

PROCEEDINGS
of the
121ST NATIONAL PRO FORMA CONVENTION
OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
(SUMMARY OF MINUTES)



Kansas City, Missouri ::: July 24, 2020

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 121ST NATIONAL PRO
FORMA CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOR-
EIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, THE VETERANS
OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 121ST NATIONAL PRO FORMA CON-
VENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE
UNITED STATES, HELD IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI: JULY 24,
2020, PURSUANT TO 44 U.S.C. 1332; (PUBLIC LAW 90-620 (AS
AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 105-225, SEC. 3); (112 STAT. 1498)



OCTOBER 26, 2021.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and
ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

45-333

WASHINGTON : 2021

U.S. CODE, TITLE 44, SECTION 1332
NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS;
PROCEEDINGS
PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Incorporated, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually, with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they may be submitted.
[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
MAY, 2021

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Speaker U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 121st National Pro-Forma Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Kansas City, Missouri July 24, 2020, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Jones', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kevin Jones
Adjutant General

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**COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES**

(Including societies that amalgamated to form Veterans of Foreign Wars)

The Veterans of Foreign Service and the Army of the Philippines amalgamated at Denver, CO, August 1913, forming the Veterans of Foreign Wars as it is today. However, the birth of the order dates from September 29, 1899, when the first national officers were elected and the eligibility clause adopted. The original chapter was granted October 11, 1899.

* indicates deceased

American Veterans of Foreign Service

1899-1900	James C. Putnam* Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1900-1901	Maj. Will S. White* Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1901-1902	Maj. Will S. White* Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1902-1903	James Romanis* Elected at Washington Courthouse, Ohio.
1903-1904	James Romanis* Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1904-1905	James Romanis* Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1905-1906	George Metzger* Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1906-1907	Charles H. Devereaux* Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1907-1908	David T. Nevin* ... Elected at James Exposition Grounds, Virginia.
1908-1909	J. Alfred Judge* Elected at Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
1909-1910	J. Alfred Judge* Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	Robert J. Woodside* Elected at Jersey City, New Jersey.
1911-1912	Robert J. Woodside* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1912-1913	Robert J. Woodside* Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

American Veterans of Foreign Service
(Eastern Branch)

1903-1904	Capt. Robert S. Hansburg * Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1904-1905	H.O. Kelly * Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

(The above two organizations amalgamated September 1905, at Altoona,
Pennsylvania.)

Army of the Philippines

1900-1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene * Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901-1902	Gen. Irving Hale * Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.

1902-1903	Gen. Irvin Hale *	Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903-1904	Gen. Charles King *	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1904-1905	Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1905-1906	Col. Alfred S. Frost *	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1906-1907	Gen. Arthur MacArthur *	Elected at Des Moines, Iowa.
1907-1908	Capt. H.A. Crow *	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1908-1909	Maj. P.J.H. Farrell *	Elected at Galesburg, Illinois.
1909-1910	Col. Charles L. Jewett *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	A. H. Anderson *	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1911-1912	F. Warner Karling *	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1912-1913F	Warner Karling *	Elected at Lincoln, Nebraska.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

1913-1914	Rice W. Means*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1914-1915	Thomas Crago *	Elected at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
1915-1916	Gus Hartung*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1916-1917	Albert Rabin*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1917-1918	William Ralston*	Elected at New York, New York.
1918-1919	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1919-1920	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1920-1921	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Washington, D.C.
1921-1922	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1922-1923	Tillinghast Huston*	Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1923-1924	Gen. Lloyd M. Brett*	Elected at Norfolk, Virginia.
1924-1925	John H. Dunn*	Elected at Atlantic City, New Jersey.
1925-1926	Fred Stover*	Elected at Tulsa, Oklahoma.
1926-1927	Theodore Stitt*	Elected at El Paso, Texas.
1927-1928	Frank T. Strayer*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1928-1929	Eugene P. Carver*	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1929-1930	Kezekiah N. Duff*	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1930-1931	Paul C. Wolman*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1931-1932	Darold D. DeCoe*	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1932-1933	Adm. Robert E. Coontz*	Elected at Sacramento, California.
1933-1934	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1934-1935	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1935-1936	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1936-1937	Bernard W. Kearny*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.

1937-1938	Scott P. Squyres* Elected at Buffalo, New York.
1938-1939	Eugene I. Van Antwerp* Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1939-1940	Otis N. Brown* Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1940-1941	Joseph C. Menendez* Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1941-1942	Max Singer* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1942-1943	Robert T. Merrill* Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1943-1944	Carl S. Schoeninger* Elected at New York, New York.
1944-1945	Jean A. Brunner* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1945-1946	Joseph M. Stack* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1946-1947	Louis E. Starr* Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1947-1948	Ray H. Brannaman* Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1948-1949	Lyll T. Beggs * Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1949-1950	Clyde A. Lewis* Elected at Miami, Florida.
1950-1951	Charles C. Ralls* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1951-1952	Frank C. Hilton* Elected at New York, New York.
1952-1953	James W. Cothran* Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1953-1954	Wayne E. Richards* Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1954-1955	Merton B. Tice* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1955-1956	Timothy J. Murphy* Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1956-1957	Cooper T. Holt* Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1957-1958	Richard L. Roudebush* Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1958-1959	John W. Mahan* Elected at New York, New York.
1959-1960	Louis G. Feldmann* Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1960-1961	T.C. Connell* Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1961-1962	Robert E. Hansen* Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1962-1963	Byron B. Gentry* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1963-1964	Joseph J. Lombardo* Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1964-1965	John A. Jenkins* Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1965-1966	Andy Borg* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1966-1967	Leslie M. Fry* Elected at New York, New York.
1967-1968	Joseph A. Scerra* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1968-1969	Richard W. Homan* Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1969-1970	Raymond A. Gallagher* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1970-1971	Herbert R. Rainwater* Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1971-1972	Joseph L. Vicites* Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1972-1973	Patrick E. Carr* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1973-1974	Ray R. Soden* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.

1974-1975	John J. Stang* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1975-1976	Thomas C. Walker* Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1976-1977	R. D. Smith Jr. Elected at New York, New York.
1977-1978	Dr. John Wasyluk* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1978-1979	Eric Sandstrom* Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1979-1980	Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.* ..Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1980-1981	T. C. Selman* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock* Succeeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1982-1983	James R. Currieo* Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1983-1984	Clifford G. Olson Jr Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1984-1985	Billy Ray Cameron* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1985-1986	John S. Staum* Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1986-1987	Norman G. Staab* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1987-1988	Earl L. Stock* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1988-1989	Larry W. Rivers Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1989-1990	Walter G. Hogan Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1990-1991	James L. Kimery* Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1991-1992	Robert E. Wallace.....Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1992-1993	John M. Carney* Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1993-1994	George R. Cramer.....Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1994-1995	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent.....Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1995-1996	Paul A. Spera Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
1996-1997	James E. Nier Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1997-1998	John E. Moon Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1998-1999	Thomas A. Pouliot Elected at San Antonio, Texas.
1999-2000	John W. Smart.....Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
2000-2001	John F. Gwizdak Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
2001-2002	James N. Goldsmith* Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
2002-2003	Raymond C. Sisk* Elected at Nashville, Tennessee.
2003-2004	Edward S. Banas, Sr. Elected at San Antonio, Texas.
2004-2005	John Furgess.....Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
2005-2006	James R. Mueller Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
2006-2007	Gary L. Kurpius Elected at Reno, Nevada.
2007-2008	George J. Lisicki Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
2008-2009	Glen M. Gardner, Jr. Elected at Orlando, Florida.
2009-2010	Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr. Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.

2010-2011	Richard L. Eubank.....	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
2011-2012	Richard L. DeNoyer	Elected at San Antonio, Texas.
2012-2013	John E. Hamilton	Elected at Reno, Nevada.
2013-2014	William A. Thien	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
2014-2015	John W. Stroud.....	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
2015-2016	John A. Biedrzycki, Jr. *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
2016-2017	Bernard J. Duffy	Elected at Charlotte, North Carolina.
2017-2018	Keith E. Harman	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
2018-2019	Vincent “BJ” Lawrence	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
2019-2020	William “Doc” Schmitz	Elected at Orlando, Florida.
2020-2021	Harold “Hal” Roesch, II.....	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS 2019-2020

Commander-in-Chief.....	William “Doc” Schmitz
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.....	Harold “Hal” Roesch, II
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic
Judge Advocate General	J. Douglas “Doug” Whitaker
Surgeon General	Curtis “Doc” Bohlman
National Chaplain.....	James “Jim” Jenkins
National Chief of Staff.....	Paul R. Phillips
Inspector General	Duane T. Sarmiento

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 Associate Director, National Legislative Service Kyle Kalman
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 Deputy Director, National Veterans Service Michael Figlioli
 Deputy Director, National Veterans Service Dawn Jirak
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 Associate Director, Training & Quality Assurance Christopher Macinkowicz
 Manager, Administration & Support Operations Theresa Aldana
 Manager, Training & Quality Assurance Lauren Barefoot

