



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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VVA Applauds House Passage of Blue Water Navy Act; Calls on Senate to Follow Suit ASAP

(Washington, D.C.) – “VVA applauds the passage of H.R. 299, *The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018*, and we call on the Senate to delay no further and pass the companion bill, S.422, as amended in the House. For far too many years, despite the overwhelming support of House members on both sides of the aisle, Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans have been thwarted in their quest to be accorded the same service-connected healthcare and benefits as their fellow ‘boots-on-the-ground Vietnam veterans,’ ” said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

“Now, after today’s vote on H.R. 299, these ‘forgotten’ sailors and Marines can see the light at the end of their tunnel growing bright for the first time in a long while,” said Rowan. This bill, introduced by Rep. David Valadao (R-CA), would restore eligibility for VA healthcare and disability compensation for some 90,000 Blue Water Navy veterans, ensuring that those who served in the Navy off the coast of Vietnam will receive the medical treatment and compensation due to their exposure to Agent Orange.

“We have long maintained that the service of sailors and other personnel in Yankee and Dixie Stations should be equated with the service of boots-on-the-ground troops in Vietnam,” said Rowan. “Now the ball is in the Senate’s court, where the passage of this legislation remains in doubt. Our nation can no longer ignore the demonstrated need of thousands of veterans who served with honor and who are suffering from the same health conditions as their in-country comrades.

“Caring for veterans is part of the continuing cost of the national defense,” Rowan noted. “Regrettably, Congress has fallen down on its responsibility to these veterans and their families. Now, however, with the House in overwhelming endorsement of the *Blue Water Navy Act*, it’s time for the Senate to follow their lead. There can be no excuse for them not to.”

