



## PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

---

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 20, 2017

No. 17-30

Contact: Mokie Porter  
301-996-0901; 30-585-  
4000, Ext. 146

### **VVA Applauds Rep. Thompson for Introducing H.R. 3327, the *Jack Alderson Toxic Exposure Declassification Act***

(WASHINGTON D.C.) – “We applaud Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA-5th) for introducing H.R. 3327, the *Jack Alderson Toxic Exposure Declassification Act*. Thompson’s stand-alone bill would require the Department of Defense to declassify documents related to any known incident in which no less than 100 members of the Armed Forces were exposed to a toxic substance. This bill will go a long way to benefitting veterans of all generations whose health has been impacted by exposure to toxins during their military service,” said John Rowan, Vietnam Veterans of America national president.

“It’s been over 50 years since the Pentagon’s secret chemical and biological warfare spraying program, in which members of our U.S. Navy and Marines were unwittingly exposed to biological and chemical agents, and our veterans are still waiting for answers,” said Rowan. For nearly 20 years, Jack Alderson and his fellow SHAD veterans, along with VVA, have been battling the Department of Defense to find out to what, exactly, they were exposed.

Among the tests under Project 112 were those designed to test the vulnerability of our Navy vessels. The Shipboard Hazard and Decontamination Program (SHAD) ran from 1962 to 1970 and employed U.S. servicemen as guinea pigs, exposing them to live chemical and biological agents, like sarin, VX, Q Fever, under operations with codenames like ‘Shady Grove,’ ‘Autumn Gold,’ and ‘Copper Head.’

“When an agency’s policy prevents veterans from accessing their service records, which they need to establish service-connected conditions to determine care and benefits with Veterans Affairs, we have a serious breach of justice,” said Rowan. We stand behind this bill and the Senate companion bill aimed at protecting the health of our service members by assisting them in accessing their classified military records which prove their exposure to toxic substances.”

*Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."*