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 Department of Kansas
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 Department of Louisiana
 Department of Maine
 Department of Maryland
 Department of Massachusetts
 Department of Michigan
 Department of Minnesota
 Department of Mississippi
 Department of Missouri
 Department of Montana
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 Department of New Hampshire
 Department of New Jersey
 Department of New Mexico
 Department of New York
 Department of North Carolina
 Department of North Dakota
 Department of Ohio
 Department of Oklahoma
 Department of Oregon
 Department of Pacific Areas
 Department of Pennsylvania
 Department of Rhode Island
 Department of South Carolina
 Department of South Dakota
 Department of Tennessee
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 Department of Virginia
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 Department of West Virginia
 Department of Wisconsin
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 Steven Organ
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 Paul Lloyd
 William Thomson
 Kathie Schiebel
 Robert Barnhart
 Gregory Stafford
 James Hapala
 Christopher Haynes
 Robert Clark
 Bert Key
 Shawn Watson
 Robert Eiler
 Guyde Lombardi
 Augustus Singleton
 Rick Williamson
 Henry Hooper, II
 Daniel West
 Dennis Parizek
 Allston Gilmond
 Thomas Gimble
 Frederick Green
 Todd Kingsbury
 Gundel Metz
 Rodney Birkle
 Vincent Lawrence

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

July 20-24, 2019 Orlando, Florida

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Alfred Simmons	8509 MD
Clinton Slack	475 DE
Edward Smith	2863 DE

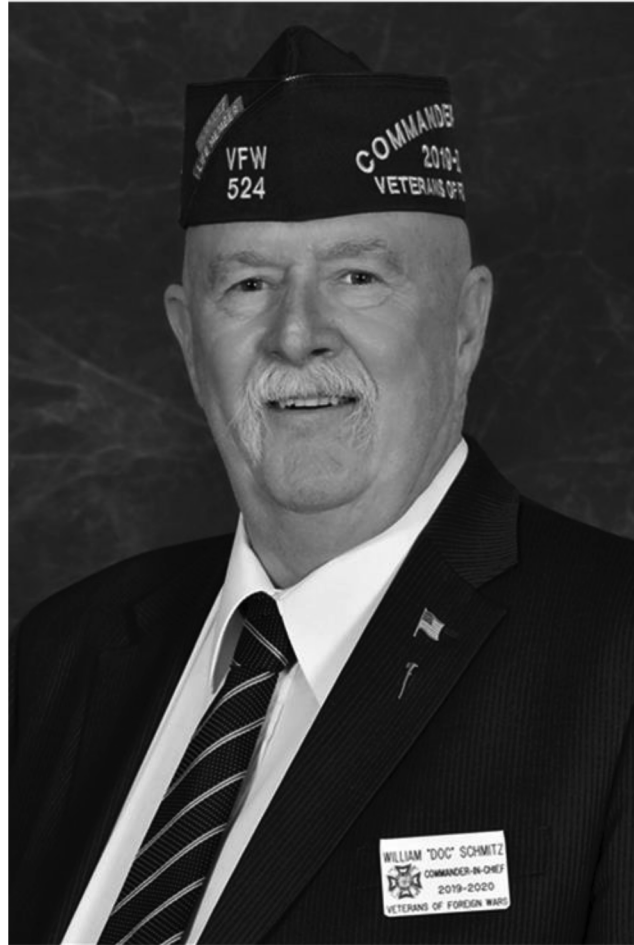
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Joy Ausman		10043 ID
Sherrod N Conyers		2122 CA
James Galen		6802 TX
Garold Gamble		345 MI
Lora Land		9191 TX

George Lott		10152 NJ
Keith Mac Donald		5867 CA
Brian Willette		3104 MA



William "Doc" Schmitz
Commander-in-Chief
2019-2020



Harold "Hal" Roesch, II
Commander-in-Chief
2020-2021

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS 2020-2021

Commander-in-Chief.....Harold “Hal” Roesch, II
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.....Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Timothy Borland
Judge Advocate General Bobby J. Cox
Surgeon General Renee Simpson
National Chaplain.....Joseph J. Gallick
National Chief of Staff..... Rosalyn Cox
Inspector General Richard Bell

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Deputy Director, National Legislative Service.....	Vacant
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Department of Virginia	Thomas Gimble
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Department of West Virginia	Todd Kingsbury
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Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief	William Schmitz

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Alfred Simmons	8509 MD
Clinton Slack	475 DE
Edward Smith	2863 DE
Mary Spencer	56 KS
Brian Willette	3104 MA

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XX

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Joy Ausman 10043 ID
Sherrod N Conyers 2681 GA
James Galen 6802 TX
Garold Gamble 345 MI
Lora Land 9191 TX
George Lott 10152 NJ
Keith Mac Donald..... 5867 CA
Brian Willette 3104 MA

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 121ST NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, JULY 24, 2020

PRO-FORMA CONVENTION
FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020

(The Pro-Forma Convention of the 121st Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the VFW National Headquarters Veterans Museum, located in Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order, with Commander-in-Chief William “Doc” Schmitz presiding.)

REMARKS, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WILLIAM “DOC” SCHMITZ

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SCHMITZ: Good morning. I’m Doc Schmitz, Commander-in-Chief of the VFW coming to you this morning from Baltimore, Maryland.

The deadly virus COVID-19 has gripped the globe and upended our way of life, but unprecedented times such as these call for extraordinary action and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is still serving.

The 121st National Convention was to be held in Reno, Nevada, but God had other plans. As combat veterans we adapt and overcome. To explain how we do that, I’ll turn it over to Adjutant General Kevin Jones from our national headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri.

REMARKS, ADJUTANT GENERAL KEVIN JONES

ADJUTANT GENERAL KEVIN JONES: Pursuant to the National Council of Administration’s vote to adopt Executive Order No. 2 issued on April 24, 2020, for navigating the fraternal business of the organization within COVID-19 restrictions, the Commander-in-Chief shall conduct a Pro-Forma National Convention for the purposes of maintaining compliance with Section 603 of the National Bylaws.

No business shall be transacted due to lack of a quorum as “the inability to transact business does not detract from the fact the society’s rules requiring the meeting to be held were complied with and the meeting was convened-even though it had to adjourn immediately” pursuant to Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.

At the conclusion of the Pro-Forma Convention, the 2019-20 terms of all officers are ended, thereby vacating those offices, the incumbents having satisfactorily served to the end of their term as defined in Section 719 of the National Bylaws.

Those National positions for which succession is provided will be immediately filled pursuant to Section 620 of the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure (the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders will succeed to Commander and Senior Vice respectively).

Immediately thereafter, the Commander-in-Chief shall appoint a Quartermaster General Pro Tempore (as well as all other appointments pursuant to Section 618(a)(6) of the National Bylaws); and shall announce that all other elected vacancies will be filled by the National Council of Administration.

Fifteen (15) days thereafter, August 8, 2020, the Commander-in-Chief shall advise the National Council of Administration of the names of comrades presented for those elected positions. The National Council of Administration will vote to fill those vacancies by ballot pursuant to Section 620 of the Manual of Procedure.

Those elected vacancies are Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Quartermaster General, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General, and Surgeon General.

The appointed offices of Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, Inspector General and the Sergeant-at-Arms, shall be filled immediately after the Commander-in-Chief enters into office pursuant to Section 618 of the National Bylaws.

Installations for those officers not already installed shall be conducted at the next National Council of Administration meeting scheduled to convene August 23, 2020 in Kansas City, Missouri.

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SCHMITZ: Thank you, Kevin. I will now open the 121st VFW National Convention.

For this, I call on Sergeant-at-Arms Bryan O'Brien in Trinity, Florida. Sergeant, please conduct the opening ceremonies.

ADVANCEMENT OF THE COLORS

(Sergeant-at-Arms conducts salute to colors)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BRYAN O'BRIEN: I now ask National Chaplain Jim Jenkins for today's invocation from the VFW national headquarters.

INVOCATION - VFW NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JIM JENKINS

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JIM JENKINS: Let us bow our heads. O, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe who art the Lord of Hosts and God of Peace, without Thee our efforts are vain. Continue Thy blessings upon the Veterans of Foreign Wars, our Auxiliary and our families. We pray that you will guide us during our deliberations and election of our National Officers. We beseech You, O God, to bless the dependents of our departed comrades, and to comfort all who gave their loved ones to our nation's cause.

Bless and strengthen the sick, the needy and the afflicted. Grant healing to our Nation. Bless, we ask of You, the widows and children in our

National Home and help us to fulfill our duty toward them. Continue Your favor upon our order and help us to practice the spirit of true comradeship, both in our councils and with the world at large. Enable us to better the community in which we live through our devotion to duty as citizens.

We now have a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades and for those missing in action and those held as prisoners of war. (Short pause.)

These and all other necessary blessings we ask of You, Mighty Ruler of the Universe. Amen.

I'm now pleased to send it over to the Brooklyn, the VFW Buddy Poppy child and resident of the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan as she leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & NATIONAL ANTHEM

(Whereupon, Brooklyn the VFW Buddy Poppy child gave the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the National Anthem sung by Tara Baynum.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Commander Schmitz, I have performed my duty.

CLOSING CEREMONIES, PREPARE AND RETIRE THE COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SCHMITZ: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms.

Pursuant to my duty as chair officer and Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I recognize a lack of quorum to lawfully transact business and therefore declare this Convention to be closed in due form. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please proceed with the closing ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BRYAN O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Chaplain Jenkins, the benediction please.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JIM JENKINS: Almighty God, the hour has come when we must part. We thank you for the Election of our Officers and may we be found praying for them. Guide them as they lead. Grant them protection. May they have a successful year.

We commit ourselves to Your care. You, who art our strong tower of defense and our protection, grant that in life's battles we may be strong and brave living such lives of stainless integrity as shall reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and glorify Thy great and Holy Name.

May Your good providence shield us from all harm. Watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom and bring us together again in true comradeship and peace. Amen. Sergeant.
(Sergeant-at-Arms conducts salute to colors)

ADJOURNMENT

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the closing ceremonies for the 121st National Convention have been completed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SCHMITZ: Thank you.

The 121st National Convention is closed. We are adjourned. Sign-knee-die-e.

I will now turn the program back over to the VFW national headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, calling on installing officer, Past Commander-in-Chief Glen Gardner.

INSTALLATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAROLD J. "HAL" ROESCH, II

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GLEN GARDNER: Thank you Chief.

I would now like to welcome to the podium Commander-in-Chief Harold J. "Hal" Roesch the second. The commander will be capped by his wife Beth Roesch, and pinned by Assistant Adjutant General, Kim DeShano.

(Capping/Pinning of Commander-in-Chief Roesch)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Harold J. "Hal" Roesch the second, before administering your obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties.

You will be held personally responsible for the charter of this organization, and at the end of your term of office you will deliver it to the officer appointed to install your successor.

It is your duty to see that all national officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You shall keep yourself informed on all proposed legislation which may affect the welfare of potential and actual comrades of this organization. Strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the congressional charter, Bylaws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important questions referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Comrade Harold J. "Hal" Roesch the second, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH: I am.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, give your name as I touch your hand and repeat after me:

(Whereupon the Officers' Obligation was administered at this time.)

OFFICERS PRAYER

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: We call again on now past National Chaplain Jenkins for the Officer's Prayer.

PAST NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JENKINS: Almighty God, our guide and divine protector, give thy blessings upon these, our comrades, who now become fellow officers. We beseech thee, O Lord, who art ever present amongst us, grant wisdom unto them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor thee, our glorious country and to better our organization. May thy strength sustain them. May thy power preserve them. May thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession our charter. Also, I present you with this gavel, which is the emblem of your authority, use it firmly, but with discretion.

(Presents gavel)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: (Salutes) I now proclaim the VFW Commander-in-Chief duly installed and this organization in working order for the ensuing year.

Before I turn the program over to national commander Roesch, we have a few special guests joining us today ... I would like to introduce Sandra Onstwedder, the newly installed VFW Auxiliary President for some remarks.

(Whereupon Sandra Onstwedder gives congratulatory remarks)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you President Onstwedder. We are glad you could join us today.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Commander-in-Chief Roesch, I turn the podium over to you, sir.

(Installing Past Commander-in-Chief salutes and retires)

(Commander-in-Chief raps gavel once)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH: I'm pleased to announce the following appointments:

Kevin Jones – Adjutant General

Debra Anderson – Quartermaster General Pro Tem

Roslyn Cox - Chief of Staff

Richard Bell - Inspector General

Bryan O'Brien – Sergeant-at-Arms

REMARKS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAROLD J. "HAL" ROESCH, II

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH: Good morning, comrades! It is a distinct honor and privilege to now serve as the 112th Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Commander-in-Chief. I stand before you, humbled, elated, and ready to selflessly serve the 1.5 million members and its Auxiliary as we continue the tradition of serving America's veterans, service members and families worldwide.

Today, I must first thank Past Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz for his unwavering leadership and commitment to our outstanding organization. Doc was instrumental in leading the VFW into 2020, while facing a challenging and trying national pandemic. For that, we owe him a debt of gratitude and I assure him that the tradition of excellence will continue.

I must also thank Glenn Gardner for installing me as Commander-in-Chief and John Gwizdak, John Smart, Gunner Kent, Jim Nier, Larry Rivers, Bob Wallace, Ed Banas, Paul Spera, Brian Duffy, Keith Harman, B.J. Lawrence and all the Past Commanders-in-Chief for the leadership and mentorship you have provided me and our VFW.

To my mom (Janice Penny) for teaching me at a very young age about love of country and patriotism. My sister, Terra who has been my biggest fan and cheerleader since we were youngsters. And to my rock – my wife, Beth, you have and forever are my best friend and the love of my life. Thank you for always standing alongside me throughout this journey we call life. You three women are the strongest people I have ever known, and you serve as dedicated, committed and selfless Life members of our amazing VFW Auxiliary. Thank You!

It's important that I thank my strong team of supporters – my family – for their service to our nation, not in the military, but in the medical field. As you know, our families take on a huge burden of sacrifice to support us and it is vital that we always recognize that. To my daughter Sara and her husband Jason, my grandkids Owen and Max. My nephew, Lucas Hopkins and his wonderful family. Thank you for your steadfast support throughout the years. I love all of you.

Special thanks to First Command Financial Planning for allowing me the time away to pursue my dream. I am extremely lucky and fortunate to work

for a company that believes in and works for active-duty military, veterans and their families as they achieve their financial goals.

Thank you to the Department of Virginia VFW and Auxiliary and everyone at Post 3219 led Commander Stephen Roche. Everyone at the Kansas City and Washington offices who have taught and guided me through the transition – I appreciate each of you for the amazing work and time you dedicate to our outstanding organization and our nation's veterans.

To Bob Neil and my friends at my sanctuary, Lake Gaston. Kim DeShano, who has been with me since I was a post commander in Virginia. To my team leaders, Senior-Vice Fritz Mihelcic, Junior-Vice Designee Tim Borland, Quartermaster Debra Anderson and Adjutant General Kevin Jones, I couldn't ask for anyone better to help lead this organization. I must also thank my partner, Aux President Sandy Onstwedder, for her steadfast support and commitment to our Auxiliary and the VFW.

Lastly, I must thank you – the members! Thank you for your tireless efforts to make our organization a pillar of our communities. For it is you who do the day-to-day work of the VFW, in your posts, communities, schools, hospitals and nursing homes.

You have opened your posts and your hearts in times of crisis – be it natural disasters or pandemics. You have conducted buddy checks, raised money, fed those in need, ran errands for those who could not do so for themselves, but just as important, you showed the nation and the world that the Veterans of Foreign Wars remains resilient.

Resiliency is the VFW's watchword. Since the founding of our organization in 1899 by James C. Putnam to the present and future days that lie ahead, the VFW has faced and will continue to face hurdles, obstacles and pitfalls in our everyday efforts to still serve our nation's veterans, service members and families. Although we may face various challenges along the way, one thing remains constant – the Veterans of Foreign Wars will continue to rally together and meet every mission it is assigned.

The very lifeline of the VFW remains its members. In order for our organization to maintain its dominant presence on Capitol Hill, within both Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, and in our neighborhoods, townships and cities around the country, we must assert ourselves and make membership paramount.

I remember the first time I was introduced to the VFW. I had just returned home from Desert Storm and found myself inside my local VFW Post dropping off a donation for a local charity. Little did I know that my supervisor, that I had just deployed with for 10 months would also be there and was a member of the Post. The Quartermaster gave me the nickel tour and educated me about the invaluable mission of the VFW and its need for more veterans like me to join its ranks. I entered the Post as a non-member, and a few weeks later left as the Junior Vice Commander. Funny how things work out, but it shows the impact one person had on me to become part of the team. This is the same energy and passion we must have heading into this year.

I encourage each of you to seize the moment and become that one person. Find that veteran who does not know what a great team we are and educate them. Ask them to become part of the Largest Combat Veterans Organization in the world, THE VFW. I don't care what age, sex, orientation, race or religion they are, just ask.

We are at a major turning point in our nation's history. All across our country, men and women are demonstrating and making their voices heard in an effort to end racial injustice. It's imperative that the VFW answer this call and stand alongside these agents of change. To our African American members, veterans and communities – Black Lives Do Matter! The VFW stands shoulder to shoulder with you. Your VFW is here for you, but most importantly, we need you to help lead us into 2021, 2031 and beyond as we continue to fight for the benefits and entitlements that our veterans have earned by serving their country with honor and courage. You know the VFW has not always been the most inclusive veterans' organization, in fact we were downright exclusive. But we have learned and changed over the years and we are still learning and changing. Our doors are open to ALL eligible veterans, and today I stand here before you and personally invite all eligible veterans to join our organization. If you are a member of the VFW and you cannot treat people with dignity and respect, then I ask you turn in your membership card and get out. Let there be no doubt in your minds – if you can't treat people with dignity and respect regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation or religion, we do not need you in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Fostering and maintaining lasting relationships with sponsors and donors is critical for the success of the VFW and its service to our nation's veterans. I must thank our teammates at USAA, Humana, Sport Clips, Burger King, Wounded Warrior Project, Dell, Twisted X and the thousands of individual donors nationwide for their steadfast support in helping us make a difference in the lives of our defenders of freedom and our next generation of young men and women. Your contributions have directly resulted in the VFW delivering top-notch educational and immediate financial assistance our nation's patriots and families.

Since 2004, we have provided more than 10,000 grants totaling nearly \$12 million dollars through the Unmet Needs Program helping struggling military families. Since 2014, we have awarded more than 1,600 scholarships for veterans and service members totaling more than \$7 million dollars. Last year alone, we distributed 8.7 million Buddy Poppies raising more than \$8 million dollars through the VFW Buddy Poppy Program for needy veterans. And our dedicated accredited service officers helped veterans recoup more than \$9 billion dollars in VA disability compensation and pension benefits, including \$1.6 billion dollars in new benefits paid to veterans in fiscal year 2019. And while these are amazing accomplishments, it's important to know that you and I are just getting started on building a 20/20 Vision for Veterans.

So, as we prepare to build a 20/20 Vision for Veterans, I ask each of you to stand with me and continue the good fight that our founders started in 1899. It's imperative that we re-educate and reintroduce, our VFW, to this great

nation. We are the pillars of our communities. We represent the strength of our nation. And we will lead the charge into 2021 and beyond in protecting the very benefits and entitlements that our service members, veterans and military families have earned through their sacrifice, commitment and selfless service in defense of freedom. "No One Does More For Veterans" is not just our motto – it is who we are and what we strive to achieve daily.

Comrades, Auxiliary members and fellow veterans, in closing, our VFW remains the resilient force it has always been. We are stronger today because of you. Together, our voices will continue to be a dominant force in our communities, on the Hill and within the halls of The White House.

It is truly a distinct honor to have the opportunity to serve as your VFW Commander-in-Chief.

May God continue to bless our veterans, service members and military families worldwide. And, may God continue to bless the VFW and the United States of America. Thank You!

(Whereupon, the Pro-Forma 121ST Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States National Convention was closed)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION
MEETING HELD AUGUST 23, 2020
(FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION 200 SERIES)**

**Resolution No. 201 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)
INCLUSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMEN OF THE OVERSEAS VFW
DEPARTMENTS IN THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE WITH
COMMENSURATE DUTIES AND LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE**

WHEREAS, VFW members of the overseas Departments are US citizens, considered members in good standing, and are entitled to the same level of VFW representation and effective information flow regarding legislative matters affecting them, as other members of the organization; and

WHEREAS, the overseas Departments are held to the same standards and requirements as other Departments and normally are highly ranked in membership, VFW program support and other performance indicators; and

WHEREAS, many of our overseas members are voters in US elections, either through dual overseas and US residences, or by absentee voting, participate actively in the VFW legislative initiatives through Action Corps and response to Action Alerts, and otherwise support legislative action; and

WHEREAS, two areas in the Department of Pacific Areas, Guam and Saipan, have US Congressional Delegates with whom we are in regular contact, one of whom is currently a member of the US House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee; and

WHEREAS, overseas Legislative Chairman currently disseminate information and legislative updates, encourage member action on legislation, submit reports to VFW National, and perform most other duties of their position, but are denied participation at the National level; and

WHEREAS, current policy is clearly exclusionary and discriminatory, and supports the perception that overseas VFW members are somehow detached, unworthy of participatory representation, and through their choice of residence are uninvolved in the legislative process; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that this policy regarding Department Legislative Chairmen shall be immediately amended, and the incumbent and future overseas Department Legislative Chairmen be added to the National Legislative Committee and afforded the status of full membership, and Conference attendance. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 202 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)
SCOUT OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION**

WHEREAS, the Scout of the Year Scholarship Program does not include a formal merit based award which the qualifying Department Scout of the Year can be presented and wear as part of their uniform; and

WHEREAS, we can and should do a better job of recognizing ALL of the outstanding young men and women who compete each year for VFW Scout of the Year; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Commander-in-Chief to adopt, through a National level design competition, an award pin which best represents the aims and goals of both Scouting and the VFW and affords unique and lasting recognition to our outstanding young men and women who are selected as Departmental Scouts of the Year. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)
ADDITION OF EOD/BDU AND CBRNE TO FIRST RESPONDERS PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, since September 11, 2001 the term First Responder has taken on new meaning. Currently, the Veterans of Foreign Wars National First Responder Program is only recognizing Police, Fire Fighters and EMT; and

WHEREAS, there have been changes to standardize First Responders nationwide, we should also update the national program to recognize those serving in harm's way; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National First Responder Program should add two departments to the national awards recognition program. These two groups work hand in hand with the other three currently in the national program and deserve to be recognized as such. The two are as follows:

1. Military Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)/Civilian Police Bomb Disposal Unit (BDU)
2. Military and Civilian Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) (Rejected)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION
MEETING HELD AUGUST 23, 2020
(GENERAL RESOLUTIONS 300 SERIES)**

**Resolution No. 301 (Submitted by Department of Nevada)
EXPAND THE DATES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY
MEDAL**

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense recognized service of the United States Armed Forces personnel in the Republic of Vietnam from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965, by awarding personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 11231 establishes the Vietnam Service Medal as recognition of service in the Republic or contiguous airspace or contiguous waters from 3 July 1965 to 28 March 1973; and

WHEREAS, service in the Republic of Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind during 29 to 30 April 1975, was recognized by awarding eligible personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Armed Forces personnel originally receiving the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in the Republic of Vietnam during either from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965 or 29 to 30 April 1975, are now qualified to receive the Vietnam Service Medal in lieu of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, after the Paris Peace Accords were signed 27 January 1973 and the last combat troops were withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam on 29 March 1973 there were members of United States Armed Forces remaining in Thailand and on ships in the coastal waters of Viet Nam in support of the South Vietnamese Army from 29 March 1973 until Operation Frequent Wind thus placing United States personnel in harm's way, but not recognized by a campaign or service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, petition Congress to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for those that served in Thailand and on the ships in the coastal waters of Viet Nam from 29 March 1973 to 30 April 1975 in support of the South Vietnamese Army. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Nevada)
EXPAND THE DATES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense recognized service of the United States Armed Forces personnel in the Republic of Vietnam from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965, by awarding personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 11231 establishes the Vietnam Service Medal as recognition of service in the Republic or contiguous airspace or contiguous waters from 3 July 1965 to 28 March 1973; and

WHEREAS, service in the Republic of Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind during 29 to 30 April 1975, was recognized by awarding eligible personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Armed Forces personnel originally receiving the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in the Republic of Vietnam during either from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965 or 29 to 30 April 1975, are now qualified to receive the Vietnam Service Medal in lieu of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, after the Paris Peace Accords were signed 27 January 1973 and the last combat troops were withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam on 29 March 1973 there were members of United States Armed Forces remaining in Thailand and on ships in the Viet Nam coastal waters in support of the South Vietnamese Army from 29 March 1973 until Operation Frequent Wind thus placing United States personnel in harm's way, but not recognized by a campaign or service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, petition Congress to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Vietnam Service Medal for those that served in Thailand and on the ships in the coastal waters of Viet Nam from 29 March 1973 to 30 April 1975 in support of the Vietnamese Army. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)
NATIONAL FLAG TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THOSE WHO DIED WHILE
SERVING IN AMERICA'S MILITARY

WHEREAS, Veterans of Foreign Wars honors the service and sacrifice of all military service members especially those who have lost their lives in service to the Republic; and

WHEREAS, since the Revolutionary War, more than 1.8 million members of the United States Armed Forces have paid the ultimate price during war, while serving in uniform, or as a result of serving; and

WHEREAS, there is no officially recognized symbol that acknowledges the ultimate sacrifice made by members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, an Honor and Remember Flag has been created by Honor and Remember, Inc., as a daily reminder for the American public to acknowledge the ultimate price of freedom; and

WHEREAS, twenty-six state legislatures across the nation have officially adopted the Honor and Remember Flag as a recognition of those who have given their lives in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, two bills have been introduced to the 116th Congress as the "Honor and Remember Flag Recognition Act", specifically Senate Resolution 2371 (S.2371) and House Resolution 3615 (H.R.3615); and

WHEREAS, this flag serves as a symbol of national gratitude that values each American life given for our freedom and gives comfort and a measure of healing to the families who lost loved ones during military service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to support S.2371 and H.R.3615 to amend title 36, United States Code, and designate the Honor and Remember Flag created by Honor and Remember, Inc., as an official symbol of the services and sacrifices by the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who have given their lives in the line of duty. (Rejected)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION
MEETING HELD AUGUST 23, 2020
(NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS 400 SERIES)**

**Resolution No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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 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. (Approved as Amended)

**Resolution No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
KEEP DEFENSE BUDGET RELEVANT**

WHEREAS, America's Number #1 priority is to defend itself, its citizens and its interests, yet efforts by Congress continue to jeopardize the Defense Department's ability 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 fact the U.S. spends more on defense than the next 8 or 10 countries combined is a false narrative. With the exception of 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, at the risk of making America less safe; and

WHEREAS, the military shrinks in terms of installations, manpower and material at the end of every war, but bringing the troops home has yet to make the world any less dangerous, our enemies any more predictable, or reduce the world's reliance on the United States to lead every contingency or humanitarian operation. Nor has our nation's war against international terrorism ended; and

WHEREAS, it is crucial that any proposed reduction 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
PRESERVE THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

WHEREAS, America's All-Volunteer Force engaged in a 19-year, two-front war, that nobody prior to 9/11 would have thought possible without reinstating the draft. It has done so despite multiple combat tours and significant military recruiting and retention challenges, and it continues to operate in an extremely dangerous and unpredictable world; and

WHEREAS, the troops are concerned. They are concerned that elected and appointed officials don't understand what it's like to serve in an All-Volunteer Force that has been tasked to do so much for so long. The troops are concerned whether there will be a place for them should they want to make the military a career. They are concerned about quality of life programs, their families, and the future of the GI Bill. And their leaders are very concerned about potential burnout in a military that is continually tasked to do more with less human and fiscal resources; and

