

Resolution No. 301

BELLS OF BALANGIGA

WHEREAS, the year 2018 is the 76th anniversary of the notorious Bataan Death March where American and Philippine men-at-arms who fought and bled together saw over 500 Americans and over 5,000 Filipinos comrades die together; and

WHEREAS, for over 100 years the Philippines has been America's strongest friend in Asia and a staunch ally in World War Two, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, over the past few decades, the United States Naval Academy, the Virginia Military Institute, Harvard University, many American cities, among others, have returned religious bells which were removed during periods of conflict and brought to the United States to churches and temples in Japan, Russia, and Germany from which they came; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the United States Military Academy at West Point returned to the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bauang, La Union an 800-pound Bell taken in 1901 from the Philippines which it held on display for over 100 years because it was the "right and honorable thing to do"; and

WHEREAS, it was not unusual during the Philippine-American War (1899 – 1902) for soldiers to bring home souvenirs and artifacts from Catholic Churches in the Philippines such as bells, and other relics in violation of the U.S. Army's General Order 100 which implemented the Lieber or Lincoln's Code protecting private property; and

WHEREAS, General Order 100 placed in effect by General Arthur McArthur during the Philippine American War prohibited the taking of personal property and defined the property of churches as personal property; and

WHEREAS, the Iwo Jima Association of America encourages the return to Japanese families of personal property brought to the U.S. during World War Two as a gesture of reconciliation and friendship; and

WHEREAS, in 1904 the U.S. Army 11th Infantry Regiment brought to Fort D. A. Russell (today Warren Air Force Base) in Cheyenne, Wyoming from a Quartermaster salvage yard on the Philippine island of Leyte, two 600-pound bells which had originally hung in the belfry of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in the small town of Balangiga on the island of Samar; and

WHEREAS, for several years it was incorrectly believed that these Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir, taken from the church in the town of Balangiga, Samar had been used during the Philippine American War as a signal of a surprise attack on American soldiers garrisoned in that town; and

WHEREAS, these two 600-pound bells ultimately became known through pejorative writing and distorted history as the “Bells of Balangiga” and a source of misunderstanding and rancor between friends and allies; and

WHEREAS, the Philippines is predominately a Catholic nation where church bells are a very important element in the lives of Filipinos as well as reflective of their national patrimony representing the very fabric of its cultural heritage and history - - the return of the bells would be “the right thing to do” and result in national jubilation; and

WHEREAS, our history and common bond was also forged in the Philippines and on August first, 1914, the “Army of the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico” became the “Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States”; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Pacific Areas, in recognition of the 76th Anniversary of the Bataan Death March and the historic military ties and camaraderie between Americans and Filipinos, and given that accurate information on the history of the two bells now exists, urge the President of the United States in collaboration with the Congress of the United States, take action to return the two Catholic Church Bells now on display on F. E. Warren Air Force Base (formerly Fort D. A. Russell) in Cheyenne, Wyoming to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in the town of Balangiga, Province of Eastern Samar, Republic of the Philippines.

Resolution No. 302

**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.

Submitted by Department of Nevada
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 303

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.

Submitted by Department of Nevada
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 304

RECOGNIZING THE END OF HOSTILITIES IN KOREA AND KOREAN REMEMBRANCE DAY

WHEREAS, the United Nations Command (UNC), the Korean People's Army (KPA), and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) signed an Armistice Agreement at 0800 hours on 27 July 1953, to "insure a complete cessation of hostilities and of all acts of armed force in Korea, until a final peaceful settlement is achieved"; and

WHEREAS, 54,236 American servicemen lost lives, 103,284 were wounded in action and another 7,747 remain unaccounted for listed as Missing In Action (MIA); and

WHEREAS, 65 years after the signing of the Armistice Agreement, remains divided. South Korea is a democratic nation while North Korea is a dictator lead communist nation; and

WHEREAS, American families still bear the pain and suffering from the loss of their loved ones and the US Military service members both male and female that have yet to be accounted for and those MIAs that have left their families still needing closure on their loss; and

WHEREAS, to recognize the United States Military who paid the ultimate sacrifice to their country and to those who were wounded and those that still remain as Missing In Action; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States request that the Sixty-fifth Anniversary of the End of Hostilities in Korea be marked by the flag of our nation (the Stars and Stripes) being flown at Half Staff at every VFW Post across the globe on July 27, 2018 and each subsequent year thereafter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States urge Congress to designate July 27 as Korean Remembrance Day and direct that the American Flag be flown at Half Staff on all Federal Buildings, State and Municipal facilities throughout the United States, its territories and possessions.

