



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000



DRAFT

Honorable Porter Goss
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

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Dear Mr. Goss:

Thank you for your letter of September 1, 1994, to Secretary Perry. It is the intention of the Department of Defense to fully honor our commitment to the veterans who patriotically served their country above and beyond the call of duty by participating in World War II chemical weapons tests using mustard gas and lewisite.

As you know from our past testimony and correspondence regarding the legislation you introduced, we are diligently working to identify the veterans that participated in these experiments. We have been able to identify an additional eight thousand names since our letter to you in April. Not all of these are confirmed exposures, and the majority are not World War II mustard gas test subjects. However, about 500 of them are from the 1943 Bari Harbor disaster.

We have already begun to share this latest information with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are trying to collect information that will assist us in locating, notifying and appropriately commending individuals whose exposures are verified or highly probable.

The Department of Defense is committed to doing everything we can to support the provisions of S. 2182. Due to the lapse in time and wide dispersion of the records, identification and verification of the test participants is an arduous task, making it nearly impossible for us to identify and locate everyone. We intend to pursue our review of the records and to provide all pertinent findings to the VA. We share the sense of Congress that these American veterans have contributed special service and displayed special loyalty to the United States and are worthy of recognition.

Sincerely,

Jeanne B. Fites
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Requirements and Resources

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