

HR-2254 expands Agent Orange eligibility

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) released the following statement in response to H.R. 2254, The Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009, reaching 200+ cosponsors:

More than 200 Members of Congress Agree: Agent Orange Veterans Deserve Compensation for Their Sacrifice!!

"Republicans and Democrats alike have joined together to stand up for Agent Orange veterans. More than 200 Members of the House of Representatives have added their support for H.R. 2254, a bill to expand the eligibility for presumptive conditions to all combat veterans of the Vietnam War, regardless of where they served. Current law requires VA to provide care for service members exposed to Agent Orange by virtue of their 'boots on the ground,' but ignores veterans that served in the blue waters and the blue skies of Vietnam. H.R. 2254 will provide veterans with benefits based on their exposure to Agent Orange regardless of an arbitrary geographic line or location. These are benefits that they have earned, yet the Department of Veterans' Af-

fairs illogically refuses to acknowledge them.

"Time is running out for these Vietnam veterans. Many are dying from their Agent Orange related diseases, uncompensated for their sacrifice. If, as a result of service, a veteran was exposed to Agent Orange and it has resulted in failing health, this country has a moral obligation to care for each veteran the way we promised we would. And as a country at war, we must prove that we will be there for all of our veterans, no matter when they serve.

"There is still a chance for America to meet its obligations to these estimated 800,000 noble veterans. The courts have turned their backs on our veterans, but I believe this Congress will not allow veterans to be cheated of their earned benefits. I would like to thank the more than 200 Members of the House who have bravely joined the fight to stand up for the rights of Agent Orange veterans. I also urge Senators to cosponsor S. 1939, Senator Gillibrand's companion legislation."

Alaskan veterans halibut fishing tournament set for May 21, 2010 at no charge for veterans

Charter boat captains from Homer, Whittier, and Valdez, Alaska have joined forces for the Alaskan Halibut Veterans Fishing Tournament next year to offer hal-

ibut trips for veterans at no charge. At last count, 40 charter boats have pledged support, and others are expected to join before the May 1, 2010, event. The event is expected to give more than 500 veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and during Desert Storm a free day on the

water. For more information about the 1st Annual Alaskan Veterans Halibut Fishing Tournament and to register refer to www.akvft.org. Registration is only for separated veterans of OIF and/or OEF. Veteran servicemembers of OIEF and/or OEF who are still active duty do not register. Active Duty Personnel seats will be given to their installation leadership for distribution. Those veterans who have or will separate from their respective service prior to

May 21, 2010, should refer to <http://voief.org> to register. There are a limited number of seats available to those who fall into this category so register early. OIF and OEF Veterans desiring to use their own vessel should refer to www.akvft.org/Contact.html.



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January 1, 2010 • HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 3, 2010 — American Legion Pancake Breakfast, 8-11 a.m., Sonora Veterans Hall, Washington Street. The best breakfast in the County.

January 5, 2010 — VVA-391 Board of Directors meeting, Veterans Memorial Hall, Washington Street, 7 p.m.

January 12, 2010 — VVA-391 General Meeting and Social, Veterans Memorial Hall, 9 N. Washington St., Sonora, Pot Luck: 6:30 p.m., 7 p.m. meeting.

January 14, 2010 — WHVVD Parade meeting, 5:30, Veterans Memorial Hall. Stand Down After Action meeting at 2 p.m.

January 17, 1991 — Operation Desert Storm begins.

January 18, 2010 — Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

January 27, 1973 — Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord.