

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Cincinnati, Ohio
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

Resolution No. 246: Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of their community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Annually the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updates a list which includes vessels that operated primarily or exclusively on Vietnam's waterways; and

WHEREAS, This list includes ships that temporarily operated in these waterways or were moored at the shoreline and ships that operated in close coastal waters of Vietnam for extended periods with evidence that the crewmembers went ashore; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that more than 500,000 servicemembers served aboard ships off the coast from 1964-1975; and

WHEREAS, Many of these personnel now have health problems commonly associated with herbicide exposure and have endured lengthy legal struggles to prove these problems are service-related; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science released its results of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure Report, which found no consistent evidence to suggest "Blue Water Navy" veterans were at higher or lower risk and were unable to state with certainty that "Blue Water Navy" veterans were or were not exposed to dioxins from Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, Current international law and treaties usually put the International Water boundary 12 nautical miles (22km) from a country's coastline; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion strongly supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to presume exposure to Agent Orange for any military personnel who served during the Vietnam War on any vessel that came within 12 nautical miles of the coastlines of Vietnam.