

# Editorials

## Agent Orange

*Additional issues need to be raised*

With the recent release of the movie, *Platoon*, many Vietnam era issues are being reexamined. Lt. Elmo Zumwalt III's visit to our campus on Jan. 19 raised many questions concerning the use of the controversial defoliant Agent Orange.

Agent Orange was one of several defoliants sprayed by the U.S. military on Vietnam and parts of Cambodia. It was used along various travel water routes and over land routes, including the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Zumwalt argued that "there were thousands of Vietnam veterans who were saved by Agent Orange, compared to hundreds who will be affected by it (negatively)." This comment raises several very important issues.

First of all, the Vietnamese people who live in the area where the defoliant was used were and continue to be affected by Agent Orange. It is prevalent in their drinking water and it contaminates the soil in which they grow their food. The U.S. should do everything possible to compensate these people for the suffering that they have been faced with.

Secondly, the figures given by Zumwalt are at best soft. There are many people who were affected by Agent Orange that do not get into the statistics. We do not yet know what effects the defoliant will have on the children of the Vietnam veterans. They, too, must be included in the statistics.

Another issue which must be looked at concerns the effectiveness of the military's use of Agent Orange. Was it the best strategy? Although it cleared off many hundreds of thousands of acres of dense foliage so that visibility was improved, this did not necessarily help to expose the Viet Cong. Instead, they moved underground to elaborate tunnel networks which they had constructed. They could see us, but we still could not see them.

One other issue that has been raised is that the Vietnam War and the use of Agent Orange was profitable for a large number of people. One group that profited from the war was the army. It provided a testing ground for many new weapons, both chemical and conventional. Also, the Military Industrial Complex, which is the permanent arms industry for the U.S., profited economically from the war. This was the group that provided the military with weapons, including Agent Orange.

The issue of Agent Orange, along with others that have been raised concerning the Vietnam War, needs to be examined closely. This was a time of great conflict for our country and we need to come to an understanding of the issues involved. Looking at any war from a solely military strategy perspective excludes a more comprehensive and, thus, humanistic point of view.

*by Michele Lashley*

*Dr. Tom Arcaro, assistant professor of sociology, also contributed to this editorial.*

## BLOOM COUNTY



## Frankly Speaking

*by Phil Frank*

I'm a bit depressed..  
I just found out there are  
948,000 graduating seniors  
this year and  
probably 60%  
want the same  
job I do..



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**DRINKING AND DRIVING  
CAN KILL A FRIENDSHIP.**

**by Berke Breathed**

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