

# Legacies of War Recognition and Unexploded Ordnance Removal Act

*Introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS)*

**Purpose:** To recognize contributions made by communities from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam including the Hmong, Cham, Cambodian, lu-Mien, Khmu, Lao, and Montagnard who supported and defended the United States Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia, and to authorize assistance to support activities relating to clearance of unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war.

**Background:** Many among the Hmong, Cham, Cambodian, lu-Mien, Khmu, Lao, Montagnard and Vietnamese communities fought and died with United States Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 1970s while suffering high rates of casualties—often with little or no recognition. Members of those communities saved thousands of lives by evacuating allied refugees and rescuing United States pilots shot down in enemy-controlled territory. Additionally, they gathered and provided intelligence to the U.S. Armed Forces about enemy troop positions, movement, strength and provided food, shelter and support. For their support of the United States during the conflict, many individuals faced persecution from their host countries. More than 3 million people were forced to flee and seek refuge in other countries, with about 2.5 million SE Asians being resettled mostly in North America, Australia, and Europe.

More than 40 years after the end of the Vietnam War, unexploded ordnance (UXO) from numerous conflicts dropped over Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam during the Vietnam War, continues to cause casualties in those countries. In Laos, much of the country's land remains contaminated with tens of millions of small UXO that have injured or killed more than 50,000 civilians since 1964. In Vietnam, an estimated 800,000 tons of UXO are left over from the Vietnam War and have killed more than 38,000 civilians. Finally, Cambodia has one of the highest rates of landmine and UXO casualties in the world with more than 64,000 Cambodians having been killed or injured since 1979.

## **Summary:**

- Honors the contributions and sacrifices made by SE Asians in support of United States Armed Forces during the conflict in South East Asia in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Recognizes the tragic legacies of war left from this conflict, such as landmines, unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war and the toll it continues to have on civilians to this day.
- Acknowledges the United States longstanding commitment to provide financial support for demining and UXO removal in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.
- Authorizes \$100,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2025 through 2029 to be provided for humanitarian assistance programs to support:
  - Developing national surveys of unexploded ordnance UXO and other explosive remnants of war in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia
  - The clearance of such unexploded ordnance UXO and other explosive remnants of war.
  - Stockpile management of small arms, light weapons and ammunition
  - Capacity building, risk education and survivor support, in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia related to unexploded ordnance UXO and other explosive remnants of war.
  - Survivors of incidents involving landmines, UXO and other explosive remnants of war, including by providing medical assistance and prosthetic devices related to landmines, UXO and other explosive remnants of war.

## **Support:**

Legacies of War (LoW); The HALO Trust (USA), MAG America, Inc.