

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
October 17-18, 2018**

**Resolution No. 17: Encouraging the Department of Veterans Affairs To Conduct Research  
On The Effects Of Anti-Malarial Drug Mefloquine For A Suspected Link To Mental  
Health Disabilities**

**Origin: Resolution No. 97 (WA) 2018 National Convention**

**Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission**

WHEREAS, Mefloquine is an anti-malarial drug that has been commonly used in military settings since its development by the U.S. military in the late 1980s; and

WHEREAS, The anti-malarial drug Mefloquine (commonly marketed as Lariam) had until recently enjoyed a long history of preferred use in certain military settings in the prophylaxis of chloroquine-resistant Plasmodium falciparum malaria; and

WHEREAS, Originally developed by the U.S. military in a Vietnam War-era drug development program and subsequently licensed for prophylactic use in the U.S. in 1989; and

WHEREAS, Mefloquine has, in the over quarter century since, been widely used by the U.S. military and by various international militaries during deployments in malaria-endemic areas, including the Horn of Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Australia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, particularly during recent large-scale operation in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Recently, Mefloquine was recognized as an idiosyncratic neurotoxicity that may cause permanent injury to the central nervous system; and

WHEREAS, Very common side effects including insomnia and abnormal dreaming affecting greater than 10% of the prescription users and common side effects including anxiety and depression; and

WHEREAS, Other side effects described as uncommon but reported in between one and ten prescribed users per 1000 including agitation, aggression, restlessness, panic attacks, mood swings and confusion; and

WHEREAS, Among susceptible individuals, such symptoms may progress to a potentially life-threatening condition; and

WHEREAS, With recent understanding of the adverse neurological effects of Mefloquine on structures in the brainstem, research had emerged demonstrating that Mefloquine may impair motor learning during certain complex tasks, such as those comparable to marksmanship, with clinical implications for Mefloquine users; and

WHEREAS, Although not unique to military settings, concern of suicide associated with use of the drug has also been a pervasive concern, particularly in the U.S. military, dating at least back to the first large-scale deployment of troops to Iraq in 2003 during which use of Mefloquine was widespread; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 17-18, 2018, That The American Legion encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct research on the effects of Mefloquine as a reviewable condition for mental health disabilities.**