WHEREAS, worldwide commitments and challenges have increased, to include keeping approximately 12,000 American troops in Afghanistan, increasing rotations to Eastern Europe, and maintaining almost 5,200 service members in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, substandard military housing, insufficient emphasis placed on training, pilot and maintenance shortages, outdated equipment, the inability to fund new programs, the use of authorities to activate Reserve component members without providing traditional benefits, and cuts to morale and welfare programs are the direct result of a military struggling to survive a budget crisis that will only continue to grow the longer Congress is unable to end the

sequester and provide a stable, consistent defense budget. The cumulative impact of lower pay and a higher operations tempo has a direct influence on morale, which in combination with a better civilian economy, has impacted both recruiting and retention, and threatens the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will redouble our efforts to work with Congress and the Administration to preserve the All-Volunteer Force, to end the sequester, and to help bring some permanent financial stability to a military that will continue to operate in a very dangerous and unpredictable world. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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; 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
INCREASE AND EXTEND TSP MATCH

WHEREAS, the new military retirement system will benefit all for their service, not just the 17 percent of service members who currently stay 20 years or longer. This recruiting initiative is needed to attract new generations of qualified service members who might otherwise not consider military service because it provides no match to portable 401k-style plans that virtually all civilian employers offer; and

WHEREAS, beginning in January 1, 2018, the government began automatically contributing 1 percent of base pay to a new service member's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account beginning the third month of service, then up to 4 percent more through a government match beginning in Year 3 through 26 years of service, for a total of 5 percent. However, the Military Compensation and Military Retirement Commission recommended a total government contribution of 6 percent — the 1 percent automatic and up to a 5-percent match — without the arbitrary 26-year sunset clause; and

WHEREAS, the Pentagon's FY 2017 budget submission proposed increasing the government's contribution to the full 6 percent, and carry the match through retirement, but would delay starting the match until Year 5; and

WHEREAS, those serving prior to January 1, 2018 with less than 12 years' service will have a one-time opportunity in 2018 to opt into the new system or remain in the legacy system, based on their own individual circumstances; and

WHEREAS, for those who join after January 1, 2018, and who stay the requisite 20 years, the new retirement program will reduce future retiree pay from 50 to 40 percent of base pay, but overall net worth could be considerably higher due to a one-time, mid-career continuation bonus, and compound interest on increased TSP accounts, which can be rolled over into other investment plans and bequeathed entirely to heirs, whereas just a maximum 55 percent of retiree pay can go to surviving spouses; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will work with Congress to increase the government's TSP contribution to a total of 6 percent beginning in Year 3 of service, and extend the match throughout an individual's military career. (Approved)

Resolution No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SEXUAL ASSAULT INCIDENT REPORTING AND TREATMENT

WHEREAS, the Defense Department's annual report on Sexual Assault in the Military Services indicated that there were 20,500 instances of "unwanted sexual contact" in the 2018 fiscal year, which was an increase of 38 percent from the previous survey in 2016; and

WHEREAS, women make up only about 20 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, which suggests 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 proposed legislation that would create an independent prosecutor for military sexual assault cases, but those efforts have been rebuffed by Pentagon leadership; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge DOD to become more aggressive in its prevention efforts to reduce sexual assault and harassment, to provide victims with proper medical and mental health care, to aggressively investigate every reported incident and punish attackers as appropriate, to stop all retribution and retaliation, and to provide scrutiny to the military justice process to identify possible areas for reform and improvement. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP MANDATE

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members in order 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, a recent GAO report indicated the Department of Defense (DOD) reporting on TAP performance did not account for 48 percent of National Guard and Reserve members and 12 percent of active duty service members, significantly reducing the actual percentage of force participation from the publicly reported 94 percent to as low as 47 percent; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has implemented a new TAP curriculum for separating service members, but does not require them to participate in classroom instruction for the individual tracks for Career Vocational Training, Accessing Higher Education, or Entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, recent VFW survey data shows that over half of all veterans who receive assistance through our Benefits Delivery at Discharge program reported that they did not have an opportunity to participate in any of the voluntary transition tracks; and

WHEREAS, former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel issued guidance to installation commanders to accommodate nationally-accredited Veterans' Service Organizations to provide pre-separation services to transitioning service members, but local transition program staff do not consistently afford VSOs with the opportunity to actively engage service members during scheduled TAP classes; and

WHEREAS, Department of Defense has worked with its partner agencies to make TAP resources available in public-facing environments; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to include the additional curriculum tracks in its mandatory pre-separation classroom counseling, and to ensure 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 periodically update their TAP information and procedures to maintain program relevancy, and to expand access to TAP resources for veterans after separating from the military. (Approved)

Resolution No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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; now, therefore

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

Resolution No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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 in an attempt 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 approving 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 410 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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, 7,600 from the Korean War, 1,587 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, in past years, DPAA has been forced to postpone, downsize, or cancel recovery missions due to funding issues such as Congress not having passed a budget. 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 increase funding levels for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Full 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
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 February 2020, the number of missing is now under 1,600 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 35-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 so they may be returned to their grieving families.
(Approved)

Resolution No. 414 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)
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. (Approved)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION
MEETING HELD AUGUST 23, 2020
(VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS 600 SERIES)**

**Resolution No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET**

WHEREAS, there are nearly 20 million living veterans; and
WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs anticipates that enrollment in the Veterans Health Administration will grow to nearly 9.5 million veterans and more than 7.2 million of those veterans will be seen by VA for health care service; and

WHEREAS, veterans use VA for numerous other benefit programs including nearly 1 million veterans in education programs, 5.7 million recipients of disability compensation, and nearly 6 million insurance policies; and

WHEREAS, the complexity of conditions that veterans which receive VA health for care will add demands to the system for years to come; and

WHEREAS, even though appropriations for VA continue to increase, they have not kept pace with demand and the rate of inflation; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which fully fund and maintain the integrity and enhancement of veteran entitlement programs and health care system.
(Approved)

**Resolution No. 602 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VA PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENTS**

WHEREAS, veterans, other than those with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, those who are receiving medications for their service-connected conditions or those whose incomes fall below the nonservice-connected pension threshold, must pay a co-payment for each 30-day supply of medications obtained through the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, there have been repeated proposals to change VA pharmaceutical co-payments, placing an undue hardship on many veterans; and

WHEREAS, the increase in costs of the benefit would likely place an undue burden on veterans, limit access to earned benefits, and serve to inequitably balance the federal budget on the backs of veterans; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceuticals are part of the VA's standard health benefits package and must be provided to all eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA is required by current law to charge veterans for life saving preventive medicines which are cost-free under private sector insurance and other public health care options; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose increases in Department of Veterans Affairs pharmaceutical co-payments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must exempt preventive medicines from VA pharmaceutical co-payment requirements. (Approved)

Resolution No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VA MEDICARE AND TRICARE REIMBURSEMENT

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views it as essential that the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system provide qualifying veterans with timely and accessible care; and

WHEREAS, VA collects third party payment for treatment, but current law prevents VA from collecting from the Medicare Trust Fund and TRICARE in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, a large number of VA's patients are eligible for Medicare and TRICARE; and

WHEREAS, VA medical care collections are used to supplement the appropriations VA receives from Congress to deliver efficient and effective health care at a lower cost than private sector health care providers; and

WHEREAS, with the increased demand on its health care system, it is now absolutely essential that VA be authorized to collect federal dollars to supplement its annual appropriations to ensure adequate funding for the Veterans Health Administration; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support enactment into law of legislation authorizing Department of Veterans Affairs to receive reimbursement for the cost of non-service connected care that is provided to veterans who are enrolled in Medicare or TRICARE. (Approved)

Resolution No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
NURSING HOME ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has called upon Congress to enact legislation to regulate and expand eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs health care and provide all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care services which include nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, current VA regulations extend VA eligibility for nursing home care to those veterans who are service-connected at 70 percent or above or those seeking nursing home care for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, the demand for VA nursing home care is increasing as the veteran population continues to age; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care units are VA hospital-based and provide an intensive and extensive level of nursing home care supported by the clinical specialties and other services within the host hospital; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care is considered the “safety net” for VA outpatient services such as residential care, respite care, hospital-based home care, adult day health care, homemaker/home health aid services and other extended care programs; and

WHEREAS, VA, through their own statements, recognizes the difference in eligibility for nursing home care and inpatient hospital care as inconsistent with the principles of sound medical practice, which support continuity of care for veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish a standard Department of Veterans Affairs nursing home entitlement for all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. (Approved)

Resolution No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, since 2000, more than 413,000 service members have sustained Traumatic Brain Injury including those who served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, veterans with blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls are at risk for TBI which often goes unrecognized; and

WHEREAS, even patients with mild TBI may have long-term health consequences; and

WHEREAS, veterans with severe TBI require a lifetime of intensive services to care for their injuries, yet many Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities are neither properly staffed nor equipped to provide the necessary screening and comprehensive health care services veterans suffering from TBI require; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that appropriate screening, diagnostic services, treatment and life-long case management services are available to every veteran suffering from conditions associated with service-connected head trauma to include, but not limited to Traumatic Brain Injuries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve research pertaining to screening methods, diagnostic tools, and treatment of conditions associated with TBIs caused by blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls to ensure veterans who have experienced a TBI receive effective health care. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
PTSD AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated that treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and providing Mental Health Care among returning war veterans is one of its highest priorities, and the VA

operates a nationwide network of nearly 200 specialized PTSD outpatient treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, the early and accurate screening, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders, yields optimal patient outcomes, and statistics have shown that these conditions, left untreated or poorly treated, can lead to increases in suicide attempts or death by suicide among a host of other negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted by VA through the National Center for PTSD found an average of 23 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have been diagnosed with PTSD; and

