

VFW Calls on SECDEF to Recognize Operation Atlantic Resolve Service with Medal

National Commander says new designation deserves proper recognition for the troops

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WASHINGTON — With President Joe Biden’s [executive order](#) issued July 14, approving the mobilization of select reservists of the Armed Forces to active duty to support Operation Atlantic Resolve, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) National Commander Tim Borland is renewing his call for the Department of Defense to award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to those service members deployed to defend NATO’s eastern flank.

“Operation Atlantic Resolve is now a named contingency operation and the troops directly supporting this crucial mission deserve proper recognition,” said Borland. “The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was created for just this reason.”

First authorized by Executive Order 10977 signed by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal is awarded for participations in U.S. military operations, operations in direct support of the United Nations and for U.S. operations of assistance to friendly foreign nations. The DOD previously approved 36 operations eligible for the award. The characteristics of the various operations include assurance, deterrence, peacekeeping, and reinforcement in support of allies, including ongoing NATO operations in former Yugoslavia.

During a Pentagon [press briefing](#) on July 13, DOD News reported Joint Staff Director of Operations Lt. Gen. Douglas A. Sims II said Operation Atlantic Resolve is designated as a contingency operation. According to Title 10, the definition of the term “contingency operation” is “a military operation that is designated by the Secretary of Defense as an operation in which members of the Armed Forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against an opposing military force.”

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“This new designation benefits troops and families with increases in authorities, entitlements and access to the reserve component forces and personnel,” said Sims.

“By exercising his authority with this simple, yet meaningful gesture,” said Borland, “Secretary of Defense Austin has the opportunity to show U.S. service members how much he appreciates what they are doing to support our NATO allies in eastern Europe.”

During Congressional testimony in March, Borland first addressed the need to recognize service members serving in eastern Europe to support NATO after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Borland observed the need for proper recognition after visiting American troops serving in Poland in February. He said that the global security situation demanded that U.S. service members be quickly sent to the defense of NATO allies, and recognizing those serving in a forward operational capacity with a medal is the right thing to do.

“The VFW calls on the DOD and Congress to properly recognize the immense contributions of those who served and are serving on the eastern flank of NATO by awarding them the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for deterring Russian aggression,” said Borland.