

Good Afternoon Jimmy,

Please include my testimony in favor of H 8251 when it comes up today.

Thanks,

Brian

April 9, 2026

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

I would like to submit my written testimony in favor of House Bill H-8251 with some additions. First, I am completely in favor of urging Congress to formally recognize those who served in Honduras during the 1981-1992 time frame with the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. These service members in many cases served in forward areas constructing infrastructure in support of counterinsurgency operations in El Salvador and along the Nicaraguan border in support of the Contras. Their dedicated service needs to be recognized.

We should also urge Congress to do a reflective reevaluation of award dates for the Vietnam Service Medal (VSM) and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) in regards to DMZ service in Korea. For Vietnam service, service members in Vietnam received no recognition from March 29, 1973 to April 28, 1975. The VSM was terminated on March 28, 1973 (the date of the departure of the last US combat troops) with the exception of those involved in the Saigon evacuation on April 29 & 30, 1975, who were initially awarded the AFEM which they can exchange in their records for the VSM. While combat troops may have left, we still had support personnel in country who were at great risk in a war zone, especially when combat operations heated up again in mid-1974 until the fall of Saigon. This needs to change.

In a similar fashion, the award dates for the AFEM in Korea have the same flaw. With America rushing to put the Vietnam War behind them, both Vietnam and the Korean DMZ were determined to no longer be combat zones on July 1, 1974 although Vietnam was later changed and back dated (so combat pay was eventually awarded) for those affected

veterans. The AFEM for Korea was terminated on June 30, 1974. However, in November 1974 the worst gun battle in five years erupted between North and South Korean forces when the First DMZ Tunnel was found. Several days later, when the tunnel was being explored, an explosion killed one American and wounded four more along with one South Korean being killed and one wounded. The Second Infantry Division was deployed during this incident a scant few miles south of where the tunnel was found. I know, I was there. A second tunnel was found in March of 1975 along with frequent infiltrations, sea clashes and strafing attacks occurring through mid-1975. The ax murders of two American officers in the Joint Security Area and the ensuing Operation Paul Bunyon occurred in August, 1976. Hostilities between North and South Korea continued on and off until 1984 when the last American to be wounded occurred in December of that year. The Korean Defense Service Medal was created in 2002 but this is a lower standing award than the AFEM and many veterans from that era refuse to petition for it. This too is long overdue to be looked at.

Thank-you for considering my input.

Brian Carn

Vice-President

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