

*While the Association does not necessarily agree or disagree with everything on this page, we do respect the right of everyone to have their say.*

## Your Say

### Agent Orange exposure doubles risk of developing Dementia, study finds.

[Patricia Kime](#)

A U.S. Huey helicopter sprays Agent Orange over Vietnam. The U.S. military used at least 11 million gallons of Agent Orange in Vietnam from 1961 to 1972.



A new study of more than 300,000 Vietnam-era U.S. veterans has found that those who were exposed to Agent Orange are nearly twice as likely to develop dementia as those who were not.

The new finding is among the most substantial to date linking cognitive decline with chemicals used for defoliation during the Vietnam War. For the study, researchers at the San Francisco



Veterans Affairs Health Care System examined the medical records of thousands of veterans and found a two-fold risk of dementia for those whose medical records indicated evidence of exposure.

According to Deborah Barnes, a researcher with the University of California San Francisco and the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the study authors found that, over the course of time, 5% of veterans with a documented exposure to Agent Orange were diagnosed with dementia compared with 2.5% of vets with no known exposure. Even though the absolute rates are low, these veterans were still relatively young, so if the risk holds, we would expect that to increase as they age.

The research also discovered that the exposed vets were diagnosed an average of 15 months earlier than non-exposed veterans -- a finding that can have a huge impact on former personnel, their families and society as a whole. Studies have found if we could delay the onset of dementia by a year or 15 months, it would have a huge impact on the population prevalence over time.



For the study, the researchers reviewed the medical records of Vietnam veterans who received care through the Veterans Health Administration from Oct. 1, 2001, to Sept. 30, 2015. They excluded anyone already diagnosed with dementia and those whose Agent Orange exposure was unclear. They found that even after adjusting for other factors and conditions that can play a role in the development of dementia -- psychiatric conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, medical conditions like diabetes and Parkinson's, or demographic variables -- the two-fold risk remained.



They did observe that veterans who had a history of Agent Orange exposure were more likely to have PTSD in their medical records or traumatic brain injury, so if they did have other conditions that could increase their risk of dementia, they adjusted statistically and there still was an association. Throughout the Vietnam War, U.S. forces sprayed more than 19 million gallons of defoliant, including 11 million of Agent Orange, to clear the jungle and destroy crops. From 1962 to 1971, at least 2.6 million U.S. service members were stationed in Vietnam and other places where the herbicides were sprayed or stored.

Thousands of veterans have been diagnosed with varying types of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Parkinson's disease and peripheral neuropathy as a result of exposure to the herbicides, according to the US VA. The research didn't explain why exposure may be linked with the development of dementia, but one of the main ingredients of the defoliants -- dioxin -- is known to be stored in fat tissue where it "sticks around for a long time. It's possible that Agent Orange stayed in the fat tissue and is slowly being released and causing toxic effects on the brain, but it is also known that Agent Orange increases the risk of other disorders that themselves are risk factors for dementia, so it's unclear if it's a direct effect of the dioxin, an indirect effect or possibly a combination.

The researchers say that their study has some limitations, including concerns over the accuracy of Agent Orange exposure documentation in medical records or misclassification of a dementia diagnosis. Also, the study did not include veterans who receive care outside of VA or contain any baseline cognitive scores, which could have revealed whether any of the veterans had undiagnosed dementia at the start.



The researchers suggested that additional studies be conducted to determine the relationship between Agent Orange exposure and dementia and added that they hoped it would encourage physicians to screen their patients for the condition as they age. Dementia is on the rise in the aging veterans community in the US, with a 20% increase expected among VA patients over the next decade, according to the department.

Researchers say they would also like to see more research on the positive steps patients can take to offset increased risk -- physical activity, healthy lifestyle choices, treating their mental health diagnoses and more. 'We can't change our past. ... What veterans can control is what they are doing now and what they do in the future. It is hoped that, even if veterans have this risk factor, engaging in a healthier lifestyle may help them offset that risk.

If you don't swear while driving – you're not paying enough attention to the road.



## Flood waters

John Laming

A recent headline in newspapers said "Man drowns while on phone to rescuers" The man died when he drove into a flood-affected area in Glenorie in Sydney's northwest at 6am on the 24<sup>th</sup> March. He is suspected to have become trapped when the electrical system failed in his Toyota Camry. The poor bugger spent 45 minutes trying to escape from his car. Seems the car's windows and door opening (unlocking) system failed to operate without electrical power. He was drowned.



You would have thought the vehicle's design team would have foreseen the possibility of electrical failure and designed a manual override system. If nothing else, an internally installed window breaking escape tool like some RAAF aircraft used to have in the cockpit. At least in commercial airliners there are escape hatches and cockpit manually opening windows. Anyone buying cars that can trap the occupants in event of an electrical failure needs to think what happens if their family is in the car

Is there a tax I can pay to stop Covid-19 – or does that only work for climate change.

## What is Gaslighting?

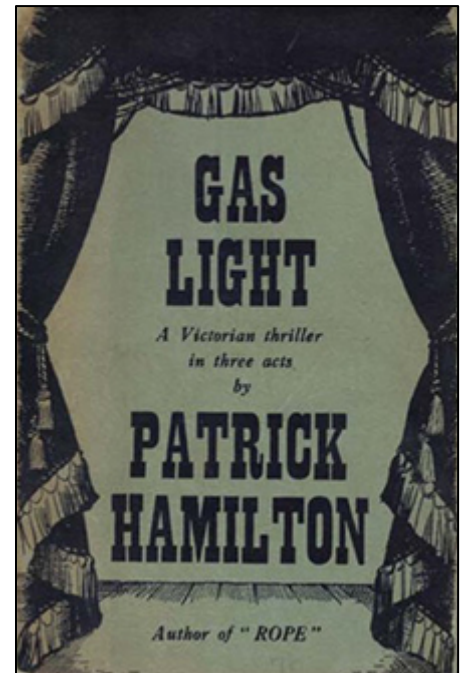
Mike Gaham.



I know we have heard this word before, but now, truly review, understand and comprehend its meaning. The term originates in the systematic psychological manipulation of a victim by her husband in Patrick Hamilton's 1938 stage play *Gas Light*, and the film adaptations released in 1940 and 1944.

In the story, the husband attempts to convince his wife and others that she is insane by manipulating small elements of their environment and insisting that she is mistaken, remembering things incorrectly, or delusional when she points out these changes. The play's title alludes to how the abusive husband slowly dims the gas lights in their home, while pretending nothing has changed, in an effort to make his wife doubt her own perceptions. The wife repeatedly asks her husband to confirm her perceptions about the dimming lights, but in defiance of reality, he keeps insisting that the lights are the same and instead it is she who is going insane.

Today, we are living in a perpetual state of gaslighting. The reality that what we are being told by the media is at complete odds with what we are seeing with our own two eyes. And when we question the false reality that we are being presented, or we claim that what we see is that actual reality, we are vilified as racist or bigots or just plain crazy.



You're not racist. You're not crazy. You're being gaslighted.

- In the US, New York State has twice as many deaths from Covid- 19 than any other state, and New York has accounted for one fifth of all Covid-19 deaths, but we are told that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has handled the pandemic better than any other governor. But if we support policies of Governors whose states had only a fraction of the infections and deaths as New York, we're called anti-science and want people to die. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.
- We see mobs of people looting stores, smashing windows, setting cars on fire and burning down buildings, but we are told that these demonstrations are peaceful protests, and when we call this destruction of our cities, riots, we are called racists. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.
- We see the major problem destroying many inner-cities is crime; murder, gang violence, drug dealing, drive-by shootings, armed robbery, but we are told that it is not crime, but the police that are the problem in the inner-cities. We are told we must defund the police and remove law enforcement from crime-riddled cities to make them safer But if we advocate for more policing in cities overrun by crime, we are accused of being white supremacists and racists. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.
- The United States of America accepts more immigrants than any other country in the world. The vast majority of the immigrants are "people of colour", and these immigrants are enjoying freedom and economic opportunity not available to them in their country of origin, but we are told that the United States is the most racist and oppressive country on the planet, and if we disagree, we are called racist and xenophobic. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.



- Capitalist countries are the most prosperous countries in the world. The standard of living is the highest in capitalist countries. We see more poor people move up the economic ladder to the middle and even the wealthy class through their effort and ability in capitalist countries than any other economic system in the world, but we are told capitalism is an oppressive system designed to keep people down. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.
- Communist countries killed over 100 million people in the 20th century. Communist countries strip their citizens of basic human rights, dictate every aspect of their lives, treat their citizens as slaves, and drive their economies into the ground, but we are told that Communism is the fairest, most equitable, freest, and most prosperous economic system in the world. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.
- The most egregious example of gaslighting is the concept of "white fragility". You spend your life trying to be a good person, trying to treat people fairly and with respect. You disavow racism and bigotry in all its forms. You judge people solely on the content of their character and not by the colour of their skin. You don't discriminate based on race or ethnicity. But you are told you are a racist, not because of something you did or said, but solely because of the colour of your skin. You know instinctively that charging someone with racism because of their skin colour is itself racist. You know that you are not racist, so you defend yourself and your character, but you are told that your defence of yourself is proof of your racism. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

Gaslighting has become one of the most pervasive and destructive tactics in American politics. It is the exact opposite of what our political system was meant to be. It deals in lies and psychological coercion, and not the truth and intellectual discourse. If you ever ask yourself if you're crazy, you are not. Crazy people aren't sane enough to ask themselves if they're crazy. So, trust yourself, believe what's in your heart. Trust your eyes over what you are told. Never listen to the people who tell you that you are crazy, because you are not, you're being gaslighted.



