

EIGHTY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
AUGUST 29, 30, 31, 2006

RESOLUTION NO.:65

**SUBJECT: The American Legion Policy on
 Gulf War Veterans Illnesses**

Origin: Michigan

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Approximately 700,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were deployed to the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, More than 40,000 women served in theater during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Over 20 percent of new recruits in the Armed Forces today are women and that percentage is likely to grow in the coming years; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of Gulf War veterans are in good health, thousands of Gulf War veterans nevertheless suffer from unexplained physical symptoms known as "Gulf War veterans illnesses"; and

WHEREAS, Over 200 scientific studies are investigating these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Few of the aforementioned studies are focused exclusively on the illnesses experienced by women Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, Misleading information about Gulf War veterans illnesses has spread on the Internet and through the media, and this information has caused a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the severity and prevalence of Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine is currently preparing reports that evaluate the nature, the likely causes and the Federal Government's response to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, These reports directly affect Department of Veterans Affairs compensation programs for Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several independent expert scientific committees and organizations have stated that a number of suspected causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses are not likely associated with those illnesses, whereas others are more likely associated with those illnesses; and

WHEREAS, The Secretary of Veterans Affairs established a committee comprised of doctors, scientists, Gulf War veterans and veteran service organization representatives to provide guidance and advice on future Gulf War-related research efforts; and

WHEREAS, Pyridostigmine bromide was used by the United States and some coalition troops as a nerve agent pre-treatment during the Gulf War although the Food and Drug Administration had not yet approved the drug for that use and some researchers contend that pyridostigmine bromide may be associated with Gulf War veterans illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Several medical studies have found that the unexplained physical symptoms reported by Gulf War veterans are similar to other medically unexplained symptom syndromes like chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States signed into law legislation amending the Gulf War undiagnosed illness law (title 38, United States Code, section 1117) to include medically unexplained disabilities such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and irritable bowel syndrome; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion's contract with a medical consultant from the University of Connecticut proved invaluable in helping the organization strive towards its goal of serving Gulf War veterans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 30, 31, 2006, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to devote the appropriate resources to finding effective medical treatments to alleviate the unexplained physical symptoms of Gulf War veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs fund more scientific studies that exclusively investigate the health of women Gulf War veterans; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly implement any reasonable recommendations contained in Institute of Medicine reports, or recommendations offered by the newly established Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses, regarding its Gulf War veterans programs and research; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the scientific community to focus its efforts on the most likely causes of Gulf War veterans illnesses and to refrain from supporting or encouraging investigations of risk factors that are not likely related to Gulf War veterans illnesses; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Defense to not use investigational drugs on U.S. troops without their informed consent; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to closely monitor the implementation of the changes to title 38, United States Code, section 1117, to ensure proper application of the law at the Department of Veterans Affairs regional office level; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to develop the Gulf Registry; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will continue to consult with medical experts from time to time in order to ensure the effectiveness of its advocacy.