

JOHN BOOZMAN
3RD DISTRICT, ARKANSAS
www.boozman.house.gov

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SPEAKER'S TASK FORCE FOR A
DRUG FREE AMERICA

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS
AND
INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS
MIDDLE EAST AND
CENTRAL ASIA
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CHAIRMAN,
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

September 22, 2005

The Honorable Glenn Fine
U.S. Department Of Justice
Robert F. Kennedy Building
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Inspector General:

I am writing to express my concern, as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity under the House Veterans Affairs Committee, regarding World War II veterans who may be unjustly deprived of War Trophy firearms currently in their possession. It has been brought to my attention that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) may be inconsistently applying various laws and regulations regarding these historic firearms.

Between 1943 and 1946, U.S. soldiers were authorized by the federal government to bring or send "items of captured enemy equipment", including machine guns, to the United States. During the 1950s the U.S. Treasury Department encouraged World War II veterans and others to have their machine guns converted into Deactivated War Trophy firearms (DEWATs) as a safety measure. However, according to the 1980 Senate hearings into ATF, various DEWAT records were destroyed, without legal justification, at some point before 1975. Because of concerns about how the foregoing problems may unjustly deprive veterans of War Trophy firearms they were authorized "to retain as...personal property..." On May 5, 2005, Representative Jim Gibbons (R-NV) introduced H.R. 2088 to provide qualified veterans an opportunity to register, or re-register, these types of firearms.

I therefore request that the Department of the Inspector General conduct an investigation of the World War II DEWAT program to determine whether the policies of this program are clear and whether they have been and currently are being followed. In addition, I would like to know which documents the ATF currently recognizes as entitling World War II veterans, and/or their lawful heirs, to legally possess War Trophy firearms, and to legally possess DEWATs.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Should you have any questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact Kathee Facchiano in my office for further information.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
Member of Congress

JB:kf
1519 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4301
FAX: (202) 225-5713

207 WEST CENTER STREET
FAYETTEVILLE, AR 72701
(479) 442-5258
FAX: (479) 442-0937

4943 OLD GREENWOOD ROAD, SUITE 1
FORT SMITH, AR 72903
(479) 782-7787
FAX: (479) 783-7662

303 NORTH MAIN, SUITE 10
HARRISON, AR 72601
(870) 741-6900
FAX: (870) 741-7741