

Testimony for House Bill 5467

Submitted By: Brian A. Carn

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Dear Chairman Azzinaro and the Honored Members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 5467. During the Vietnam War, other countries besides the United States sent combat troops to Vietnam, South Korea being one of them. In the recently passed PACT Act (Section 109 of Title 38, US Code; Section 51), the US Congress awarded VA medical care coverage to South Korean military veterans who had fought in Vietnam and later came to the US and became citizens. The same honor should certainly be extended to the Hmong/Laotian Special Guerrilla Unit veterans and the only way this can happen is through Federal legislative action.

The Hmong/Laotian Special guerrilla Unit veterans and those who served in other irregular forces in Laos fought under direct US military and CIA control. Their heroism in rescuing downed American pilots and aircrew who had been shotdown behind enemy lines is legendary. They conducted dangerous surveillance and sabotage missions against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, North Vietnam's main supply route into the South. They were so effective, North Vietnam invaded with two full combat divisions in 1971-2 yet they couldn't beat these ragtag moungtain tribemen turned soldiers.

Our State and our Country owe a long-overdue debt of gratitude to our forgotten ally, the Hmong/Laotian Special Guerrilla Unit veterans. Not many are left now, but urging our US Congressional Delegation in Washington to support legislation extending VA medical care to the few survivors seems like a small downpayment to make. For these stated reasons, I strongly support passage of House Bill 5467.