

Resolution No. 401

PROTECT POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of nearly 82,000 missing Americans that include approximately 72,000 from World War II, 7,544 from the Korean War, 1,584 from the Vietnam War, 126 from the Cold War, and 8 post-Vietnam that include Operations Eldorado Canyon (1), Desert Storm (2), Iraqi Freedom (3), Operation Prosperity Guardian (2); and

WHEREAS, Congress has in recent years acknowledged the importance of the Fullest Possible Accounting mission by increasing DPAA funding above requested amounts; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that DPAA remain adequately funded. Recovering fallen Americans from long-ago battlefields is demanding and often dangerous work for investigation and recovery teams, but it is the most sacred of missions. It is our government's fulfillment of a soldier's pledge to never leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield, which is a promise that spans all generations; and

WHEREAS, additional money enables DPAA to efficiently plan, resource and accomplish its worldwide mission to recover, identify and return to their families all missing American service members from our nation's previous conflicts; and

WHEREAS, aid provided to host nations to mitigate the legacies of war have strengthened diplomatic relationships necessary to authorize DPAA's recovery efforts in foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, Congress has adopted nine continuing resolutions in the last ten-years and caused three shutdowns since 2013, which hinder operational planning and slow recoveries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to continue to increase funding levels for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Fullest possible Accounting Mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must pass advanced appropriations to prevent a slowdown in recoveries and allow for budget carry-over allowing DPAA to plan multi-year operations.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 402

ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP LAW

WHEREAS, transition from military service is a very stressful and time-consuming period for service members and their families, and often presents psychological, financial, and professional challenges in addition to the need to find new housing, healthcare, resources, and programs to support the unique needs of each member and family; and

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members to ease the difficult transition from service into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, guidance on education and healthcare programs, and information on other benefits and post-service needs; and

WHEREAS, the DOD is required to abide by TAP reforms that were included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 and directed, among other requirements, that all service members attend TAP at least 365 days prior to separation, complete a two-day career track if they are minimally prepared for transition, and be connected to resources in communities in which they plan to reside after service; and

WHEREAS, a December 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed that 70 percent of service members did not attend TAP on time and almost 25 percent of service members who needed to complete a two-day career track did not; and

WHEREAS, VFW surveys of transitioning service members (TSM) indicate findings that align with the GAO's report and show that nearly 34 percent of TSMs either were not or did not know if they were connected to community resources, while our accredited Benefits Delivery at Discharge program representatives hear that TSMs are not consistently getting connected to community resources; and

WHEREAS, new reforms to TAP require DOD and VA to grant accredited Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) access to and provide briefings on predischARGE services like disability claims assistance to TSMs; and

WHEREAS, establishing a leadership position within DOD is needed to drive the necessary cultural change to prioritize transition services and provide Congress with a single point of accountability; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass the TAP Promotion Act, to ensure every TSM is allowed to attend TAP classes with sufficient time to participate in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program and require DOD and its partner agencies to continuously improve TAP and maximize access to materials and resources for TSMs, veterans, and their families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to require the Department of Defense to establish an Under Secretary of Defense for Transition Assistance to oversee, coordinate, and modernize all transition programs to ensure service members receive timely, effective, and standardized transition assistance; and

Resolution No. 402 – continued

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon DOD to enforce existing TAP requirements, ensure full access to VSOs providing critical transition services, and implement policies that prioritize the long-term success of transitioning service members and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 403

RESEARCH BLAST OVERPRESSURE

WHEREAS, exposure to blast overpressure from explosions, heavy weapons fire, and other military operations has been linked to long-term neurological and physiological effects in service members; and

WHEREAS, emerging research indicates that repeated exposure to blast overpressure may contribute to cognitive impairment, psychological disorders, and neurodegenerative conditions such as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE); and

WHEREAS, service members operating in close proximity to explosive weaponry, including breachers, artillery personnel, and special operations forces, are at heightened risk for blast overpressure injuries; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has yet to fully acknowledge the cumulative effects of blast overpressure exposure and implement comprehensive protective measures for at-risk personnel; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need for increased research, improved monitoring, and enhanced safety protocols to prevent, identify, and mitigate the impact of blast overpressure on service members' long-term health; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to direct the Department of Defense to conduct comprehensive research on the long-term health effects of blast overpressure exposure and to implement policies ensuring proper documentation, monitoring, and prevention of such injuries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Department of Defense to acknowledge the risks associated with blast overpressure exposure, develop enhanced protective equipment and training protocols, and ensure service members receive appropriate medical care, screening, and long-term support for conditions related to blast overpressure injuries.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 404

REPATRIATE AMERICA'S FIRST FOREIGN WAR CASUALTIES

WHEREAS, the United States fought its first major foreign war against the Barbary States of North Africa to reign in piracy and secure trade routes during the First Barbary War in the early 1800s; and

WHEREAS, on July 14, 1804, during a daring mission in the Second Battle of Tripoli Harbor, 13 brave American sailors and Marines lost their lives seeking to cripple the enemy's fleet aboard the captured Tripolitan vessel renamed the *USS Intrepid*; and

