

CBC.CA News - Full Story:

Toxic herbicide could still be on army base, scientist says

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[CBC News](#)

Traces of a toxic herbicide sprayed at CFB Gagetown in the 1960s probably still remain on the base, according to an environmental scientist.

"If you went back to the areas today where Agent Purple was sprayed and undertook some sampling, there's a high probability that you will find some dioxin, given the analytical techniques of today," said Wayne Dwernychuk.

- **BACKGROUND:** [Agent Orange and other defoliants](#)

CBC News revealed on Monday that a U.S. army report shows Agent Purple, considered three times more toxic than the cancer-linked Agent Orange, was sprayed on the base in 1966.

To date, the government has only acknowledged the harm caused by spraying Agent Orange in 1966 and 1967 at CFB Gagetown. The Canadian military is paying compensation in two cases connected to the spraying.



Wayne Dwernychuk.

Dwernychuk went to Vietnam in 1994 to research how the chemical defoliants Agents Orange and Purple had affected the environment there. He found the dioxins remained in the soil.

He believes that dioxin is likely still sitting in the ground at CFB Gagetown and may be leaching into the water system, which could pose a risk to people.

"Through the process of biomagnification, it could eventually end up in humans," Dwernychuk said.

He wants the government to do a health study of the communities around CFB Gagetown.

Civilians who say they were affected by toxic chemicals sprayed at Gagetown are now asking for compensation.

- **FROM JUNE 14, 2005:** [Civilians want compensation for chemical spraying at N.B. base](#)

Defence Minister Bill Graham said on Monday that there will be compensation for people who can show a link between their disease and the spraying of the herbicide.

Graham has defended the government's past use of the herbicide, saying it was widely used back then and that at the time, there was no belief there was any risk to humans.

But Dwynychuk said he's puzzled why the government believed Agent Purple was safe. The U.S. military used the herbicide from 1962 to 1965, ceasing use in 1965.

"If Agent Purple was stopped in terms of applications in Vietnam in 1965, why was it used in New Brunswick in 1966," he asked.

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