Sophocles said: "What people believe prevails over the truth." And that's what the media are trying to exploit. If you have read this far let me say one thing. I did not write the above and I am not sure who the author is. I sent this to you because you are hopefully smart enough to understand what is being done to you on a daily basis from many directions. I do not care about your political party affiliation. Just think through what you are being told. Don't listen with a deaf ear, or see with a blind eye.

- Question everything -- even things from people who you think you can trust.
- Question why you are being told whatever, by whomever.
- Question their motives.
- Question who benefits.
- Question if there is a hidden agenda behind the propaganda.
- Question, Question, Question.



Then do your own research and use some of your own critical thinking skills to get to the truth. Listen with your heart and with your mind. Sadly, 95% of the masses don't even know that they are being gaslighted. At least now you do.

I saw a great video over the weekend which tried to expose the “cancel” society where if you challenge the “facts” you are racist, sexist etc. One of the clips has a school district governor saying that promotion on merit is racist because it is predominately white folk who have the merit. Although the US Vice President has many skills and experience which suit her to the job, when did you see any report which said other than she is the right person for the job because she is a black female?

When I first went to Melbourne (1970, as a RAAF Engineering cadet) the information mantra was: “*news is in The Age, informed opinion is in the Letters to the Editor pages of The Age and the footy scores and TAB dividends are in the Sun*”. The availability of papers in the Cadets mess reflected this (10 copies of The Age and 1 copy of the Sun). The only use I have for The Age these days is some decent cartoons and challenging puzzles and quizzes, as well as recipes.



“News” reporting has been replaced by almost propaganda level opinion in all media outlets. Left or right wing, print, television or radio: the story is presented as though it is fact when, in fact, it is a minimum of selected fact to support the opinion. There are still still some decent letters in The Age, but getting fewer by the day. Clive Bond (an old RAAF ATC mate) and Barbara Chapman (the wife of an old RAAF ATC mate) try to keep the bastards honest in letters to The Australian and The Age respectively and you can always rely on residents of Castlemaine to push the green barrow. The current and, I strongly suspect, past generation of 15-25 year olds rely almost entirely on social media as their source of news and facts and will blithely tell you, “but I saw it on YouTube” or “Google says”.

Wikipedia has become a source of “facts” somewhat akin to the “they say” (Readers Digest) of our days. You and I joined the voting public at a time of “politics from the pulpit”. Vince Gair could have been the Pope. When my kids were at school in the 1980's we faced the issues of the next generation of teachers trying the same trick in the classroom. If a formative mind sits all day with Miss Smith spouting facts like  $5+5=10$  and the Magna carta was signed in 1215 (or was that at 1215, before lunch) then, of course the social agenda promoted by her must also be correct.

We taught our kids to (politely) question “facts” presented without supporting evidence. To do so today risks accusations of “challenging authority”. The divide in the US is going to get much worse before it heals (or should that be heels?) and while the void is there the situation is ripe for a worse “alternative” to be put in place. I'm reminded of the old joke about the dyslexic, agnostic insomniac who stayed awake at night wondering if there really was a dog. In my youth we had the conundrum, “Why is the eagle?” Some years later in a logic tutorial during my BBus studies the lecturer explained it succinctly, ‘Because the higher the fewer and that's why the Pyramids.’

Of course!!



## ESO corruption and the correlation to the deterioration of veteran's welfare and entitlements.

Rod Thompson

It has become clear over the last 10 years that the leaders of our national and state ESO's have no interest in improving the situation for the whole of our veteran community. They regularly attend meetings and forums with government and DVA and purport to speak for the veteran community allow DVA and government to whittle away entitlements, produce legislation that does not benefit the whole veteran community. For this they are awarded gongs, grants and gratuities (the 3 G's) at the expense of the community they supposedly represent.