WHEREAS, reports indicate that these 13 American service members have been interred in a small Protestant cemetery in Tripoli that has not only fallen into disrepair but is often defaced and vandalized; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Navy has readily acknowledged the significance of this battle and the heroics of the men who perished aboard the *USS Intrepid*, but have not sought to repatriate their remains from a territory that remains unfriendly to Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a federally chartered organization of service members who have served in this nation's wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil and in hostile waters, making our organization uniquely postured to see the return of the first brave Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in foreign service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State to seek the disinterment and repatriation of the 13 brave American Sailors and Marines who perished aboard the *USS Intrepid* during the First Barbary War in 1804 and who are currently interred in Libya; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge our grateful nation to welcome these Americans home, ensuring their interment in a place of honor at Arlington National Cemetery so that future generations of Americans may properly honor their unique sacrifice in our nation's first major foreign war.

Submitted by Adjutant General
To Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 405

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION FORMS SSA-1761 AND SSA-7162

WHEREAS, the Social Security Administration (SSA) sends out approximately 15,000 SSA-7162 forms each year. As part of the Foreign Enforcement Program, which verifies the existence and identity of beneficiaries with a foreign address to ensure the SSA has accurate information about the beneficiary's address, contact number and any circumstances that may affect their benefits; and

WHEREAS, these forms can at the present time only be submitted exclusively via local international postal services to Wilkes-Barre, PA; and

WHEREAS, failure to return the form within 60 days can lead to suspension of benefits; and

WHEREAS, far too often these crucial documents are lost and never received and/or delivered resulting in discontinuation of essential entitlements; and

WHEREAS, to reinstate said entitlements the beneficiary must contact their respective Social Security Administration Office which are only located in some Federal Benefits Units (FBU) which may be located in another country (*Example: The FBU for Thailand and Cambodia is located in the Philippines*); and

WHEREAS, the consequences of this action often result in weeks or months without essential benefits depriving the recipient of sufficient funds to obtain medication, food and medical care; and

WHEREAS, there are currently digital technologies already in place that would allow for a secure and reliable means to submit these forms to the Social Security Administration and eliminating the need to submit them via an unreliable international postal system; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would enable the Social Security Administration to initiate immediate reform to end the current unreliable method being used to submit these annual reports and allow for the use of a secure online reporting system; and further

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that part of this legislation include procedures that would allow authorized beneficiaries to submit said forms to any U.S. embassy or U.S. Consulate worldwide.

Resolution No. 406

SUPPORTING THE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to supporting veterans, promoting patriotism, and ensuring the national security of the United States; and, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to supporting veterans, promoting patriotism, and ensuring the national security of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the VFW recognizes the importance of international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes in maintaining global stability and security; and, the VFW recognizes the importance of international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes in maintaining global stability and security; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines is a long-standing ally and strategic partner of the United States, with a shared history of military cooperation and a commitment to democratic values in the Indo-Pacific region; and, the Republic of the Philippines is a long-standing ally and strategic partner of the United States, with a shared history of military cooperation and a commitment to democratic values in the Indo-Pacific region; and

WHEREAS, the West Philippine Sea (also known as the South China Sea) is of vital strategic and economic importance to the Philippines, the United States, and the international community, serving as a crucial waterway for global trade and commerce; and, the West Philippine Sea (also known as the South China Sea) is of vital strategic and economic importance to the Philippines, the United States, and the international community, serving as a crucial waterway for global trade and commerce; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines, as a sovereign nation, possesses legitimate and internationally recognized rights to its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, as defined by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and, the Republic of the Philippines, as a sovereign nation, possesses legitimate and internationally recognized rights to its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, as defined by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and

WHEREAS, an Arbitral Tribunal constituted under Annex VII of UNCLOS, in a landmark ruling on July 12, 2016, unanimously affirmed the Philippines' sovereign rights within its EEZ and continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, and declared that certain actions by the People's Republic of China (PRC) are in violation of UNCLOS; and, an Arbitral Tribunal constituted under Annex VII of UNCLOS, in a landmark ruling on July 12, 2016, unanimously affirmed the Philippines' sovereign rights within its EEZ and continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, and declared that certain actions by the People's Republic of China (PRC) are in violation of UNCLOS; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is deeply concerned by the increasing tensions and militarization in the West Philippine Sea, including actions that impede freedom of navigation, disrupt lawful economic activities, and undermine regional stability; and, the VFW is deeply concerned by the increasing tensions and militarization in the West Philippine Sea, including actions that impede freedom of navigation, disrupt lawful economic activities, and undermine regional stability; and

WHEREAS, the VFW believes that upholding international law, protecting the rights of allies, and promoting a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region are essential to the national security interests of the United States; and, the VFW believes that upholding international law, protecting the rights of allies, and promoting a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region are essential to the national security interests of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the PRC continues to disregard the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and continues its unlawful activities within the West Philippine Sea; and, the PRC continues to disregard the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and continues its unlawful activities within the West Philippine Sea; and

