

# TOXIC EXPOSURE COMMITTEE REPORT

APRIL 2021

## NADINE OWEN AND NANCY SWITZER

For years, one of the many important goals for the Agent Orange Awareness Program has been to be able reach out and educate as many Veterans, their families and friends about not only on the effects they personally experience from their exposure(s), but the generational effects that we have come to be made aware of as well. More and more of our children and now grandchildren, are showing signs of just what this exposure is capable of doing. It has long been discussed that even though the importance of this continued education for Veterans, their families and friends is very important it is equally, if not more so, important for the medical community to be made aware as well. Our efforts to involve the medical community have stopped short with the need for an accredited program that would not only entice but allow for the sharing of this information in a situation that would best suit this community. This has been our vision and our goal for the last few years, working diligently to be able to offer a program that will finally be able to reach our medical professionals. With the help of the local Veteran's Advocate for the area hospitals/clinics (and with whose support we have done several AO Town Halls), we have been able to acquire the medical expert needed to conduct one such program ... a geneticist from the OHSU medical facility in Portland, Oregon. A geneticist whose' areas of interest include (but are not limited to) mutagenesis & environmental epigenetics and who was honored for his work in 2014- 2015 Institute of Medicine's Committee to Review the Health Effects in Vietnam Veterans of Exposure to Herbicides (10th Biennial Update). Scheduled for virtual seminar on September 22, 2021, this will be by invitation and videotaped for possible future uses. To say we are excited is an understatement.

A virtual VVA Agent Orange meeting was held on April 8, 2021 led by Maynard Kaderlik. Much discussion was on revitalizing the AO Town Hall meetings. The presumptives that were passed in a Bill still have not been implemented. More to come on this.

We have been having virtual meetings with Betty Mekdeci regarding the masks we reported out in the last report. I am asking all of the Regional Directors to please contact their states, explain the importance of making this donation of \$10.00 per mask. If you need me to email the last letter with a picture of the mask so all you have to do is email it out – let me know. We need to help the Birth Defects registry because they have the research we will vitally need. Betty has approximately 180 air Force veterans on her Registry.



We thought our mission had been achieved.

Not so. It's now been four years, and our law, fought for so passionately, has yet to be implemented. With new VA leadership soon to be in place, it is time to rally together again to insist that our legislation be acted on and for the research to begin.

It has been 12 years since we all recognized our children and grandchildren had unwanted health issues related to our veterans' exposure to Agent Orange and other toxicants during military service. As a group, we decided to get answers needed to provide help for our offspring, and we began our fight.

Working together, we drew attention to our children's health issues by holding Agent Orange Town Hall meetings, collecting Faces of Agent Orange stories, working with the media, and lobbying our Congressional representatives. When we began, we were told we would never succeed in getting a law through Congress. With the help of dedicated Congressional staffers and representatives, at long last, we succeeded in passing a research bill, which was signed into law in December 2016.

To, once again, bring attention to our issue, we have bulk-ordered Agent Orange cloth face masks. (The mask is pictured above). The masks sales also benefit the Birth Defect Registry which has been financially negatively impacted with the pandemic. We need this registry for our research data.

The mask sells for \$10.00 each. Sandie Wilson has the supply, plus the mailing material. If you order the masks in groups of 10, your wholesale price is \$90 per 10 masks. Everyone wanting toxic exposure research for our children should be wearing one of our masks.

To order, please contact Sandie Wilson at [sandie.wil@comcast.net](mailto:sandie.wil@comcast.net) or call 734-216-4862. Make your check out to Birth Defects Research for Children and mail it to Sandie Wilson at 8933 moon Road, Saline, Michigan 48176. Please include your mailing address to ship the masks and the amount needed.

Please order the masks and sell them in your area... and please forward this letter to your contacts. This is so important! We thank you for your keeping Agent Orange in front of your fellow patriots.

Yours truly,

*Nancy S. Switzer, Nadine Owen and Sandie Wilson*