

# Franklin D. Roosevelt, Letter to the Senate on Chemicals in Warfare, August 4, 1937

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## To the Senate:

I return herewith, without my approval, Senate Bill 1284, entitled "An Act to change the name of the Chemical Warfare Service."

The Bill proposes to call the present Chemical Warfare Service the "Chemical Corps."

It is my thought that the major functions of the Chemical Warfare Service are those of a "Service" rather than a "Corps." It is desirable to designate as a Corps only those supply branches of the Army which are included in the line of the Army. To have changed the name to the "Chemical Service" would have been more in keeping with its functions than to designate it as the "Chemical Corps."

I have a far more important objection to this change of name. It has been and is the policy of this Government to do everything in its power to outlaw the use of chemicals in warfare. Such use is inhuman and contrary to what modern civilization should stand for.

I am doing everything in my power to discourage the use of gases and other chemicals in any war between nations. While, unfortunately, the defensive necessities of the United States call for study of the use of chemicals in warfare, I do not want the Government of the United States to do anything to aggrandize or make permanent any special bureau of the Army or the Navy engaged in these studies. I hope the time will come when the Chemical Warfare Service can be entirely abolished.

To dignify this Service by calling it the "Chemical Corps" is, in my judgment, contrary to a sound public policy.