

Resolution No. 401

OPPOSE TRICARE FEE CHANGES

WHEREAS, the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) made significant changes to the TRICARE military health benefit program by eliminating Tricare Standard and Extra, creating the new TRICARE Select Plan, adding enrollment fees for individuals joining the service after Jan.1, 2018 and for military retirees starting in January, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the changes mandated by the NDAA were further compounded by a change in costs instituted by the Defense Health Agency (DHA) for both the Select and the Prime plans. The changes included a complete change in the cost-share methodology for the new Tricare Select plan, which changed the beneficiary costs from a percentage of individual-services-used to an averaged, flat-rate co-payment and increased Tricare Prime fees; and

WHEREAS, Congress added additional costs by raising mail order and retail pharmacy fees for all Tricare beneficiaries, including Tricare for Life members. The additional costs included raising the costs of a 90-day mail order supply of generic medications from a \$0 co-pay to a \$7 per prescription co-pay, adding significant out of pocket costs to beneficiaries on maintenance medications for chronic conditions; and

WHEREAS, military health coverage is expensive, yet so is the upfront personal investment someone makes to voluntarily commit to a full military career. Any real or perceived erosion of benefits for career-minded personnel will undermine long-term retention; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all Tricare fee increases as well as any additional fee increases or attempts to erode the earned benefit of military healthcare. Moreover, DOD should reform its healthcare programs by eliminating institutional inefficiencies before considering participant fee increases.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 402

KEEP DEFENSE BUDGET RELEVANT

WHEREAS, America's Number #1 priority is to defend itself, its citizens, and its interests, and Congress must provide the Defense Department with sufficient funding to properly train, equip and field a military that can defeat all enemies, as well as protect vital U.S. interests around the globe; and

WHEREAS, the claim the U.S. spends more on defense than the next 8 or 10 countries combined is a false narrative. Except for China and Russia, all the other countries are focused on homeland and/or shared theater defense alliances, whereas the U.S. has a worldwide commitment to project power, reliability, and leadership; and

WHEREAS, defense spending accounts for nearly half of all discretionary spending, which makes DOD a consistent target for lawmakers trying to reduce overall federal spending, which puts America's national security at the risk; and

WHEREAS, Russia's attack on Ukraine's sovereignty, the continuing threats by North Korea and Iran, and China's military expansion, make the world more dangerous and therefore increases the world's reliance on the United States to lead militarily against those threats; and

WHEREAS, it is crucial that any proposed reduction in funding not jeopardize America's security or break faith with those who serve or have served our nation in uniform. A nation that cherishes its freedom and supports the troops can afford to do both; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to provide the necessary funding equal to not less than 5 percent of GDP for the readiness, training, modernization, healthcare, and quality of life initiatives for the armed forces of today and tomorrow.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 403

LINK MILITARY PAY INCREASES TO PRIVATE-SECTOR INCREASES

WHEREAS, military pay raises are linked by law to the increase in private-sector wages, as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI). The Administration's military pay raise request, however, can be more or less than the ECI, with Congress having the final approval; and

WHEREAS, Congress erased the double-digit pay gap of the 1990s by directing military pay raises from fiscal years 2000-2006 to be a half-percent above private-sector wage increases, and raises from FY 2007-forward to match the ECI, although more could be authorized; and

WHEREAS, the 1.7 percent military pay raise for FY 2013 matched the ECI, but the Department of Defense — in its continuing campaign to slow the growth of military compensation due to budget constraints and the sequester — recommended that future pay increases be limited; and

WHEREAS, over the objections of the VFW but with the approval of Congress, the “slow the growth” initiative resulted in military pay raises of 1 percent in FY 2014 and 2015, and 1.3 percent in FY 2016, with the cumulative result being less than the ECI; and

WHEREAS, the 2.4 percent raise in FY 2018 and 2.6 percent raise in FY 2019 were improvements and the FY 2020 3.0 percent pay raise would be the largest pay raise in ten years. But that dipped slightly in FY 2021 with Congress approving a 2.7 percent pay increase; and