Recent events reported in the media and via veterans' social media networks highlight the huge divide between the average veteran and the ESO leadership, most of whom would not give the time of day to a struggling veteran or even recognise one if they tripped over them in their Italian leather shoes. We have seen state and national RSL presidents given cars, free accommodation for themselves and family members, honorariums, credit cards, free travel, free legal assistance, Italian suits, IT and plush Office space, PA's and invitations to events such as concerts, sporting events and many other perks too numerous to list. For what? what have these men and women done in recent times to better the lives of the average veteran?

All of these perks are paid for by the money held on behalf of the membership these people have not earned one cent of it.

There are literally billions of dollars held by the thousands of ESO's large and small around the country and how much of this actually goes to coal face veteran services and assistance, less than 10% would be a good guess. It is clear they consider this their money not ours and we should be grateful for the crumbs they throw at us from the windows of their plush offices located on prime real-estate. How many corrupt ESO heads have we seen recently investigated and charged by state and federal law enforcement, the ACNC and other statutory governance bodies. Currently there a number of ESO's involved in civil and criminal litigation those include but are not limited to, the APPVA National Branch, the TPI Federation and some Branches of the RSL all of which are members of ESORT and supposedly represent the veteran community.

This situation is totally unacceptable and needs to be addressed in any Royal Commission as the inaction of these so-called veterans support organisation have also contributed to the rise of veteran suicide, homelessness and poverty. There are many small sub-branches and organisations that do not have pokies or bar revenue that do more for the veteran community than all of these major national and state bodies combined to those and their dedicated volunteers I say thank you are truly the heart and soul of our community and you change and save lives every day.





To conclude I will leave you with the words of Jamie Twidale CEO of RSL Victoria regarding the ANZAC Day March Jamie epitomises the lack of understanding and compassion of our major ESO's, he said: "In hindsight, the march is a bit more special to some than we anticipated".

If this man has not bought the RSL into disrepute I don't know what to say.

## I tried to make a salad... I failed



## DFRDB Update Jan 2021.

Jim Hislop OAM. President  
Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.

### CDDA Application

As expected, Herb Ellerbock's CDDA (Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration) application has now been formally rejected by the Directorate of



Special Financial Claims (DSFC). The application was submitted in March and it took DSFC until December to finalise it. And even though it was largely irrelevant to the claim, DSFC still used the Ombudsman's Report as the primary justification for rejection.

## Legal Action

After further consultation with our barrister, we have determined that the only challenge open against the legality of the DFRDB Act is on constitutional grounds, so Herb has now prepared a case, the basis of which is: The construction of the DFRDB Act is unconstitutional, in that the ordinary meaning of the text of the provisions in the Act results in acquisition of property on other than just terms, within the meaning of section 51(xxxi) of the Constitution.

Our advice from the barrister is that there are two primary avenues of appeal:

1. An Administrative Review by the AAT.
2. A Judicial Review by the Federal Court.

The AAT can engage in interpreting the disputed provisions of the DFRDB Act as it stands, and it can hear an argument that the Act as it stands is unconstitutional. If the latter argument is advanced then the Commonwealth can, and probably will remove the matter to the High Court. The AAT cannot deal with arguments that the legislation is simply 'unfair' or that there was any failure of consultation etc. by Parliament in the enacting the Act.



If ADFRA was to take the case to the Federal Court, the Court must first grant standing to the Association (ADFRA) to bring the action. If it does so then, it will want a security for the Commonwealth's costs of the order of \$50K. If standing is not granted, then any individual member who has suffered adversely can bring the action in their own name, provided a decision has been made by DFRDB in their case on the issue. Court proceedings may provide some political leverage for Ministerial intervention, but there is no guarantee. Since it does not require a substantial security, we have opted for the AAT avenue of appeal. However, as the deadline for the appeal of all previous decisions relating to DFRDB has been surpassed, Herb, who will bring the case to the AAT, has submitted this Complaint to the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) to trigger a new decision.

Our thanks for the erudite efforts of Bill Arden (WgCdr retired), whose research identified the perceived breach of section 51(xxxi) and located legal determinations which we can cite during our legal challenge.

## Meeting with the Shadow Minister.

So far, our approach to Shayne Neumann, the Shadow Minister for Defence Personnel and Veterans' Affairs has not resulted in any real action.



### Defence Instructions

We have been trying to locate Defence Instructions which relate to the DFRDB scheme, particularly any which may have been promulgated after the DFRDB Act was enacted in June 1973 and after Defence Force (Retirement and Death Benefits Amendments) Act 1977 was enacted in February 1977. If anyone has any copies they can forward, or knows where they may be sourced, it would be greatly appreciated.

### Stay COVID Safe.

As COVID continues to impact our lives, I trust that you will do your utmost to keep yourselves and your families safe.

My second attempt at making a salad...I don't know what I'm doing wrong





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