

In-Flight Injuries to Pilots and Flight Crew Members
(4: Health & Dental Care/13: VBA/14: VHA)
Resolution No. 23-08

WHEREAS, pilots and flight crew members of fighter, cargo and utility aircraft suffer cervical and lower spine injuries when flying because of cervical and spinal compression during flight maneuvers; and

WHEREAS, pilots and flight crew members of fourth and fifth generation fighter airplanes routinely encounter 9-g turns and other maneuvers; and

WHEREAS, in the F-16, 9-g turns and other maneuvers are routine and their effects are multiplied by the reclined F-16 crew seats, which cause a twisting of the neck and spine when the flight crew members are looking back at their “six”; thereby causing the spine and neck to be twisted and compressed simultaneously; and

WHEREAS, pilots and flight crew members on flight status are disinclined to report such injuries to medical personnel until after their retirement from military service, either because their careers require they stay on flight status, or because those injuries don't fully manifest themselves until after retirement; and

WHEREAS, a preponderance of studies with pilots and flight crew members who have flown military aircraft have results that support in the line of duty injury due to development of acute cervical and lower spine problems causing significant disabilities,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Reserve Officers Association, d.b.a. Reserve Organization of America, urges Congress to require that a presumption of service connection, medical discharge and disability pay be granted by the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, as appropriate, to former pilots and crew members who develop cervical or lower spine injuries or disabilities, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that when military records are not available the disability should be resolved as a service-connected disability.

Renewed by the National Convention, 1 Oct. 2023

Renewed by the National Convention, 19 September 2020

Adopted by the National Convention, 23 July 2017

Source: Department of Golden West, 6 July 2017