WHEREAS, changes to military pay and benefits is the top concern of military service members and their families. Continued efforts to slow the growth of military compensation, combined with a better civilian job market, and a sustained intense operational tempo have already impacted recruiting and retention, which jeopardizes the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense is already facing a shortage in key fields, such as pilots and maintenance personnel, and must develop competitive pay and benefit scales to recruit emerging talent in high-tech fields, such as cyber; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to maintain military base pay comparability with private-sector wages by ensuring annual military pay raise percentages match or exceed annual ECI increases.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 404

ELIMINATE SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT IN THE MILITARY

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) was unable to collect 2020 prevalence data due to COVID-19, with its most recent estimates indicating there were 20,500 instances of “unwanted sexual contact” among women and men in fiscal year 2018, marking a 38 percent increase from the 2016 survey, while sexual harassment instances have been projected to be even higher; and

WHEREAS, women make up only 16 percent of the military, but are the targets of 63 percent of assaults, with the youngest and lowest-ranking women most at risk, according to the survey, suggesting current strategies are not enough; and

WHEREAS, it is widely held that a far greater number of sexual assault survivors do not come forward while on active duty due to embarrassment, lack of command action when they do file reports, or for fear of personal and/or professional reprisal, to include real or perceived “red flags” in their military personnel folders; and

WHEREAS, DOD continues to encourage prevention efforts and tighten field reporting and managerial oversight, to include providing restricted and unrestricted options for reporting a sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, DOD has taken steps to improve the actions of first responders, as well as to provide confidential counseling and other specialized treatments. Yet many sexual assault survivors are not aware of such services, which could help alleviate mental health issues commonly associated with sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, Congress has passed military justice reform legislation that will create an independent prosecutor for military sexual assault cases; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly demand DOD become more aggressive in its efforts to reduce sexual assault and harassment, to provide victims with proper and necessary medical and mental health care, as well as assistance with disability claims as may be required, to aggressively and diligently investigate every reported incident and punish attackers, as well as individuals involved in acts of retribution and retaliation, and that Congress perform rigorous oversight of the recently passed military justice reforms to ensure proper implementation and identify possible areas for improvement.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 405

ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP MANDATE

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, advice on available educational and healthcare programs, and other earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, the DOD is required to ensure all service members complete TAP at least 365 days prior to separation or retirement and are connected to resources in the communities they plan to reside in after service, in addition to ensuring those least prepared for transition complete at least one two-day career track; and

WHEREAS, recent VFW survey data shows that nearly half of service members are not completing TAP until less than 180 days prior to transition and many reported that they did not have an opportunity to participate in any of the career tracks, while our Benefits Delivery at Discharge representatives are hearing that service members are not consistently getting connected to community resources; and

WHEREAS, the DOD issued guidance to installation commanders to accommodate nationally accredited Veterans' Service Organizations (VSO) to provide pre-separation services to transitioning service members, but local transition program staff do not consistently afford VSOs the opportunity to actively engage service members during scheduled TAP classes; and

WHEREAS, DOD has worked with its partner agencies to make TAP resources available in public-facing environments, some of which receive government grant funding; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the DOD to ensure service members complete TAP no later than 365 days before separation, are connected to community resources, and attend at least one career track, while ensuring nationally accredited Veterans' Service Organizations are afforded consistent access to transitioning service members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we request Congress to require DOD and its partner agencies to continuously update their TAP information and procedures to maintain program relevancy, and to maximize veteran access to TAP resources after separating from the military.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 406

**PROVIDE FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT
PAY AND VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION**

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act allowed for the gradual phase-in of full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for service-connected wounds, illnesses or injuries; and

WHEREAS, the 10-year phase-in period ended in 2014, which means military retirees with 20 or more years of service and 50 percent or higher VA disability ratings no longer have their military retirement pay offset by the amount of their VA disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, the law, however, did not provide the same equity to service-connected disabled military retirees with VA ratings of 40 percent or below, or to Chapter 61 retirees who were medically retired with less than 20 years, regardless of VA disability rating; and

WHEREAS, more than 50,000 Chapter 61 retirees receive Combat Related Special Compensation from the Department of Defense, many of whom are Purple Heart recipients; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation that allows for the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of rating percentage.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 407

