



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR FORCE DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

13 MAY 1970

Professor Matthew Messelson
The Biological Laboratories
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Matt:

As you may recall we discussed Monday night whether we knew anything about a lieutenant's report that he had seen a container labeled "GB" while in Vietnam. As I told you then our records do not show any instances where nerve agents have been sent to Vietnam.

I have, however, run into one possible explanation. With our larger artillery rounds the projectiles and bagged propellants are handled separately. The propellants are commonly known as White Bag, Green Bag, etc. The Green Bag propellant is contained in cylindrical metal containers with a green stripe and the label "Green Bag." With the very adverse climate in Vietnam it is often necessary to renovate much of our ammunition. We suspect what may have happened in some of this renovation is that reconditioned containers for the Green Bag propellants have been labeled with one green stripe and the initial "GB" as shorthand for "Green Bag." The abbreviation of "Green Bag" to "GB" should not have happened but could well have and at the moment is the only plausible explanation that I have run across. We have looked into the possibility of gas identification sets, in other words training sets, having been sent to Vietnam. Again our records indicate that none have been sent there.

Sincerely,

Bill Stone

WILLIAM W. STONE, JR.
Brigadier General, GS
Director, Chemical and Nuclear
Operations, OACSFOR

I will have some comments on your paper on Policy Considerations of CS - I plan to send them to you in the next few days for such use as you may wish; recognizing the very basic difference in our views, you may not accept many of them.

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LETHAL NERVE GAS IN VIETNAM CHARGED

Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, May 7—A former
Army officer said today that
he had seen lethal nerve gas
stored at a United States air
base in Bienhoa, South Viet-
nam, while on duty there in
1967 and 1968.

Larry Rottman, a former
first lieutenant, said, however,
that he had never seen the gas
used.

"I heard reports of its being
used," he said.

Mr. Rottman, now a 27-year-
old school teacher in Water-
town, said the gas was stored
in containers marked with the
code name "GB." He produced
an Army document that de-
scribes GB as a so-called nerve
agent that causes death.

Mr. Rottman made his state-
ment at a news conference of
the National Committee for a
Citizens Commission of Inquiry
on United States War Crimes
in Vietnam. The committee, a
group of private citizens, is in-
vestigating alleged war crimes.

Senate Unit Hears U.S. Abused Civilians in Laos

WASHINGTON, May 7 (AP)
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Agency for International De-
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