss [calls](#) “One of my most important pieces. ” (see [here](#)

[\(pdf\)](#) for the version of the article with photos)

The US government is still denying the extent of the problem, their culpability, and their liability. There are some positive-looking moves, however, with the US House Foreign Affairs holding some [hearings](#) last week called “Our Forgotten Responsibility: What Can We Do To Help Victims of Agent Orange?”

In our interview, the parents described their ordeal: When the twins were 3 years old, the parents realized that they were having developmental problems and took them to all the major hospitals in Central Vietnam for help. They were told that they only have two options; either take the children to a foreign country to get some medical treatment, or simply take the children home and try to look after them.

The family couldn’t afford to travel to seek medical attention, so the twins, now 28 years old, have been at home ever since. The twins can’t feed themselves, and they can’t talk. Their entire existence is lying on a shared, cane bed which has slits in it so that their bodily waste can fall through to the floor.

The twins appear to be able to communicate with each other via sounds and eye contact, and appeared to know that we were in their room, with one of them appearing to show us his bed sores.

The parents are both 60 years old and aren’t sure how long they will live. One of their main concerns, now, is that there isn’t anybody to look after their sons when the parents die.

We’d like to thank the family for sharing their story with us.

If you’d like to help the family, please contact us at vietsanon@yahoo.com or contact Global Village directly: info@globalvillagefoundation.org

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