WHEREAS, the PRC's actions continue to undermine the security and stability of the region; now, therefore, the PRC's actions continue to undermine the security and stability of the region; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support the sovereign rights of the Republic of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea, as recognized under international law and affirmed by the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling; and by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support the sovereign rights of the Republic of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea, as recognized under international law and affirmed by the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to Reaffirm its commitment to the Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines and work closely with the Philippine government to ensure its security and territorial integrity; continue to conduct freedom of navigation operations in the West Philippine Sea to uphold international law and ensure the right of all nations to navigate these waters freely; increase diplomatic and economic support to the Philippines to help it protect its sovereign rights and promote its economic development; work with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region to promote a rules-based order, deter aggression, and maintain peace and stability in the West Philippine Sea; publicly condemn the unlawful actions of the PRC within the West Philippine Sea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to continue to conduct freedom of navigation operations in the West Philippine Sea to uphold international law and ensure the right of all nations to navigate these waters freely; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to increase diplomatic and economic support to the Philippines to help it protect its sovereign rights and promote its economic development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to work with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region to promote a rules-based order, deter aggression, and maintain peace and stability in the West Philippine Sea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to publicly condemn the unlawful actions of the PRC within the West Philippine Sea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW will communicate this resolution to the President of the United States, Members of Congress, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Washington, D.C.

Resolution No. 407

ADDING A 'RECOVERED AWAITING DNA CONFIRMATION' CATEGORY TO THE DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY (DPAA) AND IMPLEMENTING DNA MATCH NOTIFICATIONS THROUGH ANCESTRY WEBSITES

WHEREAS, the United States is committed to the fullest possible accounting for its missing service members from past conflicts; and

WHEREAS, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is responsible for recovering and identifying missing personnel but currently lacks a formal category for remains that have been recovered and are awaiting DNA confirmation; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a 'Recovered Awaiting DNA Confirmation' category within the DPAA would provide greater transparency to families of missing personnel and allow for better tracking of ongoing identification efforts; and

WHEREAS, many American families have submitted DNA samples to commercial ancestry and genealogy websites, which have databases that could assist in identifying remains of missing service members; and

WHEREAS, implementing a system that allows these ancestry services to provide notifications to individuals if their DNA appears to be a potential match for an unidentified service member, with proper consent and privacy safeguards, could significantly aid in expediting identifications and providing closure to families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4938, that we urge the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Oklahoma to support and submit this resolution for consideration at the national level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States petitions Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to establish a 'Recovered Awaiting DNA Confirmation' category and to explore partnerships with ancestry and genealogy databases to facilitate responsible DNA matching for the identification of missing service members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW supports the continued improvement of identification efforts for missing service members and the use of modern DNA technology to bring closure to their families.

Submitted by Department of Oklahoma
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 408

SUPPORT FOR ESTABLISHING GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM VETERANS DAY ON AUGUST 30

WHEREAS, the United States has been engaged in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) since September 11, 2001, with military operations conducted across multiple theaters, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and other regions; and

WHEREAS, millions of American service members have served in combat and support roles during the Global War on Terrorism, making tremendous sacrifices in defense of the nation and its allies; and

WHEREAS, over 7,000 American service members have given their lives, and tens of thousands have been wounded in the fight against terrorism; and

WHEREAS, the service and sacrifices of these veterans, including those who continue to serve, deserve national recognition and appreciation; and

WHEREAS, the United States has established March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day to honor those who served during the Vietnam War, recognizing their sacrifices and contributions; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to designate August 30 as Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day, a date which marks the official end of the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan in 2021, as a national day of recognition for all veterans of the Global War on Terrorism; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress and the President of the United States to formally designate August 30 as Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW encourages all Americans to recognize and honor the service and sacrifices of Global War on Terrorism veterans through appropriate ceremonies, educational programs, and community initiatives each year on this day.

Submitted by Department of Oklahoma
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 409

RECOGNITION OF ADDING 74 SAILORS ON THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL

WHEREAS, on June 3, 2025, marks the 56th anniversary of the collision between the Australian Aircraft Carrier HMAS Melbourne and the US Destroyer USS Frank E. Evans DD754 in the South China Sea. In this collision the Evans was cut in half and 74 Sailors were killed. Seventy-three Sailors went down with the bowel of the ship and one-Sailor was recovered at Sea; and

WHEREAS, the USS Evans was in support of American troops in Vietnam on different orders from the years 1966 until the night of the collision. Although they left Vietnam after their 5, May 1969 operation to re-arm at Subic Bay Philippines. While at Subic Bay the USS Evans was ordered to participate in a multination operation called SEA SPIRIT; and

WHEREAS, Operation SEA SPIRIT was conducted off the coast of Vietnam as defined as the outer edge of Market Time. This area disqualified these 74 Sailors from being enshrined on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Although exceptions to the geographic limit rule have been made for other personnel killed as part of the Vietnam Conflict, but not in Vietnam itself; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and DOD to reconsider and make exceptions to have these 74 Sailors be enshrined on the Vietnam Memorial Wall with their brothers and sisters.

Submitted by Department of New Jersey
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS