

[What is Agent Orange?](#)

A mixture of herbicides that U.S. military forces sprayed in Vietnam from 1962 to 1971 during the Vietnam War for the dual purpose of (1) defoliating forest areas that might conceal Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces and (2) destroying crops that might feed the enemy. The defoliant, sprayed from low-flying aircraft, consisted of approximately equal amounts of the unpurified butyl esters of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T). Agent Orange also contained small, variable proportions of 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin--commonly called "dioxin" which is a by-product of the manufacture of 2,4,5-T and is toxic even in minute quantities. About 50 million litres (13 million gallons) of Agent Orange - containing about 170 kg (375 pounds) of dioxin - were dropped on Vietnam.