WHEREAS, VA expects an increase in PTSD conditions as veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan after multiple tours of duty; and

WHEREAS, available research has not sufficiently evaluated the clinical effectiveness of treatment programs for veterans diagnosed with and/or suffering from the effects of traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, or other mental health conditions, and adequate research into the brain's response to internal and external influences that could result in mental illness has yet to be undertaken; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to adequately staff VA mental health treatment and research programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to dedicate adequate resources to address the alarming rate at which Veterans commit suicide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to assess what specific treatments or practices are the most effective in helping our veterans cope with their PTSD. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VA HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the total number of women veterans continues to grow, as does the number of women utilizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that as of FY 2019 only 25 percent of women veterans utilize VA health care facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA currently has two Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCP) at all of the VA's health care systems. In addition, there are WH-PCPs in 90 percent of the community-based outpatient clinics; and

WHEREAS, women veterans have reported that VA staff continue to confuse them for spouses or caregivers and even challenge their veteran status; and

WHEREAS, women veterans also reported concerns regarding the gender specific competencies of VA health care professionals; and

WHEREAS, VA reported in FY 2019 that more than 80 percent of enrolled women veterans are assigned to a Designated Women's Health

Provider (DWHP), who have experience and training in women's health care; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that the VA has improved the care and services it provides women veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to continue to staff, equip, monitor and enhance health care services available to women veterans at all VA medical facilities and expand its designated women's health program to mental health care to ensure veterans have access to mental health care providers who understand women-specific mental health conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to improve outreach to women veterans, allow women to choose the gender of their VA health care providers and properly train VA's workforce to treat women veterans with the respect and dignity they have earned and deserve. (Approved)

Resolution No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXPAND VA CAREGIVER BENEFITS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program provides a monthly stipend, respite care, mental and medical health care, and necessary training and certifications for caregivers of veterans who were severely injured on or after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the comprehensive program is expected to begin expanding for the caregivers of veterans of other eras; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States believes severely wounded, injured, and ill veterans of all conflicts have made incredible sacrifices, and all family members who care for them are equally deserving of our recognition and support; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense provides support to family caregivers of members of the armed forces who are catastrophically disabled through its Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living program, which includes disability caused by illnesses in its eligibility criteria; and

WHEREAS, the VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program excludes veterans who require home caregiver services as a result of serious illnesses; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide the accurate resources to VA for the expansion of the Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program to veterans of all eras; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to fully align the VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program with the Department of Defense Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living program by including in its eligibility criteria veterans who require caregiver services as a result of serious illnesses incurred in the line of duty. (Approved)

Resolution No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY CARE OPTIONS

WHEREAS, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States report being satisfied with the health care they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs and believe the VA health care system must be improved to ensure all veterans have timely access to high quality care; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has consistently worked with Congress and VA to improve the health care VA provides our nation's veterans through community care programs to ensure veterans have a seamless experience; and

WHEREAS, the veteran population is a shifting demographic with evolving health care needs, which necessitates that VA identify new and innovative ways to deliver timely access to high quality, comprehensive, and veteran-centric health care; and

WHEREAS, VA is now allowed to charge veterans copayments for service-connected care they receive from networked urgent care clinics in the community; and

WHEREAS, the networks of VA community care programs, to include dependent care delivered through CHAMPVA, are limited by factors that influence the willingness of private sector providers to participate in these programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress must provide Department of Veterans Affairs with the oversight, appropriations and assets necessary to properly implement the VA MISSION Act as intended by Congress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA comply with federal prompt payment requirements and incentivize private sector health care providers to participate in its community care programs, while ensuring veterans and eligible dependents are not held financially liable for services furnished through such programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must remain the guarantor and coordinator of care for enrolled veterans and that the VFW remains opposed to privatizing VA or eroding VA's ability to provide direct care to veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW opposes any out-of-pocket costs for care coordinated by VA for service-connected disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress and VA must furnish and conduct proper outreach to ensure veterans are fully aware of their health care options. (Approved)

Resolution No. 610 (submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
RESEARCH ON MEDICAL CANNABIS TREATMENTS

WHEREAS, over the past several years, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury have been thrust into the forefront of the medical

community and general public in large part due to suicides and over medication of veterans; and

WHEREAS, medical cannabis is legal in more than 33 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Mariana Islands, with more states pending legalization legislation; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs cannot legally prescribe cannabis products as long as the federal government continues to categorize it as a Schedule 1 drug; and

WHEREAS, states that have legalized medical cannabis have seen a 15-35 percent decrease in opioid overdose and abuse; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have recently introduced legislation which would allow VA doctors to discuss the use of medical cannabis with veteran patients to treat service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there is substantial evidence from comprehensive studies by the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academic Press concluding cannabinoids are effective for treating various medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, multiple states that have legalized marijuana have used state funding to research the effective use of medicinal marijuana for PTSD and other health care issues; and

WHEREAS, in April 2016, the Drug Enforcement Agency gave its approval to a study on the effect of medical marijuana on post-traumatic stress disorder, the first federally funded, randomized, controlled research in the U.S. for PTSD; and

WHEREAS, veterans are at risk of losing their right to possess or own firearms if they report their use of marijuana to VA healthcare providers based on the difference in Federal and State laws; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we support federally funded research of Medical Cannabis for veterans being treated by Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, veterans who use state approved marijuana programs should not forfeit their Second Amendment rights. (Approved)

Resolution No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
CONSIDER TREATMENT FOR A PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED
CONDITION AS A CLAIM FOR VA COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, many service members have suffered from diseases that are recognized to be presumptive; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering from diseases which include many types of cancer, as well as diabetes and other chronic diseases, may not be aware that they may be eligible for service connection, even if they are being treated in a Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facility; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) neither communicates with nor obtains treatment records from VHA until a claim for compensation benefits has been filed with VBA; and

WHEREAS, many VHA facilities are not currently staffed or equipped to provide appropriate counseling to veterans or their families on how to file a claim for service connected compensation benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation requiring that treatment by the Department of Veterans Affairs VHA facility for a condition or disease recognized, as presumptively service connected will serve as the effective date for service connected compensation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to enact legislation requiring VA to notify veterans, upon receiving treatment for a presumptive disability, that said disability is a claimable presumptive service connected disability. (Approved)

Resolution No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
EXTENDING GULF WAR PRESUMPTIONS BEYOND
2021 AND TO AFGHANISTAN THEATER VETERANS

WHEREAS, many service members have served and continue to serve in the Afghanistan theater of operations since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, these veterans have served under circumstances similar to those served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, Afghanistan is not considered part of the Southwest Asia theater of operations during; and

WHEREAS, veterans of Afghanistan are suffering from similar undiagnosed conditions as those who have served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, the authority to extend presumptive service connected conditions for Southwest Asia theater veterans is set to expire on December 31, 2021; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and Department of Veterans Affairs to support research to verify whether service members who served in Afghanistan are subjected to the same environmental hazards as those who served in Iraq, so that appropriate benefits, including eligibility for compensation based on undiagnosed illnesses, and medical care eligibility, will be provided retroactive to the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must permanently extend presumptive disability compensation benefits for Gulf War veterans to ensure all service members who serve in Southwest Asia theater of military operations are afforded this protection. (Approved)

Resolution No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
EXTEND SERVICE CONNECTION PRESUMPTION
TO BLAST SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, the Global War on Terrorism has exposed more than 330,000 service members to diagnosable blast injuries, with thousands more going undiagnosed and untreated; and

WHEREAS, the nature of the conflict these service members face is frequently guerrilla-style combat where the enemy is widely known to use improvised explosive devices and indirect fire; and

WHEREAS, much of the attention has been focused on the apparent physical wounds, there are many unseen effects of blast trauma, which could include brain injuries, long-term hearing and balance issues, chronic pain, air embolisms, and injuries mistaken for personality disorders; and

WHEREAS, some effects associated with blast injuries may not become manifest immediately allowing the service member to return to the field, only to have their ability to fulfill their duty dramatically affected by the long-term effects of the blast; and

WHEREAS many injuries are difficult to diagnose and service members can suffer from these disabilities for many years after the blast; and

WHEREAS, a large number of veterans have been identified as having been diagnosed at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers with conditions possibly related to blast exposures since the start of the Global War on Terrorism; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to approve a presumption of service connection for conditions associated with blast exposure. (Approved)

Resolution No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS PRESUMPTIVE COMPENSABLE SERVICE
CONNECTION

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat or in a position (e.g., member of a gun crew on board Navy or Coast Guard ships) or certain occupational specialties have a high incidence rate of hearing loss or tinnitus as a direct result of acoustic trauma; and

WHEREAS, veterans, from earlier, were not afforded a comprehensive audiological examination upon entrance and discharge from the military services, but instead were subject to highly inaccurate test methods; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the second leading disability granted service connection by Department of Veterans Affairs was for hearing loss or tinnitus; and