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

WHEREAS, the Republic of China on Taiwan is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and key link in the Western Pacific defense chain; and

WHEREAS, the Taiwan Relations Act (PL 96-8) codifies the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character to bolster peace and stability in the cross-strait environment; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1979, then-President Carter terminated diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan, and instead established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific. This loss of diplomatic status prevents the President of Taiwan from receiving the same respect and courtesies afforded other Heads of State who visit the U.S.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by continuing to approve the sale of state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons, and technology to maintain an adequate defense capability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to support the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations, and to provide the President of Taiwan the same respect and privileges due other visiting Heads of State.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 408

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and a key link in the Northeast Asia defense chain. Numerous treaties are in force with the Republic of Korea concerning economic and technical cooperation, education, maritime matters, trade and commerce, and the Mutual Defense Treaty, that was enacted on November 17, 1954; and

WHEREAS, South Korea's immediate neighbor, however, continues to maintain an extremely large and forward-deployed military force capable of launching no-notice offensive operations against South Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea maintains the ability to launch nuclear-capable missiles, including a missile capable of reaching the United States, and has conducted six underground nuclear explosions since 2006, and is a known exporter of ballistic missiles and its technology to countries adversarial to the United States, most notably Iran; and

WHEREAS, the continued unpredictability of North Korea makes the presence of U.S. ground and air forces inside South Korea even more critical as a deterrent to aggression; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Government to maintain a substantial military presence in the Republic of Korea, and to increase military aid and assistance through modern weaponry and technology to help promote peace and stability in the region.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 409

SUPPORT THE STATE OF ISRAEL

WHEREAS, the State of Israel is a historic, democratic ally of the United States of America, and a key link in the defense of democratic principles in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, Israel has been a beacon of stability and the foundation of Middle Eastern regional security for the past 60 years, despite the repeated targeting by hostile actors wishing to infringe upon its sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, peace between Israelis and Palestinians remains of strategic interest to the United States and other partners within the region; and

WHEREAS, Israel has been one of our nation's regional strongest partners in the ongoing fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Government to continue to support the State of Israel both diplomatically and militarily and continue to work with them to ensure and promote regional stability in the Middle East, and elsewhere.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 410

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 6 post-Vietnam that include Operations Eldorado Canyon (1), Desert Storm (2) and Iraqi Freedom (3); and

WHEREAS, public-private partnerships are increasing the ability to be at more sites; and

WHEREAS, DPAA has strong bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, which has in the past provided additional funding required to support pending recovery operations in North Korea, which have been interrupted since 2005 due to U.S. safety and security concerns; 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, 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. 411

CALL FOR MORE UNILATERAL POW/MIA ACTIONS BY VIETNAM

WHEREAS, 2,646 Americans were listed as missing and unaccounted-for at the end of the Vietnam War. As of March 2022, the number of missing is now 1,584 due to a combination of increased U.S. Government emphasis, better research and identification technology, stronger diplomatic ties with host governments, and access to aircraft crash and ground battlefield sites; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam had a comprehensive wartime and post-war process to collect and retain information and remains, and, according to the National League of POW/MIA Families, this unilateral effort enabled the Vietnamese to locate, and return remains to U.S. custody; and

WHEREAS, joint U.S. – Vietnam field operations, first conducted 37-years ago, continue to provide answers to families of unaccounted for American servicemen; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam granted access to their National Archives I and II and the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) Library; and

WHEREAS, many of the grieving families may never live to see the return of their missing loved one; and

WHEREAS, Vietnamese museums contain many personal items which belonged to missing U.S. servicemen; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Vietnam to grant U.S. government analysts access to the PAVN archives where potentially valuable documents which could lead to case resolution may be located; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in this cooperative effort, that we encourage the Vietnamese government to turn over any items of a personal nature from missing American servicemen that are currently in the custody of Vietnamese museums or other locations under their control so they may be returned to their grieving families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 412

RECOGNITION FOR AFGHAN AND IRAQI COMBAT TRANSLATORS

WHEREAS, Afghan and Iraqi wartime allies were bridges to the Afghan and Iraqi people during U.S. operations against terrorism in those countries; and

WHEREAS, Mission success was directly dependent on close working relations between local nationals and U.S. agents; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies often served consecutive tours with several different units to provide continuity; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies' lives and the lives of their family members were threatened for working with the Americans; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies saved countless American lives and directly contributed to every level of tactical, operational, and strategic success during the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients go through the strictest vetting and approval process of any category of person coming to the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, this initiative is supported by all post 9/11 former secretaries of defense as well as key national security leaders in the military, Department of State, and the intelligence community; and

WHEREAS, the former chairmen of the 9/11 Commission have stated, "As former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, we encourage Congress to do everything in its power to keep the nation's promise to Afghan and Iraqi combat translators and to ensure these intrepid partners can achieve the American Dream. Special Immigrant Visas recipients from Afghanistan and Iraq loyally protected our men and women in uniform. Many directly saved American lives. Their future success will help to prevent the continued growth of Islamist terrorism – the third goal identified by the 9/11 Commission. A great nation keeps its promises"; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to recognize the contributions of Afghan and Iraqi Combat Interpreter Immigrants who stood shoulder to shoulder with, assisted and protected U.S. military service members, U.S. diplomats and government agents, non-governmental organizations, and media organizations during U.S. involvement in those countries.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 413

NAMING OF U.S. NAVY VESSEL USS TELESFORO TRINIDAD

WHEREAS, for more than a century the Philippines has been America's longest and strongest ally in Asia, joining America as our comrade-in-arms during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, for more than 90 years the United States Navy recruited Filipinos for direct service in the United States Navy, with tens of thousands recognized for their distinguished and honorable service; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines, an independent nation of more than 7,100 islands in Southeast Asia, adopted their language, culture, and governance based on decades of American colonization; and

WHEREAS, there are more than four million Filipino-Americans living in the United States of America, and the Tagalog language of the Philippines is the fourth most spoken language in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the United States Navy honors our nation by naming ships to manifest high regard for the rich history and valued traditions of the United States Navy, with names that include our national heroes; and

WHEREAS, the high honor of naming United States Navy ships is the prerogative of the Secretary of the Navy; and

WHEREAS, there is no ship in the United States Naval fleet with a name that recognizes the Asian Pacific Islanders legacy and their unique alliance forged in war and peace; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Second Class Telesforo de la Cruz Trinidad is the first and thus far only United States sailor of Asian descent to receive the Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism while serving in the United States Navy, and whose valor can exemplify for thousands like him who served in the United States Navy and "swore to support and defend," and did so with honor and distinction; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that in recognition of the enduring historic military ties and camaraderie between Americans and Filipinos, and given the factual history and bravery of Fireman Second Class Telesforo de la Cruz Trinidad now exists with his Medal of Honor citation, continue to respectfully urge the Secretary of the United States Navy, by the authority granted to his office, name a newly commissioned surface combatant ship, the USS Telesforo Trinidad, in honor of his heroism and in recognition of the commitment, distinction, and valor of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans who proudly served in the United States Navy.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 414

WARTIME ALLIES BURIAL RIGHTS

WHEREAS, our nation fought in Vietnam with the support of the Vietnamese regular army and special operations personnel; and

WHEREAS, our Vietnamese wartime allies distinguished themselves during combat in support of U.S. military objectives throughout the southeast Asia theater of operation; and

WHEREAS, many Vietnamese regular and special operations personnel, upon the US. Withdrawal from Vietnam, received Special Immigration Visas (SIV) and are now U.S. citizens; and

WHEREAS, our Vietnamese wartime allies who are now U.S. citizens and have distinguished themselves in combat in support of U.S. military operations have as their last wish to receive the honor of being buried alongside their U.S. brothers and sisters in arms in a U.S. military cemetery; and

WHEREAS, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States have been personally impacted by the support of our Vietnamese wartime allies; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that wartime allies that have performed direct military support of U.S. military operations and are now U.S. citizens, we urge Congress to create a legislative pathway for allowing wartime allies who served honorably to receive U.S. military burial rights.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS