

## **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

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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