WHEREAS, the VA has the authority to grant service connection for disabilities associated with combat-related diseases or injuries even if medically undocumented at the time of service; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) (now referred to as the National Academy of Sciences) released a study that showed that nearly all service members are exposed to acoustic trauma at some point during their military service and that many experience hearing loss and/or tinnitus as a result, often years after service. However, “after the fact, hearing loss or tinnitus incurred as a result of military service cannot be distinguished with certainty from subsequent noise-induced hearing loss...” Given these findings, reasonable doubt must be resolved in favor of veterans who suffered acoustic trauma in service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran diagnosed after discharge with hearing loss or tinnitus when the evidence shows that the veteran participated in combat or worked in a position or occupational specialty likely to cause acoustic trauma.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum compensable evaluation for any service connected hearing loss for which a hearing aid is medically indicated. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VA CLAIMS WORKLOAD

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made significant progress in reducing the backlog of claims for compensation, pension, education benefits and appeals, yet submissions and appeals continues to grow; and

WHEREAS, Congress has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved its oversight. Yet, the attrition rate and quality of new hires and retirement of journeymen claims processors continues to challenge VA's ability to train and maintain a technically proficient workforce; and

WHEREAS, VA has attempted to increase workload production by implementing arbitrary timeliness goals that rarely account for the complexity of claims; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to order redundant and often unnecessary examinations when the evidence of record is sufficient to make a determination, or claimants submit adequate medical records and doctors opinions; and

WHEREAS, after dozens of Congressional hearings, numerous studies, changes of VA leadership, altered workflow, amended work processes, erratic IT development, as well as fruitless pilot programs and experimental initiatives, it

is clear that there are no easy, simple or quick solutions that lead to the speedy reduction of the backlog; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress require Department of Veterans Affairs to accept private medical evidence and opinions in lieu of VA examinations whenever they are sufficient for rating purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to advise that Congress exercise its oversight authority and provide the vital resources necessary to sustain a sufficient workforce capable of effectively managing the workload and provide quality and timely service to those claiming benefits or appealing decisions from VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress bolsters its oversight and funding of VA technology initiatives to ensure that they are constructive, relevant and effective in streamlining claims processing and improving quality of entitlement decisions. (Approved)

Resolution No. 616 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
BURIAL PLOT ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs pays certain burial benefits at the death of a veteran who dies from a service connected disability. VA pays a different burial benefit and plot allowance on behalf of a wartime veteran who dies from a non-service connected condition; and

WHEREAS, the cost of funeral expenses in the private sector have increased annually and the current VA benefit is \$2,000 for a service connected death, and \$300 burial and up to \$780 plot allowance for a qualifying non-service connected death; well below the cost in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, Congress should provide the resources to meet the changing needs of burial benefits and bring burial allowances and plot allowances to the same proportionate level they were when the benefits were joined in 1973; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress increase all burial benefits to what the Independent Budget recommends. The VFW urges Congress to provide the resources required to meet the burial needs of all veterans who have served their country so honorably and faithfully. (Approved)

Resolution No. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
TOXIC EXPOSURES

WHEREAS, veterans who served along the Korean demilitarized zone after the dates of presumptive exposure to Agent Orange suffer from conditions associated with such exposure and are often denied service connection by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, those who served on bases in Thailand during the Vietnam War era who suffer from conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure are unjustly denied service connection; and

WHEREAS, veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffer from an array of conditions and diseases, collectively known as Gulf War Illness, which remain unexplained and VA ignores Congress and continues a burdensome claims process; and

WHEREAS, veterans of current conflicts were exposed to numerous environmental hazards, including open air burn pits, the anti-malaria drug mefloquine, and radioactive substances in K2 Uzbekistan; and

WHEREAS, veterans stationed at Woomera Air Station in South Australia, were exposed to radiation during nuclear weapons testing during the 1950's and 1960's and subsequent closure and cleanup; and

WHEREAS, veterans and dependents stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama were exposed to Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB), and now suffer from associated conditions; and

WHEREAS, veterans and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune consumed contaminated water and now suffer from associated conditions. While VA acknowledged this fact, there are differences in what conditions are compensable and those which only receive reimbursement for medical care. Additionally, the requirement to be stationed on the base for 30 days is arbitrary and ignores thousands who graduated from training in less time; and

WHEREAS, the United States military has conducted testing, monitoring, and clean-up operations related to various chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons resulting in exposure; and

WHEREAS, military firefighters and fire truck mechanics were immersed in firefighting foam almost daily as a circumstance of military service. The foam has now been banned due to extreme diseases and illnesses from its exposure, yet the government has no plans to study the effects of such chemicals on troops; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to invest adequate resources to study, diagnose, and treat conditions and illnesses associated with toxic exposures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the Department of Defense to disclose known and potential toxic exposures during all military operations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress ensures that the Department of Defense expedites declassification efforts related to exposure events and that the Department of Veterans Affairs extends presumptive service connection to veterans suffering from conditions or illnesses found to be associated with exposure to toxic substances. (Approved)

Resolution No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
DIGITAL CLAIMS PROCESS

WHEREAS, advancements in technology have created an expectation among many Americans to conduct business in real time in a secure, digital space, and:

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs now processes nearly all its workload in a digital environment; this includes claims for compensation, pension, survivor benefits and appeals, but still fails to offer timely access to this digital environment to veterans' representatives in the benefits process, and;

WHEREAS, VA has committed to developing new self-service tools for veterans to file claim actions, but has failed to similarly invest in secure resources that would allow VSOs to provide quality claims assistance to veterans in real time, relying instead on its antiquated Personal Identity Verification (PIV) credentialing process, and:

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has unsuccessfully tried to engage with VA to assist in developing cutting-edge digital tools for VA-accredited representatives to provide high quality assistance anytime, anywhere, and:

WHEREAS, in the interim, VSOs have been forced to either contract with third-party vendors or develop internal ad-hoc solutions at substantial cost to the VSOs and without proper insight or oversight from VA, and:

WHEREAS, VSOs have had to request VA's Office of General Counsel intervention in executing the same principal functions in a digital environment which VSOs previously performed with paper claims; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Department of Veterans Affairs to update regulations to authorize VSOs the same advocacy rights in the digital environment as were allowed in the paper-based claims process and honor proof of digital transmission to VA as the effective date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs work with all VA-accredited entities to develop real-time, secure access to tools that allow advocates to provide comprehensive assistance to clients in real time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress pass legislation granting VSOs 48 hours to review rating decisions. During this review period, VA shall not finalize decisions without the VSO electronically certifying that a rating review has been conducted and if there are discrepancies that require communication with VA decision makers that the clock is temporarily suspended until those questions are resolved. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs has established life insurance designed to support veterans whom might otherwise be uninsurable due to service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, by statute premium rates are based on the American Experience Table of Mortality which was created in the 1860s to set insurance rates accordingly with mortality rates at the time; and

WHEREAS, private health insurance companies more commonly use the Commissioners Standard Ordinary Table which has been adjusted for current mortality rates; and

WHEREAS, VA life insurance rates are now no longer competitive with private insurance company rates and fail to cover end-of-life expenses; and

WHEREAS, service-disabled veterans may only apply for Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI) within two years of receiving a newly-established service-connected disability; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation authorizing Department of Veterans Affairs to use the most commonly used life mortality table in order to make VA National Service Life Insurance competitive with private health insurance policies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to expand eligibility for S-DVI beyond two years after receiving a new service-connected disability. (Approved)

Resolution No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VA AUTOMOTIVE ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs will issue only one certificate of eligibility for financial assistance in the purchase of a new or used automobile or other conveyance; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs will provide or assist in providing eligible veterans with a second automobile or other conveyance when the first vehicle purchased with VA financial assistance is destroyed as a result of any natural catastrophe, the destruction was not the veterans fault or the veteran does not receive compensation for the loss from a property insurer; and

WHEREAS, current technology, design and safety advances have reached such a level that automobiles and conveyances are superior to every model produced in the last 50 years; and

WHEREAS, it is impractical to assume veterans who require such assistance would not benefit from better design and equipment changes to make it easier to accomplish daily tasks, attend medical or other appointments and experience an overall better quality of life; and

WHEREAS, veterans who require such assistance are unduly penalized by the narrow scope of this program by virtue of the nature of it being a "one time" benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to remove the unreasonable restrictions of a once in a lifetime grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs authorize veterans, or their duly authorized representatives who are already in receipt of the automotive allowance, those with applications pending, and any future qualified applicant be allowed to reapply for this essential benefit at the end of the sales or lease contract or every five years, whichever is greater, so as to maintain a practical quality of life and benefit from current safety and technology standards. (Approved)

Resolution No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
DOMICILIARY PROGRAMS AND TEMPORARY TOTAL RATINGS

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs provides free medical treatment for service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA grants temporary total ratings for veterans hospitalized in excess of 21 days due to service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, veterans are not able to work while participating in VA domiciliary and day programs; and

WHEREAS, VA has mischaracterized the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims decision Mangham v. Shinseki and now no longer considers domiciliary and day programs as “hospital care” for temporary 100 percent disability ratings; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress restore eligibility for temporary 100 percent ratings to include medical treatment provided by all domiciliary and day programs provided the program is treating a service connected disability. (Approved)

Resolution No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
IMPROVE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program provides educational support to eligible dependents (spouse or children) of a service member who died on active duty or a veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, while DEA benefits increase annually, they fail to increase at the same rate as tuition; and

