

Blue Water Navy Resolution #14-07

WHEREAS, during the Vietnam War, the United States military sprayed approximately 22 million gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides over Vietnam to reduce forest cover and crops used by the enemy; these herbicides contained dioxin, which has since been identified as carcinogenic and has been linked to a number of serious and disabling illnesses affecting thousands of veterans; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to address the plight of veterans exposed to herbicides while serving the Republic of Vietnam; and the Act amended Title 38 of the United States Code to presumptively recognize as service-connected certain diseases among military personnel who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975; this presumption has provided access to appropriate disability compensation and medical care for Vietnam veterans diagnosed with such illnesses as Type II diabetes, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, Ischemic Heart Disease, Parkinson's Disease, multiple myeloma, peripheral neuropathy, AL Amyloidosis, respiratory cancers, soft tissue sarcomas and other diseases yet to be identified; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to a 2002 directive, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs policy has denied the presumption of a service connection for herbicide related illnesses to Vietnam veterans who cannot furnish written documentation that they had "boots on the ground" in-country, making it virtually impossible for countless United States Navy and Marine veterans to acquire VA benefits; moreover, personnel who served on ships in the "Blue Water Navy" in Vietnamese territorial waters were, in fact, exposed to dangerous airborne and waterborne toxins which did not merely drift offshore but washed into streams and rivers draining into the South China Sea; and

WHEREAS, the United States Navy and Fleet Marines have been excluded from VA Benefits, yet Agent Orange has been verified, through several national and international studies and reports, as a wide spreading chemical that was able to reach Navy ships through the air and waterborne distribution routes; and

WHEREAS, warships positioned off the Vietnamese shore routinely distilled seawater to obtain potable water, a 2002 Australian study found that the distillation process, rather than removing toxins, in fact concentrated dioxin in water used for drinking, cooking and washing; this study was conducted by the Australian Department of Veterans Affairs after to found Vietnam veterans of the Royal Australian Navy had a higher rate of mortality from Agent Orange associated diseases than did Vietnam veterans from other branches of the military; when the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studied specific cancers among Vietnam veterans, it too found a higher risk of certain cancers among United States Navy veterans; and

WHEREAS, herbicides containing TCDD/Dioxin did not discriminate between soldiers on the ground and sailors on ships offshore; and

WHEREAS, more than 30 National Veterans Service Organizations support the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013; by not passing HR 543, a precedent could be set to selectively provide certain groups of veterans with injury-related medical care while denying other groups without providing any scientific or medical reasoning, and;

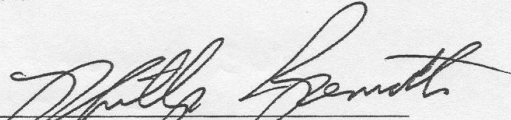
WHEREAS, when the Agent Orange Act passed in 1991 with no dissenting votes, congressional leaders stressed the importance of responding to the health concerns of Vietnam veterans and ending the bitterness and anxiety that had surrounded the issue of herbicide exposure, the federal government has also demonstrated its awareness of the hazards of Agent Orange exposure through its involvement in the identification, containment and mitigation of dioxin "hot spots" in Vietnam; and

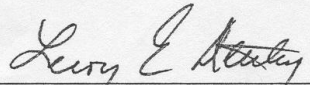
WHEREAS, the United States Congress should reaffirm the nation's commitment to the well-being of all of its veterans and direct the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the Agent Orange Act under the presumption that herbicide exposure in the Republic of Vietnam includes the country's inland waterways, offshore waters and airspace; similarly, now, therefore, be it

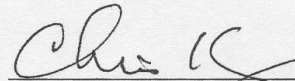
RESOLVED, that the Commissioners Court of Wharton County hereby respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to United States Veterans who served on the inland waterways, in the territorial waters and in the airspace over the combat zone and, be it further

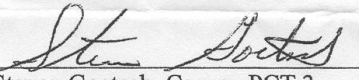
RESOLVED, that the Commissioners Court of Wharton County forward official copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress and to all of the members of the Colorado delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered into the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

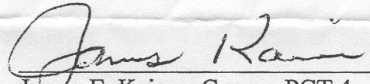
Adopted this 14th day of April, 2014.


Phillip S. Spenrath, Wharton County Judge

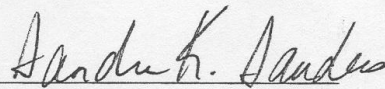

Leroy E. Detling, Comm. PCT 1


D.C. "Chris" King, Comm. PCT 2


Steven Goetsch, Comm. PCT 3


James E. Kainer, Comm. PCT 4

ATTEST:


Sandra K. Sanders, County Clerk

