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February 19, 2009

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The Honorable Patrick W. Dunne
Under Secretary for Benefits
Veterans Benefits Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Admiral Dunne:

Recently, I received a copy of a letter from Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii making reference to claims of Navy veterans, who served on vessels that sailed on the waters or were docked in ports in Viet Nam during the Viet Nam era. A constituent of mine, Mr. Lloyd Granaas, was one of these veterans, who served in the Navy and participated in the theater of war of these coastal waters. Mr. Granaas put in a claim for Agent Orange because of his service.

In a recent Compensation and Service Bulletin of December 2008, it was outlined on page 3 that there is a new definition of Viet Nam "blue water vs. brown water" service for the purpose of determining Agent Orange exposure. It appears that those veterans who served in the coastal harbors, such as those in DaNang, Cam Ranh Bay and Vung Tau are now no longer considered veterans who will gain a disability due to Agent Orange exposure. This is a brand new directive that, contrary to what has been understood by the veterans, and I assume by the Veterans Administration for the last 30 years.

Would you be so kind to advise me if this is a veterans-wide policy and if so, how this as decided by the VA? As a past member of the Veterans Committee for almost 20 years, I do not remember having a hearing on this matter, and it is my recollection there has been no initiative to set this criteria to "clarify an exposure to Agent Orange."

I am looking for guidance, which relates to Mr. Grannas' risk for a disability due to Agent Orange exposure because of his service within the inland waterways and ports of call in Viet Nam.

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The Honorable Patrick W. Dunne
February 19, 2009
Page 2

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation and your early reply to assure Navy veterans of the Viet Nam era are not forgotten and are given the appropriate assistance in their claims.

Sincerely,

Cliff Stearns
United States Representative

CS:lwb

bcc: Mr. Lloyd Granaas ✓

Fax Cover Sheet

LLOYD GRANAAS
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Send to: JOHN PAUL ROSSIE	From: LLOYD PAUL GRANAAS
Attention: BLUE WATER NAVY	Date: 2/24/09
Office Location:	Office Location:
Fax Number: 1-866-876-2962	Phone Number:

- Urgent
- Reply ASAP
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LLOYD