WHEREAS, according to the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, the average cost of attendance, including tuition, fees, and room and board, at a four-year public university is consistently more than twice the rate of reimbursement for DEA; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States worked with Congress to successfully expand the Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry

Scholarship to offer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to eligible surviving children, and spouses; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently increased the monthly allowance for DEA while also decreasing the amount of months to utilize the benefit; and

WHEREAS, while nothing can repay the enormity of the loss and sacrifice of military survivors, providing a quality educational benefit will provide them the opportunity to build a meaningful and productive future for themselves and their children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to increase Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program benefits to reflect the rising cost of education, with future increases indexed to reflect the average cost of attendance as reported by the Department of Education. (Approved)

Resolution No. 623 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
HOMELESS VETERANS PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, homelessness among veterans has significantly decreased due to coordinated efforts across multiple agencies of government and the ambitious goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs to eliminate homelessness among veterans; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of female veterans experience homelessness, many of whom have dependents in their care; and

WHEREAS, local and state homeless veteran agencies and programs are federally funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem program and the Department of Labor Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

WHEREAS, programs such as VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families and the joint Housing and Urban Development and VA's Supportive Housing program are showing signs of success in reducing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the VA acknowledges its obligation to maintain comprehensive assistance to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to the best of its capabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and Congress to continue to address veterans' homelessness by increasing the availability of affordable housing, expanding educational and employment opportunities and training and providing gender-specific services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Department of Veterans Affairs should periodically adjust Grant and Per Diem program rates for inflation to ensure sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA compensation and non-service connected pension should not be considered countable income by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in determining program eligibility. (Approved)

Resolution No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
ENSURE VETERAN SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

WHEREAS, our nation has consistently supported the future success of our warfighters through robust veterans' education benefits, historically molding generations of proven leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has worked to secure and preserve quality education benefits for all generations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs enrolled nearly one million veterans across all G.I. Bill programs in the past academic year; and

WHEREAS, despite significant improvements to consumer resources for student veterans, inconsistent access to quality consumer information and financial hardships continue to drive perceptions in Washington that student-veterans are not succeeding in higher education; and

WHEREAS, many combat veterans do not fully qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit; and

WHEREAS, certain schools and programs seek to circumvent benefit guidelines in order to reap significant financial benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to ensure proper oversight of Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefit programs by developing quality metrics with which to demonstrate student veteran success in higher education, and close financial loopholes through which certain academic programs can exploit GI Bill reimbursement models; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensure veterans receive equitable access to benefits like in-state tuition and quality pre-enrollment educational information to ensure veterans are academically and financially prepared to succeed in higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we work to extend full GI Bill benefits for all combat veterans and preserve quality GI Bill benefits for all current conflict veterans and future conflict veterans to ensure they have access to quality education assistance programs. (Approved)

Resolution No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the period of eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits is 12 years from the date of separation from the military or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not understand their eligibility to VR&E services and the benefits of the program until later in life when they become so disabled that their disabilities create an employment barrier; and

WHEREAS, VR&E lacks quality performance measures that measure rehabilitation based on the long-term effects of disability and the likelihood that a disability may require further rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, VR&E can take more than 90 days from enrollment to the start of services; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to change the eligibility delimiting date for Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program by eliminating the 12-year-delimiting date for eligibility to Chapter 31 benefits and allow all veterans with employment impediments or problems with independent living to qualify for VR&E services for life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA must restructure performance measures to emphasize long-term rehabilitation versus the current short-term indicators of success. Furthermore, VR&E should continually follow up with veterans considered to be rehabilitated to ensure that the rehabilitation and employment placement plans have been successful and if unsuccessful, to ensure the reasons and bases are clearly communicated to the veteran; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA streamlines eligibility and entitlement to VR&E programs to provide more timely intervention and assistance to all disabled veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA must provide better information about VR&E during the Transition Assistance Program Class for separating service members. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SUPPORT VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes that it is in the best interest of our nation to have a strong and viable veterans employment and training system; and

WHEREAS, Congress has recognized that veterans of all eras, especially recently separated service members and veterans with service connected disabilities find it difficult to obtain meaningful employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, while there are certain employment and educational programs in place for veterans such programs must have a proactive, long-term career focus; and

WHEREAS, programs designed to encourage federal employment of veterans, assist veterans in finding employment in their communities, and encourage federal contractors to hire veterans demand reasonable funding and responsible oversight to ensure success; and

WHEREAS, state agencies who receive federal funding are not held to the same veteran hiring standards as the federal government; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support viable and effective veterans employment and training systems, such as the Jobs for Veterans State Grant program and other Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to improve and enforce federal veteran-hiring mandates for contractors who do business with the federal government as outlined in Title 38 USC 4212; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that federal veteran hiring initiatives and programs must be held accountable for the effectiveness of the services provided and funding should be adjusted to reflect abilities in creating long-term meaningful careers for veterans, and state agencies that receive federal funding must be held to the same standards and report to Congress on the success of veteran hiring initiatives. (Approved)

Resolution No. 627 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHEREAS, government reports consistently indicate that many federal agencies fail to reach their three-percent contracting goal for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans and disabled veterans lack access to the necessary capital to invest in small business opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has failed to deliver adequate tools to veterans, offering the opportunity to fulfill the three-percent federal contracting mandate; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration remains underfunded and understaffed to fulfill its mission of establishing and maintaining robust veterans' programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress expand entrepreneurial education and networking programs for veterans via veterans small business centers and other entrepreneurship programs funded through the Small Business Administration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress expand veteran's and disabled veteran's access to capital by expanding direct loan programs through the Small Business Administration; but such programs should never come at the expense of other earned veterans' benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress hold Department of Veterans Affairs accountable for its duty to properly verify veteran entrepreneurs to help achieve the federal government's three-percent veterans contracting goal. (Approved)

Resolution No. 628 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT THE TRANSFER OF THE MARE ISLAND CEMETERY TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Mare Island Naval Cemetery, located in Vallejo, California, has been identified as "the oldest military cemetery on the West Coast and the final resting place for more than 800 of our country's heroes, some who served as far back as the War of 1812"; and

WHEREAS, no less than three (3) Medal of Honor recipients and Anna Arnold Key Turner, the daughter of Francis Scott Key, composer of "The Star-Spangled Banner" are among those buried at the Mare Island Cemetery established February 12, 1856; and two (2) years later action was completed designating the cemetery as a naval and military cemetery; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vallejo, which inherited the cemetery when the base closed, the mayor has said it should have been transferred to the Veterans Administration; further explaining the City of Vallejo does not have the funds to restore the cemetery or maintain it to an appropriate level, commensurate with its historical importance; and

WHEREAS, there is currently sponsored S. B. 2983 by Senator Feinstein of California directing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with the City of Vallejo, CA for the transfer of Mare Island Naval Cemetery, and for other purposes and H. R. 6039 sponsored by Representative Mike Thompson, California's 5th District, directing the Department of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement with the City of Vallejo, CA for transfer to the VA of Mare Island Naval Cemetery to be maintained as a national shire; and

WHEREAS, by law, the VA pays to maintain military cemeteries but they can only provide funding to federal or state entities, not city governments, thereby, causing the City of Vallejo, who has inferred the city does not have the resources to properly care for the hallowed ground and have taken the extraordinary action of asking the federal government to take back the land; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we fully support passage of S.B 2983 and H.R. 6039 by the Congress of the United States and request they be signed into law by President Trump transferring the control of the cemetery on Mare Island, Vallejo, CA. to the Department of Veterans Affairs. (Approved)

Resolution No. 629 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)
WARTIME VA BENEFITS FOR EARLY VIETNAM VETERANS

WHEREAS, section 101(29) of title 38, United States Code, officially recognizes the Vietnam era period of war as "beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam;" and

WHEREAS, the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG)-Vietnam was officially established on November 1, 1955 following the defeat of the French and the establishment of the 1954 Geneva accords; and

WHEREAS, between 5,000 and 10,000 Unites States (US) Military personnel were estimated to have served with MAAG-Vietnam and other US military groups in Vietnam between November 1, 1955 and February 27, 1961; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served in Vietnam from November 1, 1955 to February 27, 1961 are not considered wartime veterans and are considered

ineligible for wartime VA benefits such as low-income wartime veterans pensions; and

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) was established per Executive Order 10977 dated December 4, 1961 for military campaigns that started on or after July 1, 1958. US Military personnel who served in Vietnam from July 1, 1958 to July 3, 1965 may receive either the AFEM or the Vietnam Service Medal but not both. Veterans who served in Vietnam prior to July 1, 1958 are not eligible for any campaign medals; and

WHEREAS, at least twelve US military personnel were awarded the Purple Heart by being wounded in Vietnam prior to February 28, 1961; and ten US military personnel were killed in Vietnam between November 1, 1955 and February 27, 1961 and are listed on the Vietnam Wall; and

WHEREAS, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War; and such program declares November 1, 1955 to be the official start of the Vietnam War; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans-of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to change the present laws so that any US military personnel who served in Vietnam from November 1, 1955 to February 27, 1961 be eligible for all VA wartime benefits. (Approved)

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Indiana	Jerry Blake	1114
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Kansas	Richard Fisher	1432
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Ohio	Larry Moore	3494
Oklahoma	James Patterson	3916

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Pennsylvania	James Brown	5958
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Pennsylvania	David Pearl	6495
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Virginia	Stephen Roche	3219
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Wisconsin	Robert Bonack	7692
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