

My name is John Paul Rossie. I am a Navy veteran of the Vietnam War and I am the founder and current Executive Director of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association based in Littleton, CO. For the record, I would like to state that "Blue Water Navy" refers to Navy, Coast Guard, Fleet Marines and any others who served offshore Vietnam.

I have submitted my written testimony for the public record. It deals **specifically** with veterans of the Vietnam War who **did not** have 'boots on ground,' and who are addressed by HR-2254. I respectfully request that **each** of you personally review this document. It contains facts and offers solutions. It discusses how the Department of Veterans Affairs has been presenting this Committee with **contrived numbers** related to HR-2254. It very clearly shows that **you have been misled** about the head count of Vietnam veterans and about the **cost of treating** veterans who are victims of Chemical Warfare. This is a Truth. It was **designed** to kill jungle foliage. It **inadvertently** killed human being.

As I find myself seated here, surrounded by all of you because **I was invited** here today, I have mixed emotions:

- I am **honored** to be associated with a group, the Blue Water Navy Association, that has earned a seat at this table;

- I am mortified to have to sit here before this Committee and plead for the help that American veterans of the Vietnam War desperately need. We should never have let things get to this point;

- But mostly, I am **stunned** to realize that I am pleading before individuals who have **already promised** to help America's Vietnam veterans. If your promises had not been so convincing, **you would not be sitting** on your side of the table, because the promises you make are why we elected you to fill those seats.

- I am proud to say I am here because I want to **help re-structure** a Department of Veterans **Assistance**, but apparently that can not be done without the strong support of legislative bodies like this Committee, which should eventually be re-named **the Committee** for Veterans **Assistance**.

Before I roll up my sleeves up and get to work, I like to clear up some of the heavier issues:

- I am not at all comfortable when prominent individuals and august bodies, such as this Committee, make promises that they do not keep - and that people **actually die** because of it;

- And I am **appalled** that I am witnessing the Warriors of the Greatest Generation (our parents) having to bury their own children who are not dying of **natural causes**.

They are **dying** because companies like DOW and MONSANTO are **being protected and insulated** by my own government. Our parents are burying their own children because those children have been **deprived** of a long and prosperous life, cut short by an average of 13 years and wracked by **many** years of **pain** and physical disability.

- And I am **disheartened** when I see this trend continue with **our own** children who are coming home from the Middle East.

Many things have to change, and I am offering my help. This coming year will see the highest death toll of Vietnam veterans to date. Every **day** this Committee delays getting these veterans their basic earned medical benefits, another 300 or more will die directly because of that. You can not stop them from dying, but you can insure that their final years provide them and their families some basic human dignity.

We also **suspect** a high suicide rate among Vietnam veterans who, more likely than not, are going to see HR-2254 and S-1939 delayed by the **damned lies** of the veteran's greatest adversary, the Department of Veterans Affairs. "Greatest Adversary" is actually a label given to the DVA by Bob Filner, the Chairman of this Committee.

So I end with a question: What can I do to help you make HR-2254 and S-1939 Law of the Land?