

## The Rainbow Agents

The rainbow agents were called by the different colours because of the coloured band marking the drums that contained them, not the colour of the spray.

Agent White and Agent Orange were sprayed over Phuoc Tuy province, and the last recorded spraying over Phuoc Tuy was in June 1968 when W1 and V3 were in Nui Dat, shortly after V3 arrived, and about 5 months before 4 Tp NZSAS arrived.

The last Agent Orange spray in all of Vietnam was in May 1970 after President Nixon ordered it to cease. That was about the time that V5 arrived in South Vietnam, about two years after the last mission in Phuoc Tuy.

Note that TCDD (dioxin) was the toxic contaminant in 2,4,5-T. It was present in minute quantities in Agent Orange (about 13 parts per million according to both sides of the Agent Orange debate) and was not present in Agent White.

These are the different Agents of the rainbow, showing the dates they were used in South Vietnam, and whether or not they contained the toxic TCDD (dioxin).

**Agent Pink (used from 1961 to 1965)**

60% n-butyl ester of 2,4,5-T (containing TCDD/dioxin)

40% isobutyl ester of 2,4,5-T (containing TCDD/dioxin)

**Agent Green (used from 1961 to 1964)**

100% n-butyl ester of 2,4,5-T (containing TCDD/dioxin)

**Agent Purple (used from 1961 to 1965)**

50% n-butyl ester of 2,4-D

30% n-butyl ester of 2,4,5-T (containing TCDD/dioxin)

20% isobutyl ester of 2,4,5-T (containing TCDD/dioxin)

**Agent Blue (used from 1962 to 1971)**

100% sodium salt, cacodylic acid.

A desiccant (drying agent) rather than a defoliant, used for crop destruction.

**Agent White (used from 1966 to 1971)**

80% triisopropanolamine salt of 2,4-D

20% triisopropanolamine salt of picloram

**Agent Orange (used from 1965 to May 1970)**

50% n-butyl ester of 2,4-D

50% n-butyl ester of 2,4,5-T (containing TCDD/dioxin)

An analysis of the USAF Herbs Tapes recording all spray missions over Phuoc Tuy province shows that in 1967 (V1 mainly) most of the missions were Agent Orange, and about 40% were Agent White. In 1968 until the last mission in June (V2, W1, V3) most missions (about 66%) were Agent White. In the first two months of V3's tour there were 15 Agent White missions and only 5 Agent Orange missions. V3 spent all of that time at the Horseshoe.

The spraying then stopped in Phuoc Tuy in June 1968.