Resolution No. 305

AFGHAN AND IRAQI WARTIME ALLIES HONORARY VETERAN STATUS

WHEREAS, Afghan and Iraqi wartime allies were bridges to the Afghan and Iraqi people during our missions in those countries; and

WHEREAS mission success was directly dependent on close working relations between local nationals and U.S. agents in country; and

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

WHEREAS, our wartime allies' lives 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, the title of honorary veteran will allow Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa recipients similar dignity, respect and honor shown to U.S. veterans; and

WHEREAS, the title of honorary veteran will not entitle them to any U.S. Code Title 38, Veterans Affairs, or other monetary benefits, and thus will have no effect on the federal budget; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, urges the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to honor the contributions of Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients who stood shoulder to shoulder with, assisted and protected U.S. military service members, U.S. diplomats and government agents, NGOs and media organizations during U.S. involvement in those countries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars extends its gratitude, on behalf of the American people, to Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients, who served as wartime allies, for their sacrifice, bravery, and commitment to the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars supports legislation that confers upon them the status of an honorary veteran of the United States Armed Forces without Department of Veterans of Affairs benefits attached to this title, and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars applauds private sector companies and charities who want to include these heroes in their programming.

PROPOSED

Submitted by Department of New Jersey
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 306

NAMING A NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE, THE USS LOS ALAMOS

WHEREAS, the Mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is to foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts, to serve our veterans, the military and our communities and to advocate on behalf of all veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is a voluntary service organization comprised of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who served the U.S. in wars, campaigns and expeditions on foreign soil or hostile waters; and

WHEREAS, a citizen-based initiative is requesting that the United States Secretary of the Navy name a future nuclear-powered submarine the *USS Los Alamos*; and

WHEREAS, it is acutely apropos that the Secretary of the Navy should consider this request given the unique, varied and continuing contributions of the residents of New Mexico to the security of this nation and the stability of the world military since 1943; and

WHEREAS, the residents of Los Alamos and New Mexico have provided the scientific, engineering, logistical and technical expertise that has driven Los Alamos National Laboratory since its inception; and

WHEREAS, not only did the early work of Los Alamos contribute to the abrupt conclusion of the bloodiest war in the history of the world, it provided the kernel of knowledge from which the nuclear Navy became possible; and

WHEREAS, naming a nuclear-powered submarine the *USS Los Alamos* is a fitting tribute to the men and women who served during the Manhattan project in World War II and to all who have offered service in the nation's interest since the war; and

WHEREAS, many key participants of the Manhattan project and subsequent programs were and are members and veterans of the United States military, including the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, the Los Alamos County Council has endorsed the naming of a future United States Navy nuclear powered submarine the *USS Los Alamos*; and

WHEREAS, both the House and the Senate of the New Mexico State Legislature have unanimously endorsed the naming of a future United States nuclear-powered submarine the *USS Los Alamos*; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and entire New Mexico delegation to the United States Congress have unanimously endorsed the naming of a future United States nuclear-powered submarine the *USS Los Alamos*; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States unanimously passed S. CON RES.10, which is a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the

Navy should name the next nuclear-powered submarine of the United States Navy the *USS Los Alamos*; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Los Alamos National Laboratory will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary as well as a very productive relationship with the United States Navy for all of those seventy-five years; and

WHEREAS, the Department of New Mexico fully endorses this resolution, by a unanimous vote at the 84th Department Convention held on June 2, 2018; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the initiative to name a future United States Navy nuclear-powered submarine the *USS Los Alamos* is hereby enthusiastically endorsed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the United States Secretary of the Navy.

Resolution No. 307

EQUALITY FOR VETERANS' SPOUSES AND FAMILY MEMBERS IN OUR DIVERSE SOCIETY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) exists as a national association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen served this Nation in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters, and its Auxiliary exists as a national association of eligible members whose eligibility is determined within the confines this federal charter; and

WHEREAS, the eligibility to both the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliary is not based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other basis of discrimination prohibited by law; and

WHEREAS, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom remains a purpose within the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and an object of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary; and

WHEREAS, at the 24th National Encampment in 1923 delegates voted to amend the VFW's new member initiation ceremony to assure new members that the member obligation shall not "conflict with [a member's] religious or political belief, [their] freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to [their] family" as the VFW Ritual states; and

WHEREAS, the Pentagon reports twenty-one percent of Active Duty service members identify as Agnostic, Atheist, or an unknown or unclassified religion; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the VFW mandate the VFW Auxiliary remove "profess a belief in God" as a requisite for membership from Section 101 – Eligibility of the VFW Auxiliary By-Laws.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 308

SUPPORT FOR WWI CENTENNIAL COMMISSION INITIATIVES

WHEREAS, delegates at the 118th National Convention passed Resolution No. 301 to support the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission in its mission to honor, educate, and commemorate the Great War; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission has cited that Congress has authorized a systematic review into African Americans worthy of the Medal of Honor in WWII, but no such review has occurred for those who served in WWI; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission has also cited that although in 1978 Congress subsequently approved military veteran status and honorable discharges to the American female switchboard operators from the Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators Unit in WWI, these women's service has still not been recognized with a service medal; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission has requested the VFW's support in their respective initiatives to honor minority and female service members of WWI; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission's efforts to authorize a systematic review of the valor medals awarded to African American service members, and those of other minorities, who were potentially denied medals due to racial bias; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission's efforts in seeking the Congressional Gold Medal be awarded to the American female switchboard operators in WWI from the Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators unit known as the "Hello Girls."

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS