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United States Congressional Ser

Government
Documents

PROCEEDINGS
of the
99TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]

San Antonio, Texas

August 29–September 4, 1998

MAY 23, 2000.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and
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NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS; PROCEEDINGS
PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Incorporated, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually, with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they may be submitted.

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

December, 1998

Honorable Dennis Hastert,
The Speaker U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in San Antonio, Texas August 29 - September 4, 1998, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,



LARRY W. RIVERS
Adjutant General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 1998

Advance of Colors	1
Pledge of Allegiance.	1
Invocation	1
In Memoriam	2
Introduction of Speaker	2
Memorial Address	3
Introduction of Chaplain Billy Tate, Texas State Chapel of Four Chaplains	6
Presentation of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion	6
Benediction	8
Retiring of Colors	8

JOINT OPENING SESSION MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 1998

Call to Order	9
Advancement of Colors	9
Invocation	9
Video Presentation	10
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief Moon	10
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Moon	11
Introduction - The Honorable Howard W. Peak, Mayor, City of San Antonio	13
Greetings - The Honorable Howard W. Peak, Mayor, City of San Antonio	13
Introduction - The Honorable George W. Bush, Governor of Texas	14
Greetings - The Honorable George W. Bush, Governor of Texas	14
Introduction - The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson, United States Senator - Texas	15
Greetings - The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson, United States Senator - Texas	16
Presentation of American Flag Sets	18
Presentation of Awards to 1998 All American Department Commanders	18

Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation to the 98th National Convention Committee	-19
Introduction - General Lloyd W. Newton, Commander, Air Education and Training, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas	-20
Remarks - General Lloyd W. Newton	-20
Presentation of VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation to Ladies Auxiliary President, Connie Atkinson	-24
Response - Ladies Auxiliary President, Connie Atkinson	-24
Presentation of Youth Essay Contest Winner, Heather R. Hull	-25
Youth Essay Contest Winner - Heather R. Hull	-25
Presentation of Eagle and Savings Bond by Commander-in-Chief Moon	-26
Introduction of Jeff Golimowski - 1998 National Voice of Democracy Winner	-26
Voice of Democracy Winner - Jeff Golimowski	-27
Presentation of Eagle to VOD Winner Jeff Golimowski	28
Introduction of General Yang Ting-yun, Chairman, Veterans Affairs Commission	-29
Response - General Yang Ting-yun	-29
Introduction of Keynote Speaker - The Honorable Paul Wellstone, United States Senator - Minnesota	-31
Response by Senator Paul Wellstone	-32
Introduction of Helen Putnam Blackwell	-40
Introduction of Lawrence Alexander, Supreme Commander, Military Order of the Cootie	-40
Remarks by MOC Supreme Commander Lawrence Alexander	-40
RECESS	-41

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

MONDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 31, 1998

Call to Order	-41
Invocation	-42
Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance	-42
Report of Committee on Convention Rules	-42
Report of Credentials Committee	-45
Report of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual	-45

Report of Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs	-64
Report of Subcommittee on POW/MIA	-64
RECESS	-72

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
AUGUST 31, 1998

Welcome	-73
National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance	-73
Invocation	-73
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief	-73
Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Moon	-74
Presentation of VFW Commander-in-Chief Special Award	-75
Response - The Honorable James A. Endicott, Jr.	-76
Presentation of VFW Americanism Award	-77
Response - The Honorable Gerald B. Solomon	-78
Introduction of General Barry R. McCaffrey	-81
Principal Address - General Barry McCaffrey	-81
RECESS	-86

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1998

Call to Order	-87
Opening Prayer	-87
Salute to the Colors	-87
Report of Credentials Committee	-87
Presentation of VFW News Media Award, Gold Medal and Citation	-88
Response - Mr. Ken Hamblin	-89
Introduction of Major General John P. Herrling, USA (Ret.)	-90
Remarks - Major General John P. Herrling, USA (Ret.)	-91
Report of Committee on Finance and Internal Organization	-93
Introduction of Lieutenant Claude Kicklighter, USA (Ret.)	-101
Remarks - Lieutenant General Claude M. Kicklighter	-101
Introduction of Patrick J. Mulvey, CEO, the Military Channel	-106
Remarks - Mr. Patrick J. Mulvey	-106
Introduction of Sergeant Russell R. Rieke, Jr.	-107
Remarks - Sergeant Russell R. Rieke, Jr.	-108
Introduction - Mr. Mark Titlebaum, IDT Corporation	-108
Remarks - Mr. Mark Titlebaum of IDT Corporation	-109
Report of Committee on Finance and Internal Organization (Cont'd.)	-109

Introduction - The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr.,	
Secretary, Veterans Affairs	-122
Address by The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr.	-123
Presentation of Award by the PAC to	
Commander-in-Chief Moon	-130
Insurance Drawings	-131
Salute to the Colors	-131
Benediction	-131
RECESS	-131

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1998

Call to Order	-131
Salute to the Colors	-131
Pledge of Allegiance	-131
Opening Prayer	-131
Report of Credentials Committee	-132
Presentation of the VFW Armed Forces Award,	
Gold Medal and Citation	-132
Response - General Edward Philbin	-133
Report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions	-133
Presentation of VFW James E. Van Zandt	
Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and Citation	-134
Response - General Wilma Vaught	-135
Presentation of the VFW Hall of Fame Award,	
Gold Medal and Citation	-138
Response - Mr. Dennis Franz	-139
Presentation of Commander-in-Chief's Gold	
Medal and Citation to Dr. Samuel Lin	-139
Response - Dr. Samuel Lin	-140
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service	
Medal and Citation to Joseph Ross	-141
Response - Comrade Joseph Ross	-142
Report of Committee on Veterans Service	
Resolutions (Cont'd.)	-142
Introduction of The Honorable Marcy Kaptur	-147
Address - The Honorable Marcy Kaptur	-147
Report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions (Cont'd.)	-151
Report of Committee on General Resolutions	-155
Presentation of VFW Distinguished Service	
Medal and Citation to Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier	-160
Response - Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier	-161
National Marching Units and Parade Committee Winners	-161
Insurance Drawings	-162
Salute to the Colors	-162

Benediction	-162
RECESS	-162

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
 THURSDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1998

Call to Order	-163
Salute to Colors and Pledge of Allegiance	-163
Opening Prayer	-163
Report of Credentials Committee	-163
Presentation of VFW Emergency Services Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Captain Gregory Rogers	-163
Response - Captain Gregory Rogers	-164
Presentation of VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Officer Frank F. Rizzuto	-166
Response - Officer Frank F. Rizzuto	-166
Presentation of James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Mr. Richard C. Wormwood	-168
Response - Mr. Richard C. Wormwood	-168
Presentation of National Large Employer of the Year Award	-170
Response - Mr. Monte B. Johnson	-170
Presentation of National Small Employer of the Year Award	-171
Response - Mr. Paul D. Stelzner	-172
Presentation of the National Local Office of the Public Employment Service Award	-173
Response - Mr. Sal Cantu	-173
Presentation of Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year Award	-174
Response - Mrs. Judy Hamilton	-175
Presentation of Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year Award	-175
Response - Mrs. Catherine O'Dougherty	-176
Presentation of Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award	-177
Response - Mr. Charles Napier	-177
Introduction of Mr. Jim Chancellor	-178
Presentation - Mr. Jim Chancellor	-178
Presentation of Distinguished Service Medal\ and Citation to George F. Sarver	-181
Response - Comrade George F. Sarver	-182
Introduction of Past Commanders-in-Chief	-184
Presentation of Gold Medal of Merit and Citation	-185
Response - Adjutant General Rivers	-185
Introduction of Ladies Auxiliary National President Connie Atkinson	-187

Remarks - National Ladies Auxiliary	
President Atkinson	-188
Visit of National Home Representatives	-190
Remarks by President of the National Home	-190
Remarks by 1998 Buddy Poppy Child - Tyler Willett	-191
Remarks by Executive Director Shoultz	-192
Introduction of Sergeants-at-Arms	-193
Nomination of Officers	-194
Nomination of Commander-in-Chief	-194
Nomination of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-195
Nomination of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-197
Nomination of Quartermaster General	-200
Nomination of Judge Advocate General.	-201
Nomination of Surgeon General	-202
Nomination of National Chaplain	-204
Closing Ceremonies	-204
RECESS	-204

FIFTH BUSINESS SESSION

SEPTEMBER 4, 1998

Call to Order	-205
Salute to the Colors	-205
Pledge of Allegiance	-205
Opening Prayer	-205
Presentation of Commander-in-Chief's Gold Medal and Citation to General Thomas A. Schwartz	-205
Response - General Thomas A. Schwartz	-206
Final Report of Credentials Committee	-210
Nominations for National Home Trustees	-211
Introduction of VFW National Band	-212
Introduction of Honor Guard	-212
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief's Family	-212
Election of Officers	-214
Announcement of Council Members-Elect	-218
Announcement of Appointments by Commander-in-Chief-Elect	-218
Installation of Officers	-219
Presentation of Past Commander-in-Chief Lapel Pin and Gold Life Membership Card	-223
Acceptance Address by Commander-in-Chief Pouliot	-224
Closing Ceremonies	-229
Closing Prayer	-230
Adjournment	-230

COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

(Including societies that amalgamated to form Veterans of Foreign Wars)

The Veterans of Foreign Service and the Army of the Philippines amalgamated at Denver, CO, August 1913, forming the Veterans of Foreign Wars as it is today. However, the birth of the order dates from September 29, 1899, when the first national officers were elected and the eligibility clause adopted. The original chapter was granted October 11, 1899.

* indicates deceased

American Veterans of Foreign Service

1899-1900	James C. Putnam*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1900-1901	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1901-1902	Maj. Will S. White*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1902-1903	James Romanis*	Elected at Washington Courthouse, Ohio.
1903-1904	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1904-1905	James Romanis*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1905-1906	George Metzger*	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1906-1907	Charles H. Devereaux*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1907-1908	David T. Nevin*	Elected at James Exposition Grounds, Virginia.
1908-1909	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
1909-1910	J. Alfred Judge*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Jersey City, New Jersey.
1911-1912	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1912-1913	Robert J. Woodside*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

American Veterans of Foreign Service (Eastern Branch)

1903-1904	Capt. Robert S. Hansburg*	Elected at Altoona, Pennsylvania.
1904-1905	H.O. Kelly*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

(The above two organizations amalgamated September 1905, at Altoona, Pennsylvania.)

Army of the Philippines

1900-1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901-1902	Gen. Irving Hale*	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1902-1903	Gen. Irvin Hale*	Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903-1904	Gen. Charles King*	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1904-1905	Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf*	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1905-1906	Col. Alfred S. Frost*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1906-1907	Gen. Arthur MacArthur*	Elected at Des Moines, Iowa.
1907-1908	Capt. H.A. Crow*	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1908-1909	Maj. P.J.H. Farrell*	Elected at Galesburg, Illinois.
1909-1910	Col. Charles L. Jewett*	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	A.H. Anderson*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1911-1912	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1912-1913	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Lincoln, Nebraska.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

1913-1914	Rice W. Means*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1914-1915	Thomas Crago *	Elected at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.
1915-1916	Gus Hartung*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1916-1917	Albert Rabin*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1917-1918	William Ralston*	Elected at New York, New York.
1918-1919	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1919-1920	F. Warner Karling*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1920-1921	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Washington, D.C.
1921-1922	Robert G. Woodside*	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1922-1923	Tillinghast Huston*	Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1923-1924	Gen. Lloyd M. Brett*	Elected at Norfolk, Virginia.
1924-1925	John H. Dunn*	Elected at Atlantic City, New Jersey.
1925-1926	Fred Stover*	Elected at Tulsa, Oklahoma.
1926-1927	Theodore Stitt*	Elected at El Paso, Texas.
1927-1928	Frank T. Strayer*	Elected at Providence, Rhode Island.
1928-1929	Eugene P. Carver*	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1929-1930	Kezekiah N. Duff*	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1930-1931	Paul C. Wolman*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1931-1932	Darold D. DeCoe*	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1932-1933	Adm. Robert E. Coontz*	Elected at Sacramento, California.
1933-1934	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1934-1935	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1935-1936	James E. Van Zandt*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1936-1937	Bernard W. Kearny*	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1937-1938	Scott P. Squyres*	Elected at Buffalo, New York.
1938-1939	Eugene I. Van Antwerp*	Elected at Columbus, Ohio.
1939-1940	Otis N. Brown*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1940-1941	Joseph C. Menendez*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1941-1942	Max Singer*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1942-1943	Robert T. Merrill*	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
1943-1944	Carl S. Schoeninger*	Elected at New York, New York.
1944-1945	Jean A. Brunner*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1945-1946	Joseph M. Stack*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1946-1947	Louis E. Starr*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1947-1948	Ray H. Brannaman*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1948-1949	Lyall T. Beggs *	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1949-1950	Clyde A. Lewis	Elected at Miami, Florida.
1950-1951	Charles C. Ralls*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1951-1952	Frank C. Hilton	Elected at New York, New York.
1952-1953	James W. Cothran*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1953-1954	Wayne E. Richards*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
1954-1955	Merton B. Tice*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1955-1956	Timothy J. Murphy*	Elected at Boston, Massachusetts.
1956-1957	Cooper T. Holt	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1957-1958	Richard L. Roudebush*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1958-1959	John W. Mahan	Elected at New York, New York.
1959-1960	Louis G. Feldmann*	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1960-1961	T.C. Connell	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1961-1962	Robert E. Hansen	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.

1962-1963	Byron B. Gentry*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1963-1964	Joseph J Lombardo*	Elected at Seattle, Washinton.
1964-1965	John A Jenkins*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1965-1966	Andy Borg*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1966-1967	Leslie M. Fry*	Elected at New York, New York.
1967-1968	Joseph A. Scerra	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1968-1969	Richard W. Homan	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1969-1970	Raymond A. Gallagher*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1970-1971	Herbert R. Rainwater*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1971-1972	Joseph L. Vicites*	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1972-1973	Patrick E. Carr*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1973-1974	Ray R. Soden	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1974-1975	John J. Stang	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1975-1976	Thomas C. Walker	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1976-1977	R.D. Smith Jr.	Elected at New York, New York.
1977-1978	Dr. John Wasyluk	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1978-1979	Eric Sandstrom	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1979-1980	Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1980-1981	T.C. Selman*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock	Succeeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1982-1983	James R. Currieo	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1983-1984	Clifford G. Olson Jr.	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1984-1985	Billy Ray Cameron	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1985-1986	John S. Staum	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1986-1987	Norman G. Staab	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1987-1988	Earl L. Stock*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1988-1989	Larry W. Rivers	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1989-1990	Walter G. Hogan	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1990-1991	James L. Kimery	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1991-1992	Robert E. Wallace	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1992-1993	John M. Carney	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1993-1994	George R. Cramer	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1994-1995	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1995-1996	Paul A. Spera	Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
1996-1997	James E. Nier	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1997-1998	John E. Moon	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1997-98

Commander-in-Chief	John E. Moon
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Thomas A. Pouliot
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John W. Smart
Adjutant General	Larry W. Rivers
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	Brian J. Kennedy
Surgeon General	Henry F. Sexauer
National Chaplain	Dean Derieg
National Chief of Staff	James J. Thiel
Inspector General	Daniel Bartholomew
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Dir., Washington Office	Kenneth A. Steadman
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration	John J. Senk, Jr.
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs	W. Benny Bachand
Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing	Ronald G. Browning
Assistant Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Director, Administrative Services	Lawrence LeFebvre
Director, Americanism & Community Activities	Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Emblem & Supply Department	M. L. "Bud" Cale
Director, Finance and Human Resources	Robert B. Greene
Director, General Services	David L. Swindler
Director, Life Membership Dues Processing	Gary Housknecht
Director, Membership	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, National Convention	Joseph D. Ross
Director, Operations	Robert Crow
Director, Post Services & Buddy Poppy	James R. Rowoldt
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, VFW Foundation	Steve Van Buskirk
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Voice of Democracy, Youth Activities & Safety	Gordon R. Thorson
Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director, National Legislative Service	Sidney Daniels
Director, Administrative Services - Washington	Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
Director, Communications and Public Affairs	William G. Smith
Director, Employment Service	James N. Magill
Director, National Legislative Service	Dennis Cullinan
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs	Bruce Harder
National Service Officer & Director, National Veterans Service	Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
Administrative Assistant, Kansas City	Russell R. Cutright

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS, 1997-98

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH, VT)	Robert W. Madigan
DISTRICT 2	(MA, CT)	William J. Madera
DISTRICT 3	(MD, RI)	Raymond J. Boyle
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	Bruce A. Withers
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	James R. Mueller
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Scottie E. King
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	Leroy Ford
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Oliver W. Dial
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William J. Hendren
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Leslie F. Thone
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	William P. Shannon
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	William F. Cerny, Jr.
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Lewie B Cooper
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	Earl E. Chase
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	George H. Palmateer
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Dannie Cooper
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Frank R. Risewick
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	Richard J. Fruge
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Charles R. Feltenberger
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Rick Frank
DISTRICT C	(New York)	T. William Bossidy
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	George W. Marks
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	Gordon W. Kirk
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Richard L. Lehner
DISTRICT G	(California)	Richard R. Pignone
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Ferrell E. Warden
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	James DePass
Past Commander-in-Chief		James E. Nier



John E. Moon
Commander-in-Chief
1997-98



Thomas A. Pouliot
Commander-in-Chief
1998-99

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1998-1999

Commander-in-Chief	Thomas A. Pouliot
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John W. Smart
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John F. Gwizdak
Adjutant General	John J. Senk, Jr.
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	R. Earl Lord
Surgeon General	Kenneth S. Snow, Jr.
National Chaplain	Fr. Thomas W. Neville
National Chief of Staff	Randall E. Russell
Inspector General	Norbert K. Enos
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Dir., Washington Office	Kenneth A. Steadman
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration	Lawrence LeFebvre
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs	W. Benny Bachand
Assistant Adjutant General, Marketing	Ronald G. Browning
Assistant Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Director, Administrative Services - Kansas City	
Director, Citizenship Education & Community Service	Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Emblem & Supply Department	M.L. "Bud" Cale
Director, Finance and Human Resources	Robert B. Greene
Director, General Services	David L. Swindler
Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing	Gary Housknecht
Director, Membership	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, Operations	Robert Crow
Director, Post Services & Buddy Poppy	James R. Rowoldt
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, VFW Foundation	Steve Van Buskirk
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Youth Development, Scholarship & Recognition	Gordon R. Thorson
Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director, National Legislative Service	Sidney Daniels
Director, Administrative Services - Washington	Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
Director, Communications and Public Affairs	William G. Smith
Director, Employment Service	James N. Magill
Director, National Legislative Service	Dennis Cullinan
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs	Bruce R. Harder
National Service Officer & Director, National Veterans Service	Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
Administrative Assistant	Russell Cutright

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
1998-99

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	Robert W. Madigan
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	Bradley F. Reynolds
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	Raymond J. Boyle
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino, Sr.
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	James R. Mueller
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Bobby Walls
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	Leroy Ford
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Ray E. Brooks
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William J. Hendren
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Eugene H. George
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	William P. Shannon
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	Richard J. Belling
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Lewie B Cooper
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	George F. Riedel
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	George H. Palmateer
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Thomas I. Elliot
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Frank R. Risewick
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	Ronald Rusakiewicz
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	Richard J. Fruge
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Charles R. Feltenberger
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Rick Frank
DISTRICT C	(New York)	T. William Bossidy
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	Craig D. Swartz
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	Donald L. Gates, Jr.
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	Richard L. Lehner
DISTRICT G	(California)	Richard R. Pignone
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Alexander Vernon
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	James DePass
Past Commander-in-Chief		John E. Moon

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 99TH NATIONAL
CONVENTION

OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 4, 1998

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 1998

(The Memorial Service of the 99th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon, presiding. The Gold Star parents, Gold Star wives, National Officers and Past National Chaplains were escorted by the Sergeants-at-Arms.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room for the Advancement and Posting of the Colors.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard advanced the Colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" sung by the Fiesta City Chorus of Sweet Adelines.)

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Will you please stand for the Invocation by Father Dan Majeuris, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Air Force, Retired.

FATHER DAN MAJEURIS: Gracious God, our Heavenly Father, as we prepare for this Memorial Service, we honestly want to thank you for all the blessings you have entrusted to our use. So many, in fact, that we live as if they were just part of our normal scheme of our life.

Yet when we stop and think, as we do now, we know that this isn't exactly so. We thank you for life, for friends, for families and for freedom which have been given to us. Most especially we thank you for our comrades at arms who now rest in you.

So many of them gave their lives that we might live in freedom. We pray and are inspired by their ultimate sacrifice that we may live lives distinguished for thankfulness and responsibility. We do not pretend to appreciate fully the pain, the loneliness and the suffering that they and their families endure, but we do entrust into your loving care all of those who have preceded us into your presence.

May we, the living, also entrust ourselves to you. In this spirit we

commit to service this day in our lives. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

IN MEMORIAM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I would like to acknowledge the presence of Mrs. Patrick Carr, widow of Past Commander-in-Chief Patrick E. Carr, who passed away on June 1st, 1998, and some of the family members. Mrs. Carr.

I would like to also acknowledge the presence of Mrs. Ray Gallagher, widow of Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Gallagher, who passed away on October 23rd, 1997, along with her daughter.

Comrades, Ladies of the Auxiliary and Friends: We have met at this time to commemorate our comrades of the United States Armed Forces who have answered the last call. The VFW Ritual provides that the audience refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see that there is no disturbance during this ceremony.

NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF JAMES THIEL: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I request that the National Chaplain preside.

(National Chaplain Reverend Dean Derieg presided during the Memorial Services, performed by the National Officers in accordance with the Ritual.)

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I am pleased to introduce a distinguished member of the United States Air Force as our Memorial Service Speaker.

Chaplain Lorraine K. Potter, a Colonel in the United States Air Force, is the Command Chaplain, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Chaplain Potter was raised in Warwick, Rhode Island, and is an ordained minister of the American Baptist Churches, United States of America. Since her commissioning in 1973, she has served at every command level within the Department of Defense.

Chaplain Potter's achievements include the American Baptist Outstanding Military Chaplain's Award, the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, and the Reserve Officer Association Outstanding Officer Award. From 1994 to 1995, she served as the National President, Military Chaplain's Association.

I am pleased to introduce Chaplain Lorraine K. Potter, Colonel, United States Air Force.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

CHAPLAIN LORRAINE POTTER: Commander-in-Chief Moon, Honored Guests, Members of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary, Gold Star parents, Gold Star wives, it is a great honor for me as a chaplain to be here this morning and to represent the chaplain services of all of our armed services. As you begin your conference, your meeting, there is no better way to begin than to acknowledge who we are in the presence of Almighty God.

So we come this morning to worship our Creator God. We take time now to remember, remember our many blessings, the blessings of life, the blessings of liberty and freedom, and the privilege of being a citizen in this great nation. I would like to read a few verses from the holy scriptures, Solomon 9, Verses 7 to 11.

"The Lord reigns forever. He has established strong judgment. He will judge the world in righteousness. He will govern the peoples with justice." The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Sing praises to the Lord and sing joy and proclaim among the nations what he has done. So praise the nations what he has done.

We, in the military services of the United States, continually do that around the world as we proclaim that all peoples are to live in a respected way. We proclaim what the Lord has done by establishing and maintaining peace. Here today, I call upon us to remember the gifts that God has given to us and also to remember those who have been responsible with those gifts.

As I call you to remember, are you good at remembering? The older I get, I am not sure. There are some times that are easy to remember: your own birth date, maybe how to ride a bicycle, maybe not as carefully or as well, but we remember.

It is hard to miss the Christmas season with all that is about us and the many reminders. We need help in remembering lots of things, though. But we need to remember because it is in remembering that gives us encouragement and it is in remembering that we are able to maintain our hope.

That's the purpose of this worship service today, to be encouraged and to be hopeful. The sounds about us and the smells and the items that we see are reminders. They help us remember. The music that we have already heard today, help us to remember.

Our National Anthem, the Battle Hymn of the Republic, and there is nothing that brings back more memories than to hear our service songs. Then there are our flags, our national flag, our unit flag, that reminds us of comrades who have shared our experiences, who help us to remember our history, where we have been and what we stand for.

Then there is the poppy that reminds us of those who have fought

for their country and the thousands who died on fields of Flanders in World War I and throughout the world in countless battles. We see the poppies and we remember the sacrifice.

We also need heroes, people who stand for something important to us and that we are willing to live and die for. Our national heroes to that force are symbols of people who have had a vision, who have had a dream and been willing to give, give until they have no more breath: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy.

But we also have our personal heroes that help us to remember and that represent to us our own personal hopes and the promises of a full life. In this time of worship, I am asking you to remember those people who have been your personal heroes.

It may be a grandparent who loves you and cared for you when a parent was too busy. It may be a brother or a sister who gave up their own hopes and dreams for a college education so that you could have opportunities in education. It could be a friend who believed in you so much that they spoke up and were willing to give and sacrifice their own position on your behalf, or a teacher or a supervisor who saw your potential and encouraged you to be and to do all that you could to be that potential.

The chaplain, or priest or pastor at home who have shared their faith, their commitment and their claim of personal faith. These heroes are ones who put others before themselves, who have accomplished things that are great odds. They remind us.

But as we come here today to remember, it is the meaning that we put to those individuals, those events, those times that gives meaning, gives meaning to those things, those people.

Picture this: a child is born into this world screaming, wailing and crying, while all those who have been anticipating the great arrival of his child are rejoicing and smiling and around the bend of a virtuous old woman who dies peacefully with a smile on her face. All about her are crying. It is the meaning that we put to the experience that determines how we celebrate or how we grieve. How do you define your experiences with the armed forces, either as a uniform member or as a family member? What meaning do you put to those experiences, to the people that you shared with?

For some, the meaning is great. There are some that you can sit with and their stories will go on forever as they share the experiences of comrades who have together bonded and accomplished something, being proud of what they have done and what they stood for, their willingness to pay the price for the privileges of the freedoms and the lives that they have, this great pride, and it is the meaning of that that puts everything in perspective.

There may be others who hear of military service and have experienced it, and at the time of sharing, a time of fear, a time of great

pain, because what they see in its experience only is the cost, the loss of life too young, the loneliness. But it is people of faith perhaps to look into and define our experience through the eyes of our creators, to see the big picture, to have the spiritual truth which says that a life given on behalf of another is never given in vain.

It is up to us to look at our experiences of life, death through the eyes of our creator. There was a young mother who was sitting with her four-year-old little girl and her little girl was on her lap, and four-year-olds can be very, very honest.

She said, "Mama, you are so pretty. Your hair is always so shiny, your face always has such a smile or a welcoming to me. But, mama, your hands are ugly." The mama smiled at her little girl and she said, "You know why my hands are like this? When you were just an infant, I was out in the yard hanging clothes while you were napping, and I turned and I saw smoke coming from the house and I ran into the house and I grabbed you from your crib, and I wrapped you in a blanket and I carried you to safety. You were perfectly fine, but my hands were burned. That's why they look this way." The little girl took her mother's hands and she kissed them and said, "Mama, I love your hands most of all."

It is the use of our lives and all that we have in giving life to another, in protecting and defending another, in loving another that turns those things that may seem terribly ugly into those things that are the most beautiful and most loved.

Today, we remember our comrades, our heroes who faithfully served our nation, defending freedoms, establishing and maintaining the peace, loving others in their nation more than themselves, and we are here to remember and to celebrate. If we are faithful, faithful and stay the course in doing what God intends us to do, which is to love others, to serve others, to protect others, then we will become living testimonies to God's promises and to God's love.

In Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verse 1, is a powerful picture and a powerful reminder as the author writes. "As for us, we have this large crowd of witnesses all around us, so then let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way. Let us run with determination the race that lies before us."

Our comrades have run the race before them. They are now part of that cloud of witnesses who continue to encourage and remind us. They encourage us to live our lives to the fullest but selflessly. They encourage us to dream big, but be willing to sacrifice to make that dream come true. They encourage us to leave a legacy as they have left a legacy of service.

Today, we celebrate the present because we remember the past. Pause with me now carefully as we remember. Remember the gift of life, the love of family, friends, country, God, and commit yourselves to never take that life or love for granted. We remember those who have gone before us on a cloud of witnesses who have worked to serve and encourage us today to live life as they have lived unselfishly.

We remember here today those who served in the armed forces, who committed themselves to continue to serve the cause of freedom and democracy, and we commit ourselves to do the same. We remember the tragedies of war and commit ourselves to everything that we have and are.

We commit that to keeping the peace. O, God, we are grateful for the class that sits around us and grateful for the challenges and opportunities that are ours to serve, to fly above and beyond our dreams. Lord, on our sorting through life, we know that it often becomes necessary to change our flight plans, to chart new courses, to get another route.

Forbid, Lord, that any change in schedule should cause us to lose sight of our target to serve you, to serve our country and to become all that you intend us to be. Hear our prayers and make each of us here not only offer prayers but be part of the answer to these petitions. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much, Chaplain Potter, for the inspiring words.

(Whereupon, Comrade Bruce D. Anderson, United States Army Retired, played "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes followed by "This Is My Country" by the Fiesta City Chorus of Sweet Adelines.)

INTRODUCTION OF CHAPLAIN BILLY TATE TEXAS STATE CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It is my pleasure to introduce Billy Tate, the Texas State Chapel of Four Chaplains, representing the Chapel of Four Chaplains.

PRESENTATION OF THE CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS, LEGION OF HONOR BRONZE MEDALLION

COMRADE BILLY TATE: Commander-in-Chief Moon, Ladies Auxiliary President Connie Atkinson, Comrades and Sisters:

No tradition of American society is more precious to, or characteristic of, our culture than that of voluntarily reaching out to neighbors in need. Such selfless service is part of both our civic and our religious heritage.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains, a national non-profit organization, is founded upon one shining manifestation of our heritage - that of four Army Chaplains who, after giving their life jackets to soldiers who had none, linked arms with one another and went down with the US Army Transport Dorchester, after it was torpedoed on February 3, 1943.

This historical event began at Torpedo Junction, the U-boat infested, icy water of the North Atlantic during World War II. On January 23, 1943, the United States Army Transport Dorchester, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, left New York Harbor bound for Greenland. The Dorchester was escorted by three Coast Guard cutters.

Two patrolled the flanks; the third, the Tampa, was 3,000 yards out front.

Most of the men were seasick and green with nausea. The weather was bitterly cold with gale-force winds. Ice began building up on the decks, slowing the Dorchester to ten knots.

Moving among them were four Army Chaplains: George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling and John P. Washington. The Chaplains talked with and listened to the men — soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, sharing jokes. By their concern and their camaraderie with the men and one another, they brought solace.

On February 2, 1943, the Tampa's sonar detected the presence of a submarine; she dropped back and swept the periphery of the convoy, but failed to find the submarine's position. That evening, the Tampa returned to the patrol area up front, and the other ships followed.

The captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing, with life jackets close at hand. They were only 150 miles from Greenland. With daylight, there would be air cover from the American base.

It was just after midnight on February 3, 1943. An enemy submarine fired a torpedo toward the Dorchester's flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly; some were trapped below deck. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized; rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the dark churning water far below.

The testimony of survivors tell us that the sole order and the only fragment of hope in this chaos came from the four chaplains, who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened a storage locker and distributed life jackets. Then they coaxed men, frozen with fear, over the side. Soon the supply of life jackets was exhausted. Several survivors report watching in awe as the four chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own life jackets.

These four men of God had given away their only means of saving themselves in order to save others. The Chaplains gathered together, and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn. They linked their arms together as the slant of the deck became severe. In just that way, with their arms linked in brotherhood and their heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves.

It was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the Dorchester, but it was especially significant because of the identity of these four young men, two Protestants, a Catholic and a Jew.

Today, as it has these many years, the Chapel of Four Chaplains serves the memory of these brave men, and carries their message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service to every part of our country.

To recognize and encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood

and sacrifice among Americans of every age and station of life, the Chapel established the Legion of Honor Program. The bronze medallion is an award given by the Chapel in recognition of exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual which contributes to the well-being of others at the national or world level, and to a spirit of interfaith cooperation.

At this time, Commander and President Atkinson, I would like to present you with these awards. This is a plaque that goes with this award. Thank you very much, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. At this time we will have a musical rendition by the Fiesta City Chorus of Sweet Adelines.

(Whereupon, the Fiesta City Chorus of Sweet Adelines sang "God Bless America.")

BENEDICTION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Please stand for the Benediction by Reverend Eugene E. Allen, Colonel, United States Army, Retired.

COMRADE EUGENE ALLEN: Let us pray. We give thanks, O God, for all of your praise, the grace that comes to us, the history of this country and those who have served and ultimately paid the ultimate sacrifice of life. We pray your blessings upon this great Convention.

We thank you for the safety of those that are here and safety upon those that are now traveling. Now, may the grace and love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, rest and abide and be with each of you now and forevermore. It is my earnest and faithful prayer in the name of our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RETIRING OF COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: As the National Color Guard goes to the rear of the room, the Sergeant-at-Arms will escort the Gold Star parents and Gold Star wives from the room. We ask you to please be seated and remain until they have left.

(Whereupon, the Retiring of the Colors was performed by the VFW National Honor Guard.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time I would like to acknowledge and thank the Fiesta Chorus of Sweet Adelines and all the participants in making this program a success.

I would like to announce that tomorrow's Joint Opening Session will begin at 8:30 a.m. in this hall. Thank you very much for your kindness and consideration during this program. That concludes our Memorial Service.

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 1998

(The Joint Opening Session of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 85th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary was called to order on Monday, August 31, 1998, at 8:30 o'clock a.m., in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, by Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier, Chairman of the VFW 99th National Convention Committee.)

CALL TO ORDER

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Good morning. Comrades and sisters, I welcome you to this 99th National Convention here in San Antonio. On behalf of myself, Vice-Chairman Ted Connell, Past Commander-in-Chief, Vice Chairman Glen Gardner, Jr., Adjutant Quartermaster of the State of Texas, Ted Blouin, Secretary-Treasurer, eight committee members and all of the volunteers who are working to make this our most successful Convention, we sincerely hope that the time that you spend with us this week will renew your pride in our nation, rededicate your commitment to American veterans and bring new excitement to your work as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Will you please rise as we officially open this Convention with the Advancing of the Colors.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the National Honor Guard advanced the Colors at this time and the Pledge of Allegiance was given.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: And now for this morning's Invocation, the Past National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Father George Rinkowski.

INVOCATION

FATHER RINKOWSKI: Let us bow our heads. Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, who are the Lord of Host and the God of Peace, without Thee our efforts are in vain. Continue Thy blessings upon us and our families, we pray Thee, and guide us through our deliberations.

We beseech Thee, O God, to bless the departed comrades and to comfort all that gave their loved ones for our nation's cause. Bless and strengthen the sick, the needy and the afflicted. Bless, we ask Thee, the widows and children in our National Home and help us to fulfill our duty toward them.

Continue Thy favor upon our order and help us to practice the spirit of true comradeship, both in our Councils and with the world at

large. Enable us to betterment the community in which we live to our devotion to duty as citizens.

We shall have a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades and for those missing in action and those held as prisoners of war. These and all other necessary blessings, we ask of Thee, Mighty Ruler of the Universe. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrade Chairman, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, sir. You may be seated, please.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

THE ANNOUNCER: Commander-in-Chief John Moon is from Grover Hill, Ohio, and this morning we have a short video from the Governor of Ohio, George V. Voinovich, with his greetings to this Convention and Commander-in-Chief Moon.

(Whereupon, the video was presented at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades and Sisters, I am truly honored to make this next introduction. John E. Moon was elected to the position of VFW Commander-in-Chief at the organization's 98th National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August 21, 1997.

He served in the United States Marine Corps from July, 1968, to July, 1970. While stationed in Vietnam, he was assigned to the Second Battalion, Third Marine Division. In recognition of his service, he received a Vietnam Service Medal with three Bronze Stars, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal.

He joined the VFW in April, 1970, at Post 5665, Sherwood, Ohio. A year later, he was elected Post Commander, and re-elected the following year. In 1975, he joined VFW Post 2873 in Grover Hill, Ohio. During three terms as Post Commander there, he twice earned the distinction of All-State Post Commander. He also served as Post Adjutant for 14 years and also served as a District Commander and as a County Council Adjutant.

At the Department level, he has served as chairman of several committees, including Legislation, Membership, Vietnam Veterans, National Home, and the Ohio Caravan that visits the VFW National Home every year. He was an All-American Department Commander for the year 1987-1988, and was elected to the National Council of Administration in 1988.

The National appointments have included Chairman of the

Americanism Committee, assignments to the POW/MIA, National Security and Foreign Affairs, Budget & Finance, Veterans Service, and Legislative Committees. He has also served as an Assistant Inspector General, Deputy Chief of Staff and National Aide de Camp.

He attended Northwest State College where he earned degrees in Business Management and Human Resources. He is a member of the DAV, AmVets, American Legion, Military Order of the Cootie and the Marine Corps League. He served for 16 years as the Mayor of Grover Hill, Ohio.

Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming a man I am proud to call my friend, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, John E. Moon, from the great state of Ohio.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Commander-in-Chief, at this time I would like to present you with your official convention gavel and your official convention badge. I probably didn't do that as good as Susie would have. Commander-in-Chief, at this time the members of the committee and myself would like to wish you productive deliberations and a most successful convention. Thank you, sir.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much, Past Commander-in-Chief and Chairman of this wonderful Convention, Jim Nier. You know, the opportunity that came to me one year ago as I stood before you to begin the "Courage Under Fire" year was one of the greatest highlights, I guess, of my life, and I took on the responsibility with a lot of love and a lot of desire, and a lot of great will, I guess, as a result of the many people in this room today that felt that I had the abilities to carry through.

To all of you, I thank you for your confidence, the goodwill, the great deed of sincere relationships that we have been able to, I guess, coordinate over the years. To allow me to have this position has been truly wonderful. I thank you for that.

We started the "Courage Under Fire" year with many, many thoughts in mind. This past year we were able to deliver somewhat of a maximum effort when it was needed in many areas. The "Courage Under Fire" year is a courage under fire displayed today and that you are going to have to display in the near future.

Veterans are better off today than what they were one year ago contrary to so many views that we see from time to time. We see in Hollywood where Private Ryan has been saved, but we see in today's small communities throughout America and the large cities there are many Private Ryans being saved as a result of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary.

A few years back, a VFW Commander-in-Chief said that the purpose of this organization was to turn indifference into concern, and concern into action for America's veterans. I would like to thank you for doing that this year.

But at the same time, we have deep concerns that while we are saving the Private Ryans, we have some great problems with those troops that are serving in parts of the world that may be or under conditions that we are not necessarily in favor of, that being in and around Bosnia.

You know, we have resolutions opposed to our troops being there, but while those troops are stationed on foreign soil and possibly in harm's way, this organization, this VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary, will do everything, everything within our power, to make sure that they are safely guarded, that they are well prepared, and that they truly are America's finest and the world's best fighting machine.

We spent a good time this year, many, many hours pertaining to the Arlington National Cemetery. We succeeded in having it reaffirmed that Arlington is, in fact, for those who deserve to be buried there and for no one else, period.

One of the highlights of the year came in December when Fortune magazine listed our own VFW as the sixteenth most effective membership organization in the country when it comes to getting things done in Washington, D.C, and what was really nice is that there is no other veterans group ahead of us.

In that respect, we are number one among veterans and we must continue to do everything possible if we are to maintain that number one position. Our Washington staff, for what they do, is just an outstanding group of individuals. To name one would be to be somewhat slightful of all those that have participated.

So to the Washington staff, I thank you for your efforts, your contributions to America's veterans to keep us going, to keep us rated as number one. The grass roots that we have has really been the guiding light, because it is their ideas, their views, their examples and their feelings that have brought us to that number one ranking that we have, and we are very thankful.

We have also been very fortunate this year to have the support of a very wonderful lady, a true friend, an outstanding National President, Connie Atkinson from the great state of Arkansas. I might say that Connie has my heartfelt thanks for all the work of the Ladies Auxiliary for our veterans this year. I know the work they do in Kansas City, too, and I am referring to the Ladies Auxiliary, what they did last month to get out the vote to save the Liberty Memorial.

Now, those who served in World War I will always have a beautiful memorial to honor their courage, their bravery and the sacrifices on behalf of their country.

Today, America is once again under attack on foreign shores. Our recent retaliatory strikes against terrorist bases carries a strong message,

that we will not tolerate attacks on American citizens anywhere, and if they are attacked, we will fight back.

As a nation, we have displayed courage under fire many, many times during the past century, and as a veterans organization we have shown courage under fire in fighting for veterans rights, veterans benefits and in saving America's veterans from neglect, from rejection and from indifference.

I say to you, now may God bless you, may God bless the VFW, and may God bless the United States of America.

I would ask that you please rise at this time and join me in welcoming to our stage the President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Connie Atkinson, from the great Department of Arkansas.

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE HOWARD W. PEAK, MAYOR, CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: From the Alamo to the River Walk, San Antonio is a city of great charm, elegance and style. Its history contains one of the proudest chapters in the development of Texas and the United States, when brave men rallied under the battle cry "Remember the Alamo."

Today from its air base and military posts a new generation of service people is ready to protect our freedoms at home and those of our allies abroad. From the frontier of the American West to the frontier of a new century, San Antonio has grown with the times and is poised for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Much of the recent success of this city is due to the imagination, talent and efforts of one individual. His diverse background includes many facets of government, civic activities, business and education. Most important, he brings to his present position a well-rounded background in long-range planning, water management, neighborhood planning, utilities development, and infrastructure policy formulation.

Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm VFW welcome to the man who has done so much to make our stay in San Antonio so enjoyable, His Honor, the Mayor, Howard W. Peak, from San Antonio.

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE HOWARD W. PEAK, MAYOR, CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

MAYOR PEAK: Thank you very much. Boy, this is a big crowd. It is great to see everybody here in San Antonio. It is a pleasure to be here this morning, and on behalf of the City of San Antonio we are honored to have been selected as the site of the VFW 99th National Convention.

Yes, we are a city that values our tourism and convention business. It is an important component of our local economy. But more importantly, your presence here allows Military City USA to be your host and to share

with you the hospitality that has brought back to San Antonio many thousands of military retirees and others who have passed through one of more of our installations during their career.

The title "Military City USA" was earned not just because of our good fortune to be the home of five bases, but also because of the genuinely friendly relationships between the military and San Antonio that has developed over the years. We have welcomed the military as our friends, neighbors as important partners in our economy and in our community as a whole.

It is fitting that you were in San Antonio this week giving us the opportunity to thank you for your contributions and sacrifices to and for our country. So thanks to those who are here, to veterans everywhere, and to all those who have not given just your service but their lives, too. Welcome to San Antonio.

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: As the Governor of the State of Texas, George W. Bush has earned a reputation as a principled conservative who shapes public policy based on his belief in limited government, local control, strong families and individual responsibility.

He receives high approval ratings from the people of this great state, in large part, because of his ability to set clear goals and work constructively with Republicans and Democrats to achieve those goals.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a warm VFW welcome for the Governor of the great state of Texas, Governor George W. Bush.

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

GOVERNOR BUSH: Thank you all very much. John, thank you for that kind introduction. I want to welcome you all to San Antonio, a great Texas city, and the State of Texas is honored to host the 99th National Convention of the VFW. If you are from Texas, it is great to see you. I love being your Governor. And if you are not fortunate enough to call yourself a Texan, welcome. We are really glad you are here.

If you stay here long enough, you will know what I know, that this is a place full of decent, loving and hard-working people. The people in this state appreciate our veterans and we support the military. We know that we can never repay you for what you have done, but we try every chance we get.

As General Douglas MacArthur once said, "No one knows the true cost of peace like a soldier." I am vividly reminded about what peace has meant and sacrifice has meant a couple of years in Fredericksburg, Texas. Perhaps some of you were there.

There were 30,000 people that had gathered in Fredericksburg to say thanks to the veterans who had fought in the Pacific theater in World War II. You see, it would be plus 50. My dad was there. He was the Grand Marshal of the parade. My mother was there and my wife was there, and it was during this parade two things came to mind first and foremost, how we can never forget history and sacrifice made, and secondly, I learned that you can never escape your mother.

You see, I got up to speak and I said, "Mr. President, welcome to Central Texas." There was a nice round of applause. I said "mother" and the place went wild. I said, "Mother, it is clear that the people of Texas still love you and so do I, but you are still telling me what to do after 50 years."

Honest to goodness a guy in a big cowboy hat stepped out in the middle of Main Street of Fredericksburg and said, "You better listen to her, too, boy." I do listen to her. I listen to my dad who not only taught me the importance of military but taught me the importance of values, values represented right here in this hall: duty, honor and country.

There is no question that we are the freest nation in the world because of men and women just like you in this room who put duty ahead of self so that freedom and democracy could triumph over tyranny and oppression. I want to thank the VFW for its continued support of American soldiers by providing important LINKS to home, by smoothing the transition into civilian life at the end of service, and by funding a memorial to those who have served or died in battle.

There is a movie which I have not been able to see that is out right now. I am sure some of you have seen it. It is called "Saving Private Ryan." I have been reading about it and I have been listening to the reaction of a lot of people who have seen the movie, both veterans and non-veterans alike.

All people say it is a terrific reminder, and for some the first vivid testimony of how the soldiers of my parents' generation, how the soldiers such as yourself in this audience sacrificed for us, and what all soldiers have done for us. The movie is a good reminder that freedom carries responsibility, the responsibility to live a life of decency and compassion that is worthy of the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, the responsibility, as the captain says in a movie, to earn it.

All Americans must never forget the lessons of war but must always strive for peace and we must do all we can to live up to your noble sacrifice, to truly earn the freedom with which we have been so richly blessed. Thank you all very much and God bless you.

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE KAY BAILEY HUTCHINSON, UNITED STATES SENATOR - TEXAS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I am most pleased to introduce our next speaker. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson, elected to the United States Senate in 1993, is the first woman to represent Texas in the United

States Senate.

In January of 1997, Senator Hutchinson joined the key Senate Appropriations Committee. Her Defense and Military Construction Subcommittee assignments have a direct impact on crucial decisions on federal defense spending.

During her more than two years on the Armed Services Committee, Senator Hutchinson was an effective advocate not only for our military personnel and their families but for increased readiness and support for our armed forces.

In 1996, Senator Hutchinson chaired the 30-member Senate Steering Committee, an informal caucus of conservative advisors to the Senate Majority Leader.

Named Texan of the Year by the Texas Legislative Conference in 1997 and entered into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame that same year, she brings to her current position the same confidence and concern that marked her tenure as member of the Texas House of Representatives and as Texas State Treasurer.

Please join me in giving a very warm VFW welcome for the distinguished United States Senator from the great state of Texas, the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson. (Applause)

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE KAY BAILEY HUTCHINSON, UNITED STATES SENATOR - TEXAS

SENATOR HUTCHINSON: Thank you. What a great, wonderful way to start Monday morning. Welcome to Military City USA. In Texas, we love and respect everyone who has pledged their lives so that all of us can be free. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

My staff in Washington gets a little tired of me bragging about Texas all the time, because I do come home every weekend, and then I go back to Washington and I talk about how great God's country was. Well, I came back about six months ago and I said, "Oh, I had a perfect weekend. On Saturday, I rode a horse in the Houston Rodeo Parade. That same night I went to a Mardi Gras Mask Ball in Galveston and it was perfect."

One of my staffers, who had had it up to here, said, "I don't know what is so perfect about that. You deal with horses of all kinds and people with two faces right here in Washington every day." (Laughter) So, I know that many of you probably feel the same way.

But let me say just a couple of things to you about what we are trying to do in Congress. We are very concerned about the state of our military today. We are worried that we may be going to the hollow force of the '70s. Here are the indicators.

The Army had its worst recruiting year last year since 1979. The Navy is 13 percent low in its recruiting. The Air Force was only able to entice 29 percent of our pilots that had experience to take the \$60,000

bonus to sign up for five more years.

We cannot continue to be the greatest military in the world and the only super power left if we don't keep our experienced people and recruit the best as we have done over the last 200 years.

There is only one place that I am going to advocate that we increase spending in the next four years, and that is in our military. Our defense budget is too low and we must beef it up. We are going to start to target our spending so our military people will get the health care they deserve and our veterans will as well.

We are going to force the deployment of the Ace Missile system for our country. That is unconscionable that we don't have a defense system while we are watching the Middle East erupt in missile testing. We cannot stand without our own missile defense system and we are going to force the issue with this administration.

We are going to fight to make sure that the sacrifices that all of you and your comrades have made are not in vain. I will never forget, and this is a true story and I am going to end with it because it made such an impact on me. It has really been the leading force for what I have done in the United States Senate ever since this happened.

It was early in my term, about four and one-half years ago, and I was coming back to Dallas one Friday afternoon. A man walked up to me on the airplane. He said, "Hi, Senator. I am Larry Joyce. I am one of your constituents."

I said, "Well, hi, Larry. What were you doing in Washington? Did you have a good time?" He said, "Senator, I was burying my son in Arlington National Cemetery." I said, "Did he die in Somalia?" He said, "Yes, Senator, he did." The tears streamed down his cheeks.

He said, "Senator, I am a military man. I served two terms in Vietnam and I came back, and now my oldest son in his first mission as an Army Ranger is not coming home and I can't tell you why." I vowed then and there on that very spot that as long as I am in the United States Senate, I am never going to feel that I can't answer a Larry Joyce or Mrs. Larry Joyce any time I am asked that question.

There is only one answer to Larry Joyce and to Mrs. Larry Joyce, and to all of you who have made the sacrifice to let us stand here today, and that is that your son or daughter died securing the freedom of the citizens of the United States of America, and that is the only answer that we can give if we are responsible stewards of our military in our country.

So because of the son of Larry Joyce and because of all of you in this room, we live in the greatest, freest and fairest country that was ever put together on the face of the earth.

I respect you, I honor you and I thank you.

THE ANNOUNCER: It is our pleasure to introduce Rebecca Pernol, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, presenting flag sets to Mayor Peak, Governor Bush and Senator Hutchinson.

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SETS

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR REBECCA PERNOL: It is a great honor and privilege for me to be here making this presentation today. We are a symbol of a rallying point for all the brave men and women. The flag is the Lone Star, is flown over both nation and state.

We are grateful that the Lone Star has joined with other 49 states to join the great flags of ours. That flag has grown from 13 stars to 50, and a nation that started out along one-third of the East Coast and now stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to one-third distance across the Pacific Ocean, and a nation whose influences is felt around the world and today in outer space.

I hope you will display this flag in your office and think of the consequences that your actions will have upon it in everything that you do in that office.

Governor Bush, will you please step to the podium. On behalf of the National President, Connie Atkinson, of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it is my pleasure to present to you this flag set.

GOVERNOR BUSH: Thank you.

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR PERNOL: Senator Hutchinson, will you, please, come to the podium. It is with great honor for me, on behalf of the National President, Connie Atkinson, of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to present a symbol of our nation to a lady that has one of the highest offices in our nation and who knows and understands what this flag means to us. We hope that you will display it proudly in your office.

SENATOR HUTCHINSON: I will.

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR PERNOL: Mayor Peak, will you, please, come forward. Mayor Peak, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the American flag sets on behalf of the National President, Connie Atkinson, of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We hope you display it proudly in your office and remember the flag should always be displayed in a proper and dignified manner.

MAYOR PEAK: Thank you.

THE ANNOUNCER: Please sit back and relax as we present a video.

(Whereupon, a video presentation was had at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time, if you will please rise and give one great round of applause to three great Americans, Mayor Peak, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson and the Honorable Governor George W. Bush. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO 1998 ALL AMERICAN DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS

THE ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great

pleasure that we present to you the 1997-1998 team of All American Department Commanders. The selection of All American Commander was based on each achieving their assigned quotas in new and reinstated members as well as Life Member conversion.

From the Department of Alaska, Horace D. Johnson.

From the Department of Arkansas, Odell Stricklin.

From the Department of Delaware, Robert A. McGowan.

From the Department of Europe, Richard A. Maryland.

From the Department of Hawaii, Lawrence H. Sakamoto. This award will be accepted by his widow.

From the Department of Kansas, A. Lynn Hall.

From the Department of Minnesota, Donald L. Gates, Jr.

From the Department of Mississippi, William H. Long.

From the Department of Montana, Joseph W. Brand.

From the Department of North Dakota, Theodore Will.

From the Department of Vermont, Merlin T. Doyle.

From the Department of Wyoming, Kenneth E. Weber.

Will all of the All American Post, District and Department Commanders please stand and be recognized. Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause)

At this time Commander-in-Chief Moon will present a very special citation to the Department of Arizona. For 31 years, the members of the Department of Arizona have worked together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the state. Each member of the Department of Arizona can take pride in their many years of dedication and hard work that went into reaching this milestone.

Now, in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on Greg Woodring, the Immediate Department Commander of Arizona, to accept this "Consecutive Years of Membership Growth" citation. Congratulations to the Department of Arizona.

The citation reads as follows:

"In recognition of thirty-one consecutive years of membership growth, evidencing the attainment of three decades of continuous membership gain by a Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 31st day of August, 1998."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Moon. Congratulations to the Department of Arizona.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION TO THE 98TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

THE ANNOUNCER: The Commander-in-Chief Moon will now present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 98th National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's National

Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

To accept the award on behalf of the Committee is Ben Russo, who was Chairman of the Committee.

The citation reads as follows:

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of their dedication and tireless efforts to ensure the success of the 98th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 16-21, 1997."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Moon.

INTRODUCTION - GENERAL LLOYD W. NEWTON, COMMANDER, AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING, RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Ladies and gentlemen: We are proud to have with us today General Lloyd W. Newton, the Commander of Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, headquartered here in San Antonio, home of the famous Alamo.

Not only does San Antonio house Randolph Air Force Base, but it is also the home to four other military installations that train men and women who defend our nation: Lackland Air Force Base, Brooks Air Force Base, Kelly Air Force Base, and Fort Sam Houston. These bases in the communities of San Antonio include more than 178,000 active-duty, reserve, civil service personnel and military retirees.

Together, they contribute approximately \$3.7 billion to the local economy each year.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a warm VFW welcome for General Lloyd W. Newton of Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

REMARKS - GENERAL LLOYD W. NEWTON

GENERAL LLOYD NEWTON: Thank you very much for that warm introduction and thanks for the warm welcome, ladies and gentlemen. Indeed, it is a great honor as well as a terrific pleasure for me to have the opportunity to come and share some of your time during this very important event, which is taking place in this great city.

I know that the leadership of both the state as well as the city, the Governor and the Mayor, as well as our great Senator, Senator Hutchinson, have been with you already, and I just want to join with them as well as on behalf of all of the other soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guard personnel that are in the local area and say welcome to San Antonio, Texas.

To your Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon, you have done a terrific job of gathering an outstanding audience for this important convention. Interestingly enough, I have been out of town and I came back in on Saturday, and en route from Houston back to here I had the opportunity to share a plane ride with a number of your colleagues.

I happened to be in uniform so immediately they wanted to know who was this General that was joining our crowd here. I told them that I would certainly be on my best behavior because I was looking forward to joining you here this morning.

Again, indeed, it is a real honor to welcome you to San Antonio. I think if you have not already been, and I know some of you have been here for a few days, that you will find that San Antonio is certainly a warm and wonderful city. That's why we in the military call it Military City USA, not only because of the number of bases that you heard that we have here but because of that great relationship that I along with my military personnel have with the great citizens here in San Antonio.

You will find that culturally this is one of the most diverse and probably one of the most visited cities in the State of Texas. So if you find some time, get out and enjoy this great culture and great heritage that you will find here.

Let me say to you in way of a few words this morning, we certainly do live in a different world today than that which many of you might have served in just a short ten years or so ago. Back during that period of time, we were engaged in the cold war and our national strategy was one of containment very simply put, and we wanted to contain Communism.

As all of you were aware, as you were part of it, the United States did an exceptional job because we won the cold war. But things have changed certainly from 1989 until now when the wall came down. Today, we subscribe to a new strategy, one which can be summed up in three words: engagement and enlargement.

Under this strike of the United States that is actively engaged around the world in a concerted effort as we try to enlarge the family of democratic like-minded nations because we feel the free world certainly flourishes when we are engaged in this kind of environment.

This strategy will call for our armed forces and air force to continue to be in high demand as we move into the turn of the century and into the new millennium. We are in high demand as we speak right now, as a matter of fact, and today our United States Air Force, we have permanently overseas some 80,000 personnel.

As we speak, because I just reviewed my morning brief, we have over 15,000 men and women deployed to various crises and engagements around the world. We are experienced in Operation Tempo that is certainly four times, at least that much, more than we did in the eighties.

Because of that, our forces are feeling that strain. You see, we have downsized the forces, as well as a lot of our equipment has been downsized over 36 percent since the mid-eighties, and again our military men and women are feeling that strain.

But in spite of this strain, as I traveled around and meet with our folks, and I have just returned from a trip to Europe of about two weeks ago, I can tell you we are getting some of America's best and brightest. These men and women are totally dedicated to serve you and I and this

great nation that we live in.

You will find that their morale is as high as it has ever been, and let me assure you that they are some of the smartest that I have ever seen. I, along with my colleague in the leadership environment, must be sure that we are reading fast and walking very tall if we expect to stay out in front of them.

They are some of the best that we can have and because of that I am extremely proud and most honored to have the opportunity to serve in the leadership capacity. Now, I will tell you that as I mentioned things have been changing, things certainly have been changing and you have continued to play a significant role in the well-being of our armed forces and, consequently, that resulted in the well-being of our nation.

Your efforts, like those of continuing with great Americanism and community service programs have been very helpful in keeping in the forefront the value of our armed forces. Furthermore, you have your Auxiliary program, like your Ladies Auxiliary program, which has been the backbone of your volunteer efforts that has been extending a helping hand throughout our various communities and making America continue to be the world's only super power.

You continue to support the military in a very critical way, known as our national security, and our national defense. Whether that is supporting in quality of life kinds of programs or whether it means that you are serving to ensure that our readiness stays with ties that need to be and we should keep it.

You have been there as the watch dog to ensure that our comrades have before them the important facts of how our military forces are doing. As a result, you are over two million individuals strong as well as more than 776,000 ladies in your Auxiliary group that have been wearing the badge of courage under fire very, very proudly, and for that I can tell you our men and women that are in uniform greatly appreciate what you have done.

More important than that, those who have been veterans and who may not have had the opportunity to appreciate the best that America has to offer, you have kept in the forefront the need to continue to be a support to each of them.

Let me tell you, your support today is even more important than it ever was. It is more important because of a great downsizing which we have had and because there are fewer and fewer Americans who are now serving in your armed forces. Because of that, there are many who have very little knowledge of what it really means to serve the nation.

The link between us that are in uniform and our citizens in the community are largely through you, the members of the VFW. So for that, on behalf of all my colleagues I say to you thank you very, very much for being an important arm for our armed forces.

Now, over the last five years, you certainly know that America has been enjoying a great life. It has been a great life because our economy has been doing exceptionally well, except maybe for a few days last week.

But clearly the stock markets are higher than they have ever been in a long period of time.

The unemployment rate is the lowest it has ever been. We have not heard of anything about inflation here in recent times, and certainly interest rates are in the single digits. Ladies and gentlemen, I suggest to you that much of this great enthusiasm that has a bearing on our economy is a direct result of what you have done in the service of your nation as well as those men and women that are still in the uniform today.

You see, I think that it is clear that when there is more security and stability around the world, free markets flourish and ours has been moving steadily along with all of those around the rest of the world. Our men and women in uniform have helped to build that security and that stability that we find out there, even though the world is still a rather dangerous place.

But with that, we, too, want to help you enjoy that great economic benefit that has been coming to this great nation of ours. So we clearly recognize that we are in a global market and because of that we have to ensure that kind of security and stability remains because an economic crisis anywhere in the world can certainly mean an economic crisis everywhere in the world, including our United States.

So, we want to ensure that those men and women that are in uniform are clearly supported as you have done so well over the years. I will tell you, it is through their efforts that we continue to be the world's greatest armed forces. You help to ensure that those resources that are needed for our national defense continue to come our way.

So, as you continue in this convention, this milestone convention, I might add, you will find that as you begin to enter into the new millennium of the 21st Century that there are still many things to be done to ensure that we will continue to be a viable economy and a viable nation.

So as your armed forces move into much more of an expeditionary kind of force and environment, we will be a force that will be on the move, and when you call we want to be ready. So, whether it is an attack on terrorists that will take aim at American citizens, or whether it is helping with the natural disasters, either here in these United States or wherever we are called around the world, we want to ensure that our armed forces are ready.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is through your efforts that we continue to be ready. So, again, welcome to San Antonio. I wish you the very best as you continue with this convention. I know that you deliberate on extremely, extremely important issues that deal not only with our own forces but deal with our great United States. For that, we owe you all that we can.

So, ladies and gentlemen, welcome and thank you very much. I salute you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Let's give him a round of applause. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT CONNIE ATKINSON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For 84 years, the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW has been an active partner in everything the organization has been able to accomplish. This partnership has seen the development of programs and projects that serve members, their communities and our nation.

"Catch the Spirit" is the theme of this year's National President, Connie Atkinson of Conway, Arkansas, and with it she has led the Auxiliary to new records and new milestones. Connie joined the Ladies Auxiliary on the eligibility of her husband, Carroll, who served in Vietnam as a helicopter crew chief.

A Life Member of Jesse W. Grisham Auxiliary 2259, Connie has been named an Outstanding Auxiliary President, Outstanding District President and runner-up Outstanding Department President, 1989-1990.

She has served as Southern Conference Meeting Chairman, National Chairman on the Southern Conference Safety and Rehabilitation Programs, and five times earned the status of National Aide-de-Camp for Recruiting New Members.

And now, as she comes forth to accept the VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Certificate, please give her a warm VFW welcome.

THE ANNOUNCER: The citation reads as follows:

"In special recognition of her untiring dedication to our country and in sincere appreciation for her enthusiastic leadership as evidenced by the exceptional contributions of the Ladies Auxiliary to the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and, by their deeds, fulfillment of the commitment of the Ladies Auxiliary as they 'Catch the Spirit.'"

RESPONSE - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT CONNIE ATKINSON

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT ATKINSON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Moon. To you, the National VFW Officers and the Officers of the Ladies Auxiliary, Comrades, Sisters and our Guests:

Thank you for this very special award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I shall cherish it always. You know, this convention marks the end of 84 years that the Ladies Auxiliary has partnered with the Veterans of Foreign Wars to serve veterans and other members of our community throughout our great century.

We are beginning our 85th year. I think it is time maybe for us to pause and tell you, the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, how proud and how honored we are to have served as your Ladies Auxiliary for the last 84 years.

On behalf of the nearly 728,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary, we want to say to the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars thank you for the service that you rendered our country in its time of need. Thank you

for allowing us to serve as your Ladies Auxiliary. We are here to assist you in any of our joint programs in any way that we possibly, possibly can.

This year we worked together on the new projects, such as the raising of funds for the World War II Memorial, and the efforts to restore the original Star Spangled Banner. Once again, we have participated in making a difference day. We also provided outstanding scholarship opportunities for our young people. I am so proud to have been able to play a role in the legacy of service.

This morning I would like to say again a very special thank you to each VFW member on behalf of our nearly 728,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Commander-in-Chief Moon, it was a pleasure to serve with you and on behalf of all of our members of the Ladies Auxiliary I wish for you a very successful convention. I might add that I know every National President has stood here and said she has had the very best Commander-in-Chief, and as we progress through the years, the Commanders-in-Chief only get better, so I know that I have the very best Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST WINNER, HEATHER R. HULL

THE ANNOUNCER: The Youth Essay Contest is a nationwide program designed to give seventh, eighth and ninth-grade students the opportunity to express their opinion on a patriotic theme, "What Patriotism Means To Me."

The Youth Essay Contest was again very successful in this, the third year of the program. We can all be very proud of the results. Over 58,300 students entered the competition. All 54 Departments submitted a winner. Savings bonds and other incentives, totalling over \$447,000, were generously given by our membership to young people throughout our great nation.

We are very pleased to have the 1998 National Winner of the Youth Essay Program competition with us this morning. Heather was a ninth-grade student at Los Alamos High School in Los Alamos, New Mexico, when she wrote her winning essay. She is sponsored by VFW Post 8874 and its Ladies Auxiliary from Los Alamos, and is accompanied by her father, mother and sister.

Here to present her award-winning essay: "What Patriotism Means To Me", the 1998 First Place National Youth Essay Winner, Heather Hull.

YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST WINNER - HEATHER R. HULL

MS. HULL: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, and thank you all from the Ladies Auxiliary and veterans.

Patriotism, to me, is the spirit and soul of a country. It is what

keeps a country together not only through war and hardships, but also through the victory and triumph. What else could keep a soldier from losing heart and hope in battle? A disheartened country from losing the burning desire to rebuild itself? A nation of divided citizens from losing each other?

It is patriotism that keeps our love of freedom alive. It is not money or wealth; it is not social acceptance. It is the pure goodwill of every true American that keeps our nation's dreams alive. Every day we show our patriotism in large and small ways: by proudly saluting the flag, by saying the Pledge of Allegiance, by celebrating the Fourth of July with its bursts of fireworks. Americans show their patriotism when soldiers give their lives serving our country and when citizens cast a vote in support of a candidate whose ideals represent their own.

Behind our many freedoms, including the freedoms of speech and religion, stand all the men and women who, through dedication to their dreams and perseverance through their struggles, have made so many opportunities ours. Although we may only recognize their sacrifices and suffering on certain holidays, such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day, their legacy is all around us every day. In every military cemetery, the gravestones there represent hundreds of our patriots who have served our country and who continue to do so.

To me, patriotism is a kind of heroism. When I saw my face reflected in the shiny granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) in Washington, D.C., I was reminded of the valor of those whose names are etched there and of the courage of their loved ones.

We Americans have always shown our patriotism by honoring our values and by envisioning freedom for all. To me, patriotism is the optimistic spirit and the deep-rooted soul of our country, the United States of America. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF EAGLE AND SAVINGS BOND BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON

THE ANNOUNCER: Commander-in-Chief will present Heather Hull with the First Place National Youth Essay Award, a \$5,000 U.S. Savings Bond, and a Silver Eagle Trophy, to recognize the excellence and significance of her participation.

Thank you, Heather Hull, for coming to our National Convention and for expressing your patriotism.

INTRODUCTION OF JEFF GOLIMOWSKI - 1998 NATIONAL VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

THE ANNOUNCER: Over the past 51 years, the Voice of Democracy Program has encouraged high school students from across America and in American communities overseas to think, write and speak

out for freedom and democracy.

Students currently compete for over \$128,500 in national scholarships, as well as over \$2.6 million in awards and scholarships given annually by Posts, Districts, Departments and their respective Ladies Auxiliary.

VFW and Auxiliary scholarships enable many young Americans the opportunity to seek an education in colleges and universities of their own choosing.

We are pleased to have the 1998 First Place National Winner in the Voice of Democracy Program with us today. He graduated from Newport High School in Newport, Oregon, and will attend Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. He is sponsored by VFW Post 2624 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Newport, Oregon.

Here to present his award-winning essay, "My Voice In Our Democracy" the 1998 First-Place National Voice of Democracy Winner and recipient of the \$20,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, Mr. Jeff Golimowski.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER - JEFF GOLIMOWSKI

MR. GOLIMOWSKI: Good morning. Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my most heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliaries. It is easy to forget in this generation of peace the costs of the freedom that my generation now enjoys.

After spending the last three years working with the veterans, they have been some of the kindest and most decent people I have ever met. I will give you this promise right now that for the rest of my life I will do everything within my power to guarantee that my generation will not forget the sacrifice of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause).

Thousands of years ago, on a small peninsula jutting out in the Mediterranean, amidst sun-drenched orchards and rocky plains, there arose a city that would change the course of history. The city of Athens became for hundreds of years, the center of the Greek world and from this mighty city of marble temples and broad avenues, came a principle that the world had never seen before, the principle of one citizen, one vote.

Under the great leadership of the great Pericles, the city of Athens achieved the dream of many civilizations - a stable and just government controlled by its citizens in a direct democracy.

More than 2,000 years later, another great city has risen. Standing between a mighty river and the Atlantic Ocean, another city of marble temples and broad avenues stands as a beacon to the rest of the world. And it is from this city, this Washington, that another principle has been given to the world, the principle of one citizen, one voice.

For although the ancient Greeks and her descendants attempted to build an equal Democracy, and her citizens thought themselves to be free,

in reality Athens was not a democracy but a hypocrisy. Only her adult male citizens were granted the right to vote, and only the opinions of a few influential people were given any weight. Women and children were regarded as little more than slaves.

But here, today, the United States of America is truly a nation of voices. And within this mighty conflagration of sound, any individual can influence the course of our nation and the course of history. But so many individuals in this mighty nation cannot see the incredible importance their voices have to all of us. So many are unable to see that their apathy, their lack of thought and care, are causing their political vocal cords to atrophy, and it is this apathy that is slowly starting to erode away the foundations upon which Washington, and the nation were built.

However, there is one group of people in America that hold within its hands the ability to hold back the apathy, if only they could see their own influence and power. This group of people is the youth of America, and it is to this group that my voice belongs.

For centuries, our ideas have been ignored, and our words have been lost in the sea of speeches and writings by adults. But today, with the advent of the digital age, our age is no longer a boundary. Archimedes once wrote that if you gave him a long enough lever and a place to stand, he could move the world. To the youth of America, I can tell you this: Today you stand with the level in your hands and the strength to push it. I challenge you to find the courage to use it.

You see, in today's world of instantaneous communication and Internet technology, you are no longer bound to your social strata by your age or by your size. Those older than you will shout loud and long to protect their interests. They will lower their taxes and raise their services without regard for your interests, for when you are staggering under the weight of a system long past its feasibility, they will be long gone. The time to speak is now.

But I will warn you: A single voice in this great nation is almost immediately lost. Today, that's all I am, a single voice. But if I persuade just one person, convince just one person of the importance of our involvement, then tomorrow, my voice will be amplified by another.

As the days and weeks go by, our message will continue to grow until it rings from every household, and from every street corner, that the youth of America will no longer stand as a silent minority, waiting for others to take command of us. We have our own ideas, we have our own voices, and we will be heard.

It is then, when our voices, when our ideas are finally given the weight they deserve, then that dream of Athens, that dream of Washington and that idea of one citizen, one voice will finally be realized. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF EAGLE TO VOD WINNER JEFF GOLIMOWSKI

THE ANNOUNCER: Commander-in-Chief Moon presents Jeff

Golimowski with a Silver Eagle Trophy to recognize the excellence and significance of his participation.

Thank you, Jeff Golimowski, for coming to our National Convention and for expressing your patriotism. Let's give Heather and him another big hand. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL YANG TING-YUN, CHAIRMAN, VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For years the Veterans of Foreign Wars has enjoyed a warm relationship with the Veterans Affairs Commission and the Republic of China on Taiwan. They have truly been our friends.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has consistently pledged its support through resolutions for our friends in the Republic of China. That support was recently reinforced on July 10th following the President's visit to Beijing, when the United States Congress, by a vote of 92 to 0, affirmed its long-standing commitment to Taiwan in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act.

Today, we share with the citizens of the Republic their pride, their success and their economic achievement. Certainly, that success in large part can be attributed to the employment and development programs that the Republic conducts for its veterans.

The tremendous care, support and vitality of its veterans programs have been an inspiration to the VFW. We wish to thank our friends in the Veterans Affairs Commission for their long and beneficial friendship.

Joining us today to reaffirm their pledge of brotherhood and comradeship is the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission. Comrades and Sisters, please give a warm VFW welcome to General Yang Ting-yun.

RESPONSE - GENERAL YANG TING-YUN

GENERAL YANG TING-YUN: Commander-in-Chief Moon, Madam President Atkinson, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honor for me to represent the veterans of the Republic of China on Taiwan at the Joint Opening Session of your 99th National Convention. I am exceptionally pleased to be among such a distinguished group of allied veterans here in this historic city of San Antonio, and I am very happy to once again see Madam President Atkinson and Commander-in-Chief Moon, who respectively visited our country last November and last July.

Since your 1997 National Convention, the Far East has experienced some severe economic upheavals. Countries, whose economies were thought to be stable and growing, unexpectedly found themselves in extreme difficulties. Certain currencies depreciated to one-

half of their former values of just one year ago, leading to political instability and the ouster of presidents and prime ministers.

The Republic of China has been comparatively less affected in these circumstances. We believe that the main reason our prosperity has continued is the fact that our economic strength is based on the firm foundation of a free enterprise structure under democracy.

Our economy is actually composed of over one million three thousand medium and small businesses, which accounts for 97.92 percent of our nation's business activities. Consequently, the capital in our society has been so widely and popularly distributed that we can flexibly meet the challenges and absorb the impacts from different directions.

And our founding father, Dr. Sun Yat-sen originally promoted this system.

As many of you know, Dr. Sun lived in Hawaii and absorbed the best ideals of American society, which he transplanted to China. It is, therefore, little wonder that the people of the Republic of China have maintained a great deal of respect and admiration for the United States. In fact, the friendship resulting from our common goals and aspirations led to our formal alliance during World War II and subsequent conflicts in Korea and Vietnam.

Names like MacArthur, Chennault and Wedemyer are as much a part of our history as they are of yours.

The growth of freedom and democracy in the Far East region in recent years should be large attributed to the United States' military power and resolve. Therefore, American veterans can be truly proud of their inestimable contribution to world peace. You have clearly and consistently articulated your positions to the executive and legislative branches of the United States Government on a number of vital issues, including the sale of advanced military equipment to our country. Your efforts are most appreciated by the people of the Republic of China.

The Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China is dedicated to furthering our excellent cooperation with the VFW to enhance our mutual interests, promote comprehensive and effective veterans assistance programs, and advance the goals of justice, freedom and democracy around the world.

In closing, I give you and every one of you my best regards for your health, happiness and a most successful convention. Thank you.

MR. CHARLES KAN: Now, ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. On behalf of the Republic of China on Taiwan, I would like to present the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat to your Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Moon. Now, let me have the honor to read the citation that accompanies the Banner.

"Mr. John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations between the people of the United States of America and the Republic of China in his support of

readmission of the Republic of China into the United Nations.

"In appreciation of his meritorious service, Commander-in-Chief Moon is presented the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the Government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulation."

Secondly, I will now present a commemorative plate to the Commander-in-Chief. Let me have the honor to read the inscription on the plate.

"Presented to Mr. John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in recognition of these outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between the VFW of the United States and the veterans of this Commission of the Republic of China. This is presented this 31st day of August, 1998."

Last but not least, on behalf of the veterans of the Republic of China on Taiwan, I would like to present a similar commemorative plate to the National President. The inscription reads as follows:

"Presented to Mrs. Connie Atkinson, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between the VFW of the United States and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China on Taiwan."

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. It has been our pleasure to have attended the Opening Ceremonies of the organization's 99th Convention. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER - THE HONORABLE PAUL WELLSTONE, UNITED STATES SENATOR - MINNESOTA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We are pleased to have with us today, our Keynote Speaker, Senator Paul Wellstone, from the great North Star State of Minnesota.

Senator Wellstone has received numerous awards for his advocacy on behalf of the nation's veterans and their families. In 1995, he received the "Legislator of the Year" award from the Vietnam Veterans of America as well as the "Patriot of the Year" award from the Minnesota Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

As a member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, he has worked to improve the treatment of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and has fought to improve veterans' health-care services.

A leader in seeking to reform the nation's health-care system, Senator Wellstone helped lead the fight to ensure that people would be able to take time off from work to care for a sick child or aging parent without losing their jobs.

We are pleased to introduce our Keynote Speaker, United States Senator Paul Wellstone, the Senior Senator from the great North Star State

of Minnesota.

RESPONSE BY SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE

SENATOR WELLSTONE: Thank you. Let me, first of all, thank the Commander for his kind introduction and let me thank each and every one of you for the invitation to speak at this VFW 99th National Convention. Al Loehr from Minnesota tells me that I am lucky and I can consider this to be a huge honor to be the first Minnesotan from our congressional delegation to have a chance to speak at the National Convention of the VFW since Hubert Humphrey in 1965, and that puts me in a great tradition.

I thank you for your commitment to courage, for your commitment to country and for your commitment to community. But I also want to tell you that I am especially honored because I admire your service to veterans and their families. I admire your service to communities and I admire your service to the nation.

Before I start thanking some people that are here, let me start out with a Minnesota story, if I can, because I love having a chance to be a Senator from my state. I know that part of the focus of this convention has to be VFW unity. Those of you who are here, you may not agree on all issues, but we come together around the issues that matter.

So let me tell you a Minnesota story that speaks to this. In the mid-1980's, many Minnesota farmers were being driven off their land. They were being foreclosed on. It was a crisis. I fear, by the way, for those of you that are from agricultural America that we are going to go through this again.

These farmers had no empowering explanation as to why they were losing their farms. They not only worked there, they lived there. This became fertile ground for politics of hatred. It was the politics of hatred that was racist and it was anti-semitic and all the rest. Some scary groups were out there organizing the farmers.

So my friend said to me, "Paul, you are Jewish. You have got to stop speaking out at these farm rallies. You have got to stop organizing the farmers." But if you are five-five and one-half, you don't pay any attention to such advice. Some of you know what I mean.

So, I went out to speak at a community that those of us in Minnesota call Alexander, Minnesota. I gave a speech at the big farm rally. As soon as I finished, a big guy, a lot of guys look really big to me, came up and he said, "What nationality are you?"

I said to myself I can't believe this. I said, "I am an American." He said, "Where are your parents from?" I said, "Well, my father fled persecution in Russia and my mother's family fled Ukraine, although she was actually born in New York City."

He looked at me. He said, "Then you are a Jew?" Now, I want to tell you, I went to the University of North Carolina and I was ready. I said, "Yes, I am." And he stuck out his big hand and he said, "Well, buddy, I am

a Finn and us minorities have got to struggle together." That is one of the reasons why I love Minnesota.

National Commander-in-Chief Moon, thank you. Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, thank you, and Adjutant General Larry Rivers, thank you. Auxiliary National President and Executive Director of the National Washington Office, Ken Steadman, thank you.

Thank you for the National staff and for all my VFW friends from Minnesota, too many to name. Thank you very much for all of your support. Without your support, without all that you have done for me, I would never have a chance to be a United States Senator.

To Jim Shaw, who somewhere is here, a Korean War veteran, a member of my staff, a member of the VFW Post 8510, thank you so much for all of your help. To our affiliate members, for your great work, and the special guests, I thank you. I thank you also for the 99th Convention.

You have a rich history and what I want to say to you today at this 99th Convention, as we move to the 100th Anniversary, we need you. The VFW has been about service to community and service to country. The VFW has been about citizenship with all of the citizens.

I worry for my country. We need a new century of citizenship, a new century of patriotism, a commitment to our country as a whole, and I come here to honor you because you have the attitude, you have the kind of commitment and you have got the time to work that is needed for Americans.

Please help me, VFW, in calling our nation to move forward with citizenship, patriotism and love of country. That is why we are here. Because of you, we have a veterans health-care system and service-connected benefits. Because of you, we help homeless veterans, though, not enough.

Because of you, we provide job training to veterans. Because of you, we have veterans' preference in employment. Because of you, we have assisted the dependents and survivors of veterans, service to veterans. That's what the VFW has been about for 99 years.

Because of you, millions and millions of dollars have been contributed to worthwhile civic projects from sea to shining sea. Because of you, youngsters can participate in sports, Boy Scouts and Voice of Democracy. Because of you, we have more support for cancer research, VFW service to community. Because of you, we have prosperity. Because of you, we have freedom. Because of you, we have democracy: VFW service to nation.

I will say to you in a very personal way as a United States Senator, that giving back to veterans strengthens our nation and for many of us when we give back to veterans, those who have served our country, who have risked life and limb, that is the single best thing I can do as a United States Senator.

I am probably more proud of your asking me to speak at this gathering than almost anything I have ever done in my life, and I mean that

without exaggeration. Now, I pose the question for you at this 99th Convention. Have we, as a nation, have we, as a country, done enough to give back to our veterans? Have we done enough?

Let me just put it to you this way. I get so tired of all this discussion about politics, left, right and center. I don't care about the labels and nobody in Minnesota ever comes up to me and talks in those labels. Politics is about trying to do well for people.

While many of you, you were living proof of this, you served our country, you came back and you have been enormously successful in the private sector, the public sector, the community, you name it. I know this. I know this from Jim Shaw in our Minnesota office, from all the calls that we get and from all the people we try to help, there are veterans who had a war injury that has changed their lives forever.

There are many veterans that are hurting. There is a lot of pain. There is a lot of people that have fallen between the cracks, and our country has not done our best in honoring our commitment and moral obligation to the veterans in the United States of America.

The concern, how much more needs to be done? Listen to the Persian Gulf veteran. He has returned home with a long and complicated list of ailments. He used to be a runner. He could run five miles before service in the Gulf. Now, he can't walk one block.

I will tell you today at this VFW gathering, and I will be disappointed in you if you don't make the same commitment, except I know you already have made this commitment, and we should do everything in our power to support the Persian Gulf veterans and we should not rest until they get the answers and the health care and the compensation that they deserve.

Have we done enough for our veterans? Listen to the aging World War II veteran who worries about losing touch with friends and families after having been placed in a nursing home. We can and should develop a national long-term health-care policy that is truly in the best interest for veterans and their families.

Look, part of this is obvious. We make the commitment to veterans' nursing homes, but, you know what else we have to make a commitment to, we have to make a commitment to a veterans' health-care system whereby we say to our veterans as they reach the age of 70, 75, 80 or 85, we, as a nation, will do everything possible to make sure that as long as possible you will be able to live at home in as near as normal circumstances as possible with dignity.

We ought to make a commitment to home-base compassionate community care for our veterans. That should be a part of the veterans health care in the United States of America. Have we done enough? Have we done enough for our veterans?

Listen to Smokey Parish from the forgotten 216th. It was his job to measure radiation. Some of you know where I am going with this. During the military nuclear bomb tests in the '50s in Nevada, atomic veterans were

sent to ground zero with little or no protection.

They were not given any warnings about the danger to the exposure to radiation, and I will tell you today at this VFW gathering I have met these veterans from all across the country and their families. The number of these veterans that have died from cancer, the number of their children that have been ill, the number of their grandchildren that have been ill, this is a national disgrace.

I know that the VFW has been supportive, but I have got to say it because you invited me to be here: do you realize this is almost half a century ago and we finally passed a bill out of the Senate Veterans Committee? It will go to the floor this month, and it expands the illnesses of cancer that became a part of presumptive service-connected diseases.

I am not going to rest and I hope you won't rest until we right this injustice and make sure that these atomic veterans get the care and get the compensation that they deserve in our country. Is it enough? Listen to American ex-prisoners of war who were still coping with the effects of being held in captivity.

We cannot forget our POWs and their families. We must treat and compensate them for the diseases that they have that we don't, for being held against their wills. Listen to the veterans whose claim is for service-connected disability.

You know where I am coming on this. It took years of red tape, paperwork, appeals and remands to get it approved. On the average, 111 days for claims of benefits to move through a regional office; 881 days for an appeal to move through the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Forty-one percent of the cases at the Board of Veterans Appeals in 1998 were remanded, sent back to the regional offices for further work. I say to the Veterans of Foreign Wars that this is too long. There have been too many mistakes. Justice delay is justice denied for veterans.

We must get the decision right the first time. We must get the decision right the first time. We have got to change this system and make sure the people get the compensation that they deserve. Of course, the VA must re-enter, must re-engineer its claim responses.

Of course, the VA will use new technology. Secretary West will be talking about this. I think it is so important that he be in the tradition of Secretary like Jesse Brown and be a strong advocate for veterans, and I know he will do so. But we have got to stop this practice of cutting staff when we add new computers.

Computers can't replace trained professionals, especially in adjudicating complicated claims for benefits. We ought to fully fund and staff our regional VA offices. Have we done enough? Listen to the veteran living and struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder.

He has been back from the war for several decades now, but he still is drowned in pain and alcohol, access to treatment is critical. Listen to the homeless veteran who is living on the streets in our cities. Here we are in the United States of America today at our peak economic

performance doing so well economically, and we are still being told that we don't have the resources to help homeless veterans.

One-third of the homeless people in our country today are veterans. That is a national trend. It is critical for VA treatment for mental illness and chemical dependency. We can do that. Better access to transitional housing for these veterans is critical. We can do that. Better access to job training is critical. We can do that.

I believe that at this gathering the VFW, given your service to community and your service to veterans, we should make the commitment to make sure that our country meets the challenge of dealing with this disgrace of one-third of the homeless people in our country being veterans.

It is unconscionable, it is unacceptable, and we can do better as a nation. Yes, we can do better as a nation. Have we done enough? Listen to the veteran who depends upon the VA medical system for health care in an era of cutting staff and a no vote budget.

I say today at this 99th VFW Convention that it is time for Congress to put veterans' health-care back on the agenda, back on the table. It is time for the Congress to take positive actions on veterans' health-care legislation and stop squeezing money out of our VA Hospitals.

I will introduce a bill in the next week or so. I don't say this to brag. I hope there will be strong bipartisan support. I am certainly working with Senators on both sides. Our legislation will be simple. It will say (a) begin the planning so that we know what we are going to do to deal with our veterans population as more and more veterans, thank God, live to be the age of 85.

I will say (b) fully fund the VA medical system. The flat line budget won't work. Third-party payments will not give us all the resources we need. Go on record to fully fund the VA medical system. Third, we should have a nationwide Medicare reimbursement program so that Medicare veterans will have the right to choose the VA for their health care.

It will say, first of all, give veterans a stronger voice in ensuring higher quality care. We have set up veterans Review Boards to go with these, so that veterans are involved in helping to shape the kind of health-care system that we are going to have for veterans, and finally it says let's make sure that in all of this discussion about patient protection, we may have to legislate in the fall, in September, that veterans are included.

There should be a veterans' health-care bill of rights, high-quality care, timely access to care, access to specialists, and making sure that we get the best care possible in the country. It is time to put the pressure on the Congress to move forward with a really good health-care system for veterans in the United States of America. That should be a top priority for our nation.

Anyone in the Congress, Democrat or Republican, who is willing to work with veterans, who is willing to work with the VFW, will come away from that experience feeling more patriotic and more grateful with the renewed sense of commitment to our country.

I know that, because that has been my journey as a United States Senator. During World War II, 400,000 Americans died on the battlefield. If you can see this movie, and for some of you it may be too painful, but I hope many of you will see the movie "Saving Private Ryan." I think it is an extremely important movie and I think you will think so.

Now, 700,000 returned home wounded. During the Korea War, 50,000 Americans died; 100,000 wounded. During the Vietnam War, 58,000 Americans died; 300,000 were wounded. You and I know that when ordinary people step forward and make the ultimate sacrifice or return home wounded or disabled, they deserve the admiration of the American people. They have earned it.

You know, because you truly understand patriotism, you more than any other Americans have demonstrated your love for our country. Patriotism is reflected in the thousands of yards of sacred purple and thousands of raw cast profiles of George Washington that you have earned.

Patriotism is in the memory of those brave Americans who fell on Omaha Beach, at Heartbreak Ridge, on Hamburger Hill. Patriotism wavers in the bars of red and sticks of white that snap in the wind and tear at the heart, and to be sure that if the patriotism is to mean anything, it must mean keeping faith with those who the nation fought from their youth and transported to distant shores to fight in the unspeakable horror of war.

Patriotism is also believing like you do in the inherent goodness and greatness of our nation with a deep faith in the ability of Americans to work together and create a better country. But today in Washington, we are confronted with another philosophy. I call it the new isolationism.

Not as in foreign affairs, but as in new human affairs and as in veterans affairs. This new isolationism makes individual pursuit the primary goal, not commitment to the nation as a whole. This new isolationism represents a very difficult philosophy than I think is best represented by the VFW.

With you, I think about the Erickson family, a letter I received from a 14-year-old girl. "Senator, my dad served in Vietnam. He has been fine, but then last week he took a shower in the morning getting ready to go to work. He came out of that shower and has not spoken a word since. What can be done to help my dad?"

I think of the atomic veterans who are still waiting for compensation. I think of the homeless veterans. This new philosophy says you are on your own. If you are a Vietnam veteran and you have a substance abuse problem, let's be honest about it. Many of those veterans that live in the street do. This philosophy says you are on your own.

If you are struggling with post-traumatic stress syndrome, this philosophy says you are on your own. If you are Lisa Gilmore and Tim Gilmore, Timothy has now passed away, it was so important to him, he had Agent Orange, a Vietnam vet, and he wanted to get that compensation to his family before he passed away because otherwise he was sure his family would not have the economic support. This new isolationism says you are

on your own.

If you are 60 years old or you are 70 years old, and you have Parkinson's disease — both of my parents have Parkinson's disease, I know what that is about — this new isolationism says you are on your own. If you are poor and you can't put food on the table, this new isolationism says you are on your own.

If you are one of 42 million Americans with no health insurance, this new isolationism says you are on your own. Whatever happened to there by the grace of God go I? Whatever happened to that sense of community? I said at that VFW gathering, I pain you to say at this VFW gathering that we must challenge new isolationism and instead we must talk about a new devotion to country.

We must talk about a renewed commitment to our nation as a whole. We must talk about communities. We must talk about service; we must not be a part of the cynicism that says we cannot do better as a nation. We must call on all Americans to be their own best souls.

Whatever happened to the idea that we all do better when we all do better? Now, this patriotic attitude, I have got to say this, has not been on display recently in Washington. Let me give you a case in point. I am going to talk about, even though it is not pleasant, but I am going to talk about it and you know about it, what I refer to as the great highway robbery.

You remember what it was like, the military handed out cigarettes like candies, soldiers were encouraged to smoke to relieve stress. Remember the thinking that smoke them if you have got them. Well, regardless of those facts, the Congress and the administration changed the rules of veterans and they denied tobacco-related benefits.

Worse yet, did they not only deny tobacco-related benefits, but they did not put the savings into other veterans' programs. Did they use the \$17 billion to make sick Gulf War veterans better? No. Did they use the savings to invest in long-term care for veterans? No.

Did they use the savings for justice for atomic veterans? No. Did they use the savings to cut back on the back board of claims and get these decisions made in a prompt manner? No. Did they use the savings to fully fund veterans' health care? No.

Now, don't get me wrong. I am all in favor of our nation's transportation infrastructure. But I would say this: if you want to invest in more highways, you go ahead and do it, but you take monies out of the benefits that you give to tobacco companies and the insurance companies and the oil companies: Don't take the benefits from veterans and their families.

I think people in Minnesota can understand. I think, on the final highway bill, we worked hard to have a good bill. There must have been two or three of them that voted against it. I voted against the bill. I want nothing to do with this highway robbery.

Then Senator Rockefeller and I wanted to come back with another

amendment yet, and they wouldn't let us do it. They did kind of a slick move and they put it in a conference report on the tax reform bill. I think there were two of us, not such a good thing, veterans to vote against tax reform, but there were two of us that voted against the IRS bill because again I don't want a thing to do with it.

You know, they told us that they couldn't do as much as we need to do for veterans, because we had a deficit. We don't have a deficit any longer. Then they took \$17 billion from the veterans budget and they put it into transportation. Where is the commitment to veterans?

I think that politics in Washington, the administration and the Congress have run out of good excuses, and I hope that at this 99th Convention that there will be a demand that a positive veterans agenda be put back on the table with a real focus on good health care for veterans. And I hope that the VFW will lead the charge. You have done it before. Do it again.

Let me conclude with a quote from a great American. Before taking command of the Continental Army, George Washington told the first Continental Congress, "When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen." I know that you having been steadfast soldiers and will always be great citizens.

Lest you join us today in a call for a new century of American citizenship, the memorial to Colonel Robert Shaw that stands in Boston Common, is the praises of "The Pride, Courage and Devotion of the Patriotic Soldier." I call upon, America to convince the pride, courage and devotion to the patriotic citizen.

Let us see if Americans truly honor veterans. Let's see an America where we can be proud of every single person that our country turns out. Let us see if America, wherever infant I hold in my hand, they are all God's children regardless of the color of their skin, regardless of whether they are rich or poor, regardless of religion or creed.

Every individual in our country has the same chance to reach his potential, full potential. Let us work in America to earn the sacrifice reflected in those thousands of yards of sacred purple. Let us strive in America to be even more worthy to stand beneath those seven bars of red and stripes of white.

Let us strive for an America that will truly portray the new constellation represented by those stars of white on that field of blue. Please join me and let us together fashion a new patriotic America.

VFW members, families, honored guests, veterans, auxiliaries, the future of our nation will not belong to those who are content with the present. The future of our nation will not belong to the Senate. The future of our country will not belong to those that stand on the sidelines.

The future is going to belong to women and men who have passion and who work hard to make our country better. The future will belong to all of us who believe in the duty of our dream. I thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing

ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Again, thank you very much, Senator Wellstone from the great state of Minnesota.

INTRODUCTION OF HELEN PUTNAM BLACKWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: If I may at this time, I would like to introduce to you an individual who is very special to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Please welcome Helen Putnam Blackwell, daughter of James C. Putnam, the first President of the American Veterans of Foreign Service. Helen is a Past President of the VFW Department of Arkansas Ladies Auxiliary. Thank you, Helen, for joining us this morning.

We are always glad to have you with us and to be a part of our Convention.

INTRODUCTION OF LAWRENCE ALEXANDER, SUPREME COMMANDER, MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Since 1922, the Military Order of the Cootie has been conducting operations that have brought recognition and appreciation to their own members and to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as well. I can say that I truly appreciate what they have done during my year as Commander-in-Chief.

From their hospital work to their annual trek to Arlington National Cemetery, the Cooties do an outstanding job of honoring America's veterans and their families.

This year they were most fortunate in having Larry Alexander, from the great state of Oregon, as their Supreme Commander. Larry earned his VFW eligibility in the waters off the coast of Vietnam on the USS Flint, an ammunition ship. Once ashore, he not only joined the VFW, he became very active very quickly.

In the VFW and in the MOC, Larry has served in almost every chair and has served on several committees.

Please give a warm VFW welcome this morning to our next guest, Larry Alexander, Supreme Commander, Military Order of the Cootie.

REMARKS BY MOC SUPREME COMMANDER LAWRENCE ALEXANDER

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER ALEXANDER: Good morning. Commander-in-Chief John Moon, National President Connie Atkinson, I bring you my best wishes for a successful and continued successful convention of the 99th Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

To my fellow VFW comrades, it is a pleasure and honor to bring

the greetings from the Supreme Organization of the Military Order of the Cootie and our Auxiliary, the MOCA. I would like to ask the Cooties in the audience to give John, Commander-in-Chief John Moon, a round of applause for his courage, leadership and inspiration for this year. (Applause)

I would like to ask those same Cooties to extend your hand to the new leadership, Tom Pouliot, that he will know that you are there working for him also. As VFW members, I would like to refer to them as VFW Cooties, we did over \$9.5 million of hospital work for the veterans in the hospitals. We did this as VFW members. I wish you all a joyful and successful convention, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak here.

THE ANNOUNCER: Now, let's sit back and enjoy a video on Tribute to the VFW 100th Anniversary, 1899 to 1999.

(Whereupon, the 100th Anniversary Video was presented at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: On behalf of National Auxiliary President Connie Atkinson and myself, we would like to thank all of you for joining us in the Opening Session this morning. We know we are going to have a great convention. I wish to pay tribute to the many, many recipients of awards this morning and to the All-American Departments, Districts and Post Commanders again.

We will now have our Closing Ceremonies. I call on Past National Chaplain Father George Rinkowski for the Closing Prayer.

(Whereupon, Past National Chaplain Father George Rinkowski gave the Closing Prayer.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Sergeant-at-Arms, please lead us in the Salute to the Colors.

I now declare this Joint Opening Session closed.

(Whereupon, the Opening Session was recessed at 11:15 o'clock a.m.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION MONDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 31, 1998

(The First Business Session of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, at 1:30 o'clock p.m., by Commander-in-Chief Moon.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, we will now conduct the Opening Ceremonies for the 99th National Convention. If I could, please, have you and the Sergeant-at-Arms to

maintain order, I will call to the podium Sam Elson, Department Chaplain from Michigan, for the Invocation.

(Whereupon, Comrade Samuel Elson, Chaplain for the Department of Michigan, gave the Opening Prayer followed by the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will ask you to, please, move to your seats as quickly as possible. Again, I will report to you that today's session is being held here only. Tomorrow we will go back to normal seating in the other section of the convention area. So, please, bear with us today as we try to move as far as we possibly can so that you can get out and get back to your respective hotels.

At this time I call forward to the microphone for the Report on the Convention Rules Robert Hansen from Minnesota, Chairman. Past Commander-in-Chief Hansen.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HANSEN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I would like to take this first opportunity to thank the Commander-in-Chief for the appointment as Chairman of the Rules Committee and also on behalf of my Vice-Chairman, Darrell Bencken, we have concluded our business and we are ready to present to the convention the following report:

To the 99th National Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, San Antonio, Texas.

Your Committee on Convention Rules met Sunday afternoon, August 30, and agreed on the following recommendations which are respectfully submitted for your consideration:

1. That, with exceptions noted below, Demeter's Manual be recognized as parliamentary authority for this Convention.
2. That when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or address the Convention, he shall rise, address the Chair as "Comrade Commander- in-Chief", and after being recognized, shall state his name, Post number and Department, before proceeding.
3. A registered delegate shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject, or any pending resolution for a period of eight minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present; provided, that chairmen of Convention Committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees; and in the event of controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.

4. All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or in his absence the Department Adjutant. All resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to committee no later than 9:00 a.m. Thursday, September 3, 1998, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Commander for consideration.
5. All resolutions offered on the floor at the Convention, or otherwise, shall be in writing, and shall automatically, and without reading, be referred to the Adjutant General for assignment to the proper committee.
6. Committee chairmen, in reporting on, resolutions referred to their committee, shall first read those resolutions on which favorable action is recommended. Specific resolutions shall be set aside for individual action at the request of any delegate, the others being voted upon collectively. After action has been taken on all such resolutions, the chairman shall read the number and title of those resolutions which the committee has disapproved. A resolution disapproved by the committee shall be automatically rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it be approved, in which case it shall be brought up for debate and Convention action.
7. This Convention will not consider any resolution dealing with race, creed or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. This Convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organization funds.
8. This Convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization, or requesting us to join with any other organization in sponsoring legislation not expressly proposed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
9. No person not a duly registered delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, in a viva voce report on any subject before the Convention.
10. Unit rule of voting shall not be allowed in this Convention.
11. Voting strength shall be determined as those delegates registered as those delegates registered as of the close of the credentials registration booth the previous day and as reported by the Credentials Committee each morning. The Department Commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each Business Session, a list of Posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates representing those Posts listed on the report will be accorded voting privileges.
12. On roll calls, the Chairman or acting Chairman of each

delegation shall poll his delegation's registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.

13. Registered delegates of a delegation may arrive at a vote in any manner they see fit, but shall announce it in terms of full units and not in terms of a fractional part of a vote.
14. Reconsideration of a motion or resolution upon which final disposition has been made shall not be allowed after the session at which it was acted or has been recessed unless the body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that session
15. When the report of the chairman of the delegation is not acceptable to all registered delegates of the delegation and a poll of the Department registered delegates is demanded by three registered delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the registered delegates, without discussion of question.
16. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by ten registered delegates representing Posts in ten separate Departments.
17. Nominating speeches for the National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate and such speeches shall not exceed two minutes each. Nomination and election of National Officers will be held according to the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, and Manual of Procedure, Article VI, Section 609.
18. Registered delegates and persons recognized by the Chair shall be entitled to a respectful hearing and the Chair shall have the authority to clear the gallery or the floor or have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the floor any person or persons who may create any disturbances which interfere with the orderly procedure of the Convention.
19. Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present is necessary for suspension of the rules of this Convention. Respectfully submitted, Robert E. Hansen, Chairman, and Darrell Bencken, Vice-Chairman. Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of these rules for this convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrades, you have heard the motion. Is there a second?

COMRADE DARRELL BENCKEN (Post 2981 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Darrell Bencken, Post 2981, Kansas, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any discussion? The question has been called for. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The motion carries.

To you, Mr. Chairman, and to you, Darrell, Vice-Chairman, thanks

for everything. We appreciate it.

At this time I call to the podium the Chairman of the Credentials Committee for the first report.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Richard Trombla, Department of Kansas, Post 1174, Chairman of the Credentials Committee. Comrades, this is a temporary report as of the close of business last night.

Total delegates, 11,277; Department Commanders, 44; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 25; and National Officers, 30. That is for a grand total of 11,376.

Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report of the Credentials Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. At this time I would like to release the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Convention Rules Committee.

We will call at this time to the podium for the Report of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, Chairman John M. "Jack" Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief from the great state of Florida.

I have a couple of things real quick, if I may. To my right, in the upper level, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Delaware, West Virginia, D.C., Alabama, Rhode Island, Central America. To my left in the upper tier, Louisiana, Maine, Connecticut, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Indiana, North Carolina, Texas and Kentucky.

Again, comrades, this is only for today. Tomorrow we will be back in the normal seating arrangement. A request has been made by some of those in the room, can we please remove our jackets? I have no problem with that whatsoever.

Comrade Chairman.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The national officers and delegates to this convention, I, first, would like to take this opportunity to thank the Commander-in-Chief for having appointed me to this distinguished committee.

I wish to thank him also for appointing Al Loehr from Minnesota as the Vice-Chairman, and to each and every one of those members that served on the National By-Laws Committee yesterday I am extremely proud of their decisions and I want to commend the Chief for appointing them.

I would like to read, Commander-in-Chief, with your permission, the suggested order of my presentation, if you would agree with this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Please proceed.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: In making the report of the committee, I am going to follow the following procedure. I will read the list of those by-laws which the committee recommends be adopted, or adopt, and move the adoption of these resolutions.

After that motion and a second, the Commander-in-Chief will ask if there are any resolutions which a comrade wants to set aside for discussion and debate. Note will be made of those resolutions to be set aside and a vote will be taken on those resolutions which have not been set aside.

After the vote on those resolutions, which were not set aside, we will take up those by-laws which have been set aside for debate. They will be taken up in the order in which they have been set aside and each by-law will be voted on by the convention as a motion to adopt the resolutions.

The committee has recommended referral of several resolutions or by-laws to permanent committees of the VFW for review. The motion to make the referrals to the committee will be made after the complete action has been taken and set aside. After action is completed on the resolutions recommended for adoption or referral to a standing committee, I will read the list of those resolutions to which the committee recommended rejection.

After the list is read, you will have the opportunity to move the adoption of any of these by-laws. Each motion will be taken up and disposed of in order. If no motion is made by a comrade with respect to a specific resolution or by-law, the resolution or by-law is, under the convention rules, automatically rejected.

By the way, I don't have to read this. These are the way the by-laws and the resolutions will be introduced to this convention.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I will now read the Proposed Amendments to the National By-Laws approved by our committee. If you are ready, B-1, Section 215 - Eligibility To Office.

B-2, Section 220 - Vacancies And Removal Of Elective Officers.

B-3, Section 222 - Delegates, County Council, District, Department And National Conventions.

B-4, Section 309 - Surrender Or Forfeiture of Charter.

B-5, Section 603 - Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

B-6, Section 610 - Officers, Powers And Duties.

B-7, Section 617 - Regional National Council Of Administration Members - How Elected.

B-8, Section 617 - Regional National Council of Administration Members - How Elected.

B-9, Section 1101 - Formation, Control And Disbandment Of Auxiliaries.

B-10, Section 1201 - Formation And Control.

B-17, Section 615 - National Committees.

Commander-in-Chief, I move for the adoption of these by-laws.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Al Loehr, Post 4847, Minnesota, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There has been a motion and a second to adopt those previously read resolutions. Are there any that someone wants to set aside?

Let me start with Microphones 1, 3 and 5, which will be to my right or your left. Microphones 2, 4 and 6 will be on this side.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ron Rusko from Post 9460, New Stratford, Connecticut. I ask that B-5 and B-7 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It is noted that B-5 and B-7 have been requested to be set aside. Are there any others? Hearing no comments, we will call for a vote. All those, other than B-5 and B-7, in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed will signify by saying "no". The motion carries.

Mr. Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: B-5, Commander-in-Chief, Section 603 - Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees. The committee reviewed this and it was based on the effect of this proposal was to require a two-thirds vote rather than the majority vote to change the sites or dates of future national conventions once the Council has voted to select a certain site.

The purpose of this proposal is to discourage the switching of convention sites that have occurred in the last several years. These changes have undermined the VFW's credibility in the industry. Convention planning needs to proceed without concern that the site might be suddenly changed, wasting previous work and expense, and requiring new efforts directed to a new location. There must be some type of consistency in the manner of the site selection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): I make a motion that B-5 be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion is out of order.

ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: As you understand, Ron, the motion on the floor is to adopt B-5 as a committee recommendation. You can object and ask the delegates to vote against B-5, but the motion is to adopt B-5.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Thank you very much, Mr. Maher. Comrades, this motion to have the Council of Administration to take a two-thirds majority vote to change the site selection plays somewhat into the resolution that will be coming before

you in a day or two and has been approved in committee.

As you know, in the year 2000, we are scheduled to go to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for our National Convention. In 2001, you are scheduled to go to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for your National Convention, with an option of a third year for your National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

If you approve this by-law amendment, then what will happen is that resolution might become moot, because the by-laws supersedes a resolution. This by-law says only the sites need be selected. So we have not needed that two-thirds majority vote on the first 99 years in this organization to have great national conventions. They will all be good.

I have been hearing and I think so many more of you have heard that we really simply don't want to continue to go to the same site year after year after year, because many of our good comrades use it as a vacation time. It gives many of our good comrades the opportunity all around the country to attend and participate in a National Convention.

If you would adopt this by-law amendment, you will make it more difficult to have your voice said as to where this convention is going to be, and I urge you to reject this by-law. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any other discussion on B-5? Any other discussion on B-5? Hearing none, then we will proceed to vote on B-5 as the set aside. The committee's recommendation was passage. We will now call for a vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". B-5 is defeated.

There was a request that B-7 be set aside.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ron Rusko from Post 9460, New Stratford, Connecticut. The way that the by-law amendments were proposed, we are to go through each and every one of the ones that were approved by committee, vote on them, and then go through the ones that were disapproved.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief and my fellow comrades, if we do that, where you have the resolution or By-Law Amendment B-7, if you adopt that, you will not be able to discuss any of the other by-law amendments that were rejected because they will be moot.

You will not have the opportunity to debate the merits of the other resolutions concerning the realignment of the National Convention. That's exactly what happened in the committee in that the first B-7 was adopted and none of the other ones could be addressed.

So, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would ask with unanimous consent, because we would hope to be able to discuss and debate B-19, if we could simply have B-7 set aside until these comrades have the opportunity to debate the merits of B-19 and others.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Chairman Carney.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-

in-Chief and delegates, I will read why the committee felt that we should do this. The effect of this proposed amendment, which is supported by the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and many Departments is to realign Council representation in the Eastern Conference to afford New Jersey a seat without otherwise changing and/or rearranging the Council of Administration.

This is by far the simplest and most direct way to resolve the problems that arise when Departments are unable to maintain membership at a level sufficient to justify separate representation of the Council. Commander-in-Chief, it is my understanding that the Department of New Jersey is in support of this amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any other comments? B-7 has been asked to be set aside.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): I ask there be unanimous consent for B-7 to be set aside until we have had the opportunity of debating the other by-law amendment proposals that deal with the realignment of the National Council of Administration, so these comrades can make their mind up as to which way they would like to go.

...Cries of "What did he say?" ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: They have asked you to repeat it. Evidently, the microphone is not feeding through.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I ask for unanimous consent on B-7 so that these good comrades could debate the issues of B-19 and the other by-law amendments that are going to be presented to realign your National Council.

With all due respect to the Chairman, New Jersey is not the only one affected by B-7. There are other states affected in B-7. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, with unanimous consent, I would hope that we would hold those by-laws or B-7 until we can take in this debate on B-19 and others.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Unanimous consent has been asked for by Microphone No. 4, Ron Rusko. I will call for a vote. Those in favor of unanimous consent will say "aye"; those opposed say "no". The call for a vote to passage for B-7, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed signify by saying "no". B-7 is passed.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Commander-in-Chief, the next list of National By-Laws have been recommended for rejection.

B-11, Section 101 - Eligibility.

B-12, Section 102 - Applications - Affiliate Of New Members.

B-13, Section 102 - Applications - Affiliation Of New Members.

B-14, Section 610 - Officers, Powers And Duties.

B-15, Section 610 - Officers, Powers And Duties.

B-16, 17, 18, 19, I am going to group these together so you all know, but I will go with B-16, rejected, Section 610 - Officers, Powers And Duties.

B-18, Section 617 - Regional National Council Of Administration Members - How Elected.

B-19, Section 617 - Regional National Council Of Administration Members - How Elected.

B-20, Section 617 - Regional National Council Of Administration Members - How Elected.

B-21, Section 617 - Regional National Council Of Administration Members - How Elected.

B-22, Section 717, Resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You have heard the report of the Chairman asking these resolutions be rejected. You have heard the report of the Chairman recommending that these changes to the by-laws be rejected.

COMRADE ALBERT THOMAS (Department of Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Al Thomas, Commander of the Department of Pennsylvania, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Hearing no motion to set aside, the resolutions are, in fact, rejected. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Proposed Amendments to the Manual of Procedure.

The committee recommends adoption of M-1, Section 217 - Nomination, Election, Installation And Term of Office.

M-2, Section 222 - Delegates, County Council, District, Department and National Conventions.

M-3, Section 516 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

M-4, Section 517 - Officers And Chairmen, Duties And Obligations.

M-6, Section 704 - Relief Fund.

M-7, Section 711 - Buddy Poppy.

M-8, Section 1101 - Formation, Control, And Disbandment Of Auxiliaries.

M-9, Section 1101 - Formation, Control, And Disbandment of Auxiliaries.

M-10, Section 1101 - Formation, Control, And Disbandment of Auxiliaries.

M-11, Section 1101 - Formation, Control, And Disbandment of Auxiliaries.

M-12, Section 1201 - Formation And Control.

M-13, Section 1201 - Formation And Control.

M-15, Section 1201 - Formation And Control.

M-16, Section 1301 - Amendments.

Commander-in-Chief, I move that these amendments to the National Manual of Procedure be approved.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been properly made. Is there a second?

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There has been a motion properly made and seconded. Are there any requests to have any of these proposed amendments to the Manual of Procedure set aside?

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I ask that M-6 and M-7 be set aside, please.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It is so noted that M-6 and M-7 have been set aside.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE EDWARD BANAS (Post 10004 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ed Banas, Post 10004, Jewett City, Connecticut. Were B-5 and B-14 inadvertently missed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will ask for a comment real quick.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: M-5 and M-14, we recommend adoption. That will be a part of the original motion that M-5 and M-14 be included, and I will move, Commander-in-Chief.

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: To return to Microphone No. 4, those are included in the motion as part of the proposed amendments to the Manual of Procedure to be accepted. Are there any other requests for set aside? Any other requests? We will then proceed to vote.

On the proposed amendments to the Manual of Procedure, the motion has been properly made and seconded, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The motion carries.

Mr. Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Commander-in-Chief, M-6, the reason was the existing provision is inconsistent with other sections of the by-laws which fully address the employment of directors and other — that is the wrong one. I am sorry. Guess what, I was on by-laws and I should be on the Manual. Allow me the opportunity to goof up a couple of times. We got that one approved, and I don't want that one brought up again. I apologize, Commander-in-Chief.

Section 3 of the Congressional Charter provides, and I quote, "That the purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical and educational, to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members, to assist worthy comrades, to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws, and to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institution of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all of her enemies whomsoever."

The proposed amendment to Section 704, (f) "To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs" would honor the intent of Section 3 and allow Posts to use relief funds for such things as scholarships and flag education.

A positive effect resulting from this amendment would be a renewed interest in the Buddy Poppy Program. A recent survey of 54 Department Headquarters revealed the Posts Relief Funds currently contain approximately \$10 million to \$15 million.

Why not unencumber these funds by adopting this amendment, get more positive attention to the VFW and help the hospitalized veteran assembler of the buddy poppies in the process?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any further discussion on M-7?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, let me first state I am not against change and I am not against promoting or fostering patriotism. But to open our Relief Fund up to promote patriotism in different ways is going to open a can of worms.

I have served as Department instructor for three years and I have seen some of the uses that have been done with the Relief Fund. The Relief Fund has always been there to use for our veterans and their families. This has been one of the basic principles of this organization.

I think that if we do this we are going to take it a step in the wrong direction to allow this to be done. There are other means that we can fund these very worthwhile projects. An example, suppose my Post wanted to take \$4,000 out of the Relief Fund to paint the outside red, white and blue. Is that promoting the cause of patriotism? I ask this delegation to reject this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will ask if there is any other discussion on M-6. I will do that because I can't see some of the mikes in the upper tier. Hearing no more discussion, we will call for a vote on M-6. All those in favor of passage of M-6, the Proposed Amendment to the Manual of Procedure, signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no".

This time I have got a problem and my hearing is not that good. To me, it is almost a tie. I think it is, which would result in passage. Let me hear it again. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion passes.

M-7 has been requested to be set aside. Is there any discussion on M-7?

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I have got to have a microphone. Where are we? We are again at Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I appeal the decision of the chair on M-6 and call for

a roll-call vote on M-6.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Jim, it only requires a majority on the Manual of Procedure. I felt that there were enough votes to be in the affirmative. That's why I made that decision. We will call for a divisional vote. I need ten states.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 7367 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dennis Clark, State Commander of New Jersey, I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: That's one.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 1761 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Raymond Lupo. I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Where are you from?

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 1761 - Maine): Maine.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The name, please.

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 1761 - Maine): Post 1761, State Commander from Maine, Ray Lupo.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: That's two.

Microphone No. 3 again.

COMRADE TONY BORJAS (Post 2866 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tony Borjas, Post 2866, Missouri, I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: That is three.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE ROGER BAKER (Post 6841 - Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Roger Baker, State Commander of Indiana, I call for a roll-call vote.

COMRADE EDWARD LAVILETTA (Post 793 - Vermont): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ed Laviletta, State Commander of Vermont, calls for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM ROBBINS (Department of Delaware): Bill Robbins, State Commander of the Department of Delaware, calls for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOSEPH ROSETTA (Post 9619 - Maryland): I am Joseph Rosetta, Department Commander of Maryland, and I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ANTHONY GALLARDO (Department of Nebraska): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tony Gallardo, State Commander of the Department of Nebraska, calls for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Have we got ten?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD PORTER (Post 454 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Don Porter, Department of Illinois. I call for a roll-

call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is that ten states? We need another state.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ERNEST MEYERS (Post 4090 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ernest Meyers, Commander of the Department of Michigan, calls for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We have ten states that have called for a roll call vote. It will take a little time for this. Comrades, if I could have your attention for a minute. I have been informed, unless there is a motion on the floor to challenge my decision of the majority vote and a proper second, then my decision would stand.

So that we all have a sense of fairness in this room, is there a motion against my decision?

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Department of New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dennis Clark, State Commander of New Jersey. I move that we appeal the decision of the chair.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a second?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE EDWARD LAVILETTA (Post 793 - Vermont): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Department of Vermont seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor of appealing the decision of the Commander-in-Chief will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". We are going to have what is called a wedding contest before this convention is over, so let's do it and get things out of the way. We will proceed with the roll-call vote.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, can I have your attention for a minute, please. In order to expedite this, we have roll-call sheets that will be handed out over here to my right. If one person from each delegation will come down and get a sufficient supply for your delegation, we would certainly appreciate it. We can move this thing a little faster.

Also while I am here, let me remind you of the rules of the convention and what the Commander-in-Chief has said. During this convention, only those who have credentials stamped "Registered" will be allowed to address this convention or allowed to vote at this convention.

At this time we have a few National Council members who have not yet registered. So when we get into the vote, their name will not be called. If there is any question, come see me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: If you would, please, take your seats. We are ready to start the roll-call vote. Comrades, we have about another ten or fourteen minutes before the calculator gets here. We can go ahead and start. Do you want me to call for a vote to see if we want to start or wait?

We will probably get a tie again. What is your feeling? I guess that

will have to depend upon me. We will start the roll call at this time.

...As Assistant Adjutant General Senk called the roll, the following votes were cast: ...

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Commander-in-Chief Moon	X	
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Pouliot		X
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Smart		X
Quartermaster General Ridgley	X	
Judge Advocate General Kennedy		X
Surgeon General Sexauer	X	
National Chief of Staff Thiel	X	
Inspector General Bartholomew		X
<u>COUNCIL MEMBERS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
District No. 1 - Robert W. Madigan	X	
District No. 2 - William J. Madera		X
District No. 3 - Raymond J. Boyle		X
District No. 4 - Bruce A. Withers		X
District No. 5 - James R. Mueller		X
District No. 6 - Scottie E. King		X
District No. 8 - Oliver W. Dial	X	
District No. 9 - William J. Hendren	X	
District No. 11 - William Shannon	X	

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Districts 7 and 10 have not registered as of 4:00 o'clock, the close of the registration yesterday. Therefore, in accordance with the rules of the convention, they are not considered for a vote. If it will make it easier for everyone, District No. 7 is not registered, District No 10 is not registered. District No. 12 is not registered.

COMRADE WILLIAM CERNY (Council Member - District 12): I am registered. I registered yesterday morning.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Come to the side and bring up your stamped card.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
District No. 13 - Lewie Cooper		X

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: District 14, Earl Chase, is not registered.

District No. 15, George Palmateer, is not registered.

District No. 16, Dannie Cooper, is not registered.

District No. 17, Frank Risewick.

District No. 19, Richard Fruge, is not registered.

District A - Charles Feltenberger.

COMRADE CHARLES FELTENBERGER (District A - Pennsylvania): I voted with my Post.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
District B - Rick Frank	X	

District C	- T. William Bossidy	X	
District D	- George W. Marks		X
District E	- Gordon W. Kirk	X	
District F	- Richard Lehner		X
District G	- Richard Pignone		X
District H	- Ferrell Warden	X	
District J	- James DePass	X	

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: We will begin with the Departments at this time.

<u>STATE</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Alabama	232	25
Alaska	75	
Arizona	200	10
Arkansas	196	
California	46	476
Colorado	66	65
Connecticut		178
Delaware		113
District of Columbia	25	2
Department of Europe	31	31
Florida	409	
Georgia		191
Hawaii		43
Idaho		48
Illinois		662
Indiana		362
Iowa	131	
Kansas		286
Kentucky		177
Latin America/Caribbean	14	
Louisiana		188
Maine		140
Maryland		241
Massachusetts	259	77
Michigan	68	214
Minnesota	146	253
Mississippi		151
Missouri	1	276
Montana		74
Nebraska	17	215
Nevada	17	55
New Hampshire	104	1
New Jersey		237
New Mexico		133
New York	15	326
North Carolina	170	96

North Dakota	96	
Ohio	400	212
Oklahoma	96	64
Oregon		74
Pacific Areas	88	
Pennsylvania	586	70
Rhode Island		53
South Carolina		159
South Dakota	16	115
Tennessee		139
Texas	681	15
Utah	22	25
Vermont		90
Virginia		163
Washington		186
West Virginia	175	4
Wisconsin	34	200
Wyoming	46	2

PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Billy Ray Cameron	X	
George Cramer		X
James R. Currieo	X	
Walter G. Hogan - (Voted with State)		
Cooper T. Holt		X
Allen F. Kent - (Voted with State)		
James L. Kimery - (Voted with State)		
Clyde A. Lewis	X	
Clifford G. Olson	X	
R. D. Smith	X	
John S. Staum	X	
Howard Vander Clute, Jr.		X
Robert E. Wallace		X
James Nier	X	

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: That concludes the roll call. Give us a few minutes and we will have it tallied.

Commander-in-Chief, the results on the ballot that was taken, 5,966 yes; 5,391 no. The majority needed was 5,688, so the motion passed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: If I may have your attention, please. There has been a question as to some of those that did or did not register. Again, if you registered yesterday, you would have had the right to have voted.

Leroy Ford contended that he did. We will take that into consideration and give him the option once we verify that and let him either vote "yes" or "no" on this situation. George Palmateer was not

registered. We checked. He did, in fact, register this morning. George will be available to vote tomorrow. Thank you.

It has been a while, but I think we are now on M-7. They requested it be set side. I believe it was Microphone 3, Jim Mueller, from the Department of Missouri.

Mr. Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Committee stated that deleting the first two paragraphs is merely housekeeping in nature since these two paragraphs are identical to Section 711 of the By-Laws. The change to Section 711 will allow VFW Posts to use youth groups, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Pop Warner football players and others to distribute buddy poppies for the VFW as long as they are recognized as a 501(a) not-for-profit group.

We currently sponsor many youth groups with monies from our general funds. Why not ask them in return if they would help us with the distribution of buddy poppies. This process would also educate the youth about the VFW Buddy Poppy program.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any discussion on M-7?
Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would ask this organization here, have we grown so complacent in this great organization to allow other not-for-profit organizations to assist us in distributing our trademark, our VFW Buddy Poppy for us?

If our Posts and Auxiliaries don't care enough about our veterans to get out and distribute buddy poppies to show the community that we care about our veterans, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves. I think we need to stay with the basics of this organization.

I have always told my Post and Auxiliary if you do nothing else during the year, you ought to come out and sell buddy poppies for an hour or so. It is our duty, it is our honor to honor these who have served with us, who have gone before us and made the supreme sacrifice.

We need to show the communities that we as veterans care, not as other organizations. I feel that if we opened this up, you are going to have lawsuits if one of the Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts get hit by a car, or something happens to them we will be sued.

I would say there is probably Posts and Auxiliaries that are doing this now, and I will go along with saying what we do with the gays in the military "don't say anything if you are doing it." Thank you. I ask this motion be defeated by this body.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLEN KENT (Post 9972 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Gunner Kent. I rise to speak in favor of this. As the comrade said, I don't think we are getting complacent, but our membership is getting older.

It is hard for these members to stand on corners for four or five

hours selling buddy poppies. Now, we heard this morning about how this organization wants to get involved with the youth of this country. We heard the Voice of Democracy winner state that three years ago he didn't know anything about the VFW.

How better to educate America's youth about the Veterans of Foreign Wars than having them sell buddy poppies and make them understand that this money goes to help the veterans that defended this great country? How better to let these children know what this great organization is about?

If we don't involve the youth, if we don't show our colors, nobody is going to know what we are doing. All this by-law change is doing is allowing these Posts that have older membership to use the youth that they already sponsor, their Boy Scouts, their Girl Scouts, their Junior ROTC, and allow these children to get out and give back to the veterans of this country that have given so much to this country. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 3355 - New Jersey): Comrades, I rise to speak in favor of this Proposed Amendment to the Manual of Procedure. At the meeting yesterday, I simply asked the question how many people in this room have Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other groups out distributing — I never used that word "sell", distributing buddy poppies for you?

Three-fourths of that room raised their hands. All I am asking, comrades, is that we make what we are doing legal. If not, then we have to uphold the Manual of Procedure and take the actions that are necessary to stop other Posts that are doing that. I urge you to vote in favor of this resolution. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE JOHN DAHMAN (Post 1421 - Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition. I agree with Past Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent and John Senk that we need to get the youth involved. I am going to speak on the liability. I am part of the By-Laws Committee and I brought this question up. John Senk was there and Joe Ridgley.

Neither one could give me an answer if the Post would be liable, which I am sure they would be, if the child got hurt out there selling a poppy on the street or poked one in their eye. As many of you comrades know, if a comrade slips in your Post or something happens, everybody is sue crazy today, and I agree with you today somewhere down the road this is going to happen if we approve this resolution. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 4 again.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glen M. Gardner, Jr., a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I, too, rise in favor of supporting this change in the Manual of Procedure. I think that somewhere along the line we have lost sight of the fact that just because we changed the by-laws doesn't mandate that your Post has to do anything different than they are doing today.

On the last one, we discussed like it was going to be a mandate that all of a sudden you had to use your poppy money for something other than what it is being used for. As John said, we probably have 70 percent of our Posts today that are already violating the by-laws by having other groups help them with their poppy sales. We need to change the by-laws and allow this to be done and in a legal manner. I ask we support this by-law change.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE REED (Post 9400 - Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise to support this. The one comrade that was against it stated something about liability. Well, if you have a function going on with non-members, if you have bingo, if somebody slips and falls, you are going to be liable. You darn better well have enough insurance to cover it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH (Post 4346 - Georgia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Bulldog Smith, a delegate from Post 4346, Georgia. I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The question has been called for. All those in favor of M-7 will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". Bob Wallace, I don't need my hearing aids today. It passes. The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the committee recommends rejection of M-17, Section 101 - Eligibility.

M-18, Section 101 - Eligibility.

M-19, Section 803 - Manufacture And Use Of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia And Uniforms.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE DON ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): I move that M-18 be set aside, and I would move its adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: M-18 has been moved for adoption. Is there a second?

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion and the second on the floor is in order. That is M-18.

Comrade Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrades, the discussion in our committee was based on the purpose of this proposal is to add the National Defense Service Medal to the list of qualifying medals.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We are open for discussion. Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE DON ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): Once again, for the eighteenth time, I rise before you and recommend that we accept the National Defense Service Medal as eligibility in the Veterans of

Foreign Wars. I expect to have the courtesy of listening to me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The microphone is on at the present time. Allow the individual to speak.

COMRADE DON ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): Comrades, as we have known in many ways the National Defense Service Medal is similar to that of the American Campaign Medal, whereas, it was given or awarded to our service personnel for overseas duty and non-overseas duty.

We are now at a point where it has been told to us by our parent organization that within the next decade one-half of our World War II members, including myself, will no longer be with us. I am also bringing to your attention that if one-half of our group is not going to be with us, half of the so-called group that is eligible to join the VFW will no longer be with us.

I am a person who believes in the traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. When the Posts in Ohio merged, they were the American Veterans of Foreign Service. When the three Posts in Pennsylvania, Altoona, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia merged, they were the American Veterans of Foreign Service.

When they merged in Denver, Colorado, they became the Veterans of Foreign Wars with no other change. As far as I am concerned, many people served under atomic bombs, et cetera, warheads in Eastern Europe, served in submarines all over the world and are not eligible to join the VFW, but yet every man and woman who went to Hawaii after December 7th is eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I want to know how many hazards there were in Hawaii at that time. Every person here knows that when you are at the front lines for every individual who is fighting, there are ten in the rear echelon, and the eleven are eligible to join the VFW.

If you talk about cheapening the eligibility, comrades, that has already been done. Right now we have more ineligible people in the Veterans of Foreign Wars than in the history of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and that is because of this at-large program.

Ten million young men and women from the ages of 18 to 50 something would be eligible to join, and we need this blood transfusion, and I recommend that the Veterans of Foreign Wars accept this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM CARLYLE (Post 10097 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Carlyle, a delegate from Post 10097, Fort Myers Beach. I have been coming to conventions for 20 years and we have been bouncing this around, voting this down every year.

I realize that the VFW is a dying organization because we are losing a lot of members. I would rather for the VFW to be a dying organization by losing a lot of members as long as we are dying proud that we are a VFW member, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will comment on this a little bit before we look for another mike. I am 50 years old and I plan on living another 35 or 40 years. I don't look for it to die that quick. Any other comments?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WARREN GASCON (Post 792 - Vermont): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades, I agree with everything the comrades have said. Everyone has a right to their opinion. It is, however, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is not the American Legion.

I have nothing against the American Legion. I have many friends that belong to the American Legion, and I also belong to the American Legion. The Veterans of Foreign Wars means exactly that. That is my statement.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I stand in opposition to this proposed change in the by-laws, not because I don't believe that it is about time for open and honest debate about the future eligibility of the membership of the VFW.

We have many military personnel stationed overseas today, many who were killed in the last three or four weeks that would have been eligible for the VFW because they were on duty. I disagree with making the National Defense Service Medal eligibility criteria because, as all of you know, the first thing that will happen someone will walk in with a 214 and it will say "National Defense Service Medal" and no one will ever look any further to see if they had overseas duty.

That is why I stand in opposition to this by-law change and I hope that in the future we will have open and honest debate about the eligibility criteria of our organization. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1 again.

COMRADE TIM SMITH (Post 1733 - Tennessee): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I agree with the comrade that just spoke. At one of our recent meetings that we have already had, one of our past officers tell us that the National Defense Medal was recognized by the VFW at one time during the Persian Gulf.

The whole point I am trying to make is this, they are already looking at some people who have the National Defense Service Medal as a qualifying medal, which is not and it shouldn't be. As a Persian Gulf veteran and one of the younger members, I disagree with the National Defense Service Medal as a qualifying medal. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE KENNETH PIKE (Post 4876 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I refer back to Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade

Commander-in-Chief and my comrades, I have been to this microphone many times trying to put across our idea that the National Defense Service Medal with 30 consecutive days and 60 non-consecutive days overseas would be good for the organization and would allow good people, good comrades, to join this organization and participate in the fate of all veterans by working together.

We know that the organization is having a tough time filling its ranks. If you read the National magazine, there are constantly articles in there saying that we need to build up the VFW or we are going to lose it. I don't care, under any circumstances I would rather see this as veterans of foreign service in name again rather than lose this organization.

Not everything is perfect in this organization. We argued for years that the people in Korea should be allowed to join the VFW without a medal and that happened. I am so happy that it did. Comrade Commander and comrades, I am somewhat confused.

Last year at the National Convention, you adopted a resolution for a charter change to allow non-service members into the VFW in the form of Merchant Marines. Now, hang on a second. That resolution passed. There was a resolution in this year's committee, and the resolution was put in by the Commander-in-Chief John Moon, and what it says was to not do that.

Well, that resolution was rejected, which means that it now goes forward on the charter change to allow the Merchant Marines into the VFW. You are going to have a chance to talk about that resolution again. But that is why I am confused. You want someone to belong to this organization and you have rejected a resolution that would have stopped it, to stop the Merchant Marines.

At this point in time you are saying yes, we want it in, but comrades that have served overseas in harm's way we can't find in our hearts to let them in this organization and be a part of this great organization and determine its fate and their future and their health care. I think we should. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. The proponents have spoken at this time. The question is in order. We will call for the vote. All those in favor of passage of M-18 will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed to the passage of M-18 will signify by saying "no". The chair is not in doubt. The motion is defeated.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Proposed Amendments to the Ritual, the following are recommended for adoption: R-1, R-2, R-3. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that these amendments to the Ritual be approved.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any requests for set asides?

COMRADE AL LOEHR (Post 4847 - Minnesota): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Having been properly made

and seconded, are there any requests to set aside? Are there any requests to set aside? I don't hear any requests at this time. I cannot see up there, so I am assuming there are no requests.

We will call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Committee recommends rejection of R-4.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The recommendation is for rejection of R-4. Again, are there any requests to set aside R-4? Hearing none, R-4 is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that completes the Report of the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual Committee. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Vice-Chairman, Jack Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, and Al Loehr.

Comrades, we wanted to get out of here early. We have some things we must do because of some travel constrictions and some problems with some weather-related areas, I guess in North Carolina, Billy Ray Cameron must leave the convention tomorrow to attend to some duties regarding the flood victims.

At this time I will call for the Report of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. The Chairman is Wally Hogan.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. To the distinguished national officers and to all the delegates at the 99th National Convention, first of all, I would like to thank the Commander-in-Chief for the appointment to this great committee, and thank you for the appointment of the gentleman you chose to serve with me.

That will be Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron, who is Chairman of the Subcommittee on POW/MIA, and my Vice-Chairman, Jim Kimery, and Billy Ray's Vice-Chairman from the great state of Ohio, Roger Taylor.

At this time I would like to introduce Billy Ray, and he will go through the POW/MIA Resolutions.

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CAMERON: Thank you very much, Wally. Commander-in-Chief, I want to once again thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on POW/MIA, and I would like to thank the committee and my Vice-Chairman, Roger Taylor, who did a tremendous job, and to Rocky and his staff in Washington

for their support.

I will go through the resolutions on the POW/MIA Committee. First, I will read the resolutions that the committee recommended that we adopt, and there were three or four that were adopted, as amended. So the first one you will find is 401, Support Public Awareness Projects. The committee recommends adopt.

Resolution 403, VFW Supports Kuwait's Demand For An Accounting Of Its MIAs. That is recommended for adoption.

No. 418, Assist Vietnam's Recovery Of MIAs As A Sign Of Good Faith. This is a resolution that we have had for several years and we ask that you adopt.

No. 433, Interment Of An Unknown From Vietnam. We recommend adoption. That was one that was added to the committee after the convention.

Roger, come up and read that one.

COMRADE ROGER TAYLOR (Post 2873 - Ohio): Resolution No. 433, Interment Of An Unknown From Vietnam.

"WHEREAS, on Memorial Day, 1984, a set of remains of an unknown serviceman from the Vietnam War was ceremoniously interred in the Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington National Cemetery and

"WHEREAS, those remains lay in that place of honor until 1998 when new evidence and new identification techniques led to their exhumation and the subsequent identification of Lieutenant Michael Blassie, and since then the Tomb of the Unknown from the Vietnam War has been empty; and

"WHEREAS, this Tomb represents the sum of all the sacrifices of those who served and suffered in the Vietnam War, as well as those families who lost a loved one and especially including the sufferings of our MIAs and their families; and

"WHEREAS, this Tomb reminds all Americans of the extreme sacrifice sometimes required to defend our country and our freedom;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we view the Tomb of the Unknown Serviceman of the Vietnam War as a powerful place, symbolic of the sacrifices of all who served in that most divisive war and believe the Tomb has become to be recognized and revered by the American people as the place they can come to honor all of America's military heroes; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if there are any remains that in all likelihood cannot be identified by known forensic medical techniques, and after all means of identification have been exhausted, the U.S. Government make every effort to inter one of our unknown honored dead from the Vietnam War to rest in peace alongside his comrades from World War I, World War II and the Korean War in this hallowed ground."

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CAMERON: That was Resolution 433. We recommend that it be adopted.

Moving along, the next three resolutions the committee

recommended be adopted but were amended because of language and to clarify some language in the resolutions.

Resolution 402, Seek Opportunities To Resolve The Korean War POW/MIA Issue. The committee recommended to adopt as amended. That was Resolution 402.

Resolution 431, Americans Who Are Prisoners Of War Or Missing In Action, we amended that one and the committee recommended adopt this one.

At this time, Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that we adopt these resolutions.

COMRADE ROGER TAYLOR (Post 2873 - Ohio): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been properly made and seconded. Are there any requests for any to be set aside? Hearing none, we will call for a vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CAMERON: There were two that the committee recommend that we reject. The only reason we rejected these was a similar resolution was already in place, and that was Resolution No. 425, Americans Who Are Prisoners Of War Or Missing In Action, is the same as Resolution 431. So the committee recommended that we reject that in favor of Resolution 431.

There was another resolution that was submitted late about the Unknown Soldier From Vietnam In The Tomb. That was Resolution 440. It was basically the same as 433, so we asked that be rejected. No. 440 was rejected in favor of No. 433.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any request to have this set aside? Hearing no request to have it set aside or a motion to adopt, the report of the committee then for this one is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, Billy Ray. I would like to now call on Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Kimery, who will read first those resolutions that were approved, then those resolutions that were approved as amended.

Past Commander-in-Chief Jim.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KIMERY: Thank you very much, Chief Wally. I would like to thank the Commander-in-Chief for this appointment. I am very happy to serve. I am going to read to you now the resolutions that were approved as written, approved by the committee yesterday afternoon in session.

They are No. 404, The Lessons Of The Cold War.

No. 405, Limit Foreign Ownership Of U.S. Businesses And Properties.

Resolution No. 406, Take Action On The Immigration Problem.

No. 407, Time Is Running Out For Castro.

No. 412, Maintain An Effective U.S. Coast Guard.

No. 413, Standing Firm For Democracy And Liberty.

No. 414, National Strategy Of Peace Through Strength.
No. 415, Halt The Erosion Of Intelligence Services.
No. 416, Support For The Republic Of Korea.
No. 419, Oppose U.S. Forces Under Foreign Command.
No. 422, Retain The Selective Service.
No. 423, Monitor The Panama Canal Carefully.
No. 427, Require All Eighteen Year Old Citizens To Register For

Military Draft.

No. 434, Improve Military Readiness. No. 434, I will read the Resolved.

It is, "BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to act now to reverse this trend in decreasing defense readiness by providing our military leaders with the resources required to accomplish their missions and the military strategy of the United States; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in order to improve the morale and retention of our high quality, dedicated American servicemen and women, that the Congress and the Administration take action to stop the erosion of military entitlements and benefits, and restore military retirement benefits to the level that existed prior to 1986."

The intent of this resolution is to urge the President and the Congress of the United States to improve the readiness of our armed forces by providing our military leaders with the resources required to accomplish the military strategy of the United States, and to encourage the Congress and the Administration to take action to improve the morale and retention of our servicemen and women by stopping the erosion of military entitlements and benefits, and by restoring military retirement benefits to the level that existed prior to 1986."

Does that clear 434 up?

No. 435, Tighten U.S. Policy On High Technology Exports.

No. 436, National Missile Defense For The United States. We will read No. 435. It is titled Tighten U.S. Policy On High Technology Exports.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the President and the Congress to reverse the present U.S. policy on exporting American advanced 'dual-use' technologies and supercomputers to China and Russia, and strengthen the rules that limit the export of American 'dual-use' technologies to any country that poses a possible ballistic missile or any other significant threat to the U.S.; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Administration stop any U.S. commercial activity which facilitates the improvement of Chinese ballistic missile capability, and provides any information or technology that would provide new military capability, including any long-range missile technology, to any country that poses a significant threat to our nation without prior U.S. Government authorization."

Now, No. 436, the National Missile Defense For The United States.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to immediately accelerate efforts to develop and deploy a National Missile Defense System to protect the United States against an accidental or unauthorized ballistic missile launch; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and the Congress to take immediate actions to stop the proliferation of ballistic missiles and technologies to any potentially hostile or rogue states and terrace groups that may seek to target the United States directly with long-range missiles."

Resolution No. 437, Increase The Defense Budget.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to take whatever steps are necessary to increase defense spending and reverse the 14-year pattern of declining defense budgets; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in light of the first federal budget surplus in three decades, and the current strength of the U.S. economy, we urge the nation's bipartisan political leadership to reopen negotiations on the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 in order to provide for a reallocation additional of national resources to the defense budget, and to sustain period of real growth in defense spending."

Resolution 438, Women In The Military.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as opposing assignment of women within the Armed Forces to jobs that call for them to aggressively seek out, be close with, and kill or capture enemy forces; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress to establish an independent commission to examine all facets of the security, training, assignments and role of women in the military and to withhold approval of any further personnel changes until the commission has time to make its recommendations; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support barracks improvements that provide for totally separate and secure sleeping areas and latrines for men and women in the armed services, but we believe that each Military Service should be free to determine how best to train their recruits in basic training."

We go now to Resolution 441, Restore Pre-Attack Ranks To Admiral Husband E. Kimmel And General Walter C. Short.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States to restore the honor and reputations of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President of the United States to take necessary steps to posthumously advance Admiral Kimmel and General Short to their highest wartime rank of Four-Star Admiral and Lieutenant General. Such action would be appreciated

greatly to restore the honor of these two great servicemen.”

The last one, the resolution approved, as written, is 442, Support Of Self-Determination For Puerto Rico.

“BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we request the Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and the rest of the members of the United States Senate to pass Senate Bill 472 before the adjournment of the 105th Congress.”

That completes those, Commander-in-Chief. I move adoption of the resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There is a motion to adopt. Is there a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I second that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any requests for set asides?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DEBRA HERZOG (Post 5158 - Wisconsin): I ask No. 438 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The request for 438 to be set aside is noted. Any other requests to be set aside?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CLIFF LEDYARD (Post 1079 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to have you people, if it is possible, to make copies for the rest of us here from 432 on to where we stopped right now. We don't have any record of this at all.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: That is a very valid point. We have run into it in the past, that many of these resolutions are submitted after everything else has been copied for the convention and put in the booklet form. That is what we are running into.

Then the amendments are made to those before they are even put into the books. That is what we have run into over the past few years. That is a very good point well taken. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a request for set asides? Okay. I would ask, then, for a vote for all of those that have not been set aside. I will call for a vote. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed say "no". Those that have not been set aside are hereby passed.

Comrade Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I will call on our Director of National Security & Foreign Affairs.

COMRADE ROCKY HARDER: Well, there is really not much to explain. The resolution was read. The statement is pretty clear. We should hear from the floor, I think, to hear what the concerns are. This is Resolution 438, Women In The Military. I will read it. Resolution No. 438, I will read it in its entirety.

“WHEREAS, as a result of the Gulf War experience in which five women were killed, fourteen wounded and one taken prisoner, women

now have gained unprecedented access to U.S. combat aircraft and warships; and

"WHEREAS, now even the Army has been pressured into allowing women in combat engineer battalions and aviation units and the Marine Corps Commandant has expressed his misgivings about the physical strength and endurance of women in combat positions; and

"WHEREAS, a series of incidents in several of our Armed Services has led many to question the current mixing of men and women in basic training, and in overseas combat assignments; and

"WHEREAS, the VFW also notes these unprecedented personnel changes have occurred by Executive Branch edict without any legislation or serious debate within the United States Congress;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as opposing assignment of women within the Armed Forces to jobs that call for them to aggressively seek out, close with and kill or capture enemy forces; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress to establish an independent commission to examine all facets of the security, training, assignments and role of women in the military and to withhold approval of any further personnel changes until the commission has had time to make its recommendations.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support barracks improvements that provide for totally separate and secure sleeping areas and latrines for men and women in the Armed Services, but we believe that each Military Service should be free to determine how best to train their recruits in basic training."

That is Resolution No. 438.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Comrade.

I will ask at this time for Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DEBRA HERZOG (Post 5158 - Wisconsin): I believe that most of us in this room have the patriotism and belief in our country to fight for it. I don't believe that that freedom or that responsibility should be limited to men. I believe that a woman, if she is capable and she is trained, should be allowed the privilege of fighting for the freedom of this country regardless of whether she is a man or he is a woman. I am sorry about that. (Laughter) I am asking the VFW to believe that women have the same right to fight for their country as men do. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Microphone No. 2. Any further discussion on this Resolution No. 438?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BARRY WALKER (Post 4579 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I agree with part of the resolution. Two of the women that were killed in my unit, I carried one of them out of the barracks and three of the women who won Purple Hearts were in my unit and I helped carry them out as well.

I think you have to say from working with both up North and

South, the women did an outstanding job during the Persian Gulf.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any further discussion? I see no hands or comments. Hearing none, the motion originally made was to adopt Resolution 438. It had been asked to be set aside. At this time, those in favor of adoption of Resolution 438 will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed will signify by saying "no".

The chair is in doubt again. The reason I say the chair is in doubt again, if we adopt 438, it restricts the women in the military. If we reject 438, it allows women in the military, in the combat area. Does that clarify it.

Again, we will call for the vote. I would ask those in favor of adoption of Resolution 438, restricting women in combat, to say "aye". We will call for a vote for those that are opposing No. 438. All those opposed say "no". No. 438 is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KIMERY: The following resolutions are approved, as amended. All these resolutions are in your book.

No. 408, Punish Terrorists Now.

No. 409, Strategic Defense Is A Strategic Priority.

No. 410, Honoring Those Who Serve.

No. 411, Oppose Lifting The Defense Department Ban On Homosexuals In The Armed Forces.

No. 417, Support The Withdrawal From The Former Yugoslavia.

No. 420, Support For The Republic Of China On Taiwan.

No. 426, NATO Enlargement.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion to adopt these resolutions, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You have heard the reading of those resolutions recommended for passage as amended. Are there any requests for set asides? Seeing none, we will call for a vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I will now read those that the committee recommended rejection.

No. 428, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal Navy Medical Augmentation Team Operation Urgent Fury (Grenada).

No. 429, Issuance Of Cold War Victory Medal.

No. 430, Special Medal For World War II Navy Armed Guards.

No. 432, Support H.R. 432, To Provide For The Issuance Of A Nuclear Radiation Medal For Certain Members Of The Armed Forces.

No. 439, In Support Of Army Medic Michael New. I don't believe you have No. 439, so I perhaps should read the Resolved.

Resolution No. 439, "In Support Of Army Medic Michael New.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Officer's previous position against Mr. New be

rescinded and that in accordance with the wishes of the majority of VFW members, a resolution in support of Mr. New be passed by this convention with copies of the resolution to be sent to Mr. New and the Army Court of Appeals Judges considering his appeal."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any requests for set asides? Are there any requests for set asides?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LYLE KELL (Post 1561 - Washington): I speak to the Special Medal for World War II Navy Armed Guards.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Do you request to have it set aside?

COMRADE LYLE KELL (Post 1561 - Washington): I request to have it set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. Resolution Nos. 428, 429, 432 and 439, are there any requests to have them set aside? Hearing none, they are rejected.

Now, Lyle, Microphone No. 1. In order to have action taken on this, you must make a motion to have Resolution No. 430 adopted.

COMRADE LYLE KELL (Post 1561 - Washington): I make the motion that Resolution 430 be adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a second to the motion? I will look at Microphone 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. I see no one at the microphone. Seeing no one at the microphone, there is not a second. The motion dies. Therefore, Resolution No. 430 is rejected as recommended by the committee.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: That concludes the Report of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. I would like to again thank you for the opportunity to serve on this prestigious convention and to thank all those that have helped us yesterday afternoon at our security meeting. Thank you again, John.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: To the Chairmen, Past Commanders-in-Chief, and Vice Chairmen, thank you very much. To all those committees that have reported, they will be recalled for further recommendations or resolutions that are brought forth.

Is there any other business or announcements that have to be made real quick? I know we are running late. It is raining. If you want to, we can go until 6:00 o'clock. I guess we don't have anyone that wants to stay.

Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, we will prepare the room for the Closing Ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Please rise and stand at attention facing the flag of our nation.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was given at this time, followed by the Benediction.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We will stand in recess until 8:30 tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the session was recessed at 4:50 o'clock p.m.)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
AUGUST 31, 1998

(The Distinguished Guests Banquet of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 7:00 p.m., by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot.)

WELCOME

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Good evening and welcome to the Distinguished Guests Banquet for this, our 99th National Convention.

I am Tom Pouliot, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the VFW and your Master of Ceremonies for this evening. I want to express our sincere thanks to San Antonio and Texas, the Lone Star State, for the fine welcome we have received.

We have a tremendous program this evening. We are very pleased to have all of you with us, especially our VFW National and Department leaders and our VFW Ladies Auxiliary members. We are especially pleased to have our distinguished guests whom I will introduce after dinner.

Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

(Whereupon, Pledge of Allegiance was given, followed by the singing of the National Anthem.)

INVOCATION

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Please remain standing. Now, our Chaplain Dean Derieg will give the Invocation.

(Whereupon, the Invocation was given by National Chaplain Dean Derieg.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: You may be seated. Ladies and gentlemen, please enjoy the evening, enjoy your dinner and the fine music of Al Sturchio Orchestra.

(Whereupon, dinner was served followed by the introduction of the distinguished guests by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Pouliot.)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I am privileged this evening to introduce to this very special audience the National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Since its founding 99 years ago, the VFW has drawn together dedicated men and women who share the same concern and love for America and its veterans. With a long and proud history of accomplishments, the VFW has always been in the forefront of every constructive program to set forth, expand and protect the rights and privileges of America's veterans.

Whether its efforts are for a strong national defense or concern for the nation's veterans, the VFW must have inspired leaders who will guide us wisely.

We have been most fortunate to have a man of this stature to guide us this year. Through his 28 years of active involvement with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, John Moon has been a man on the move, helping his fellow veterans and his community.

In keeping with his motto "Courage Under Fire", he has worked hard to address the concerns and the mandates of the VFW.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to introduce to you a man dedicated to working for America's veterans and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, our Commander-in-Chief, John Moon, from the great state of Ohio.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Tom, for that very generous and warm introduction. My remarks tonight will be very brief. You see standing before you a very proud man who for the last 12 months has had the wonderful privilege of leading the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Leading this great organization is very gratifying.

I have seen the results of the work and services of our two million VFW members and the more than 750,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary. In every city and town that I visited, I saw positive proof that the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary are a dynamic force serving our nation's communities and our nation's veterans.

This year has been a very pivotal year as the VFW works to ensure that veterans' programs receive proper funding. It has been a year of challenge as we work to maintain the integrity of the VA in these trying times.

In responding to our "Courage Under Fire" theme, we have supported our armed forces and the need to maintain a strong national defense.

I have been able to visit our military men and women around the globe. I have been with them in Europe, Kuwait and on the Militarized

Zone, that fragile line separating North and South Korea.

How proud I was to bring your message of support to our troops. That message was made all the more clear and meaningful with those wonderful VFW telephone calling cards. They are a visible sign of our support. You are to be commended for this tremendous program.

In visiting Southeast Asia and Korea, and other parts of the world, the fate of our MIAs was always with me.

The VFW will continue to lead the way in what we believe to be the best means of achieving our goal of the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs.

We take our role very seriously and will continue, as we monitor progress and results in working with Vietnam and the other governments in this region. To do less would be a disservice to our members, to those missing and their families and a disservice to what the VFW stands for.

Your efforts in support of every program that we have undertaken in the past year, whether it be in community and youth activities, Voice of Democracy, Post development, Buddy Poppy, have been proven that working together we can be successful.

Yes, it has been a very special year for me because I was proud to be with and served with the finest men and women of our nation — its veterans.

Now, before my first mission as your National Commander-in-Chief comes to an end, I would wish to say on behalf of Susie and I that there is no way we will ever be able to repay this organization, to thank each of those that have been so much in the way of support and sincerity and kindness, for all the efforts that you continue to put forth on behalf of today's veterans and all that you are going to be able to do in the future ahead. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF VFW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPECIAL AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Ladies and gentlemen, I am most pleased to present the VFW Commander-in-Chief's Special Award to James A. Endicott, a veterans advocate from the great state of Texas. A former general counsel for the Department of Veterans Affairs, Jim Endicott demonstrated keen insight, understanding and clarity of judgment in providing legal advice and services to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the VA staff from November, 1991, to January 20, 1993.

His keystone decision, rendered amidst controversy on January 13, 1993, directed that service connection rating may be granted for tobacco use if evidence establishes that such use of tobacco was in the line of duty. With courage and an abiding sense of integrity, his decision to render such an opinion clearly establishes a moral obligation to compensate veterans for service-connected illnesses and injuries.

Tragically, in its rush to secure additional dollars to pay for pork barrel projects, the Congress has taken away the authority to grant such

compensation. Buried in the conference report to the recently enacted Transportation Bill, was language denying smoking-related compensation for veterans and directing that the projected savings of some \$15.4 billion be used to pay for transportation projects that were in violation of the balanced budget law.

Currently, Mr. Endicott is in private law practice with offices in Central Texas and the Washington, D.C., area, where he concentrates on federal legal issues and health-care issues. He has produced and hosted the weekly G.I. Journal radio show and is a frequent speaker and panelist on veterans and military issues.

A 22-year army veteran, Jim served in Vietnam. He is a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3892, Harker Heights, Texas.

Please join me this evening in welcoming a true veterans' advocate, James A. Endicott, Jr.

The Resolution reads in part, "Commander-in-Chief's Special Award presented to James A. Endicott, Jr., in recognition of his outstanding contribution to America's veterans as General Counsel of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. August 31, 1998, John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief."

RESPONSE - THE HONORABLE JAMES A. ENDICOTT, JR.

COMRADE ENDICOTT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief Moon, Ladies Auxiliary President Atkinson, my Fellow Comrades and Sisters particularly in my own Department of Texas, I never planned to be the poster child for the long-standing military tradition "of smoke them if you have got them," but I guess that is what I have become.

When I sat down to sign off on this decision that has become so much debated, it really wasn't all that hard because I knew I was shortly going back to Texas and I was going back to Killeen, Texas, to answer to Ted Connell, a great former Commander-in-Chief, if I made the wrong decision.

If Ted wasn't enough, backing him up was Jim Nier, Glen Gardner, Alan Burton and Doug Bell, great Texas veteran leaders. I knew I had to make the right decision. I also knew if I made the wrong decision, it would just be one more alligator in that swimming pool in Washington that somebody would have to wrestle with. And over the years in Washington I learned from a very good Washington insider, my good friend, Larry Rivers, when I got to Washington about alligators.

I said, "There are a lot of them up here and what do you do with them?" He said, "Jim, the secret is you just have to know which ones to train and those are the ones that you wrestle with." I said, "A Louisiana lawyer has to know about alligators." About the first three times I got in the pool, after he said they were trained, I learned there were not any trained alligators.

Tonight, I have got four feelings I would like to share with you.

First, a very sincere feeling of thanks for thinking of me and what was to me part of doing the job I was supposed to do, taking care of veterans. This evening, also this is to make me feel a little bit old, because our principal speaker tonight, General McCaffrey, was a fourteen-year-old teenager when I was a senior cadet at The Citadel, and his dad was my commandant cadet.

You also make me feel very humbled to be recognized on the same program with Jerry Solomon, who was always there for veterans, a great leader of this country and for veterans. You also make me feel very proud of this organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I have three uncles that served in World War II, each of whom came back to be active in this organization. They were the Kaul brothers of Kansas City, Missouri. My uncle David was in the Navy, served in the Rangers, was Commander and Quartermaster of Post 302.

My uncle Bill served in the Air Force. He was a B-17 Crew Chief out of England, and I asked him one time, I said, "What did you do in the Air Force? What kind of ranking?" He said, "I was a zipper sergeant." I said, "I have never heard of a zipper sergeant. What does that mean?" He said, "I had had those generals on so many times and took them off, I had to put zippers on them." He was active in Post 1829 in Kansas City.

My Uncle Clancey was an Army Private and went in on Omaha Beach, he was wounded on D plus two, had a leg injury that left him in pain for the rest of his life. He served as Department Commander of Missouri and also Commander of 1829. His wife, Helen, later served as our State Auxiliary President in Missouri.

When I went to Vietnam in 1968, in my pocket was an application to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the first thing I did after writing back to my wife was to mail that back to my uncle. For our family tomorrow, the third generation of our family, Lieutenant Rod Alpono of Maryland will get on an airplane to go to Bosnia where he is with the Joint Task Force in Bosnia. He is also going with a VFW application in his pocket.

To me, the VFW is a great family. We are a family who believes together and we stand together for veterans and for families and for winning. Comrades and sisters, thank you again for the honor to be an American veteran and for what you have done for me this evening. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW AMERICANISM AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to present to this great gathering, a distinguished American who has been chosen to receive the 1998 VFW Americanism Award for his untiring efforts in promoting the values of patriotism, commitment to service and love of country, values which contribute to the betterment of American society.

Congressman Jerry Solomon, throughout a distinguished 26-year career as a legislator, has remained steadfast in promoting the principles of responsible citizenship and Americanism.

His efforts in advancing legislation to protect our nation's flag from desecration, coupled with his direct involvement in seeking the fullest possible accountability of our prisoners of war and missing in action, attest to his commitment to the principles of Americanism.

Currently, he is Chairman of the powerful Rules Committee of the House of Representatives. He is a former member of the prestigious Foreign Affairs Committee and is on a leave of absence as the Senior Republican of the Veterans Affairs Committee.

Congressman Solomon is a member of the House Task Force on National Defense Policy. He is the former Chairman and still a member of the POW/MIA Task Force.

Since 1982, Congressman Solomon has served as a Congressional Delegate to the North Atlantic Assembly, the political arm of the NATO alliance. Presently, he serves as Vice-President of the Assembly.

Congressman Solomon, a native of New York, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps at the onset of the Korean War. He served on active duty until July, 1952, and remained in the Marine Corps Reserve until honorably discharged in 1959.

In 1992, he received the prestigious VFW Congressional Award for his outstanding service to the nation.

I am pleased to present the 1998 VFW Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation, to a great American, a veterans' advocate and friend of the VFW, the Honorable Gerald B. Solomon. If I may read the citation at this time.

"Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Gerald B. Solomon, Congressman.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition for his many years of dedicated service on behalf of the citizens of his nation, currently serving as the Chairman of the powerful Rules Committee of the House of Representatives, and for his untiring efforts evidenced by his leadership on the prestigious Foreign Affairs and Veterans Affairs Committees. His exceptional service to our nation throughout a lifetime of public service has enriched our sense of history and our belief in the principles of Americanism.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 31st day of August, 1998. Approved by the National Council of Administration." It has been signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Congressman Solomon. (Applause)

RESPONSE - THE HONORABLE GERALD B. SOLOMON

COMRADE GERALD SOLOMON: Commander-in-Chief John Moon, I am really humbled. Your lovely wife, Susie, and General Barry McCaffrey, and Jim over here and his wife, distinguished officers and members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Connie Atkinson and all of your Ladies Auxiliary: Yes, Commander, it was six years ago I did receive the Gold Medal Award from the Commander-in-Chief and six years ago the Congressional Award, and now I can just tell you I am extremely proud to be selected again to receive this coveted award this evening.

I guess I would have to say I am proud because it allows me to join with those other select members who have received this award for what they have done for their country and more so for what they have done for the veterans of this great nation of ours.

Commander-in-Chief Moon, I am even more proud because this award comes from an organization of over two million brave men and women who during times of peril they have risked their own lives for the defense of this country. Commander-in-Chief Moon, the men and women of your organization are really the true heroes in my eyes and the eyes of the American people, who not only serve their country in uniform but they continue to do so as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

It is a troop that is always in the forefront of every development to maintain adequate veterans' benefit programs. Mr. Commander, the community work carried out by your local VFW Posts in hometowns all across America, it is legendary, and your promotion of pride and patriotism and good citizenship is exemplified by your nationwide Voice of Democracy Program is so inspiring and proud examples of the American people.

That nation has a great memory and will never forego those who labored mightily in its cause and no Americans will not forget or veterans ever forget because those who wear the pride label of veteran have great memories. They are memories of pain, they are memories of glory, of sacrifice and honor, but more importantly, they are memories of horror of war.

They are memories they must never forget, because those memories are the very leg and, yes, we are the greatest station on earth. It is those memories that brought about the VFW's greatest accomplishments back through the 1980s. That was your never-ending support of the peace restrict philosophy of a strong national defense second to none.

That concept stopped Communism dead in its tracks. It brought the Soviet Union to its knees, and that is the very reason that democracy is breaking out all over Europe and all over this world today. I have to tell you something, my fellow Americans, that war is not over.

The threat to America's freedom is still there and, yes, the Berlin Wall has fallen and the former Soviet Union is no more, but the cold fact is that tens of thousands of armed nuclear weapons are still aimed at the United States of America.

Two million Soviet troops still remain in uniform, and the new Russian Confederate is highly modified and unstable, as you read right in the papers today, and no one knows the future or who will control that former Soviet Union. There is also the very serious threat that no less than ten hostile American terrorist groups either have or are on the verge of having nuclear missile capability, and any one of them would not hesitate a moment to launch a terrorist attack on America, both here in America or overseas, as we just recently witnessed with the cowardly bombing of our two embassies.

Of course, we all know that deadly and Communism still enslaves almost half the world population in places like Cuba, in North Korea, Vietnam, Mainland China, with North Korea threatening another invasion. I was just up on the DMZ three days ago. China is now deploying 18 intercontinental ballistic missiles aimed at America's mainland.

No, ladies and gentlemen, the war is not over. That is why we must never let our guard down. We must never again leave America undefended as we did back on December 7, 1991.

Many of you in this room remember that day. That is why we absolutely must continue to maintain a peace through strength, strong advocate defense that can guarantee the protection of American interests both here and abroad, and can continue to attract and maintain young men and women capable of handling today's high-tech strategic weaponry.

We need to restore the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital and health-care programs to a funding level that will guarantee we meet our obligations to provide the highest quality medical care to any, and I repeat, any sick or disabled veteran, and do this in Veterans Hospitals where only veterans are served. Is that right? (Applause)

Yes, yes, we must fight with all our might to see that our military budget is not decimated. We must fight to make sure that the future veterans of America, these young men and women serving in all our volunteer military today, continue to be the brightest, the best educated, the best trained, the best equipped, and the most highly-motivated soldiers ever to serve in our military.

We must make sure that these volunteers coming from all across America have an opportunity to pursue an honorable and proud military career. Military careers are honorable and they are proud when they can accumulate up to \$40,000 of educational benefits with the new peacetime G.I. Bill, and where they have learned, ladies and gentlemen, and I think you should all listen to this because it is so important, they can learn something greatly needed in America today, and that is how to be good citizens.

In today's military, our young people learn things, all that is lost and neglected today in broken homes and schools, they learn discipline, respect. They learn teamwork and responsibility. They learn the importance of being polite and courteous in today's society.

They learn to live within the law. They learn not to use illegal

drugs. General McCaffrey will tell you in a little while they learn the meaning of the word pride and the word patriotism, and more often than not they even get a little religion in our military today.

Yes, every year hundreds of thousands of these kids join the military and become good citizens and they learn these important principles that somehow they missed in school or in their homes. Then, ladies and gentlemen, when their enlistment is over, when their service is done, they turn in their uniforms as you and I did and they return home bringing these ingrained principles along with them to be spread about in the community and taught to the younger generations to come.

Yes, these men and women are no longer soldiers and sailors and Marines and airmen, they now have a new responsibility. They have now joined one of the most important groups of people in America, a group that is without a doubt the one most responsible for making America this great free nation of ours.

It is the group represented by all of you gathered here tonight. Those of us who have earned the right to proudly call ourselves veterans of the armed forces of the United States of America. Thanks to you America is number one. We are going to keep it that way.

Commander-in-Chief Moon, on behalf of all veterans, I gratefully accept this Americanism Award. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. God bless you and God bless America. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL BARRY R. McCAFFREY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Ladies and gentlemen, we are pleased to have with us this evening General Barry McCaffrey, the Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

General Barry McCaffrey was confirmed by unanimous vote of the United States Senate for that position on February 29, 1996.

Barry McCaffrey began his military career as a seventeen-year-old at the United States Military Academy at West Point. During his career in the military, he served four combat tours: one in the Dominican Republic, two tours in Vietnam, and commanded the 24th Infantry Division attack into the Euphrates River Valley during the Persian Gulf War.

He continues to serve his country and community. He is active in veterans' affairs and is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Please join me in a warm welcome for our special guest, General Barry McCaffrey.

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS - GENERAL BARRY McCAFFREY

GENERAL McCAFFREY: John, let me thank you for that very kind

introduction. Normally, you have to permit me to use sort of a standard gag line when I am introduced, such as the charitable way I explained that I am emotionally moved by the work you do.

Of course, I am Irish and I am easily emotionally moved. My mother is Irish and she cries during beer commercials. As you might imagine, my staff, given my current responsibility, asked me to stop using that line.

Let me thank your Commander-in-Chief for his leadership of being a Vietnam veteran, the incoming Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, and let me thank Connie Atkinson for your leadership, almost 750,000 people that do so much for our veterans country-wide.

Let me take notice of Deputy Secretary Hershel Gober for 20 years in the military service in both the Marine Corps and the Army, and another Vietnam veteran that is part of the team. Particularly, let me just publicly state how much respect I have for Congressman Jerry Solomon, a Marine Vietnam combat vet. He went on to serve the country for 20 years and has done so much and given a great example for many of us. Thank you for what you have done for America.

Let me take notice of Jim Endicott, the recipient of the Americanism Award tonight. He was at The Citadel, a 21-year-old guy, when I was 14. Jim, you looked a lot older in those days to me than you do now. Thank you for all you have done for the Veterans Administration and for the country.

A couple of other people I just want to very briefly mention, General John P. Herrling, and the great service that he now renders as Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission. Also to General Wilma Vaught, I have enormous respect for what she has done in putting together the Women in Military Service for the America Memorial Foundation. Thank you for your leadership.

Lieutenant General Claude Kicklighter, who has done so much in uniform and now in civilian leadership for the Department of Army.

First of all, I want to say how proud I am to be here tonight. I say that as the son of a veteran who served in combat with the United States Army for over seven years in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. I say that as the father of two veterans, an Infantry Major son that served in the Gulf War in the 82nd Airborne and a daughter who is now a Captain in the Army National Guard.

I say that as someone who has enormous respect for the VFW as a Life Member of the Hinesville VFW Post, Hinesville, Georgia, the center of the universe for those of you who are not familiar with it, right? Two million of you are gathered together in this Association, one million from World War II. What a generation, what leadership, what you did for our country, what incredible sacrifice, with over 300,000 deaths.

Your generation had a keen understanding and responsibility and very little understanding of your rights. Thank you for what you did to defend America. The Korean War veterans, the forgotten war, the

incredible Korean conflict. For many of you, the Korean War vets who are in the VFW now, fought in World War II and were called back to service in those terrible years of '50 to '51 to provide the combat leadership we needed while we tried to rebuild the U.S. Armed Forces which had been allowed to fall apart. Thank you for the 300,000 Korean VFW members.

Vietnam, 600,000 VFW members. Seven and one-half million of us served in uniform during that conflict. Over three million served in one of the branches of the armed forces. Over 300,000 of us were wounded or killed, or became missing in action.

This was a tremendous sacrifice which at the time was unappreciated, because of tremendous difficulty, which I hope all of you agree to try and reach out to bring into the VFW and the other great patriotic organizations, the veterans who served in uniform during that conflict.

Finally, I am enormously proud to note that the VFW is now over 100,000 members that served in the Persian Gulf, Grenada, Somalia, Operation Just Cause, Panama and other conflicts. They are probably the best military we ever fielded. I say that as someone that commanded 19,000 soldiers and reinforced infantry division during the Gulf War.

I might add a thousand of them women, went to stage for four days with tremendous support, one of the most powerful Air Force in the world, the Navy Air, the Marine Air, that was what alleged at the time the second biggest land Army in the Gulf region, which four days after the attack started was the second biggest Army inside Iraq.

If I may say a couple of words about the current portfolio I have got. I was privileged to serve in uniform for 32 years and in four conflict situations. I was not a volunteer for this job. I tell people, "Mr. Congressman, I was propelled to the front ranks of all the American people for two reasons. One, I was confirmable by the Senate and, secondly, my dad told me to take the job."

I am serious about that. I have been honored to take part in the effort. I work with a team that involves the Attorney General Janet Reno, Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health, Togo West of the Veterans Administration, the Education Secretary Dick Riley, and others. We have \$17.1 billion in the '99 budget on the Hill right now. There is money in there, about \$1.1 billion for the Veterans Administration drug prevention and research activities.

We will fund 17,000 VA full-time drug resort personnel. There are 126 VA medical facilities that offer substance abuse treatment. We need to remind ourselves that there are literally hundreds of thousands of our veterans who were wounded in body and spirit and others who went on to suffer intensely from drug abuse; and I include the most dangerous drug in America, alcohol.

When we treat these veterans in the VA system, we are not doing them a favor. We, the country, owe these veterans sustainment and treatment to get them back to their families and their communities and into

a productive role, and we can do it. We are proud of what the Veterans Administration does.

It is not clear to me that we have reached the optimum level of care, and I fully support, as I am sure Togo West and others do, who continue to care for veterans in the manner in which we have given them a promise when they set forth to serve. Some 2.2 million of those veterans are actually receiving disability compensation and 400,000 are disabled.

Let me talk about the larger problem on drug abuse. Who is using drugs in America and who isn't? I might add the veterans actually have a lower rate of drug abuse in general than the American population. That is something to tuck away in the back of your mind.

The active armed forces in the United States, starting about mid-1980, have now the lowest rate of drug abuse in American society. There is 1.7 million men and women in uniform, the best kids our country can put to defend us, have drug abuse rates that are probably a little more than one percent. That is essentially a drug-free institution.

There are a lot of reasons for that. Many people misunderstand and think it is because of the drug test. That was a tool that we were grateful to get. It helped a lot, particularly in the early years when the Army almost fell apart, the armed forces.

1976, around in there, sticks in my mind as the worst period when probably a third of the armed forces was using drugs. It was a nightmare. It was incredible. We worked our way out of it. It took almost ten years. Now, the biggest advantage we had over American society was sergeants.

We had sergeants who were men and women in their early thirties and late twenties who acted like parents to young people, who set standards. We finally, those of us who were the captains and majors, when the armed forces went through that terrible post-Vietnam period, we said we have had enough. No more drugs in our service.

We finally did that after ten years of struggle. As you leave here tonight, I would ask you to look for some hand-outs that we have at the exits. One of them is the National Drug Strategy. It is a short document. It has what is my idea of what a centerfold is today, a fold-out, and it outlines on two pages for those of us who has an infantry mentality what we are trying to achieve.

There are five goals. There are 32 objectives and, indeed, in some ways it is a management challenge. There is a lot involved in it. Clearly, we have got to work with foreign governments. We have to go work where cocaine is produced. We have to work with Thailand and areas where cocaine is produced, Afghanistan.

We understand we have to do better on our borders. We are going to present, I hope to Congress in the coming year a better organized group, to give better tools to the men and women of the Customs Service, the Border Patrol, the INS, the DEA, to allow us to defend America more effectively.

We also understand that some people will use drugs. They will

become compulsive drug users, not many. We have to remind ourselves of that. There are 270 million of us Americans, and four million are chronic drug users.

I might add another ten million are addicted to alcohol, but four million are chronically addicted to illegal drugs, and they are a mess. They do an enormous damage. Many of you in this room know someone who is involved in that, a child, a college roommate, a buddy in the armed forces, a fellow employee. It is a desperate situation.

People start using drugs because they bring intense pleasure. Almost anybody who uses them, the problem is, as you and I look at somebody using heroin, they are involved in this ultimate euphoria, what we see is the person we love, we admire, is someone who is wrapped in waves of nausea, whose skin is crawling, who is violently ill and who has lost their sex drive and are constipated. That is the good news about heroin users.

The bad news is when they become addicted, which is very rapid with many of these highly drug use situations: methamphetamine, crack, the chemically-produced drugs. And ten years from now when my daughter is back here as the U.S. Drug Policy Director she will probably tell you that the cocaine is no longer the major drug threat throughout America. We are not going to be happy if we have replaced it with another chemically-manufactured drug.

Now, we also have got to understand that the heart and soul of the drug effort, what this strategy sketches out is that the central component is prevention. You and I, the veterans as grandparents, as parents, as mentors, as advisors and community leaders, have to step forward and ensure our young people from about the age of nine on through age eighteen do not become involved in smoking pot, in abusing alcohol, in smoking cigarettes and the other drugs.

Those three drugs fostered together are the predictors of whether you turn into a young adult with a lifelong drug problem. If you can get to age nineteen without being involved in that behavior, you will never have a drug use problem in your entire life.

Now, the problem is in today's America we are not talking about a sophomore at college smoking joints. We are not talking about a law school student trying cocaine. In today's America, more eighth-graders than twelfth-graders use heroin. In today's America, eighth-graders have doubled their drug use rates in the last few years.

So, I just suggest to you flat out as you look toward a decade that you look at this problem in America. The most dangerous drug in America is a 12 year old smoking pot on weekends, because that young person is 79 times more likely to have a compulsive drug use problem.

That is where we are going. We think we have a decent plan. We are getting bipartisan support out of Congress. I am enormously grateful for the leadership of Joe Biden, Senator Hatch and many others. There are a lot of people in Congress who understand what we are doing.

They understand this is a ten-year effort. This is not a military campaign. It is a war, but it is war for the value system of American families and children in schools and the workplace. The last 15 years drug abuse in America has actually come down by half. Cocaine use has come down by 70 percent. We are doing better.

The armed forces, the police departments, the universities, the Fortune 500 companies are essentially drug free. We still have a long way to go. Six percent of the country are using drugs. We are going to have to cut that in more than half in the coming years. The real problem, though, is our children.

If I may just end on a note, let me call again on all of you who came forward and served at the risk of your life. You showed discipline, you showed leadership, and you showed commitment, and America needs that commitment in the coming ten years or so.

We simply have to reach out to our children after their school is out, on weekends, and during the summers, and they have got to have an example. If they don't get it at home, if they don't get it in the school, they will have to be counseled and mentored by a community coalition, by Boys and Girls Clubs, by the YMCA and by the Elks, and by the leadership that forms its own value system in combat serving its country. Thank you very much for who you are and what you stand for. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: To the Honorable Jim Endicott, our former VA General Counsel, Senator Gerald Solomon, U.S. House of Representatives, and, of course, our keynote speaker, General McCaffrey, we deeply are indebted and honored to have all of you with us this evening and for the many remarks you gave us. It was greatly appreciated.

At this time I will now return the program to our Master of Ceremonies for the evening, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief John Moon. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce to you three ladies from Weberly, Texas, who pay tribute to the Andrew Sisters with their music. We will now turn back the clock and enjoy some light-hearted, nostalgic entertainment.

They like to sing. You have reached your musical destination. Ladies and gentlemen, at this time I give to you the Andrew Sisters Revue, Destination.

(Whereupon, the Andrew Sisters Revue by the Destination was given at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Let's hear it for the Destination. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you, the audience and our honored guests, for being here with us this evening. This concludes our program for this evening. Will our National Chaplain, Dean Derieg, please come to the podium and give the Benediction.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Derieg gave the Benediction.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you

and have an enjoyable evening. That concludes our Distinguished Guests Banquet.

(Whereupon, the Distinguished Guest Banquet was concluded at 9:30 o'clock p.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION TUESDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1998

(The Second Business Session of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Moon.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Because we have to start the Tuesday session early, I would ask you to please take your seats as soon as possible. We will call this meeting to order.

Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, proceed with the Opening Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance, and National Chaplain Reverend Dean Derieg gave the Opening Prayer from the Ritual.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies have been conducted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. I have been asked to announce, and we will do it periodically through the day, due to the high heat and the high humidity you are encouraged to drink many fluids, particularly water. I knew that was going to happen.

This will reduce the dehydration. A lot have had some concerns and a lot of individuals that have been weakened. It is not from the use of alcohol. They have got to get some more fluids in their system.

I want to also announce at this time that the VFW Health Fair is still going on. It is free. It will be 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. That is today and tomorrow. For today and tomorrow screening for glaucoma, blood pressure and so forth will be from 8:00 until 4:00. So, please, if you have the opportunity to stop off at the clinic, do so.

Could I see a show of hands where Arkansas is? We can't begin without apologizing. But I am better this morning. Last night in the audience with us was an individual who during World War II received the Medal of Honor for his courage and his abilities to maintain this country's freedom. From VFW Post 2722, Fayetteville, Arkansas, Clarence Craft, Medal of Honor recipient. (Applause)

Is the Credentials Committee here?

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade

Commander-in-Chief, Richard A. Trombla, Department of Kansas, Chairman of the Credentials Committee. I want to remind you this is a temporary report. This includes everybody that has registered and turned in their credentials by 4:00 o'clock last night. According to the rules of this convention, the cut-off time is 4:00 o'clock. If you don't register by 4:00 o'clock today, you will not show up on the report for tomorrow.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the total delegates is 12,424. The Department Commanders is 52; Past Commanders-in-Chief is 26; total Officers, 33. That makes a grand total of the delegate strength of 12,536 as of 4:00 o'clock yesterday afternoon. So be sure and register today before 4:00 o'clock to be counted for tomorrow. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: What we are going to do is start with some of the various committee reports, and as time will allow we will have various guests and receive various reports. We beg your indulgence. Due to the heat, and so forth, if you want to take your jackets off, by all means do so. I request those at the podium, that when the various guests do come, we put our jackets back on.

PRESENTATION OF VFW NEWS MEDIA AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The Veterans of Foreign Wars News Media Award is presented for outstanding commendation to the field of journalism. This year's recipient is Ken Hamblin, a nationally-syndicated radio commentator for 2.5 million people on 125 radio stations.

Known for his nature and, Mr. Hamblin, it may not be politically correct to do so, but he does speak his mind and in doing so he challenges his audience to think. Mr. Hamblin is also a newspaper columnist, whose commentary appears in fourteen cities across the nation through The New York Times syndicate.

Whether on the radio or in newspapers, Ken Hamblin's commentary on U.S. society and politics has provided an open forum for the exchange of ideas and comments.

He is a veteran. He has served in the United States Army.

I am pleased to present this morning the 1998 VFW News Media Award to Ken Hamblin, who through his honest and forthright commentary has contributed to a better understanding of our American way of life and its institutions.

Comrades, please join me in a warm welcome to a great journalist and fellow veteran, Ken Hamblin.

The News Media Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Ken Hamblin.

"In special recognition of his distinguished career as a nationally-syndicated talk show host and journalist whose forthright commentary on U.S. society and politics has provided an open forum for the exchange of

ideas and comments thereby contributing to responsible citizenship while enhancing the democratic process.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 1st day of September, 1998. Approved by the National Council of Administration." It has been signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. KEN HAMBLIN

MR. HAMBLIN: Good morning. I salute you all. This is a special group to be among. Because of your contributions to the men and women you left behind, making those contributions, beginning at least in my lifetime with December 7, '41, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Grenada, the Persian Gulf, it is possible for me to be here today.

I am a firm and committed first generation American to our republic. Now, there are some who would look at me and say, "Gosh, what makes a colored guy so high and so big on America?" I pause to allow that question to sink in because, ladies and gentlemen, there was a song that we used to sing at PS 41 back in Brooklyn that went, "This is my country, this is my country, the land that I love."

I am a product of my grandfather's dream, a western laborer who left Barbados to work with his hands on the Panama Canal, who learned enough Spanish to go to Cuba long before Fidel, to be an English translator, and then on to Roxbury, Massachusetts, and then down to Brooklyn, New York, where my mother and father met and "whala".

The American dream didn't work for my granddad, but he nurtured that dream and he kept the name alive, and he passed on to my mom and my aunts and my uncles, and I am not sure how well it worked for them. But I am an end product of that dream and it has worked for me because they never cheated me, they never stole by playing down my heritage. They never stole my inheritance.

And I now will pass that dream on to my children, and I see it blossoming full in my children's children, my grandchildren. When I ask people what they are going to give me in place of the United States of America, they went through a myriad of reasons.

They take a brick from here, a stone from there, to weaken the cornerstone and the foundations of the republic. They say "duh" and "just because". Those are not sufficient answers. I am not a combat veteran. I am not begrudging of that. I think God blessed me and those of you who have been there know what I mean.

But I fight on another field of battle in the civilian sector as a person who understands what poverty is and, in fact, I can say with full and first experience it sucks. I come from a different place where people once upon a time in America, our America, whether Italian or Polish, Jewish, Scots or German, African, Asian, they came to these shores and they said

to their children, "Be an American."

I am living proof that that works. You are living proof that works. I have received awards before and they were awards from liberal organizations, and people say to me, "You were a liberal?" Yes, I was a liberal, a black kid growing up in Brooklyn, New York. What else would I be, Irish? No harm with the Irish there. Relax.

But I began to ask some very hard questions that I would pose to this audience right now. I challenge any member within the confines of this organization, within the confines of this auditorium this morning to name one major American city that has prospered socially, economically, academically under black liberal political rule? You cannot answer that question.

It is not, ladies and gentlemen, just a black problem, it is an American tragedy. Those are the questions that must be asked by the beneficiaries of the American dream. I am fighting on the front where the concept of bionics is challenged, as it must be challenged, where the concept of incompetence being an equal as qualifying must be challenged.

During my liberal days, I received many awards, but they were liberal awards, and to that end I was never sure if I was entitled to that award. This award that I received today goes with another very coveted award that I have received. It is the other bookend that will parallel in the award from the National Rifle Association for defending the concepts of the Second Amendment.

This says I have defended the concept of the First Amendment and I am honored to be among the men and women who have defended both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. God bless you. From my heart, I say this as one American to many others, God bless you, stay strong and never forget the challenge when they bitch and moan about the republic. Ask, demand, insist to know what will you give me in place of the American dream. I salute you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Mr. Hamblin, thank you very much. Along with your award goes an honorarium of \$5,000. We appreciate everything that you have done.

MR. HAMBLIN: Thank you all again. God bless you.

INTRODUCTION OF MAJOR GENERAL JOHN P. HERRLING, USA (RET.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrades, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which proudly includes one million World War II veterans among its membership, unanimously approved a resolution at our National Convention in 1994 strongly supporting the establishment of a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Support for the Memorial was reaffirmed at our 98th National Convention last August. On July 9th, I was proud to appear before the National Capital Planning Commission in Washington and voice our support, and urge that construction begin quickly.

The American Battle Monuments Commission, which was authorized by Congress in 1993 to establish a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., has maintained strict compliance with the applicable laws to see that this Memorial is appropriately located, designed and constructed.

We, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, are fully committed to fulfilling our mandated pledge to support this Memorial. To reaffirm our commitment to this Memorial, our National Council of Administration approved a fund-raising campaign to take place over the next four years. This campaign is aimed at raising some \$7.5 million toward the construction of the World War II Memorial.

This morning, I am pleased to introduce a fellow VFW member and good friend of the VFW, the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to Retired Army Major General John Herrling. (Applause)

REMARKS - MAJOR GENERAL JOHN P. HERRLING, USA (RET.)

GENERAL HERRLING: Commander-in-Chief John Moon, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It is a pleasure to be with you in San Antonio to celebrate your 99th Convention, the entry of the VFW 100 years of service to the country and its veterans. I think the American people would find it truly remarkable to know that all the VFW has accomplished in the last 99 years.

You have certainly made a lasting and positive impact on the country and the lives of many, many people, particularly veterans and their families. Last night, General McCaffrey used the words "dynamic force" to describe what he felt the VFW had done with this country. I think that was appropriately stated.

You are to be commended for your service. May the next 99 years bring even greater success to this wonderful organization. My purpose today is to give you a brief update on the World War II Memorial Campaign and the progress that we have made since I spoke at the mid-winter convention earlier this year.

Before I begin, let me express a few well-deserved thank yous. First, to your organization for their enormous support for the World War II Memorial in establishing a goal of raising \$7.5 million. Your commitment is still the single largest of any organization to date, including some very substantial gifts from corporate America.

Senator Bob Dole, and all of us on the World War II Memorial staff, you have our sincere thanks and gratitude. Secondly, I want to publicly acknowledge and thank your National Commander-in-Chief John Moon, first, for his strong personal support over the past year on behalf of the World War II Memorial; secondly, for his address to the National Capital Planning Commission this past July in Washington in support of the

Memorial.

His words to that commission were convincing and inspirational and went a long way towards gaining the commission's approval for the World War II Memorial design concept, which it did approve that same day.

Last, but certainly not least, our thanks for the combined gift of \$20,000 from the John Moon Homecoming Committee and the Department of Ohio. I understand that this gift will be matched by \$10,000 from the VFW Trust, for a total contribution of \$30,000 for the World War II Memorial. That is a great gift in the VFW campaign. Thank you, John, and thanks to the Department of Ohio.

Last March, I was pleased to report that the campaign had raised nearly \$18 million. As of today, I can report that that figure has grown by \$10 million, to over \$28 million. This does not include the VFW's \$7.5 million goal. A list of contributors grows daily and is now over 175,000.

Following this summer's approval of the design concept, the design of the Memorial is moving forward to address specific architectural and landscaping elements. The design team is focusing on the Memorial's content, its sculpture, Memorial art, and inscriptive words that will be an integral part of the Memorial.

The next time I have an opportunity to talk to you I hope to have the pictures, some pictures of the Memorial design and some of the specific design elements. This is all good news. But we still have a long way to go before we can break ground.

By law, we must have all the funds necessary to build and maintain the Memorial before we can turn the first shovel of dirt. With that in mind, we have targeted ground breaking for Veterans Day in the year 2000. That's a fast-track fund-raising program, but being optimistic in our ability to raise the money and America's willingness to support the World War II Memorial, I think it is a reality.

The campaign is to build a National Memorial, and we very much need the support on the national level. Each of you can play a role in that effort by help publicizing the World War II Memorial. You can do this in your communities, with your friends, with your neighbors, in your local newspapers and with your congressional representatives.

The only way we can raise the remaining funds is to get the word out and get the American people behind this national project. I am sure many of you have seen Steven Spielberg's new film "Saving Private Ryan." It is an agonizing and startling portrayal of what many World War II veterans and many of you in this room have experienced firsthand.

Hollywood may have recreated it with genius, but D-Day, June 6, 1944, was no Hollywood, it was the real thing. The real thing wasn't just in Normandy, it was all across Europe, all across the Pacific and encompassed vast areas of the globe. It took place on land, in the air and on and under the sea.

Over and over again, for nearly three years, there was death and

destruction on a scale never before seen. When it was over, 75 million people had died and large areas of the world lay in destruction. In the end, America and her allies had prevailed and the course of human history was forever changed.

The World War II Memorial will preserve the memory of that extraordinary generation of Americans who fought and won that war on the battlefield and here at home. This was a generation who literally saved the world, preserved the freedom and prosperity that we enjoy today and the prosperity our children and grandchildren will enjoy tomorrow.

The Memorial will be a reminder that future generations of America's determination to fight for what was right, America's sacrifice and courage during those dark days, and a reminder of what America can accomplish when it is united and bonded in a common and just cause.

The World War II Memorial will represent America at its best in the 20th Century. With your help, we will build this Memorial before the generation it honors passes into history. Thank you for your time this morning, but more importantly, thank you for your service to your country, to our country, for all you have done in the past 99 years and for all that you will do in the future, not only for our veterans but for our communities, our children and this home we call America. Thank you very much and God bless you all.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Again, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I assure you, remain committed to making sure that this Memorial is done in a timely manner. We will do everything we can to assist you in your efforts. Thank you again, General.

The first committee to report this morning will be the Finance and Internal Organization. Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, is the Chairman. Thomas Dougherty, the Past Commander of Pennsylvania, is the Vice-Chairman.

Comrade Nier.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Good morning, comrades. I want to first thank the Commander-in-Chief for assigning me to this most important committee. As he just noted, the Vice-Chairman on this committee is Tom Dougherty from Pennsylvania. Where are you, Tom? I can't see you. Anyway, he is the Vice-Chairman.

The Committee on Finance and Internal Organization met Sunday afternoon and acted on the 23 resolutions before it. I wish to commend the appointed committee members for their input and the quick deliberations that we had on these resolutions.

In accordance with the rules of the convention, I will at this time read the number and title of those resolutions that the committee has recommended be adopted, or adopted as amended. They are the

following:

Resolution No. 203, National Convention Site Selection.

Resolution No. 217, Official March For The Veterans Of Foreign Wars.

Resolution No. 223, Emphasize Changes to Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure And Ritual.

Now, I recognize that No. 223 is not in your book. Let me read that, if I may. That is a very short resolution.

"WHEREAS, the National Headquarters publications 'Congressional Charter and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure,' in general, is modified and produced annually and incorporated modifications are directive in nature to National, Department, Districts, County Councils and Posts, as well as all officers of same: with consideration to the thousands of officers accountable for various information within the publication; and

"BE IT RESOLVED, requested through channels, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters italicize any new or revised text in the Congressional Charter By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that Resolutions 203, 217 and 223 be adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You have heard the motion. Is there a second?

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): As Vice-Chairman of the committee, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It has been moved and seconded. Is there any request to have any of those set aside?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Glen Gardner, Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I would just like to ask a question of the chair regarding Resolution 223.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: All right.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): When the Chairman explained that he did not say that you were going to italicize the deleted items. Did you take that out of there, Comrade Chairman?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrade Gardner, the last "Be It Resolved" that I was handed by the staff is exactly what I read.

"BE IT RESOLVED, requested through channels that the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters italicize any new or revised Congressional Charter By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual." That did change the previous "Be It Resolved", Glen.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Thank you, Comrade Nier.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 - Florida): Commander-in-Chief, I am Benny Bachand, Post 4287, Orlando, Florida. I would like No. 203 set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: No. 203 has been set aside. Is

there any other request to have any set aside? I am looking at Microphone 1, to Microphone 2, to Microphone 3. Seeing none, we will call for the question on the motion. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". Those resolutions previously read are passed.

No. 203 was set aside. We will have discussion on 203.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 - Florida): I rise this morning to give information to the delegates regarding the site selection process that was used in determination of Milwaukee as a site for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002. Comrades and delegates to the convention, Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier appointed a National Convention Task Force that consisted of not only national staff but of members of the National Council of Administration.

That Task Force met over a two-year period and made a report to the National Council of Administration last October that we consider a three-year package to effectively try to minimize the future cost to our delegates for this National Convention.

The National Council of Administration in October approved the Task Force's report and instructed the Time and Place Committee to then select bids on a three-year basis. We had six cities that came in based on this three-year commitment, or two years and then the option for the third year.

All room rates were then negotiated based on this three-year process. We went to the National Council meeting in Washington. It was then decided by the Time and Place Committee to actually recommend the City of Miami as the site for the National Convention.

That recommendation was made to the National Council of Administration in Washington. The National Council of Administration deliberated on all of the six sites. In fact, there was a series of roll-call votes on all of the locations, and the City of Milwaukee was then given the three-year option.

I want to tell you that as the individual held responsible for carrying out the mandate of the National Council of Administration that we have been in the process of negotiations with the City of Milwaukee. We do have hotel rates that have been negotiated based on this three-year basis.

I caution this delegation to be careful in your deliberations of this resolution, because if this resolution is passed, then there is a very good likelihood that the entire package could be jeopardized and we could be in serious financial trouble because of commitments, contractual commitments that already have been made. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any other discussion on No. 203?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BILL RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): Comrade

Commander-in-Chief, I find, in my opinion, this resolution somewhat out of order. But I would like to move an amendment, sir, if I might, and that the resolution be amended in the first line of the "Resolved" portion after "United States", insert the word "recommend".

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You have the first, "Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the scheduled site for the National Convention in the year 2002, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, not be contracted for, and the selection site committee propose other locations for our national convention in the year 2002 to the National Council of Administration for their consideration."

Right after the comma, in the first line of the "Be It Resolved," you ask that "recommend" be inserted?

COMRADE BILL RADIGAN (Post 3061 - South Dakota): That is correct. I believe it will be less offensive to the Council of Administration that did its job, recommend rather than positive.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a second to the amendment?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE LORNE RUZICKA (Post 3312 - South Dakota): Lorne Ruzicka, Department Commander of South Dakota, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There is a motion and a second. I will call for discussion on the amendment. Hearing none, we will call for a vote on the amendment. All those in favor of the amendment will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The "nays" have it. The amendment is rejected.

We will go back to Resolution No. 203. That is to make the convention site selection. All those in favor of Resolution 203 will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by "no". Gentlemen, I believe the "nays" have it. Resolution No. 203 is defeated.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I doubt the vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Here we go again. I am going to ask all those in favor of Resolution No. 203 to please rise. All in favor of Resolution No. 203, please rise. Please sit down. All those opposed to Resolution 203, please rise. The chair is no longer in doubt. Resolution No. 203 fails.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrades, I will now read the number and title of those resolutions that the committee has recommended for rejection.

Resolution No. 201, Provide Administrative Space Rent Free In VFW Washington Office For The VFW Political Action Committee.

Resolution No. 202, Severance Package For Outgoing Adjutant General.

Resolution No. 204, Annual Salaries Of National Officers And Employees.

Resolution No. 205, National To Absorb Membership Program Costs.

Resolution No. 206, Continued Payment For Deceased Life Members.

Resolution No. 207, Recognition Of The Military Order Of The Cootie.

Resolution No. 208, Setting Post Membership Goals.

Resolution No. 209, Age Limitation For Sons Of The VFW.

Resolution No. 210, Direct National Council Of Administration To Urge Ladies Auxiliary To Amend Their By-Laws So Non-U.S. Citizens May Qualify For Membership.

Resolution No. 211, Poppy Coin Collectors.

Resolution No. 212, Repaying Bonus Benefits.

Resolution No. 213, Membership.

Resolution No. 214, Military Coalition.

Resolution No. 215, Reinstate National VFW Americanism Record Book Program.

Resolution No. 216, Endorse The National Purple Heart Hall Of Honor.

Resolution No. 218, Limit Sites For Commander-in-Chief Membership Trip.

Resolution No. 219, Severance Package For Outgoing Adjutant General.

Resolution No. 220, Severance Package For Outgoing Adjutant General.

Resolution No. 221, Severance Package For Outgoing Adjutant General.

Resolution No. 222, Deny VFW Membership To World War II Era Merchant Marines.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, those are the resolutions that this committee recommends be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tom Dougherty, VFW Post 3474, Vice-Chairman of the committee. I would like to have No. 222 set aside. I don't know whether a motion is in order right now before I speak, but I would like to move for adoption of this particular resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Which one?

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): No. 222, Deny VFW Membership To World War II Era Merchant Marines.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: What you are asking is that No. 222 be set aside?

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You have asked for 222 to be set aside. Are there any others to be set aside? Okay.

At this time we will go to Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Yes, Commander-in-Chief. What I would like to do is give a little background of this first and then —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You will need to make a motion, please.

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Yes, I make the motion to adopt Resolution 222.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a second?
Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CARL AIELLO (Post 1645 - Massachusetts): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There is a motion and a second to adopt Resolution 222. We will now go into discussion.
Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I don't know whether everyone was really clear on this or not when it was rejected. First of all, I would like to remind all these delegates that are present that yesterday we rejected a resolution for the National Defense Service Ribbon.

The thing you have to consider here is that these people served in the uniform of the various services of their country. They were a member of the armed forces. These people that we have, that we want to take into this organization, the Merchant Marines, they were totally separate.

We have to remember that at the 1987 National Convention they were denied because this motion, Resolution No. 725, was approved in that particular convention. It says, "Whereas, the term veteran is presently defined by Section 101 of Title 38, U.S. Code, which reads the term veteran means a person who served in the military, naval or air service, who has been discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable."

This goes on and goes on. This was approved. They were denied at that time in 1987. The other thing I would like to bring to your attention is the American Merchant Marine veterans newsletter that was sent to a sister organization and was signed by the Assistant Deputy Administrator for Training.

In that letter, he said in essence that, you know, in your communities if you have honor rolls and strictly for the services, et cetera, et cetera, they are not entitled. Even at that time, they knew that the Merchant Marines were not entitled to be one of the organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars. So there is a lot there.

The one thing they were approved for in 1988 was for benefits in the VA medical system. So there is a clear difference. They weren't given veterans status other than for care in the facilities. So that is the reason I am asking for approval of this resolution and that they be denied entrance into the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a very unique and a very proud

organization. Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE STAN LOWE (Post 9439 - Wyoming): I have the honor, sir, of being Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the great state of Wyoming. I am very proud that Wyoming is the home state of Admiral Emery S. Lang, who commanded the United States Merchant Marines during World War II.

He built the ships, he enlisted Americans, he trained them, he put them through their boot camp. He put them through their armed training with guns, war survival and all the other elements of warfare. He put them on the ships he built and then turned over the control of the ships to the military and naval authorities in order to deliver the goods that had to be delivered all over the world to the far reaches of the world if we were to win World War II.

Unfortunately, I am sorry, but Admiral Lang was so occupied with the fulfillment of his duties and responsibilities that he did not have a good public relations service and, consequently, the story of the Merchant Marines and the service performed by the Merchant Marines has not been told.

As the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee in my state, who must determine who is a veteran and who is not a veteran in order to receive the benefits of our office, I have had to make this study. More importantly, I have made it because of my great admiration for our great Wyoming citizen, Admiral Lang.

I have to tell you that in all candor that the resolution that stands before us today is shot through and through with inaccuracies. I don't fault the sponsor of the resolution for it. As I said before, the information, what the Merchant Marines did, has been withheld badly from the public.

It had to be during the war because they didn't want the word to get out that there were over 800 ships that were trying to supply our troops and sailors across the world being sunk by Hitler. Hitler knew his only way, his only chance to defeat the allies, was to cut off the supply runs.

We were not about to give him aid and comfort by putting out that information. My friend, Captain Arthur Moore, who wrote the most comprehensive and complete book on the role of the Merchant Marine in World War II, had to go to the government, of course, in order to get the information about all these eight hundred plus ships that were sunk.

That is 85 percent of all of the American flying ships during World War II. He had to do this. He went to the government in order to get this information. The government still some 14 years ago was maintaining at this time the secrecy they did in World War II.

He had to resort to legal means in order to get this information freed up. This is incredible. So, I apologize in my capacity as best I can on behalf of Admiral Lang that this information has not been available to you.

Let me go through quickly the legal effects. I am a lawyer. I have

headed up the largest corporate law department in my state for the past quarter century. I have worked regularly with the federal statutes, the federal regulations, with federal court decisions, and let me tell you what my analysis is.

First of all, in 1936, Congress enacted the Merchant Marine Act. In doing so, they not only created a Maritime Commission, which during World War II was merged into the War Shipping Administration. But they also created the United States Merchant Marine Academy, one of five academies in our educational system for our service people.

They also at that time declared that the Merchant Marines, in times of war and national emergency, shall be considered to be an auxiliary of the military and naval forces. An auxiliary of the naval forces, that means that the Merchant Marine in times of war change its status from peacetime to wartime status.

That accounts for the change in training that was done for the people in the Merchant Marines in order to carry out their functions. During the war, of course, the Merchant Marines was not one of the recognized services, one of the armed forces, and so what happened was that in 1977 Congress passed the G.I. Bill Improvement Act.

Now, we all know about the G.I. Bill. This is one of the many bills that was passed through the years in order to improve the G.I. Bill. Under this bill, provision was made for the establishment of a means of ascertaining who had served an active military service during the war in order to be qualified for the equivalent of law enforcement service.

This amendment was sponsored by Senator Barry Goldwater. The bill was enacted, and pursuant to that law a Board of Review was created. Now, the Board of Review didn't right away accept the Merchant Marines. In fact, the Merchant Marines had to go to court and prove the points that they had about their service in order to qualify to become recognized as active military service people.

So, consequently, when they did it, and the court ruled in their favor, and, by the way, in doing so, the court ruled on many of the issues that are raised in this resolution. So the court's ruling then resulted in the Board reconvening, looking at the facts more accurately and truthfully and, consequently, they granted veterans status to the Merchant Marines.

Now, the veterans status is something that is recognized by the other agencies of the government. For example, here is a letter from the United States Coast Guard. It is a letter to one of the Merchant Marine veterans that says, "Enclosed are documents that establish your status as a veteran."

Here is another letter from the Maritime Administration. "We in the Department of Transportation of the Maritime Administration strongly support the efforts to provide veterans status for World War II."

Here is another letter —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 3, your time has expired. Your time has expired, Microphone No. 3. I look to the

various microphones. I look to Microphone No. 1, to Microphone No. 2 and Microphone No. 3. I ask the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms to write those comrades' names down that are standing there.

We are going to suspend this discussion for the present time. We have one announcement to make and then we have another guest. This evening there will be a food drive at the Patriotic Rally. It is going to feed San Antonio's hungry people.

We ask those in attendance to please bring some type of dry staples and canned foods to the rally. If you are unable to do that, a cash donation will be accepted. This is done to accord those in and around the San Antonio area the opportunity to get some good meals. The doors will open at 4:30 this afternoon.

INTRODUCTION OF LIEUTENANT CLAUDE KICKLIGHTER, USA (RET.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrades, in two years we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. In an effort to recognize our Korean War veterans, their families and to provide the American public with a clear understanding and appreciation of the lessons and history of the Korean War, we are fortunate to have with us Lieutenant General Claude M. Kicklighter, the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for International Security Affairs and formerly the Executive Director of the Department of Defense's 50th Anniversary of World War II Commemorative Committee. General Kicklighter and the Committee did a marvelous job.

With preparations underway, it is fitting that we prepare to honor and recognize those who set the stage for America's determination at the start of the Cold War and whose service and sacrifices eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

I am confident that under General Kicklighter's leadership, and with the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this commemoration of the Korean War and its veterans will be a memorable one.

Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for a good friend of the VFW and a valued Life Member, Retired Army Lieutenant General Claude M. Kicklighter.

REMARKS - LIEUTENANT GENERAL CLAUDE M. KICKLIGHTER

LIEUTENANT GENERAL KICKLIGHTER: Commander-in-Chief Moon, President of the Ladies Auxiliary Connie Atkinson, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart, and former Commanders-in-Chief, National Officers, Fellow Veterans, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in our 99th Annual Convention. This morning I would like to briefly provide you an overview

of the planning for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. Congress has asked the Department of Defense, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to help our nation organize and prepare for this effort.

But before I begin, I would like to express appreciation for all the Veterans of Foreign Wars did to assist the grateful nation in thanking and honoring our World War II veterans and their families as we commemorated the 50th anniversary of World War II.

No organization worked harder or contributed more than the VFW. You recruited over 1,000 commemorative communities to assist us in honoring veterans in hometown America. You provided some superb educational materials for our schools, and you produced some great publications that are still in use throughout our nation.

Your Past National Commanders-in-Chief, during this period, played a major role as I know the future Commanders-in-Chief will play a role in Korea. Bob Wallace, Jack Carney, George Cramer, Gunner Kent, Paul Spera, all were very much involved.

Our National Headquarters helped plan and oversee the national effort. As this organization knows, the World War II generation was asked to fight the most destructive war in history, a war that we were not prepared for, but we had to buy time to get ready for that war and we bought that time with the lives of young Americans.

Our World War II veterans fought and won that war and literally saved the world. When that war ended, our veterans came home, they took off their uniform. They said very little about what they had done, they rolled up their sleeves and they built this strong and free America.

At the end of World War II, we were the most powerful armed forces that the world had ever known. In five short years, on June 25, 1950, when a 200,000 manned Korean Army invaded South Korea with a surprise attack, we had almost dismantled the U.S. defense establishment.

Again, we were not prepared to fight. Once again, we bought the time to get ready and bought that time again with the lives of young Americans. Many of you in this auditorium this morning bear the wounds of that unpreparedness and we should never be unprepared again. The lessons of World War II and the Korea War are clear. If we want peace, freedom and prosperity, we must remain strong, prepared and engaged.

By the Korea War's end, three years one month and two days after it began, the United Nations forces from 22 countries led by the United States had fought to a standstill. The Soviet Union directed the North Korean-Chinese force which was three times the size of the United Nations forces.

This victory in Korea stemmed Congress aggression in Asia and saved South Korea. This was a major turning point in world history and the beginning of the end of Communism. This was the first time that war had been fought under the United Nations flag. And had the United States and the United Nations not stepped in so in 1950, and in spite of the heroic

efforts by the South Korean efforts, that nation would have fallen within a few weeks.

If South Korea would have fallen, this would have had extreme consequences around the world. The outcome of the Cold War and the world we live in today would have been greatly altered. By the time the Armistice was signed and the guns fell silent on July 27, 1953, the casualty toll of the United Nations forces allege more than 140,000 killed and 295,000 wounded.

United Nations prisoners of war suffered terribly. In addition to those who died from exposure and starvation, almost 12,000 were murdered by their captors. The millions of refugees, hundreds of thousands were killed or became casualties.

Many are still unaccounted for. The death and destruction of that war was horrendous. Once again, American soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen were fighting a desperate war far from home in some of the worst weather and terrain imaginable.

The U.S. service, many of them veterans from World War II, paid a severe price. In three years with that war, more than 35,000 U.S. soldiers were killed and more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers were wounded, and several thousands were missing in action. These are the official casualty figures.

But as all of you know, no one who serves in war is left unaffected. The freedom of South Korea came at a high price. Just ask the veterans who fought there and their families who waited at home, especially the families that lost loved ones: the Gold Star mothers and fathers, the Gold Star wives and the Gold Star children.

This group, like you, knows that freedom comes at a high price. Although the Korean War was a combined effort, it could not have been fought for very long without American service members. American men and women left a proud legacy in Pusan, Inchon, the Chosen Reservoir, Bloody Ridge, Pork Chop Hill and hundreds of other battlefields on that rugged peninsula, places that will forever live in the minds and hearts of those who served there.

That war had not ended. For almost a half century, since the 1953 Armistice was signed, American and South Korean forces have been standing vigilant guard along a very heavily fortified and very dangerous militarized zone near the 38th Parallel.

The passage of time has revealed much about the lasting legacy of those who fought in Korea. You will recall that many questioned our involvement in a war so far from home. How wrong they were. The results of that war speak for themselves. Today, South Korea is a strong, growing democracy of almost 50 million hard-working, productive people who in just two short generations have created an astonishing prosperity on the ashes of the Korean War.

Compare that with North Korea, where for half a century the heavily armed police state ruled by a tyrannical dictator, and tried to

bankrupt Communism, is currently experiencing malnutrition and famine, and yet on the verge of collapse they still remain a very dangerous country with one of the largest military forces in the world today; and the recent missile firing over Japan illustrates how dangerous this nation is.

What a contrast. The miracle of the South Korean people was brought about as a result of the courage, the valor, the selfless service and sacrifice of the United States, the South Korean and United Nations. Without them, South Korea would have been subjugated under Communism and the history of Asia and the rest of the world would have been changed for the worst.

The light of freedom that burns so brightly in South Korea and many other nations today would have been extinguished. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the number of nations that enjoy freedom in the world today would have been greatly altered if we had not fought and won that war.

The legacy of the Korea War veterans is a strong and free South Korea. The war was a major victory in ending the Cold War and making a much safer world for our children and our grandchildren to live in. Will the Korean veterans please stand and let us thank you and give you a round of applause. (Applause)

In closing, let me briefly outline the planning for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. This is a very important mission that our nation is embarking on and we need all of us, especially the VFW, to help pull this off.

Our goal together is to ensure that every Korean veteran and their families know that our nation, a grateful nation, remembers their service 50 years ago. The Korean War veterans have never been properly thanked and honored, and this may be the last time to right that wrong.

Together we must find our veterans in communities, Veterans Hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, wherever they are all across this nation, and ensure they know what they accomplished and remember. We must also ensure America knows that these veterans saved a great nation and the people from enslavement, and stopped Communism dead in its tracks.

The world is a much safer place as a result of their service and sacrifice. We must make a special effort to remember the prisoners of war and the missing in action. Over 8,000 U.S. were captured. More than 3,000 died in captivity. Many were executed. Many more were captured and 8,100 are still missing in action.

We will make a special effort also to remember the service of women and minorities in that war, and this was the first time that we had fought as an integrated force. The most important part of our program will be organizing our efforts in hometown America.

As we did the 50th anniversary of World War II, we are requesting communities, civic and veterans organizations all across this great nation to become part of the effort. There were more than 7,800 commemorative

communities when we ended the 50th anniversary of World War II.

We need you and the VFW Posts to recruit your communities. Get them involved and help us support the local schools by providing educational materials, posters, lesson plans, teachers' guides and CD roms on the Korean War. Our role together will be to unite our nation in supporting this important mission.

We will remember all the services, the Army, the Marines, the Navy, the Air Force, the Coast Guard, all the components, active Guard and reserve. The commemorations will begin on July 25, 2000, with the 50th anniversary of the attack on South Korea, and will end on July 27, 2003, on the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice.

Throughout the period, we will commemorate key events of the war. They will be commemorated in Korea and all across this great nation. We are asking organizers of annual events, such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day, during this period to ensure that the Korean War veterans are the centerpiece of those programs.

We already have had many cities and states request that they be selected as sponsors for some of the major commemorative events in our nation. The Commander of the U.S. forces in Korea has already organized a task force and they are planning events in Korea.

They are also organized to assist the veterans as you go back to Korea to visit some of the battle sites where you fought. We briefed the VFW National Commander this last November and will continue to provide annual updates to the VFW senior leadership.

We are counting on the VFW to help organize and oversee this effort. Our partnership with the VFW and Department of Veterans Affairs, I will tell you our counterparts in the Veterans Affairs is Jack Carney and Gunner Kent. We are all working together with other veterans service organizations. We will recruit community organizations all across America, so we can honor veterans where they live in hometown America.

Now is the time to get started. Our commemorative communities will be issued a flag as shown on the screen, I hope. I can't see the screen. Is the flag up there? Good. If you will look at that flag, you will see running through the center of it is a streamer, blue and white. This is the battle streamer for the Korean War.

You will see 22 stars around the tagua. Those are 22 nations that have fought as allies in that. You will see at the bottom of that flag the words that our veterans asked to be put on there, and that is "Freedom Is Not Free." Also that flag is in both English and Hangul.

South Korea has adopted that flag as their official flag. Each commemorative community will also be issued a certificate signed by the Secretary of Defense and will be provided with materials which will support commemorations in hometown America.

Together we will produce educational materials to provide to the schools, and we will ask the VFW to help us do that. The World War II veterans, as you recall, were issued an honorable service lapel pin at the

end of World War II which they affectionately call the "ruptured duck".

The Korean War veterans were never issued a Korean War service lapel pin, but working with the Veterans Administration we will plan to issue the lapel pin that I hope you see up on the screen. Those pins will be made available to all the veterans who served in Korea during this commemorative period.

It has been said that any nation that forgets its veterans ceases to be a great nation. America and the VFW will ensure that this nation never forgets veterans. Thank you for the support that you provide every day to our men and women in uniform, to our veterans and all that you do to make this nation so great. God bless America. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. Again, I assure you that every veteran, old or young, who belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars will do his utmost to carry out the concerns and deeds of those serving in the Korean War.

INTRODUCTION OF PATRICK J. MULVEY, CEO, THE MILITARY CHANNEL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The success of the VFW's Operation Uplink rests in the support given by individuals and corporations. To date, we have given out tens of thousands of these phone cards, and let me assure you, the response from those receiving them has been outstanding.

Imagine yourself in Bosnia and someone walks up and hands you a free pre-paid phone card, or you are a veteran in a VA Hospital and someone walks in and says, "Here, call home and let the family know how you are doing."

That's what Operation Uplink is all about, people reaching out to friends and loved ones, and the VFW helps them to do it, and we in turn are assisted by many corporations like the one I am now going to present this plaque to.

The Military Channel went on the air on July 4, 1998, broadcasting to North and South America, Europe and the Far East. As the name implies, they will be carrying programs about the military and the history of military operations, many of which you will recognize because you were in them.

As veterans, we wish The Military Channel great success. Now, to accept the plaque expressing our appreciation for what they have done for Operation Uplink is their Chief Executive Officer, Patrick J. Mulvey.

Mr. Mulvey, it is an honor and privilege for me to present this plaque to you.

REMARKS - MR. PATRICK J. MULVEY

MR. PATRICK MULVEY: Thank you, Mr. Moon, for those kind words. Thank you, all veterans, for being here and thank you for being

there when our country needed you. Congratulations to the Veterans of Foreign Wars on your 100th anniversary.

It is a great honor to accept this award on behalf of The Military Channel. Many of our employees, including myself, are veterans, our producers, directors, our marketers. We look to veterans to bring that experience into our business so they can express and transmit that message to not only the country but to the world.

On July 4th, when I flipped the switch to start the transmission of The Military Channel, it was our expectation that our network would positively promote the spirit of the military, that spirit that each of you so embodied so well. That is why we were thrilled to celebrate, The Military Channel, by participating in the VFW Operation Uplink.

As many of you know, the recent floods in Korea took the lives of four of our servicemen, destroyed several VFW Posts and created great hardships. Assistant Adjutant Ron Browning tells me that our donation to Operation Uplink allowed 1,000 deserving soldiers to help in the rescue efforts to make a free phone call home.

I can think of no better example than Operation Uplink to show the power of communication. At The Military Channel, we want to communicate and share the military experience worldwide. We do it every day, 24 hours, military programs on heroes, history and hardware.

Our Web site militarydv.com is the gateway for our network programming for military news and for information and links to our military fraternal organizations, just like you, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. To a great extent, The Military Channel is a celebration of your service and sacrifice and of the service and sacrifice of the many people just like you who could not be here today.

In every society, there are men and women who know all too well the privilege of freedom must be purchased by the designation of the few. In America, you are that few. The Military Channel is about you. It is also about the millions of Americans who follow in your footsteps, the men and women of America's current active duty and reserve military who share your dedications and your values.

Let me share some of that with you right now. The military family for your legacy has sacrificed valor and victory will live on. I hope you come to think of The Military Channel as your own. If you like what you saw, please call your local cable operator, your satellite provider, and let them know you want The Military Channel.

Help us get your message out to the rest of the world, The Military Channel, we bring you here at home. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF SERGEANT RUSSELL RIEKE, JR.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: About two years ago in Louisville at our National Convention that Operation Uplink, the program that provides pre-paid telephone calling cards to hospitalized veterans and

active duty service personnel, was introduced.

Thanks to the generous contributions of its supporters, many of whom are sitting here today, we have been able to provide more than 100,000 cards by the end of this year. That's quite an accomplishment.

But the fact is, the number of cards, impressive as it may be, pales in comparison with the real measure of success: communication between a lonely soldier or veteran and someone back home.

We have got a special guest today to tell you about that. Some of you may have already met him, at least in a manner of speaking, at the Washington Conference this past February. He was stationed in Hungary at the time, serving in Operation Joint Guard, and we had the privilege of listening in on a conversation with his father.

Please join me in welcoming Sergeant Russell R. Rieke, Jr.

REMARKS - SERGEANT RUSSELL R. RIEKE, JR.

SERGEANT RIEKE: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Moon, and Distinguished Guests, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary for their continued support of U.S. armed forces and support of Operation Uplink.

With this continued support of Operation Uplink, we can help soldiers and sailors and our disabled veterans in our VA Hospitals to make needed phone calls to their families back home. I know this because I received an Uplink phone card while I was stationed in Hungary for nine months. I was able to talk to my family on numerous occasions.

With that in mind, I would like to introduce and thank my family for their support while I was stationed overseas. First of all, my parents, Past Commander of Illinois, Russell R. Rieke, Sr., my mother, Nancy Rieke, and last but not least, my wife, Rebecca, who is pretty tough. We had only been married for three months when I got shipped overseas. Being gone nine months, it was a nice welcome to come back home.

I would like to also say thank you to my home Post, VFW Post 5694, from Milan, Illinois, and its Ladies Auxiliary. They adopted my unit while I was stationed overseas and helped send a lot of gifts and phone cards and things of that sort to each soldier in my unit.

Also thanks to the Department of Illinois VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary and members. Once again, I would like to say please keep supporting our troops and our disabled veterans with Operation Uplink so they may call home at a time of need. Thanks once again.

INTRODUCTION - MR. MARK TITLEBAUM, IDT CORPORATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I have been very fortunate in having the opportunity to see the reaction myself a number of times this past year of the Operation Uplink program. In fact, over Independence Day weekend, I was a part of Operation Uplink's single largest distribution

to date, with more than 25,000 cards distributed to troops and veterans in the Washington, D.C., area.

Sergeant Rieke's comments remind me of the reaction I saw there. These individuals are just thrilled to be given that opportunity to call home.

Today we have with us a representative from the IDT Corporation in Hackensack, New Jersey, one of the organizations that helped make the July 4th event possible.

We are proud to have with us representing IDT, Mr. Mark Titlebaum, Senior Corporate Sales Director. The efforts of the VFW and the IDT team have provided over 250,000 minutes of free phone time to hospitalized veterans and active duty military personnel through Operation Uplink, including the effort mentioned earlier.

In spite of this significant gesture, IDT has taken a secondary role allowing the VFW to advance the cause of veterans and those that still serve.

Please welcome Mr. Mark Titlebaum of IDT Corporation.

This is presented to the IDT Corporation, in recognition of their commitment and support to Operation Uplink. It is dated September 1, 1998.

Mark, it is an honor and pleasure to present this to you.

REMARKS - MR. MARK TITLEBAUM OF IDT CORPORATION

MR. TITLEBAUM: Commander-in-Chief Moon and Distinguished Guests: The President of IDT regrets that he was unable to attend your VFW Convention to accept this award. He asked me to accept this award on behalf of IDT Corporation, its Board of Directors and stockholders.

IDT has now been a part of Operation Uplink for just a few months. We are aware that over one million minutes have currently been given out to veterans and active duty personnel, with many more on the way, as Commander Moon has indicated. We are proud to be a part of Operation Uplink in helping the active duty personnel and veterans keep in touch with family and loved ones.

We believe that it is a great deed the VFW is doing in helping the quality of life, both mentally and physically, and we personally would like to thank Commander Moon and Ron Browning and his crew for allowing us to be a part of this. Thank you and have a good day.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION (CONT'D.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time I would ask those that were at Microphones 2 and 3 to please return to the microphones so we can continue with deliberations. For those of you who want to remove your jacket for a little while before our next speaker arrives, you may.

At this time we will go to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, my name is Glen M. Gardner, Jr. I am a delegate from VFW Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I stand before the delegates at this 99th Annual Convention in support of Resolution No. 222.

My support of Resolution No. 222 is not to be interpreted as opposition to the Merchant Marines. I stand in support of this resolution because I believe there are many, many other veterans who served in the armed forces of the United States at the present time who are not eligible for membership in our great organization and who have served in harm's way during this service in the armed forces.

I believe before we expand our eligibility outside the ranks of the armed forces of the United States that we should have open and honest debate about those who have been members. I would like to place in the record as testimony in favor of this resolution the following letter to the editor of The Galveston Daily News, which was printed in November, 1987.

It is headed, "Merchant Seamen are not Veterans.

"This is in reference to the comments of Dr. Donald Willis, your guest columnist of November 12, 1987. I would like to comment on his question why will the federal government not grant veteran's status to American Merchant Seamen of World War II.

"I went to sea out of Galveston at the age of 16 and sailed the world for six years. So, I know whereof I speak. The Merchant Seaman is a civilian and not military in any sense. I carried with me the conservatism of my father and on his advice tried to avoid the steamship companies or union contracts. Being unable to do so, I found myself on a union ship.

"I saw little or no patriotism in the cruise. They were too busy demanding fresh strawberries, steak and ice cream while the GI was eating sea rations. My starting salary was \$87.50 as opposed to the GI at \$21. When my ship entered a war zone, my salary immediately doubled. They called it a 100-percent bonus.

"If we were in port and there was an attack by the enemy, we received a \$300 port attack bonus. I recall that in 1943, my ship was running between Algiers and Naples with Army cargo. We made a total of 18 trips, and each time we were in Naples harbor the bombers came over and made us \$300 richer.

"We did finally lose the ship, and I got a free ride home and was more than compensated for my personal property. When a Merchant ship came back to the U.S. port, the crew was free to sign off and go home. As I progressed from the crew to officer status, I was adequately compensated and saved a considerable amount of money.

"Mostly, the crews were what I considered second rate and were virtually all alcoholics. I was really embarrassed to talk to servicemen. We even had a U.S. naval crew aboard to do our shooting for us. I hesitate to mention the hazardous cargo bonus I received for hauling green beef hides from Argentina that smelled bad. That is the Merchant Seamen, Dr. Willis."

I think the words of this Merchant Seaman who served in 1942, speaks aptly for why we should support the adoption of this resolution. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE SEARLE (Post 2314 - New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am a member of Post 2314 from Carteret, New Jersey, and a Korean War veteran. That was about the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard in my life.

I served six years in the Merchant Marines. On my first day, I went down to join the Navy. Of course, I couldn't get in because I was color blind. But the Army didn't seem to mind. What I want to do today, if I accomplish anything today, you know, you have heard me for three or four years now.

When this man says we are not veteran status, it sounds like you are half crazy. He said we got only benefits. Well, the Korean Merchant Marine got benefits and he was not a veteran of the armed forces of the United States. That is what I am, a Merchant Marine.

There is a certain group of us that were on ships in combat. One out of 32 of us died. Seven thousand men died. We have 4,000 men on the bottom of the sea, and I want these men here, my comrades and brothers, to say to themselves do we meet that criteria of being Veterans of Foreign Wars?

I am not talking about any other dates after the war, before the war or not in the zone. Every one of us was in combat. Gentlemen, this is crazy right here. Here is my discharge. Any one of you can see this. I was honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States.

I will admit to you that we are not part of an armed force. That is true, and we will never be part of an armed force. That is why the put us in the Coast Guard. That is why they put us in the Army and discharged us as a part of the armed forces.

I have two bundles of proof here. Take a nickel or dime and call the Veterans Administration. We have support from the Pearl Harbor survivors. We have support from the Silver Star veterans. We have the resolutions from the AmVets, the American Legion. Why is it we will not take five minutes to call our government, the VA, and say are they veterans, instead of spreading these ridiculous rumors that go on and on and on?

Gentlemen, if you want to honor somebody, honor those men that died that are your brothers that are Veterans of Foreign Wars. There is no doubt. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE LYLE KELL (Post 1561 - Washington): I rise in opposition to this proposition. I joined the Navy on June 10, 1943. They said, "Where do you want to serve?" I said, since my brother was in the United States Navy Armed Guard, I said, "I am the younger brother and I said I think that I would like to go in the Armed Guard."

I didn't realize I had signed on to a suicide squad. That is exactly the term that was used by the U.S. Navy Armed Guard. Now, then, the people who have no idea about what the Armed Guard suffered and what the Merchant Marine suffered during World War II have got their eyes closed.

The whole East Coast of the United States is a ship, is a graveyard of ships, a rifle shot away from our beacons. They wouldn't even turn off the lights there on the East Coast allowing those U-boats from Germany to shoot the ships down, and they did it by the hundreds.

You go down to the Dutch West Indies, the oil is seeping still out of the ground where they sunk the ships around there. There is a video out now called "The Winter Winds of Hell." If you want to see a video, you ought to see that. Someone mentioned Chosin Reservoir. Take a look at that video if you want to see Chosin Reservoir.

You will see convoys, as many as 30 in a convoy, five getting through to Merrimac, with ice hanging all over the ships, men standing out there freezing to death in the watch, or ships torpedoed, lasting as long as a minute in the water. I don't know where we are coming from.

We have to know who saved this world, and we have got to know it was the Merchant fleets of our nation and other nations that really brought the materials to those who had the need for them in World War II, the food, the material to fight with, the troops and all that. They did it on and on and on.

I had about 150,000 miles out there. I have every medal. That is the American medal, the Asiatic, Pacific, the European medal, and I was in the Persian Gulf before these kids ever thought of the Persian Gulf. We were almost sunk in the Persian Gulf.

Those were Merchant Marines on those ships with us, but we guarded the Merchant Marine. The Merchant Marines were my friends. They were a good group of men. Drunks, hey, some of them were, that's true, but so were some of the Armed Guard. I was one of them. I know what I was talking about.

I am your National Chaplain or was in '95 and '96. I am going to tell you if we want to help veterans, as it says right up there, "We'd do anything for this country." If you want to do something for this country, do something for these veterans who saved this country.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467 - New Jersey): Had I stood at this microphone ten years ago, I suspect that I would have joined with those who were opposed to accepting members of the United States Merchant Marines for probably all the reasons that I have heard from previous speakers who are in favor of denying the membership.

However, today I learned a great deal since that time about our organization and about those who have served in the Merchant Marines. It is my understanding that this resolution was submitted, and I have read the

comments following it in the book that you published, saying that you were concerned about the fact that last year the delegation was unsure of the resolution that they had adopted and deserved, I suspect, a second chance to review that decision.

I don't think that was the case at all. I think it was very clear last year that those attending the National Convention were prepared to accept the Mariners in our midst. If I recall, on Thursday, there was even a motion to reconsider that died for lack of a second.

So there was plenty of opportunity for those delegates attending that convention to reconsider should they have wanted to do so. Something else bothers me a great deal as well. This is information that I learned probably in the past few years in contact with many of the members of the Merchant Marines who had other service and who do belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

It seems that there were, and correct me if I am not accurate, about 250,000 men that served in the United States Merchant Marines during 1941 through 1945. Those are the ones that we are considering for membership. There is only 100,000 of them left at this point.

But 7,000 Merchant Mariners, 7,000 American souls who were involved in the war effort, bringing materials to those World War veterans to sustain them on the battlefield, who died in the bottom of the ocean. When U-boats were attacking our merchant fleets, many of them unguarded, riding alone without benefit of convoy, over 800 Merchant ships sunk with the material that was necessary to sustain our effort and to save lives of the American servicemen.

Now, our founder, James Putnam, if you look back in the history of our organization, continually said let's keep this membership brief. If we are to survive, if we are to strengthen our voice when we testify before Congress, we need all the help that we possibly can get.

The Merchant Marines have proven that they are effective in testifying before Congress, because, as you know, they now receive care in VA medical facilities. Why not let them join us in support of our legislative initiatives.

My comrades, particularly those of you who served in World War II, this resolution addresses war service. I don't know what will happen today. It may come to pass that you will be denying Merchant Mariners membership in this organization. If that does occur, that is sad.

But even if it does occur, let us not forget as members of this organization as ex-servicemen, as veterans and as Americans that they gave honorable service in support of our armed forces and they made many sacrifices that should be recalled with great, great reverence.

I oppose denying them membership. I hope that the members of this organization here assembled will provide them that opportunity to strengthen our own cause. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ALEX LOMBARDI (Post 6255 - New Jersey): Comrade

Commander-in-Chief, I am opposed to this resolution. I was a member of the U.S. Navy Armed Guards. I don't know how many of you members know who the Armed Guard are. We are the ones that sailed with these Merchant seamen, and there is no one knows them better than we do.

As a longtime member of the VFW, all I have ever heard is slurs against the Merchant Marines. They were part of the military. They were under the jurisdiction of the Navy. There was over 200 of them that were court-martialed, and to be court-martialed you had to be military.

The VFW has been misled where they have been told these fellows are not veterans. How much blood do they have to give? They were in on every invasion, every invasion that took place to make sure that everyone got their supplies. They never got the money that everyone thinks they did. That is a big fallacy. If anyone wants proof, I can give it to them. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Microphone No. 2.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise against this resolution barring Merchant Marines from joining our organization. I fought at this microphone for the last 20 years against the Merchant Marines and I fought against the National Defense Service Ribbon, and I fought against extending the Korean eligibility.

But the last year, when we amended it, it approved only World War II, then I changed my mind. Believe me, we have got to stop thinking about how much money they made and whether they had strawberries or what have you. As a veteran of Korea with four battle stars, and my records show that, there were many people in the armed forces having strawberries when I was having C-rations in the Chosin Reservoir.

These Merchant Marines in World War II had the highest number of fatalities and casualties of any branch of service and in some cases all of the branches of services. If there are any of you out there that really feel that every single member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars had seen combat, had a shot fired at them, you better re-evaluate it.

It is time for me to have to face one of these guys that was shot down. The ship was shot from under them four or five times and say you are not eligible? We have accepted anybody that served in Korea for almost 4 years now. All I ask, gentlemen, please remember if you vote for this motion, then you are voting to restrict your membership from the Merchant Marines, which this convention last year approved.

So, please, join with me and vote against this resolution so that the Merchant Marines can get the honor they deserve.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TED CONNELL (Post 9192 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The question has been called

for. Is there a proponent on the floor that wishes to address this body for five minutes?

Microphone No. 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS (Post 1736 - Louisiana): Commander-in-Chief, Larry Rivers, a delegate from VFW Post 1736. If I could take these few minutes to try to put this thing in a little perspective. You know I have dealt with this issue for a number of years, as all of you, and it pains me a great deal that the debate always seems to revolve around danger and it revolves around every other issue except what has been the issue for VFW membership.

If you look at our VFW By-Laws, it says nothing in our by-laws that any veteran, I will repeat that, is eligible for VFW membership, only those that have served in the armed forces of the United States are eligible for VFW membership. To my knowledge, we have never had a member of the VFW, and I have reviewed the 100-year history, that was not a member of the armed forces of the United States.

Although having earned my eligibility as part of the ocean going services, I was in the infantry and I know during World War II many civilians that were in the service of their country fought alongside the Marines and took the Pacific Islands, and they bled and they died.

I am sure there were others in ocean going service, on ships that were shot down that were in service to the country or in war service that were not even armed forces of the United States or in the Merchant Marines. I just ask you to consider what really is the issue here.

What we are talking about is in the purest context is not something that comes at our heartstring or trying to correct inequities of those that have given a great deal to their country. I don't believe anybody in this room doubts the quality and the character of the ocean going service of those that served in the Merchant Marines.

All of those that know, having served in combat and shot at or seeing bloody eyes like any of us have, has never been a requisite for membership in the VFW. You have to have served in the armed services of the United States. That is one thread that we all have in common.

If you decide, for whatever reason, to begin to admit ocean going service, whether it be land or sea, was not a member of the armed forces of the United States, I suggest to you that you change the very fabric of what the organization has been.

We are an organization made up of those who served in the armed forces. Conferring veteran status, even if that veteran status comes from the Department of Defense, does not confer having served in the armed forces of the United States. That is the question here.

Now, one other thing from a pure old standpoint of how do you administer this? If we go to Congress and say to Congress change our charter, to broaden it to allow Merchant Marines, ocean going service, not to ones involved in the Pacific Islands, not that they fought daily as civilians, and not members of the armed forces which gave service to their

country, where does this stop?

We have to amend the congressional charter and then next year we have to come back here and amend our by-laws by a two-thirds vote. I don't know that that is likely to happen. So I suggest to you that the issue here is this: do you want to change the VFW here at our 99th Convention to where we will now have members that were not members of the armed forces of the United States?

If so, you have a group of members, even though they may have had service to the country is tremendous, we will also have a group of members of the VFW that never served as a member of the armed forces of the United States of America. That is the question. I ask you to consider that in casting your vote. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. Microphone No. 1 moved the question. The proponents have spoken since the question was moved. At this time we will now call for a vote.

COMRADE GENE MANFREY (Post 6627 - Florida): I would like to ask for a point of information. I am Gene Manfrey from Post 6627, St. Petersburg, Florida, and a Past State Commander. I would like the Chairman to define what the vote will be. It is my understanding if you vote in favor of that it will deny them.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Yes, I planned on addressing that. Thank you very much. Resolution No. 222 was moved for adoption. If you vote "aye", then you are voting to deny membership to every World War II era Merchant Marine. If you vote "no", you are voting to accept Merchant Marines into the VFW. Do we understand?

All right. Voting "aye" is to deny, voting "no" is to allow. At this time I will call for the vote. All those in favor of Resolution No. 222 will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed to Resolution No. 222 will say "no". I will rule that Resolution No. 222 is approved.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE COX (Post 6772 - Ohio): I appeal that decision. You are going to have to have a hearing aid, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much. That is probably right. He has raised the question and he feels it is only fair. Those of you that are in favor of Resolution No. 222, to deny membership to the World War II era Merchant Marines, please stand.

I will ask the individual that called for the appeal to please look around the room. I would now like those members standing to please sit down. Now, those opposed to Resolution No. 222, please stand. My hearing and my eyesight are still in good control. Resolution No. 222 is approved.

Is there anyone else at any of the microphones?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): I would ask at this time, are we still open for resolutions to be set aside on the previous motion?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Do you have one that you would like set aside?

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): I will ask that Resolution No. 209 by the Department of Ohio, Age Limitation For Sons Of The Veterans Of Foreign Wars, be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Further, I should have stated, do you want to make a motion to that effect?

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): I will gladly do that. I will make a motion to that effect.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We have set aside Resolution 209 and then there is a motion for passage of Resolution 209. Is there a second to that motion for passage?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE COX (Post 6772 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, George Cox, Department of Ohio. I wish to second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. There is a motion and there is a second for the adoption of Resolution No. 209, Age Limitation For Sons Of The VFW. Under discussion, I will call forward the chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Commander-in-Chief and delegates, Resolution No. 209, the "Be It Resolved" that we extend the age limitation of the Sons of the VFW and that the sons be recognized in this order as they are in other fraternal military organizations, to-wit: a bona fide auxiliary unit of the parent organization.

It is the feeling of the committee that the intent of this resolution is to create a men's auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the committee recommended rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates, I would like to speak on my motion to accept Resolution 209. Comrades, over the past year, I did a great, great deal of traveling in the Department of Michigan visiting roughly one-third of our Posts.

That being said, I can tell you most honestly that this thought came up a great, great many times, and I can tell you truly that the small communities, the home community of that Post, more often this comes up. We have in the "Resolved" on the motion, we have that we realize that the age limitation placed on the Sons of the VFW is discriminatory. Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates, I think that is most true and it is a thoroughly undefensible position to say that it is not discriminatory.

Secondly, our Posts in our various communities in our various Departments need to know that when we have a member like myself, like yourself, comrades and delegates, that have a daughter, that have a sister that can join the Ladies Auxiliary, pay their dues and be members until the day they die, and also have sons that based on our current criteria could

join the Sons of the VFW organization and at the age of 16 they are out.

Our Posts need their services, these relatives, these sons, these brothers and, yes, comrades, fathers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars deserve the opportunity and the Posts deserve the opportunity to bring them in as an official auxiliary member.

The age limits, membership requirements are to be very similar to those of the Ladies Auxiliary. This may require some fine-tuning by the National Organization, and I would encourage them to do so. At this time I would recommend passage of the motion to accept Resolution 209. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. I will first yield to Microphone No. 3 again because at the time this gentleman was speaking there were many people lined up around behind him. I will yield to Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE TOM KEYES (Post 6471 - Vermont): Thank you, Commander. My name is Tom Keyes. I am a member of Post 6471 in the State of Vermont. I would just like to inform you I have a daughter that is eligible and I have got a son that is in a military school in Vermont.

I have also an older son that is disabled. He will never be able to join the service. He has tried every branch there was and has been denied because of his medical problems. My Post asks him, my son and my wife, all the time to volunteer for things, and this son is always ready and able to help out.

He always jumps on the wagon when he is called upon. However, not being able to go to the club on his own is discriminatory action in that sense itself. He is 23. He will never be able to go to the club. I am not asking he be made a member of the VFW, I am asking that you do something in regards to the boys of all of us here, not just myself, but all of us here that are not able to join the service who can never be a member.

If your son has been in combat, what about his son? Will he ever be able to join? I ask this body to pass this Resolution 209. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Microphone No. 3.

I am going to Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE COX (Post 6772 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in support of removing the cap on the sons. I wish not to create a social environment in our VFW Posts, but we have a son's unit in the State of Ohio. With our 114,000 members right now, we have one son's unit.

It is my desire that our National Organization either remove the cap on the son's unit or disband it. It just doesn't exist. So, I would like this body today to make up their mind if we are going to allow a son's unit in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to either remove this age limit or disband the unit altogether. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you.
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL BURRIS (Post 2615 - North Carolina): Comrades, I believe we debated this last year at the convention in Salt Lake City. It was stated earlier that we were creating another men's auxiliary. Whether that be the case or not, it probably is a moot point.

My question posed to you, I believe that Comrade Rivers stated it in a nutshell. What is our eligibility to this organization? To me, this applies just as well. This resolution makes reference to other fraternal military organizations that sponsor some units that do not have age limitations. That is true.

But, comrades, we are not the American Legion, we are not the Disabled Veterans, we are not the Vietnam Veterans of America. We are the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Our eligibility is the price we pay for joining. As our incoming Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak says, we are special and we are unique, and we are different, and that is why we are the greatest veterans organization in this country.

Let's keep it that way without attaching an auxiliary or broadening the membership criteria to include those who did not serve in the armed forces. With that said, Commander-in-Chief, I move the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The question has been moved. Microphone No. 2, are you a proponent or an opponent?

COMRADE RON TOWNSEND (Post 4713 - Ohio): I support the Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: You have five minutes in which to speak.

COMRADE RON TOWNSEND (Post 4713 - Ohio): Commander-in-Chief, I rise in support of this issue for several reasons. How many comrades in this room can't put a color guard on the street or a man on detail without help? Stop and think. In my lifetime, I have seen many veterans pass away. I can remember as a child after World War II veterans were in great number at local functions.

Today, the World War II veterans disabilities are such that prevent them from that. I have four sons. One is a member of the VFW. If I had four daughters, they could join the VFW Auxiliary and rise to be National President. My sons are denied that opportunity with the exception of one. Therefore, I strongly urge that we do something about the cap on this membership. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much. Microphone No. 1 moved the question. The proponent at Microphone No. 2 has spoken. If you vote "aye" on Resolution No. 209, you are asking that there be no age limitation in regards to the Sons of the VFW.

If you vote "no", you are voting against Resolution No. 209 to allow for a widening of the age limitation. Is that clear? Voting "aye" is for the proposed resolution as the motion was made and seconded. That is to allow for a more broader age limit. Voting "no" is to keep it the way it is. Does everyone understand that now?

We will now call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by

saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". We will do that again. All those in favor of adopting Resolution 209 to open up the age limit for the Sons of the VFW, please rise. All those opposed, please rise. The chair is still in doubt. I am still in doubt. It looks to be a tie.

I would ask at this time that the Sergeants-at-Arms please have those that are in favor of Resolution 209 to rise and count those. Those that are in favor of Resolution 209, please stand. As soon as you are counted, please sit down.

The "ayes" have been counted. We will count those opposed to Resolution 209. Those opposed, please stand at this time. May I have your attention, please. Thank you, Sergeants-at-Arms. I appreciate the quickness. We do, in fact, have a vote.

There were 685 "aye" votes and 767 "no" votes. Now, in the sense of fairness, you have the right to call for a roll-call vote. We were trying to do this to move the convention along. If you want a roll-call vote, I would ask that ten states get in line real quick. If not, we are going to move on with further business. We are moving along. Resolution No. 209 is defeated.

Are there any other motions for adoption of any resolutions that have been presented by this committee?

COMRADE DOUG BELL (Post 6873 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move Resolution No. 218 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Do you move for the adoption of Resolution 218?

COMRADE DOUG BELL (Post 6873 - Texas): I so move.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: A motion for adoption of Resolution 218 has been made. Is there a second?

COMRADE JIMMY CANTRELL (Post 9168 - Texas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There has been a motion and a proper seconding made. We will now call for the report of the Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates, the "Be It Resolved" portion of this Resolution No. 218 is as follows:

"Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we instruct the Quartermaster General not to appropriate funds for any proposed Commander-in-Chief membership trip to Europe, Asia, or any other foreign countries not normally on the Caribbean cruise itinerary, or requiring expenditures of VFW monies in excess of \$375,000."

It was the feeling of the committee in its recommendation to reject that that the Commander-in-Chief should have the authority to select where he wants to go on his cruise and that the Council of Administration sets the dollar amount. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will call for discussion but knowing full well that when our next guest comes, I will suspend any and all discussion.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DOUG BELL (Post 6873 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am the Department Commander from Texas. Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates to the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I stand before you in support of Resolution 218.

The Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars passed Resolution 218 at its State Convention in June. Resolution No. 218 in no way should be construed as taking away rights and privileges of the National Commander-in-Chief, the Quartermaster General or the National Council of Administration.

The members of the Department of Texas, by passing this resolution, want to send to the Commander-in-Chief, the Quartermaster General and the National Council of Administration their thoughts concerning the annual trip known as the Department Commanders' membership trip.

Each year, through the Membership Department, the Department Commanders compete for a trip with the Commander-in-Chief, their National Officers and invited guests. Two years ago, when all membership programs were basically turned over to the Departments, it was felt that instead of continuing this trip it should be somewhat of an award for all Department Commanders for the great service they had given to our organization.

At that time the National Council of Administration passed guidelines who would be invited to go. We, the Department of Texas, fully support this program as long as guidelines set up by the National Council of Administration as to who will participate as a guest of National and our conference.

For three years, these Department Commanders, serving as chair officers in their Departments, give up their time, and in many cases their finances to help lead our great organization. The membership from the Department of Texas did, however, feel that they should express through this resolution their concerns about no guidelines as to where the trip would be taken.

Over the years, most of these trips have been the Caribbean cruises. Some of those trips were to Hawaii, and a very few have been trips to the foreign countries. A review of the budget expenditures during the years they were trips to foreign countries, we will find that these trips to foreign countries were more expensive, and in many cases by the amount of 20 to 30 percent than the Caribbean cruises.

The members of the Department of Texas felt this trip should be limited to Caribbean cruises or trips to the 52 states of the United States, with an expenditure of no more than \$375,000. Not only are the trips in foreign countries more expensive, but they can also be under current circumstances more dangerous.

It was also felt that the Department Commander, who is taking the

trip, thought that it should be a cruise. We, therefore, believe that the Quartermaster and National Council of Administration needs the guidance that is provided in this resolution.

When the Commander-in-Chief makes a determination where the trip will be made, he will have the guidance of it. We ask you to support this Resolution No. 218.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any discussion at Microphone No. 1, No. 2 or No. 3? Seeing none, we will call for a vote. All those in favor of Resolution No. 218 will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed will signify by saying "no". The "nays" have it. The motion is rejected. The resolution is rejected.

Are there any other motions to be made for this committee? I see none at Microphone No. 1, Microphone No. 2 or Microphone No. 3. Therefore, the recommendations of the committee for rejection stands. This committee is now relieved of its duties.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2 for comment.

COMRADE THOMAS DOUGHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, when I was at the microphone previously, I neglected to thank you for my appointment to this committee and I have to say it was a pleasure and joy serving with Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much for the comments, Tom.

INTRODUCTION - THE HONORABLE TOGO D. WEST, JR., SECRETARY, VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrades and Sisters, please rise. We are pleased to have with us this morning the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr.

The United States Senate confirmed Secretary West as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on April 28, 1998. He directs the federal government's second largest department, responsible for a nationwide system of health-care services, entitlement programs and national cemeteries for America's veterans and their dependents.

From 1993 until his appointment with the Veterans Administration, Secretary West served as Secretary of the Army. He also serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Commission, a bi-national Board appointed by the President.

During his years in the Army's top civilian post, Secretary West demonstrated unwavering concern for the well-being of young soldiers and their families.

In an environment often dominated by discussions of military hardware and force structure, he gained a reputation for making "quality of life for the troops" an operational issue.

He has brought that same concern for the well-being and quality

of health care for our nation's veterans to his office as Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Please join me in a warm welcome for a very special guest, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Togo D. West, Jr.

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE TOGO D. WEST, JR.

COMRADE TOGO WEST: Thank you. Thank you, National Commander John Moon, for your introduction, and I thank all of you for your warm reception and for your attention. Thank you for having me for the second straight year. It was just a year ago when you welcomed me to your National Convention, but in a different capacity.

At that time I was the Secretary of the Army and little did I know that I might return to you in a different capacity. I look forward to visiting with you again but in a way I return to you as part of the family, and for that I am grateful.

There are other reasons for being grateful for being with you today. For one thing, I get to be with a former National Commander-in-Chief, Gunner Kent, who is one of you, I know, and who has kept all of us in the Department of Veterans Affairs on the straight and narrow. It is good to be with you for that reason as well.

There is a third reason, and it is this. Across America today, at a time when our nation continues to be at peace, yes, continues to be stable, there continues to be the concern that America remember what their veterans have done for her.

Today when you gather, and yesterday in your Opening Ceremonies, you remind America again that a generation is growing to maturity, secure in the belief that they can live in their home without the threat of a foreign invasion, because American veterans are willing to go abroad, to leave home and hearth to face the enemies of America, America's allies and America's values.

So I say to you for the third reason that it is a pleasure to be with you today is a very simple one, which I hope you will mark. That is for any person who appeared before you, whether it is a government official, a private citizen, anyone who speaks to you, it is an honor to be in your presence. For that, I thank you.

A hundred years ago this year, in 1898, the Spanish American War was drawing to a conclusion. It, in fact, concluded that year. As you know, not long after the veterans of that war formed the first of the organizations that would come together to be the VFW.

One of the heroes of that war, an Army Colonel named Teddy Roosevelt, was also one of the early members of this organization. It is he who identified in his own time, later as President, a sense about service, service to the nation, service to community, service as members of the armed forces.

It is he who conveyed that idea that in many ways is reflected in this VFW's notion of service to America as it has lived it out in almost those 100 years. President Roosevelt, later as President said, "It is the men and

women whose ideals reflect the following, who have the best handle on America's country. That is the courage to strive for the happiness that comes from work and effort and self-sacrifice, and to seek the joy of a sense of duty."

In all the years since then, the members and the leaders of the VFW have demonstrated that sense of duty, which that earlier member of the VFW Teddy Roosevelt spoke. Since the duty in setting forth in uniform when America calls and even when an American crisis have not yet called, a sense of duty in serving far from our nation's shores, a sense of duty in returning to lead communities in which you live and have lived.

The sense of duty that calls you today as members and leaders of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the oldest chartered, largest and most influential of organizations. I didn't say veterans' organizations, I said organizations in America. That's the sense of duty that calls you still to this day to live and work and strive for the security and future of America.

Since that time, you have shown that three times over sense of duty in a number of the activities, and in every activity of your organization. For 75 years now, since 1922, the Buddy Poppy, fashioned by veterans in VA facilities and state nursing homes, whose sales produced revenues that have supported millions of veterans over the life of this nation.

As a former Boy Scout, your program, Voice of Democracy, which looks to the future of this nation, which understands that this nation's future is in her youth, your working with Boy Scouts, with the JROTC, with Special Olympics, in which you teach them, yes, skills and writing, patriotism, good citizenship, but you teach America as well.

My father was a high school principal. He is dead now. Years ago, I listened in as he spoke to my mother, a school teacher, about a speech he had given to his colleagues. Picture this in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He said he concluded his speech by saying, "I told them you are teachers. Remember you teach the life you live."

You in your support of our young Americans, your scholarships, your competitions, teaching our young Americans, but you are also teaching America. You are teaching them by your example, and the message you send them is a profound and powerful one that we can never have enough good citizens, that we can never have enough patriots and that we can never love our country too much. (Applause)

There is more. Just this summer, your National Commander and I, and others of your leadership were together in that National Press Building where you disclosed to the nation your expanded support of Operation Uplink. Seventy thousand additional pre-paid calling cards right to the personnel and veterans in VA medical facilities so that they could be in touch with their families, those who love them and about whom they care.

You know as well as anyone in the nation the profound impact this could have on the morale of veterans as they find themselves away from families, from homes, from neighborhoods. And your co-sponsorship with us of the Golden Age Games serves not only those that are 55 years and

older in VA facilities, but serves all Americans for by the inspiration, by the example of what they do in those games, those veterans lift us all.

I was pleased to be at the most recent Golden Age Games to meet and talk with the competitors, volunteers and sponsors. For all those and for many more things you do, your millions of hours of volunteer service in VA facilities, in state facilities, our veterans benefit and America benefits as well.

So, my first duty here as your Secretary of Veterans Affairs is to say to you "thank you" on behalf of a nation that you have improved. Think about it, think about what you have done for America. Oh, yes, you have kept her free. You have kept families secure, but you have given the world a country that is not anywhere in the world.

You have given the people with our peers and you have given us a host of values and principles that inspire the entire world. For all of that, on behalf of your Department of Veterans Affairs, yes, we thank you. In behalf of all Americans and as a simple citizen, I say to you as my first duty, thank you for what you have done for America, thank you for what you do today and for the profound effect and impact you continue to have. Thank you for that. (Applause)

As you gather here in convention, you gather on the eve of a new millennium. That is less than 18 months away, which will be the 1st of January, the year 2000. I know before you correct me that the experts tell us that is not the millennium.

The millennium comes a year later, 2001. You and I know that when December 31, 1999, comes and we have New Year's Eve, we are going to be thinking about a brand new thousand-year period then and there. So, you gather in times when change comes upon us rather rapidly.

You know, sometimes I think it is hard for me to embrace the concept of a new millennium. As a kid, a new year was a big deal for me. You had to change the last number for the year. Then as I grew older, a decade became a big deal. Lots of people never even see a new century.

My dad was born in 1905. He will not see a change in the century. We will see a new millennium. The changes that it brings and the changes that are all upon us already can be unsettling, of course. There are opportunities for your Department to support veterans veterans.

The change will be, as President John Kennedy said more than 30 years ago, change is the law of life. But if we are to be part of the change, you and every veteran have a right to demand that that change be beneficial, for change just for change sake is no use to anyone.

So we are undergoing change in the delivery of health care to our veterans, a change that at times appear to be unsettled. But it is devoted to some very basic principles. First, that we provide health care for more veterans. The eligible veterans who potentially need health care and have earned health care from their government still have not all been reached. So our change must bring more health care to more veterans.

Secondly, it cannot be lesser health care. It must be better health

care. This nation stands unlike any in the world, because it has had the services of the most extraordinary men and women in uniform in the world. When they served, they called them members of the Army, soldiers, Marines and sailors, airmen, Coast Guard personnel. Today we call them patriots and veterans.

This nation has had the best service from the best personnel and they deserve the best health care. So more and better health care for more veterans. An all-important third element that we not lose any of the important services that we provide today.

Everyone in America knows that VA provides the best understanding of the problems and concerns, the health concerns of the aging. The important aids for those who have suffered injury, prosthetics, and have the special concerns of those who have been prisoners of war and who have suffered spinal injury.

We must not lose that ability even as we provide more and better health care. Therefore, we will continue to open out-patient clinics wherever we find groups of veterans who need health care. We are opening them today and we will not slacken in our effort to continue to open them.

Two other things about change that have health care for veterans as we approach the new millennium. Perhaps there are changes that will not happen. First, is wherever I go, I hear concerns raised about veterans. There is apparently a creeping concern that veterans centers may be closing or may be folded into something. I have a brief statement about that. It goes like this. "Not on my watch." I don't think it will be on your watch, either. So that is fine.

The second thing that will not change is that we are under an injunction from the Congress, yes, that by October of this year the veterans will receive health care in VA health centers they must be enrolled. There is an enrollment procedure. Yes, that will take effect soon.

But it does not mean that a single eligible veteran will be denied health care because after October 6th he or she has not yet enrolled. We will enroll you when you come for health care if you have not been enrolled. Moreover, those who have been receiving health care as eligible veterans since October, 1996, have been automatically enrolled by us.

So the requirement for enrollment is one change, but it will not stop eligible veterans from receiving their health care. We will see to that. Change is occurring in our delivery of benefits to veterans as well. I can visit any facility in America that is operated by your Department of Veterans Affairs and stop in the lobby of the VA Hospital, go into the ward of a medical center and talk to veterans, and almost without fail you and those whom you and I represent will say to me, "I believe I have the best doctor. I believe I have the best nurse. I believe I have the best technicians. I am fine. I am not sure I could speak for Joe down at the other end, but I am fine."

You and I know what that means. First of all, I like to believe it is

true. I think it is. We also know that each of us believes it. We must get the best medical care. We assume our doctor is the best. That's understandable. By the same token, I can speak to two or three of that same group and say, "Well, are there any other concerns?"

He or she will say to me, "Well, I have this claim for benefits and it is not being handled properly." I say that, not to voice a word of criticism of any of our employees at the Veterans Administration. You and I know that like other VA employees they are among the most dedicated, most competent employees of the federal government.

Indeed, of all the members of the federal government I have met, they come to work every day feeling that what they do is vitally important and believing that they bring improvement to the lives of those with whom they deal.

Now, I mentioned the claims process to remind myself and you, and all of us, of something that you and your veterans know that when claims are not being processed effectively, it affects our veterans as vitally as anything else in their lives. This Department of Veterans Affairs must be sensitive to that.

So our new Under Secretary for Veterans Benefits, Bill Thompson, has already committed himself to a series of changes of improvements designed, first of all, for speed and then to provide accuracy. A word about speed. Over the time of my adulthood, I have spent a number of years in government service and I am proud of it. I am trained as a lawyer.

We have a saying in the profession in which I have practiced in private practice a number of years, is that justice delayed is justice denied. By that same token, every day that your Department of Veterans Affairs does not act upon a claim, does not provide a final result to a veteran, that is in effect a denial for each of those days when the veteran is not receiving his or her benefits.

We, in the Department, must respond to that. If we do, then it will be a very well-received change, indeed, I suspect. There is more. It doesn't do our veterans, those of you that I represent, those you represent and whom I serve, any good to get a speedy answer if the answer is wrong.

So as important as improving speed, you must be getting it right the first time. The best service connection you can render to a veteran on a claim is to get it right the first time. The time lost on appeals and hearings and reconsiderations, that is once again time lost to the veteran in which for all practical purposes the claim, because it has not been granted, is denied for that day.

I know about that, it relates back, that once granted it relates back to the claim. But for every day of delay, we have harmed a veteran. Your Department will improve on that record as part of the changes underway looking towards the new millennium.

One further thing about what you and I should expect from the VA in the months and years ahead. There is much said about the idea of one VA. I embrace the idea. You ask what it means to the veteran on a daily

basis who walks into a VA facility expecting, because it says on the door outside the word "veteran", that in that facility he or she will be welcomed.

From that facility, he or she will be helped, will find some good things done for them. I expect the veteran doesn't care quite as much about whether it says medical center, regional office or outpatient clinic. He or she cares more about the fact it says veterans.

So, I think one VA should mean that it should be wherever a veteran enters a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, whether he has come to the right place or not, that he should not leave that place without a feeling that something has happened to advance his cause.

Did he come to the wrong location? Perhaps instead of saying, "You are in the wrong place," we need to say, "Let us get you to the right place." Is he there without an appointment? Then perhaps we can make one. Change the rules.

The point is this: veterans don't have time to waste. They have given so much in service to the nation, so we in this Department, when we have a veteran in our presence, must use those valuable moments to be of help, and we will.

When I was Secretary of the Army, I had a great honor, and that was to participate with you, the President, leaders of this nation and other nations, in observing the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II. It was a moving time for this nation and for the world.

Most of America saw it on cable TV and national TV. Many veterans got to live it again. It was a way of assuring that this nation, this world, would have some grasp of what was meant by the Army Sergeant who traveled with me during part of those commemorations on my plane.

He was Sergeant Walter Eller. Sergeant Eller is no longer on active duty. He went with me and a group of veterans. He served in World War II and received the Medal of Honor for his service. We traveled back to the scene of his service. He lived those times.

He wrote out his thoughts about what that time should mean to America. He said in part these words: "Now as newsreels and photographs from that era are flooded upon us and upon our media, it is important for us to remember that it really happened. Today is history, but yesterday it was real. We, the generation who lived it," he said, "the generation who have learned of it firsthand must ensure that our heirs understand that their world was not always free, that the privileges and rights they take for granted today were bought and paid for by a generation of Americans who gave everything they and all too often everything they were to proclaim a world.

"The cost," said Sergeant Eller, "was high, but the victory was priceless." I have been reminded of those words over and over again. Even as I say them to you, they bring back to me the scenes of those times as we returned to Europe 50 years later.

I visited the American Cemetery in Italy, the one that is about an hour's ride outside of Rome, you know of it. There are buried the American

dead of the Roman Sicily campaign; there are those beautifully kept green hills, marked row upon row of white crosses and Stars of David. Now 71,000 Americans of that campaign are buried there.

Three thousand names of Americans missing in action are inscribed on the walls of the memorial there at that cemetery. Twenty-one sets of brothers are buried there; two sets of twins side by side. Twenty American women are buried there.

I am even more reminded of that scene and all that it means to this nation, and it has meant to the world in terms of the sacrifices and the services of honor your members who left families so that other families might remain together. By recent events, two views, one by the producer of that movie "Saving Private Ryan", Steven Spielberg, he actually said in an interview after it, "If the best thing that happens with that movie is that someone who has seen it is driving past a Veterans' Memorial Cemetery."

Those were Spielberg's words, a Veterans' Cemetery, "looks over and sees the markers and dwells for a moment on why they are there and the sacrifice that they made and who we are as a nation, and how much we owe to them for their sacrifice."

Then says Spielberg, "That film would have done all that I could have hoped for." I say, "Bravo, Mr. Spielberg." There is another duty expressed by a woman in Tennessee. I read her letter to the editor. She identified herself as the wife of a World War II veteran.

She said they had just come from seeing "Saving Private Ryan." She said and she wrote these words, "I started weeping from the beginning. I never stopped. I wept for the dead, I wept for those who came back. I wept for their families, I wept for the part of my husband I will never know, that families will never see again."

She wrote that as they left the movie she and her husband, there was not a single word between them. They drove home in silence. When they got home, they were silent for much of the evening, broken by only one comment from him. At one point he said to her, "Welcome to my world."

She told in her letter about how she had gone to one of her first veterans' parades in a large city in America. I will not name it. She was struck by the fact it was so poorly attended and in a state that regularly turned out thousands for entertainment. She was saddened, not embittered, saddened.

Then she concluded her letter with these words, words not to you, to all Americans about you. She said, "See the movie 'Saving Private Ryan.' Visit a veterans' cemetery. Pause when you pass the American flag and pray for world peace. But most of all," she wrote, "think of the veterans because he or she gave up a part of his or her soul for every one of us."

My duty is to say to you today that even as Americans feel comfortable with their peaceful status, their secure status here in the North American Continent, there are those who will insist that America remember, remember your service and service of all the veterans who went

abroad for this nation.

Remember the services of all 41 million veterans who have served this nation over her life, 26 million of whom still live. Voices who will remind America, as did President Clinton a few short years ago speaking of our veterans of World War II, "They may be old as you look at them today, but in their youth they saved the world."

It is my duty to remind you that there will be Americans who will insist that we all remember, because if we forget, then this nation will lose her soul. You and I and all American veterans will never let that happen. God bless you for that service to America.

God bless you for the service that over two and a quarter centuries has kept this nation strong and free and vital. It gives us a future that looks forward to that new millennium bravely and proudly. God bless you for the fact that Americans stand taller today for the flag flies bravely across the globe, and across the globe there are those who look to America for leadership.

God bless all who love you and to whom you love. God bless all who have served this nation in uniform today, and the colors of their respective services, but under one Star-Spangled Banner. On this day, in your convention here in lovely San Antonio, and many set conventions to come, whether good times or times of social or economic challenge, whether at peace for which we all pray or if we be at war, may God bless well the dear and ultimatum to which you and all veterans have given your sacrifice and which our men and women today give their service and to which they, you and I, and indeed all of us give our love. Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause)

PRESENTATION BY THE PAC TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time I will call to the podium Assad Allie, Chairman of the Political Action Committee.

COMRADE ASSAD ALLIE: Commander-in-Chief, will you stand up here at the mike. I have been given the honor and privilege of making a presentation to our Commander-in-Chief from the Board of Directors of the Political Action Committee, which is the American Eagle, the highest award that we do, in fact, give to our Commander. Congratulations, Commander-in-Chief John Moon.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ED BANAS (Post 10004 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I believe that a resolution was somewhat misunderstood by the delegates to this convention, and that this resolution could effectively force our organization to a third year in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. That resolution is 203.

I make a motion that it be reconsidered and I did vote on the prevailing side.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 1761 - Maine): I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There is a motion and there is a second on the floor for reconsideration of Resolution 203. We must vote beforehand on the reconsideration. All those in favor of reconsideration will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed to reconsideration signify by saying "no". The "nays" have it. It is not to be reconsidered. Thank you.

Is there any further discussion from Microphone No. 1, Microphone No. 2, Microphone No. 3?

At this time we will call forward for the last procedure of the day, the Insurance Drawings.

(Whereupon, the Insurance Drawings were held at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room for recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was had followed by the Benediction by National Chaplain Dean Derieg according to the Ritual.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. We are in recess.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:50 o'clock a.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION WEDNESDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1998

(The Third Business Session of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Moon.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Opening Session.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman led the assembly in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance, and National Chaplain Dean Derieg gave the Opening Prayer from the Ritual.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The first order of business this morning will be the Report of the Credentials Committee. The Chairman is Richard Trombla.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief Moon, this is a temporary report. As of 4:00 o'clock yesterday, there were 13,091 delegates; 54 Department Commanders; 26 Past Commanders-in-Chief; 36 National Officers. That is for a total of 13,207. That is as of 4:00 o'clock yesterday. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much, Credentials Chairman.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: This morning I am very pleased to present the VFW Armed Forces Award to an organization which has served our nation with unparalleled professionalism.

Since it was established, the National Guard Units have fought with honor in all major U.S. military operations from 1637 to the present. Both the Air National Guard and Army National Guard continue to perform their dual mission, providing well-trained, well-equipped units to the states to help fellow citizens.

During natural disasters and emergencies, a part of the nation's total force, the Guard provides the same well-trained units to defend the United States.

The Army National Guard has units in 2,700 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The Air National Guard has 88 flying units and more than 170 installations nationwide.

Besides serving our country, the National Guard conducts many youth programs aimed toward "at-risk" children. Programs like "Starbase", a program for youths and Grades K-12, which exposes inner-city schools to real world applications of math and science.

"Challenge" is another fine program that guides children in the direction of academic excellence, community service, leadership, and much more. Similar to "Challenge" is "Youth Conservation Corps", a six-week residential program conducted at National Guard Bases.

It is with a great deal of pride and a deep sense of honor that the Veterans of Foreign Wars presents its Armed Forces Award to the men and women of the Army and Air National Guard for their dedication and unwavering sense of mission.

Here to accept this award on their behalf is the Executive Director of the National Guard Association, Major General Edward Philbin.

The award reads in part, "National Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Army and Air National Guard.

"In special recognition of the unprecedented dedication exhibited by the men and women of the Army and Air National Guard as they perform their dual mission of participating in U.S. military operations to protect our freedom as we know it today and providing well-trained and well-equipped units to help fellow citizens during natural disasters and emergencies, and in grateful appreciation of the many youth programs such as Starbase, Challenge and the Youth Conservation Corps, sponsored and conducted by the Guardsmen.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 2nd day of September, 1998." It has been signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - GENERAL EDWARD PHILBIN

GENERAL PHILBIN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Moon. Fellow Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Ladies and Gentlemen: Since 1636, the militia now designated as the Army and Air National Guard in the United States has been an active participant in any conflict in which this nation has been engaged.

Consequently, the members of this great organization, the members of the National Guard Association of the United States are bound together by ties of history, dedicated service and bloody sacrifices. It is because of this close relationship that I accept with most sincere and deep appreciation the 1998 Veterans of Foreign Wars Armed Forces Award for outstanding contributions to the national security on behalf of the half million soldiers and airmen of the Army and International Guard of the United States.

We are honored by your recognition of our efforts and we pledge to you that we shall continue to respond to critical national, state and community needs as we have done for over three and one-half centuries. I sincerely thank you, and I salute you and your organization that still remembers the real meaning of those three words: duty, honor and country.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Along with the award, we want to present to the National Guard Educational Foundation an honorarium in the amount of \$5,000. General, will you please make the presentation for us.

I would call forward the National Veterans Service Committee for their report. George Cramer is Chairman and Ted Connell is Vice-Chairman.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Good morning. Commander-in-Chief Moon and delegates to this 99th National Convention, I report that your Convention Committee on Veterans Service

Resolutions convened at 1:00 o'clock Sunday, August 30, 1998. The instructions were read and roll call and preliminary matters were discussed.

The committee was divided into three subcommittees to carefully deliberate the 91 resolutions that were assigned to this committee. The subcommittees were established as follows: Subcommittee 1, Medical Programs for Veterans Benefits and Entitlements, chaired by Tom Hansen from Minnesota. The Vice-Chairman was Les Brow from Texas. The Staff Advisors were Jim Jewell, Assistant Director of Veterans Health Policy, National Veterans Service, and Sid Daniels, Deputy Director of Legislative Services, and Bill Frasure, Special Assistant, National Legislative Service.

Subcommittee 2 was Employment, chaired by Walter Luksta of Illinois, and Vice-Chaired by Bernie Boyle from Wisconsin. The Staff Advisors were Jim Magill, Director of Veterans Employment, and Valerie Callaway, Special Assistant to Veterans Employment.

Subcommittee 3 was Other Benefits. It was chaired by Melvin Garrett from New York, and Vice-Chairman was Ray O'Neill from Michigan. The Staff Advisors were John McNeill, Assistant Director of Veterans Benefits Policies, Bob Manhan, Assistant Director of National Legislative Services, and Jim Vaughn, Appeals Director of National Veterans Service.

Before proceeding to report, I wish to take a moment to express the committee's appreciation to Fred Juarbe, Director of National Veterans Service, Jim Magill, and the other people in our Washington Office that helped us provide this valuable information.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Ted Connell from Texas for serving as Vice-Chairman of this very important Convention Committee.

Commander, with your permission, I will begin the committee's report by presenting those resolutions that we recommended for approval.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I thank you, Past Commander-in-Chief Cramer, for yielding at this time.

PRESENTATION OF VFW JAMES E. VAN ZANDT CITIZENSHIP AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrades, in 1986, Congress authorized the construction of a Memorial in Washington, D.C., that would be a lasting tribute to the women who have served or are serving in our nation's armed forces.

Last October, at the gates of Arlington National Cemetery and two years after ground breaking, the Women in Military Service to America Memorial was dedicated.

When one considers that almost two million women have served in the United States military throughout our history, from the American Revolutions through Operation Desert Storm, it is most fitting that such a

memorial be erected not only as a memorial to those events but to the noble women who served their country.

The contribution of women to national security throughout our nation's history deserves the recognition which General Vaught has worked for.

Such a memorial serves to remind each of us, young and old, man and woman, and especially children that freedom must be guarded. Freedom does have a price, it is not free. Protecting our freedom calls for responsible citizenship. General Vaught's vision and commitment to building the Women in Military Service for America Memorial serves as an inspiration to all of us.

This morning we are pleased to present the VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award to Retired Air Force Brigadier General Wilma Vaught for her vision and significant contribution to the spirit of service and citizenship to our country.

Please join me in a very warm welcome for a fellow VFW member and the President of the Women's Memorial, Brigadier General Wilma Vaught. I might add there is a check in the amount of \$5,000 payable to the Women in Military Service Memorial.

General Vaught.

RESPONSE - GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT

GENERAL VAUGHT: Thank you. I am honored to be here and I was honored this past October when John Moon and Larry Sear were there for the dedication of the memorial, and I thank you for being here.

As I look back over what we have done, it seems to me that a memorial or a monument at its best should pay tribute to the past, be relevant to the present, and be an inspiration to the future. You work on these things and you finally get them erected, and you wonder did I really succeed in doing this?

Just the other day I received a letter from an Air Force Major that I want to share with you, because it says that I believe we have succeeded. She wrote, "Participating in the dedication day and the candlelight march was the highlight of my military career. Saying thank you just doesn't seem to be adequate, so I thought I would tell you just what the memorial means to me.

"I am a member of the United States Air Force Reserve Nurse Corps. I have 15 years total active service time with nearly eight years active duty. I have greatly enjoyed my military career over the years. Over the past four years, however, I have constantly struggled to balance the demands of a full-time job, raising my family and my Reserve IMA position.

"Many times it would have been easier for me to just give up the Reserves. Every time I started to feel overwhelmed, I would receive a newsletter or other communication from the Memorial Foundation. It would remind me of all the women that have gone before me and all the

women that are traveling the path with me now. Countless times, the Memorial has inspired me to go on with my military career.

"Dedication Day was truly inspiring because I talked with so many women who did not have the opportunities that I do. I hear their voices of encouragement now when I am tempted to give up. The week after Dedication Day, I reported for medical red flag chemical warfare training at my assigned base. The training was intense and grueling, and I was glad it was over for another year.

"At the end of the day, we had a Retreat Flag Ceremony. I watched the faces of the young women in the color guard as they lowered the flag and reverently folded it before handing it to the troop commander. Their faces expressed so eloquently love and dedication to service.

"I realized at that moment that I had seen the same expressions in the faces of the thousands of women who had attended the dedication event. I saw in the faces of those women all the things that the Women's Memorial stands for. For a brief moment in time, I was one with all the military women that have gone before me, all that are presently serving with me, and all that will serve in the future. It is a privilege to serve with them and honor their service by supporting the Memorial."

I looked at what we have done, what we are doing and what we must do. We have built the Memorial and we are finished with the exhibits and everything and it will be at a cost of about \$22 million, and we have made the main gate at Arlington Cemetery something that is a tribute to every man and woman who has ever served in the military. It doesn't look like a disgrace anymore.

We have formed a book publishing company and with dedication we have published our first book called "The Defense of a Nation - Servicewomen in World War II." This is a definitive history of the women who served in World War II, who changed the world for women.

One thing I would suggest to you, we have copies of this book in our booth here at the Exhibit Hall. Buy this book. Put it in the library. It is twenty bucks, and I will sell one to John Moon. I will give it to John Moon for twenty dollars. It is sold. Thank you, John.

We got congressional approval of a coin, the fourth in the history of our country, to honor women. We convinced the Postmaster General Marvin Runyon to issue a stamp concurrent with the dedication that honored the women. If you have not seen that stamp, devil your post office to death until they get it.

We opened the first store to sell things for military women, servicewomen of today and veterans. We are helping veterans. We are not a veterans service organization, but if we get a request to help we do that. We are a voice on military women's issues.

I congratulate the VFW today for voting day before yesterday to support women while taking a different position, and it has historically been true on the issue of women in combat and the general training. I thank you for that.

We have generated visibility of women veterans and servicewomen. What are we doing now? Well, we are trying to get all our records up to date and get all those women in service put in, standing pictures. We are entering the registration.

We are learning to operate the Memorial seven days a week and open every day, except Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are working to raise money, because, unfortunately, we ended up with a debt of about \$5 million and we are working to pay that off. I want to thank the VFW for its donation thus far of \$117,812, and I would hope to see you come up to \$150,000 at which point we are going to put your name on one of the exhibit alcoves.

The Auxiliary is up to \$138,000 now. But your name, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, is right now on our donor recognition hall in the Memorial. I hope when you come to visit you will see it there. We have got to equip the theater yet.

We have got to find the women that are not registered, and there are so many. There are about 1.6 million that we have not found out about and have not registered. We are doing things to keep the Memorial alive, having programs there and doing a variety of things so that it just doesn't sit there and become uninteresting for people. So that is what we are doing.

I hope you will continue to register women. I hope you will continue to spread the word about the Memorial. Ten minutes ago, over here in the Health Fair, I talked to a young woman in the Air Force who had never heard of the Memorial, and that happens to me more times than I would like to admit.

Back in about 1989, I received a registration from an Army Nurse who had served in World War II. She gave me a charge that I carry with me and I will carry with me until the Memorial is paid for. She wrote, and this is on one of the glass tablets in the skylight of the Memorial: "Let the generations know that the women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom that our resolve was just as great as the brave men who stood among us, and with victory our hearts were just as full and beat just as fast, that the tears fell just as hard for those that we left behind us."

That has been my charge with the Memorial, to let the generations know that the women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom. Come and visit the Memorial. You will see that through the films, through the exhibits, through the many things we are doing and through this book and the others that we will publish from time to time, that we are letting the generations know.

Thank you for this donation. We will put it to work, and thank you for honoring me. When you honor me, you don't honor me, you honor every woman who has served this nation so well always as a volunteer. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: If I may at this time, Pat Potter, Past National Surgeon General, please come forward to the mike.

PAST NATIONAL SURGEON POTTER: Thank you, Commander. The women veterans of the VFW for the last eight to ten years have been getting together annually for a luncheon at the early part of the convention. We did so on Monday. There were 17 of us that got the word and we were there.

At this time, on behalf of the women veterans of America, I would like to present the General with a monetary donation for the Memorial. I would like to also at this time challenge every woman veteran here to contribute to this monetary donation to make sure your name is enrolled with them.

If you would like to be on the mailing list for the luncheon, I am in the Pennsylvania delegation. Stop and give me your name and I will see that you get word ahead of time for the next convention. Thank you, Commander.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We are indeed honored to present this morning our VFW Hall of Fame Award to a man who is not only a respected actor and playwright, but a fellow veteran who experienced heavy combat during 11 months in Vietnam with a reconnaissance unit.

Dennis Franz has unselfishly given his time to serve as the National Chairman of the 1998 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

The National Salute was established as an official VA program in March, 1978, to pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans, increase community awareness of the role of the VA Medical Center, and encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

A graduate of Southern Illinois University, with a degree in Speech and Drama, Mr. Franz has developed an exceptional career as an actor.

He is currently playing the role of Detective Andy Sipowicz on the TV show "NYPD Blue" and previously played Lieutenant Buntz on the show "Hill Street Blues."

Mr. Franz has also starred in numerous movies like "Sea of Angels" in 1998, and received critical acclaim for appearing alongside Dustin Hoffman in "American Buffalo" in 1996.

He resides in Bel Air, California, with his wife, Joanie Zeck, and their two children, Krista and Tricia.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and sisters, please join me in a warm VFW welcome for a great American and fellow veteran, the 1998 VFW Hall of Fame Award recipient, Dennis Franz.

"Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to

Dennis Franz.

"In special recognition of his exceptional career as an actor having appeared in numerous movies and currently portraying Detective Andy Sipowicz on the television show 'NYPD Blue' and in sincere appreciation of his continued visits to hospitalized veterans and his being named National Chairman of the 1998 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. A Vietnam veteran himself, his continued dedication to our hospitalized veterans serves as an inspiration to us all.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 2nd day of September, 1998." It has been signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry Rivers, Adjutant General.

The honorarium for \$5,000, Mr. Franz asked to be made payable to the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Fund. We thank you very much.

RESPONSE - MR. DENNIS FRANZ

MR. FRANZ: 60855265, eight numbers given 30 years ago that would forever be ingrained in this head. As my alter ego, Andy Sipowicz, on NYPD would say, "I am damn proud of those numbers." What an honor to join the likes of George Forman, Ross Perot, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Walter Peyton, Loretta Swit, Peter Graves, my friend Charles Durning and George Halas, the owner of my favorite football team, the Chicago Bears. Well, we all have our opinion. As a veteran that holds special meaning in that it comes from those who also served.

After a tour of Vietnam, I left the armed forces with a great deal of pride and determination, determination to pursue what I loved doing most and that was acting. Over the years I have had some luck. I found some success and now the word "celebrity" is attached to my name, and that word can be a funny thing.

I have found that it allows me to help others in a variety of ways, one of which was to serve as the 1998 Chairman for Hospitalized Veterans. I am very honored and touched to receive the 1998 Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall of Fame and I thank you very, very much.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

TO DR. SAMUEL LIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I am most pleased this morning to present the VFW Gold Medal of Merit to Dr. Samuel Lin. Dr. Lin received his M.D. and his Ph.D. degrees from the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center. He began his professional career as a commissioned officer in the Public Health Service of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. From dedication and

diligence, he progressed through the ranks from ensign to rear admiral in nine years.

Upon his retirement from federal service, he joined the Upjohn Company, now Pharmacia and Upjohn, Inc., as Executive Director for Federal Medical Affairs.

In his current position, Dr. Lin has been instrumental over the past two years in securing financial support from Pharmacia and Upjohn to fund the Veterans of Foreign Wars' health education and screening efforts at our Washington Conferences and Conventions, including this on today.

In keeping with his commitment to promote better health among veterans, Dr. Lin played a key role in securing the support of other pharmaceutical companies and organizations, such as the American Foundation for Urologic Disease and American Diabetes Association in support of the VFW Health Fairs.

Dr. Lin has demonstrated himself to be a true ally of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and a dedicated servant of our nation's veterans. Please join me this morning in welcoming a true veterans' advocate, Dr. Samuel Lin.

"Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to Samuel Lin, M.D., Ph.D.

"In special recognition of and sincere appreciation for his personal involvement over several years in promoting better health among veterans through health education and screening projects sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

This award is given the 2nd day of September, 1998, and signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - DR. SAMUEL LIN

DR. LIN: Commander-in-Chief Moon, better known as John, thank you, sir. Thank you, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, for this wonderful award and recognition. On behalf of Pharmacia and Upjohn, I am honored to accept this magnificent recognition from the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

For the past two years, as Commander John has already said, it has been our privilege to have worked alongside your leadership in establishing benefit screens and health educational programs at your national meetings and that you have heard of the participation of the American Foundation for Urological Diseases. We began this partnership targeting issues of concern, such as prostate, bladder and erectile dysfunction.

This year will be added to the American Diabetes Association. We added issues with regards to diabetes and its complications. I would like to add that also this year for the first time we had the pleasure and the honor and opportunity to work with the Ladies Auxiliary in providing a

similar set of programs.

Through this partnership, I have become truly impressed with how much your leadership really cares about your physical, mental and social well-being. We have all learned together through these cooperative endeavors. While these efforts have been at the national level, we are looking together at establishing similar procedures for Post members at the local level and will be working on pilot projects in the very near future. We think you will be pleased.

As a final word, I would like to encourage you to attend the preventive health sessions this afternoon in Fiesta E from 1:00 to 3:00 o'clock, covering the issues of diabetes, prostate, bladder and erectile dysfunction. I challenge you to enable yourself to be in charge of your own health by learning more about these conditions and how you can prevent them or reduce their negative consequences on the quality of your life.

Our hope is for you to become a full partner with your health provider in your own health care and that of your families. That is our encouragement to you.

Once again, Commander Moon, the VFW, thank you for this recognition and we will see you next year at the big 100.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO JOSEPH D. ROSS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The success of the VFW has always been based on the hard work and dedication of our members. They are the ones who recruit the new members, they are the ones who get out and make our programs successful and they are the ones who set the course this organization will follow. But we do have some people we can turn to now and then for support, the VFW national staff, in the Kansas City Headquarters, and the Washington, D.C. office.

Our next guest came to work at the VFW Headquarters in July, 1981, soon after retiring from a 21-year career in the United States Navy. He earned his Navy Air Crew wings while assigned to anti-submarine warfare operations.

At the VFW National Headquarters, he worked in several positions: National Safety Director, Post Development Director, and finally, National Convention Director.

In everything he has done, Joe Ross has advanced the goals and objectives of this organization, and we will certainly miss him in the future.

Please join me in giving a warm VFW welcome to Joe Ross as we present him with the VFW Distinguished Service Award. The award reads in part, "In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of 17 years of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a dedicated worker and gifted professional fulfilling with unquestionable integrity and expertise the duties and responsibilities of the offices of

Assistant Director, Post and Program Development; Director, Post Development and Safety; and National Convention Director."

This has been signed this 2nd of September, 1998, by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General. Congratulations to you, Joe.

RESPONSE - COMRADE JOSEPH ROSS

COMRADE ROSS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Moon. I would like to just take a couple of moments and say a few things. I owe an awful lot of thanks to an awful lot of people and I would like to start out with my Department, the Department of Illinois, the 19th District, and my Post 2048. They have stood by me and backed me through all 17 years.

I would like to add a few things traveling this country, working with many of you Departments. I want to thank the comrades and sisters for their hospitalities and their friendship they have shown me. Most of all, I would like to say one thing, there is no director in any national program that is not successful without the help of you, comrades, the feedback that we get at National Headquarters.

Those are the programs that are instituted, that work the best, and it is the grass roots that make them successful. I am quite sure that as we go towards the 21st Century that the leadership of this organization will be better and better and better. I say that because of the young veterans that will take the helm of this organization it will continue to grow.

I would like to say one last thing and one last thank you, and if it wasn't for my lovely wife, Judy, a Life Member of our Auxiliary standing by me at all times, I am quite sure I couldn't make it. She did say one thing, "It is surely fun this year, Joe."

This is the best convention we have been at. Nobody calls at 3:00 or 4:00 o'clock in the morning to complain. Thank you, God bless you, and I just want to let you all know I might be retiring from the national staff but I am just falling back in the ranks of all you good comrades. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We will now have the Chairman of the Veterans Service Committee to continue with his report, Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS (CONT'D.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief and delegates to this convention. I will now proceed with reading the resolutions that were recommended for adoption. Past Commander-in-Chief Ted Connell will then proceed to report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption as amended, and then I will

conclude by reading those resolutions that we recommend for rejection.

Approved as written: Resolution 602, Adequately Fund The Veterans Health Care System Construction Program.

Resolution 603, The Department Of Veterans Affairs Budget.

Resolution 604, Amend The Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protection Act.

No. 605, Concurrent Receipt Of Retirement Pay And Veterans Disability Compensation.

No. 607, Exclude Guard And Reserve Income When Determining Eligibility For Unemployment Insurance.

No. 609, Federal Employees Health Benefit Program For Military Retirees.

No. 611, Support Development Of On-The-Job Training Program For Recently Separated Veterans.

No. 613, Entitlement To Nursing Home Care.

No. 616, Improved VA Hospital Facilities For Women Veterans.

Resolution 620, Benefits For Filipino Veterans And Scouts Who Served With The United States Armed Forces During World War II.

No. 621, Cost-Of-Living Increase For VA Beneficiaries And Military Retirees.

No. 622, VA Medicare Subvention.

No. 625, Support For Persian Gulf War Veterans.

Resolution 628, Retain Employment Assistance For Veterans And Disabled Veterans.

No. 629, Funding Of National Veterans' Training Institute.

No. 633, Tobacco Industry Settlement And Veterans Health Care.

No. 636, Gulf War Undiagnosed Illnesses.

No. 637, Support Legislation Providing Additional Benefits And Services To Vietnam Veterans Children With Spina Bifida.

No. 638, Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan.

No. 648, Naturalization Process For Filipino Veterans of World War II.

No. 653, Benefits For Saipan Marine Scouts Who Fought Alongside U.S. Forces During World War II Battle of Saipan.

No. 655, Amend 38 USC To Include Service Connection For Chronic Peripheral Neurapathy As A Result Of Exposure To Agent Orange.

No. 667, Preservation Of The National Soldiers' Home Located At The VA Medical Center, West Los Angeles.

These resolutions were submitted by the Commander-in-Chief for submission to this convention. Since the resolutions are not listed in your Schedule of Resolutions, I will read the title and the resolved of each of these resolutions.

Resolution 686, Research On The Health Effects Of Depleted Uranium And Implementation Of An Education And Safety Training Program For All Ground Troops.

"BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars request the

Secretary of Defense immediately direct and verify the full implementation of the Depleted Uranium training program; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an independent, non-profit scientific organization, under federal contract from the Department of Veterans Affairs, conduct appropriate studies regarding the health effects of DU, for the purpose of issuing a comprehensive report identifying the health effects related to use of DU."

Resolution No. 687, Transition Housing Loans For Homeless Veterans.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to urge Congress to initiate legislation allowing VA to underwrite/guarantee, on a limited basis, selected commercial loans made to non-profit organizations to construct and maintain selected multi-family transitional housing exclusively for use by veterans and their dependents; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this legislation must require the participating non-profit housing organizations to closely and continuously coordinate their efforts on behalf of homeless veterans with VA, as well as state and local housing authorities, to share technical expertise and to avoid wasting time and resources on competing services and overlapping efforts."

Resolution No. 688, Service Connection For Hearing Loss And Tinnitus For Combat Veterans.

"BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars request Congress to enact legislation that will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection to veterans with documented combat service and who have been diagnosed with hearing loss or tinnitus at any time after discharge from military service."

Resolution No. 689, Cost Will Never Be A Factor For Veterans' Entitlements.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars that we correspond forcefully to Congress and the President that never again can veterans' entitlements be negotiated based on solely economic factors."

Resolution No. 690, Specially Adapted Housing Allowance.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we seek legislation to amend 38 U.S.C., Section 2102, to allow a veteran to qualify for a second allowance not to exceed 50 percent of the maximum amount authorized under 38 U.S.C., Section 2101, to be used to modify a second personal residence which economic value does not exceed the previously adapted residence, and which can be applied for only after five years has expired from the original allowance."

Resolution No. 691, Refer Veterans To Veterans Service Organizations Representatives.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Secretary of Veterans Affairs establish a policy whereby all veterans that seek VA medical care or inquire about other

entitlements be informed that Veterans Service Organization representatives are available for assistance with these matters.”

Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 99th National Convention, I move for the adoption of these stated resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion is in order. Is there a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CONNELL: Past Commander-in-Chief Ted Connell seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been duly made and seconded. I will call for discussion. Are there any requests for any of those resolutions to be set aside? Microphone 1, Microphone 2, Microphone 3? Seeing none, we will call for a vote.

All those in favor — I am sorry. We will go to Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DAVID FORD (Post 8852 - Louisiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to make a motion that we set aside Resolution 626 for discussion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Resolution 626 has not been recommended for approval at this time as it is written, so it has not been a part of those that have been recommended for approval.

Microphone No. 1, Microphone No. 2, Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE TIMOTHY SMITH (Post 1733 - Tennessee): I would like to have set aside Resolution No. 625.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Could you please clarify it, 625?

COMRADE TIMOTHY SMITH (Post 1733 - Tennessee): Yes, No. 625.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Resolution 625 has been requested to be set aside. Resolution 625 is set aside. Are there any other requests for set asides? Hearing no discussion, we will call for a vote. All those in favor of the resolutions proposed to be adopted will signify by saying “aye”; all opposed will signify by saying “no”. The motion carries.

I would ask at this time that the chairman come forward and read the intent of Resolution 625.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The intent of this resolution is to ensure all veterans affected by their service during the Persian Gulf War are properly treated and compensated.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I look to Microphone No. 3. You have asked that this be set aside. Actually, it is in your hands.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE TIMOTHY SMITH (Post 1733 - Tennessee): The Chairman just clarified that for me. All I really wanted to hear, coming straight from the horse’s mouth, is that the Persian Gulf veterans are not getting anything from the VA or otherwise.

I would like to ask that the VFW, being the number one veterans’ organization in the world, to lobby Congress, the President and Secretary West of the Veterans Administration to better assist all Persian Gulf veterans

and their families. Like I said, the Chairman just clarified that resolution for me and I would like to move that it be accepted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: All in favor of adopting Resolution No. 625, please say "aye"; all opposed "no". Those resolutions, including No. 625, are adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CONNELL: Next, we wish to bring to your attention the following, which were approved as amended. I would say our thanks to the staff for an excellent job of never rewriting, but sometimes changing the language but not the meaning of the resolution.

We first approach Resolution 601, Sexual Trauma Treatment For All Veterans. Unless somebody objects, I will call the number instead of the title.

Nos. 606, 608, 612, 614, 618, 619, 623, 624, 626, 630, 631, 632, 634 635, 639, 644, 645, 646, 650, 654, 661, 663, 671, and the next resolution was transferred to our committee after your Schedule of Resolutions were printed. So I will read the title and then the "resolved."

The number is 683. And the title is The Future Of Pershing Hall.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we oppose any change in present regulations covering this property that would permit its outright sale and therefore violate the original purpose of the acquisition of the property, including its original objective, that of a memorial."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move these be approved, as amended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been properly made. Is there a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, George Cramer, Post 6869, North Riverside, Illinois, I second the motion, with the exception of Resolution 663 that was inadvertently typed on the sheet, approved as amended, and the committee's recommendation is to have it rejected. So except for 663, I would second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: May I bring the maker back?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CONNELL: I will revise the motion as stated.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion and second are now in order. As to those that were read as amended, are there any questions at Microphone 1, Microphone 2, Microphone 3? Seeing none, we will call for a vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed signify by saying "no". Those resolutions, as amended, are approved.

Comrade Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Since the delegates will accept reading of just the number, I will proceed by reading the number and not the title. These are the resolutions recommended for rejection. We must have a guest.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Just testing you, George. Go ahead.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You know, I happen to know who the next guest is, so I don't mind stepping aside. These are the resolutions that were rejected: Nos. 610, 615, 617, 627, 640, 641, 642, 643, 647, 651, 652, 656, 657, 648, 659, 660, 662, 663, 664.

No. 663, if you recall, is the one that I said we inadvertently put in on the approved, as amended, and the committee recommended rejection. Nos. 663, 664 — would you like me to stop?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for yielding at this time.

INTRODUCTION OF HONORABLE MARCY KAPTUR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrades and Sisters, it is a special pleasure to introduce the distinguished Congresswoman from the Ninth District of the Buckeye State of Ohio. Our guest, Representative Marcy Kaptur, single-handedly pushed for legislation to build a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., undeniably the most significant American memorial authorized in the 20th Century, at no cost to taxpayers.

U.S. Representative Kaptur is one of only 36 women in U.S. history who have served in Congress for more than ten years.

From humble beginnings, Representative Kaptur's life mirrors the bootstrap nature of struggling families in her district. Her reputation as an independent-minded reformer on such high profile issues as campaign finance reform, lobbying reform, and stopping the flow of foreign influence and foreign money into U.S. politics has gained her the respect of many colleagues and constituents, including The Reform Party, which sought her as its vice-presidential candidate in 1996.

Representative Kaptur continues to sponsor legislation to reform the campaign finance system, including a constitutional amendment to allow spending limits on campaigns.

Since her arrival in the halls of Congress, Representative Kaptur has willingly volunteered as a judge in the VFW's "Voice of Democracy" program, a deed we are all truly grateful for.

Please join me this morning in a warm welcome for a very special friend of the VFW, the Honorable Marcy Kaptur. (Applause)

ADDRESS - THE HONORABLE MARCY KAPTUR

CONGRESSWOMAN KAPTUR: A warm good morning. What a pleasure to be here and to be introduced by my good, wonderful friend, John Moon, a son of our great Buckeye State.

All right. Good for Ohio. Also his beautiful wife that I know is here somewhere in the complex. Also to Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Thomas Pouliot and members of the Ladies Auxiliary whose leadership and

generosity are building the next generation of political leaders for our nation through the Voice of Democracy.

Your dynamic President, Connie Atkinson, and your Senior Vice-President, Jane Bingham, to all of you and all of your officers, members and friends, thank you for this very, very warm welcome.

It is a distinct honor to appear before you today to report on the consistent progress being made toward the establishment of our nation's advocacy of democracy in Washington, D.C., a permanent memorial commemorating the victory of freedom over tyranny in World War II.

But before I give you a little more details on that, I wanted to take just three minutes to state the following: Simultaneous with my appearance before your National Convention today, our office is releasing a statement that outlines my reasons for urging President Bill Clinton to take the admirable course of action in our national interest relative to his personal difficulties.

Although I will not read my statement in its entirety, let me say that the President, unlike any other public or private official in our nation, is the commander-in-chief of our armed forces. Duty, honor and country are the hallmarks against which great military might is built and leadership sustained.

The President cannot separate his responsibilities as a political leader from his responsibilities as commander-in-chief. Beyond this, the most important public question for him is how to yield some good for our nation, especially our young people out of a sad set of circumstances?

As one mother reminded me, "Marcy, we try to teach our children to do what is right, not what is easy."

President Clinton himself reminded us in his nomination acceptance speech in 1992, "We offer our people a new choice based on old values. We offer responsibility, we demand responsibility." He said, "Responsibility starts at the top. That's what the new covenant is all about."

Then in his second State of the Union Address, he said, "Tomorrow can be better than today, and every one of us has a personal moral responsibility to make it so."

William Shakespeare long ago wrote, "To thy own self be true and it must follow as the night to day thou canst be fought to any man."

Such is the time now for our President. May he be given the wisdom and the fortitude to do what is right in the end of our national interest.

In the final analysis, America's ideal and purpose will prevail and prosper because our nation and our people are stronger than any one person's ability to diminish us.

Let me say this morning that the memorial that I have been asked to talk to you about will duly honor those who served on three fronts and on the home front, and the extraordinary valor that preserved the very idea of liberty itself in this 20th Century.

As we approach the new century, it is appropriate that America

properly revere the profound period between 1939 and 1945. So long as there is an America, this hallowed ground in our nation's capital will pay homage to devotion that elevated duty, honor and country to sacred proportions.

Our words cannot fully capture internal depth when the children of freedom of those men and women who rose above common measure and brought victory over tyranny, preserving freedom for this modern generation and those that follow. Our words will fall short of the feelings we hold in our hearts and the memories that endure.

Today, a half century after the end of that awful conquest, we are lifted by the words of Lord Alfred Tennyson that "Some work of noble work may yet be done, not unbecoming men that stroll with God, come my friend. It is not too late to see a newer world."

The idea of democracy often challenged but not triumphed at the close of this 20th Century demands full enlargement by the world's freedom speaker. In the 21st Century, the probability of war for territorial gain seems less likely than terror strikes and war in civil strife, diminishing world resources of food and fuel, abject poverty and disease, and the tolerance between the force.

Today, under democratic regimes that do not value human life prey on powerless people, even employing again the genocide strategy that is espoused by our World War II enemies as they seek repression rather than liberty. So we must ask ourselves as we celebrate the sacrifices of our veterans and humankind yet learned to build peace and democracy.

The concept of a World War II Memorial in Washington explained from the Army veteran, as an infantryman might say, Roger Burden of Ohio that fought with the 101st Army Division in the Battle of the Bulge. Roger came to me as his Representative to Congress in 1987 to ask why with all the monuments and memorials in our nation's capital there was none dedicated to World War II.

I said to him, when he first asked me, "But, Roger, wait a second. There is Iwo Jima. He said, "Wrong. That is the one service to the Marine Corps in one battle." Later that year I introduced legislation to create such a memorial. But I had little comprehension of the hurdles that lay before us.

It would take us longer to establish the memorial than it did to fight the war. As in the war, it took a lot of allies to win the fight, and it was a particular pleasure for me to work with the Veterans of Foreign Wars in our quest, your Washington Office and veterans across this country.

We can give special thanks also to our great champion for veterans in Congress, a former member of Congress and Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Sonny Montgomery of Mississippi. We worked with hundreds of members of Congress who achieved this in a clearly bipartisan effort.

This memorial will commemorate as well the service of millions of Americans who served on the home front. By the end of the war, bombs

built primarily by women were coming off poorly run assembly lines, one every 63 minutes. Overall, the U.S. war effort at home produced 296,601 aircraft, 71,060 ships, 86,388 tanks.

The memorial will honor every citizen who bought a war bond, who planted a victory garden, who used ration cards for gasoline and food, who produced the food, who produced the material to clothe and equip our troops, who sailed the ships, and flew the planes who supplied our fighting forces. It will commemorate every single person who gave their life for this country and for its ideals, and every wounded and disabled veteran, and every member who served in our armed forces. One American woman reminds us again of the war effort. Helen Bowager was a textile worker in Lowell, Massachusetts. She sewed parachute panels at the Atlantic Parachute Works, perhaps even the parachute that carried my own brave uncle into China, India, Burma front. While Helen's husband and three brothers were in the service, she worked hard, the second shift, six days a week, making parachutes for the duration of the war.

On Veterans Day, 1995, Roger Durbin and Helen Bowager stood with the President of our country, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and many dignitaries to help us dedicate the future site of the World War II Memorial along the mall in our nation's capital.

It will sit between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. It will be the most important site of this 20th Century. The site is consecrated with the soil from 16 American World War II cemeteries abroad as well as soil from Arlington Cemetery. I well remember the words of Roger Durbin that day.

He said at the end of the glorious site dedication ceremony, "I helped scatter sacred soil from cemeteries around the world upon the stars and worn grass, and that is when it became the most sacred, revered, beautiful spot in America." When the history of the nation during the 20th Century is written, without question, the victory of liberty over tyranny will rest at this century's profound achievement.

The bitter Cold War that has ensued for nearly 50 years, tested the wills and valor of freedom-loving people everywhere, most certainly here in the United States, whose people carry the burden of this arsenal of democracy for another half century. That period of liberty now triumphant as the century ends.

Finally, the great mall of our capital, our avenue of democracy, will accurately reflect the history of this 20th Century. As our nation demonstrates proper honor and profound respect for the accomplishments of this courageous, incredibly unselfish and deeply patriotic generation of Americans.

This will be a memorial to a nation and at a time that will reverberate always in the pages of history. Let me know if you can picture standing on the mall, the Washington Monument rising very high reflected in the pool of the Lincoln Memorial and the reflecting pool right in front of it, the memorial will be designed in a way that a feature of the memorial

will actually reflect in the reflection pool as the Washington Monument shadows this task.

You will have the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries coming together in the impact on that pool. There will be waterfalls, there will be laurel wreaths, there will be solemn places for consternation to celebrate what this generation has achieved for the world.

I hope we dedicate the World War II Memorial on Veterans Day early in the 21st Century. What would be more fitting than to stand at the crossroads of the 20th and 21st Centuries and dedicate a memorial to our nation's finest hour in this 20th Century.

On behalf of the people of the United States, let me personally thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars for your support and stalwart effort in helping us pass this legislation and achieving a final commitment to build this memorial. Let us move onward. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Representative Kaptur, we thank you for your spirited concern, your commitment and your dedication. The veterans in this room and the veterans across America sincerely appreciate your efforts on their behalf.

I will again call to the podium the Chairman of the Veterans Service Resolutions, George Cramer.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS (CONT'D.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I would like to beg your indulgence here. I notice that we let one drop through the cracks. If I may, I would like to back up just a little bit. These are the resolutions that were recommended for rejection.

I will go back to 649. I missed that the first time through. Nos. 649, 651, 652, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 668, 669, 670, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682. There were two resolutions submitted to our committee after the printing of your books. Once again we also recommend rejection of Resolutions 684 and 685.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates, those are the resolutions recommended for rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The recommendation of the Chairman of the Veterans Service Committee will stand unless there are motions to approve any of those recommended for rejection. There is nothing on Microphone 1. Anything on Microphone 2?

We do have someone at Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE LEROY FORD (Post 5480 - Kentucky): I am a registered National Council member now, and I would like to set aside Resolution 657.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Do you wish to move for the

adoption of No. 657?

COMRADE LEROY FORD (Post 5480 - Kentucky): I wish to move adoption of 657.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been made to move for the adoption of Resolution 657. Is there a second?

COMRADE JIM WATSON (Post 1913 - Kentucky): I will second that motion for adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion and second is for adoption of No. 657. That is in order.

I will call to the microphone the Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to this 99th Convention. The reason the committee recommended rejection of this resolution is we feel that it is not a veterans issue.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM WATSON (Post 1913 - Kentucky): I urge the body to consider the fact that we believe this is a veterans issue. This resolution is equitable retirement system of all government employees. The Tennessee Valley Authority is one that is in question here, known as TVA.

The Tennessee Valley Authority not only operates in Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and a number of Southern states, the Tennessee Valley Authority controls power plants, waterways, recreational areas and such. The Tennessee Valley Authority is not abiding by giving the job preference point system to their employees where veterans are concerned.

They are also not giving veterans entitlement after five years of employment, wherein when you complete five years of employment with the agency, you become invested in the Civil Service Retirement Program, where they can purchase their military time if they are not military retired.

The final line on this thing is we urge Congress to recognize the military service in all federal agencies and calculate the retirement benefits and employment benefits. I am not connected in any way with any federal employment, but I had in my state and in my neighboring states a number of people who are and I urge us to protect their rights and their employment. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you.

Again, Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE LEROY FORD (Post 5480 - Tennessee): I stand in support of this resolution because after a federal employee, we have the opportunity after one year to get your military service in. It would be a shame for the Tennessee Valley Authority not to give these people and comrades and sisters the opportunity to do this.

If you look at our Social Security the way it is going down, we will need all we can get in this retirement plan. Comrades, please support No. 657.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Any other discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE TONY GALLARDO (Post 131 - Nebraska): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we would like a better clarification on Resolution 651 and why it was rejected. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will call on the Chairman first before I get to Microphone No. 2.

We will go to Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOHN McNEILL (Post 5412 - Virginia): The Tennessee Valley Authority is a singular agency in the government that has really basically nothing to do with the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense. This would be best addressed to the Civil Service Administration Commission for resolution.

Therefore, I move that since it is not a veterans issue, it has nothing absolutely to do with this Veterans Affairs or Department of Defense, that we reject this amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 1; Microphone No. 2; again Microphone No. 2. Hearing no other discussions, we will call for a vote. The motion is to adopt Resolution No. 657. All those in favor of adoption of 657 will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed to Resolution No. 657 please say "no". The "nays" have it. Resolution 657 is rejected.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE SAM LOWE (Post 9439 - Wyoming): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I want to request set aside of Resolution 662 and move its adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion for Resolution No. 662 for adoption is in order. Is there a second?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CHARLES FRESORGER (Post 579 - Wyoming): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There is a motion and a second to adopt Resolution No. 662. I will call to the podium the Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 99th National Convention, let me read the "Resolved" of Resolution 662 first.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we hereby petition Congress to support full funding for all of the employment and training programs that are administered by the Department of Labor."

The reason the committee recommends rejection is we rejected it in favor of Resolution 614, which basically is the same thing, but we think it is a stronger resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Does that clarify any question that you may have at Microphone No. 3?

COMRADE ROBERT LOWE (Post 9439 - Wyoming): It does,

Comrade Commander. Thank you very much. I just want to say for the record that in my state the people who work for the Department of Labor who are veterans are absolutely an essential part of the service of the veterans of our state.

I want to do everything possible in order to support them. I speak now as Chairman of our State Veterans Affairs Commission. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Microphone No. 3. What we are doing, there has been a motion on the floor to accept Resolution No. 663, and a proper second has been made. I am sorry. That is Resolution 662. In committee that was rejected in favor of a stronger Resolution No. 614, which was adopted.

At this time, those in favor of Resolution No. 662 will say "aye"; all those opposed will say "no". The motion is rejected. Resolution 614 is in order.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE TONY GALLARDO (Post 131 - Nebraska): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise to set aside Resolution 651 and I make a motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are you making a motion to adopt No. 651, Microphone No. 1?

COMRADE TONY GALLARDO (Post 131 - Nebraska): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: We will need a second.

COMRADE DWAIN WILSON (Post 1652 - Nebraska): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Resolution No. 651, Downsizing Veterans Affairs Regional Office. The motion and the second is in order.

I call forward the Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, let me once again read the "Be It Resolved" on No. 651.

"BE IT RESOLVED, a copy of this resolution be provided to the Nebraska Congressional Delegation and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, requesting that they do everything in their power to ensure the budget of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is increased to levels that will enable the Lincoln VA Regional Office and all over divisions within the VA to perform their missions in a professional and timely manner commensurate to the service that veterans rendered to their country."

The reason that the committee rejected No. 651, it was rejected in favor of Resolution 634 which you adopted, which again we feel is a stronger resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will now go back to Microphone No. 1 for the maker of the motion or the seconder.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE TONY GALLARDO (Post 131 - Nebraska): The explanation is satisfactory.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Again, I will inform the comrades that 651 was rejected in favor of a stronger one. A vote of "aye" is to accept Resolution 651 and a vote of "no" will be rejecting it. Those in favor of No. 651 will say "aye"; those opposed "no". The motion is rejected.

Are there any other requests or motions from any of the microphones?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM BELL (Post 6873 - Texas): I request that Resolution 665 be set aside, and I move its adoption at this time.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Before I accept a second to this motion, we will see if this is rejected in favor of a more stronger one earlier. Resolution 605 was adopted earlier and it is a stronger resolution. Does the maker of the motion wish to continue with that motion and ask for a second?

COMRADE WILLIAM BELL (Post 6873 - Texas): Will you read 605?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Resolution 605 was approved.

COMRADE WILLIAM BELL (Post 6873 - Texas): I withdraw my motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been withdrawn. I look to Microphone No. 1, Microphone No. 2, Microphone No. 3. The recommendation of the committee stands. All those are rejected that were not approved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Chairman Ted Connell, Past Commander-in-Chief, and I thank you for the assignment, and we want to thank the committee and the Washington staff for their support.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Your committee is hereby dismissed, Comrades Cramer and Connell.

I call to the podium the General Resolutions Chairman, John Staum, Past Commander-in-Chief, from Minnesota.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STAUM: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Moon. I want to thank you for this appointment. We also want to tell you that I became attached to this chair back here, I didn't think I was ever going to get up here. I think our committee met here this week, I believe we met on Sunday afternoon. It seems like a long time ago now.

Our committee had General Resolutions. We met Sunday afternoon at 1:00 o'clock and we had a very fine session. I was ably assisted by Vice-Chairman John Gwizdak, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief designate from the Southern Conference; Jim Goldsmith from

Michigan, also a candidate for Junior Commander-in-Chief; and Paul Phillips from Delaware.

The staff members that were assisting us that day were Mike Gormalley, Gordon Thorson, Robert Crider and Russell Cutright. I will get into the approved resolutions right away.

The Committee on General Resolutions, the resolutions we approved for adoption are No. 301, No. 308 and No. 309. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move adoption of those resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Do we have a second to the motion?

COMRADE JOHN GWIZDAK (Post 5080 - Georgia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There is a motion and a second for adoption. Is there any discussion at Microphone No. 1, Microphone No. 2 or Microphone No. 3? Hearing none, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion carries.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Recommended for adoption, as amended, is Resolution 302 dealing with the Star Spangled Banner to remain the National Anthem. We crossed off a few words in the "Resolved", and the words that were crossed off were "well and/or influence".

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I recommend the adoption of that resolution, as amended.

COMRADE JOHN GWIZDAK (Post 5080 - Georgia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion and the second are in order to adopt, as amended. Seeing no one at the microphones, I will call for the vote. All those in favor of the amendment will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion is in order. The resolution is adopted, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Those resolutions that were rejected by the committee are Resolution No. 303, Restrict Designees On World War II Monument; No. 305; No. 306; and No. 307 was rejected in favor of 302.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any requests for adoption of those that have been recommended for rejection by the Chairman?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PAUL CROTEAU (Post 8203 - Florida): I would like to ask to have set aside for discussion Resolution No. 305.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I would ask Microphone No. 3 if you want this to be adopted, you will have to move for adoption of Resolution No. 305.

Microphone No. 3, I would ask if you want to move for the adoption that you do so with a motion.

COMRADE PAUL CROTEAU (Post 8203 - Florida): Yes, I would

like to move for the adoption of No. 305.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Your motion is in order. Is there a second?

COMRADE RAYMOND BREUNAR (Post 10139 - Florida): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion and the second is in order. I call forward the Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Resolution 305, Fund Our Veterans Earned Entitlements With Our Constitutional Power. The premise of the resolution is that the Federal Reserve System is unconstitutional, therefore, Federal Reserve Notes are not legal tender.

In Article I, Section 8, Paragraph 18 of the Constitution of the United States, it states: "To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution and the Government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof."

That paragraph allowed the United States Congress to enact the Federal Reserve Act that delegated the responsibility of the power to coin money and set its value to the Federal Reserve System in 1913. The committee felt that that explained it all and they moved for the rejection in the committee meeting.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time I would ask the sound system man to turn up the microphone system on Microphone No. 3 so that the gentleman may be able to speak.

COMRADE PAUL CROTEAU (Post 8203 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, officers and members, Resolution No. 305 is about money. We, the VFW, are primarily concerned about money for our veterans. The United States' note is money which serves us, the American people, as a servant of an exchange of value, whereas, the Federal Reserve Note serves the world merchant bankers as masters over the media, over the elected offices, our government agencies, our private industries, all salaried employees, as well as all wage earners in the United States with the banker's power of winning at the expense of the American taxpayer.

We heard yesterday that any change should be for the better. In 1964, a change was made that was a bad change. The United States note money was completely replaced by the Federal Reserve note money. Since 1964, the national debt has gone up to many trillions of dollars and the interest that the U.S. Treasury or the taxpayers must pay to the Federal Reserve bankers is up to more than \$500 billion for the fiscal year ending September 30th. That is accelerating.

The good part of the United States note is that it was issued by the U.S. Congress and it circulated back to the U.S. Treasury interest free. So, at the end of the fiscal year, the United States Government has the money that was circulated to operate the government functions.

Whereas, the bad part of the Federal Reserve Note is that the monies have not circulated back to the U.S. Treasury, so the government is

without money on September 30th and now the Congress has issued the United States note, the government could function with the United States note, because it has circulated it.

However, because the government borrowed interest-bearing Federal Reserve Notes, the government has no money, while the compound interest accelerates the increase of the national debt. It has been shown to us that the national debt has increased a billion dollars today and the interest that the taxpayer must pay to the Federal Reserve bankers exceeds \$1 million a day.

That is why Resolution 305 must be adopted so as to take advantage of the powerful gift which our forefathers granted to us in the Constitution of the United States of America. The congressional power to issue money interest free is by this Constitution. That means that it is official.

No. 305 is moral. That means that it is righteous and beneficial for the veterans. The United States note is a servant rather than a master. I move that Resolution 305 be adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Microphone No. 3. In regards to Resolution No. 305, we will look to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN WHITCOMB (Post 988 - Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in defense of this motion. I move also that it be adopted. I am very surprised, amazed actually, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars members do not know more about their Constitution and this money problem that has been going on since 1913.

The 100th Anniversary logo said, "We'd do anything for this country." Now, it is the time. Way back in 1997, Congress sent to the President for his signature a bill designated as a line item veto. Just a couple of months ago the Supreme Court of the United States handed down a decision that it was unconstitutional.

The words of Justice Antonin Scalia, who wrote the opinion for the majority, stated, and these are his words, "The Congress cannot give away their duty; they cannot give it away even if they want to. It is unconstitutional to do so."

Now, if it is unconstitutional to do so with the line item veto, it stands to reason that back in 1913 it was unconstitutional for the Congress to give away their right to coin money. I urge you very strongly, comrades, adopt this resolution. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Microphone No. 1. I will go to Microphone No. 2 and Microphone No. 3. We will go back to Microphone No. 1 on Resolution No. 305. Seeing no one at the microphones, I will call for the vote on No. 305. All those in favor of adopting 305, will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed will say "no". Resolution No. 305 is hereby rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: There is one other resolution, and that was Resolution No. 304. The resolution was to censor "60 Minutes". After quite a lengthy discussion, there was a motion to table

this and send it back to the Department of Texas. The motion to table amounts to rejection, and that's it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a request or a motion to adopt Resolution No. 304? Seeing none, the recommendation of the committee is in order. Resolution No. 304 is hereby rejected. I would ask that the General Resolutions Committee, though, still be with us because we are not going to dismiss that committee until sometime late tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Commander-in-Chief, do I understand that Resolution 303 was rejected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Resolution No. 303 was rejected.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, could we ask why it was rejected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: I thought we were done. Resolution No. 303, Restrict Designees On World War II Monument. One, Congress passed legislation authorizing the World War II Memorial. The act made it very clear that the monument was to reflect the sacrifice of all Americans.

It is underlined, all Americans, even those that served on the home front. That directive has been followed in all of the design proposals sent to the various Washington, D.C., bodies that have final approval. Given how far along this process has proceeded, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to insert a change now.

To do so would delay the project even further, thereby hindering its completion if not preventing it. Also, it already incorporates another portion of the World War II Memorial dedicated to those who died in conflict. The VFW has taken an active role in support of a special portion of the monument, a portion dedicated to our fallen comrades.

This resolution could further delay this project. As a result, those World War II veterans still alive would tragically be denied an opportunity to see it completed in their lifetime. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, may I digress for a moment here?

I had the opportunity of serving on the President's Commission for the Korean War Memorial. That memorial took almost ten years. As you remember, the Korean War lasted three years and one month. Now, I worked on that memorial and any changes that were made had to go back to square one.

Then you had to go back to all the committees, the Battle Monument Commission, the National Planning Commission, the Fine Arts Committee, and all those committees are composed of presidential appointments like myself, and most of them had quite inflated egos.

So, my friends, every time that you make a change in Washington, D.C., you have to go through all those committees. Any changes flow to

this World War II Memorial would only delay the project. I listened very intently to Congresswoman Kaptur talk this morning.

She very eloquently described what was going to be on that memorial. My comrades, let's not delay this memorial any longer. We owe that to the World War II veterans throughout this nation whom I have a deep and abiding respect. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you for that clarification.

Microphone No. 1 will be recognized again.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Past Commander-in-Chief Staum, thank you for that explanation. It clears up the resolution. We appreciate your words.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES E. NIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Several years ago a young man from El Paso, Texas, an Army veteran, joined the VFW. From the very beginning he showed that he was a natural leader. Just eight years after joining the VFW, he was elected to the position of Department Commander, the VFW Department of Texas. "Rise Higher With Nier" was his theme and he indeed took his Department higher that year, and he finished the year as an All-Department Commander.

But he didn't stop there. Jim Nier set his sights higher and in 1996 was elected to the position of VFW Commander-in-Chief. The leadership that had been so obvious here in Texas, and had led to so many achievements, was now taken to the national level. As Commander-in-Chief, Jim Nier toured the country and visited members and active duty troops around the world. Under his leadership the VFW increased its support for active duty personnel at home and overseas.

During his "Above and Beyond" year, Jim Nier called for increased vigilance against international terrorism, instituted a VFW POW/MIA initiative to further the recovery efforts in Southeast Asia, called for an extension of the President's Gulf War Illness Committee, and followed that up by asking that the presumptive period for such illnesses be extended. As a result of Jim Nier's efforts, President Clinton recognized the VFW for its leadership in the area of Gulf War illnesses.

From improved health care for veterans to beginning discussions with North Korea over the recovery of MIAs from that war, Jim Nier took our organization above and beyond. And in one of his last official acts called on our government to finalize its plan and get on with building a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Here to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation, please give him a warm VFW welcome, Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier, VFW Post 8919, El Paso, Texas.

RESPONSE - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Good morning, comrades. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Delegates to this 99th National Convention, my Fellow VFW Members and Friends: It is with much pride that I accept this VFW Distinguished Service Medal and it is particularly awarding to me to have it presented to me by my friend John Moon.

Yes, the award has been presented to me, but I accept it on behalf of those who were with me in ensuring that we had a most successful year as we began to prepare this great organization for the 21st Century.

To my Post, to my District, to the Department of Texas, to the Kansas City and Washington offices and their staffs, and most importantly to the Council of Administration and to the 54 Department Commanders who served with me, I shall always cherish your support and your friendship. To my wife, Kimmy, thank you for your love and your continued support and your understanding.

I am proud to be here this morning. I am extremely proud to have received this award. I am extremely proud to be a member of the greatest veterans organization in the world, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I am truly proud to be an American. Thank you and God bless each of you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I would ask that this be recorded in the minutes of this convention, the Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to James E. Nier, Commander-in-Chief, 1996-'97.

"In sincere appreciation and special recognition of his total dedication and commitment to the highest ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and his continuing efforts in support of its programs and purposes. Through his exceptional leadership during the 1996-'97 administrative year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars demonstrated its ability and willingness to go 'Above and Beyond' for our nation and its veterans."

Given this 2nd day of September, 1998. I will give it to you, Jim Nier. Congratulations.

...Convention Announcements. ...

NATIONAL MARCHING UNITS AND PARADE COMMITTEE WINNERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time I call to the podium Robert Brady for the purpose of announcing the award winners in the parade last night.

COMRADE ROBERT BRADY (Post 7090 - Pennsylvania): This is the report of the National Contests Committee. Lackland Base, we not only used their base but we used their active drill instructors to help with the judging. The results of those contests, the winner of the Senior Men's Color

Guards, the Silent Sixteen from Darien, Connecticut. The Commander-in-Chief will present their First Place plaque.

The ladies category, Field Competition, Senior Ladies Color Guard Champion, the Patriettes from Davison, Michigan.

Our next group of winners are the Junior ROTC classification. This is a unit that is a little bit out of turn because they have a military transport and have to get out of town as soon as they can. So the Spring Valley High School, please come forward. They are the winner of the All Girls JROTC Color Championship and represent the Department of South Carolina.

Griffin High School, will you please come forward, from Griffin, Georgia. The next four awards are won by this unit. The National Champion Junior ROTC Color Guard, the Male Unit; the Junior Open Field Contest, Griffin High School, Male Unit.

The National Championship ROTC Armed Drill Team, the National Champion All-Girl Rifle Drill Team, Griffin, Georgia. The Ladies National Championship, Junior ROTC Unarmed Drill Team from Walter Stebbins High School, Department of Ohio, Dayton, Ohio.

The results of the Ladies Nights Patriotic Rally Winners, the VFW Color Guard, the Department of Iowa.

The Best Appearing Senior Ladies VFW Auxiliary Color Guard, the Department of Arkansas. Will someone from Arkansas accept the plaque for the ladies, please.

The VFW National Ritualistic Contest will be held today at 2:00 p.m. in Plaza Room D, located on the second floor here. It is 2:00 p.m., the Ritual Competition.

Commander-in-Chief Moon, that is the extent of our report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The Assistant Quartermaster General will please come forward to announce the winners of the insurance drawing.

(Whereupon, Assistant Adjutant General Larry Maher announced the winners of the insurance drawing.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room for the Closing Ceremonies for this session today.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was had followed by the Benediction according to the Ritual.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for today's session has been conducted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: This session is hereby closed for today and we will reconvene at 9:00 o'clock a.m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 11:30 o'clock a.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
THURSDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1998

(The Fourth Business Session of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Opening Ceremonies and the Salute to the Colors.

(Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman led the assembly in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance. National Chaplain Reverend Dean Derieg gave the Opening Prayer.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you. We will begin with the Report of the Credentials Committee.

Mr. Chairman.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): This is a temporary report, comrades, as of last night. The total delegates, 13,297. The Department Commanders, 54; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 26; National Officers, 36. That is for a grand total of 13,413. This is a temporary report, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

PRESENTATION OF VFW EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO CAPTAIN GREGORY ROGERS

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Annually, the Veterans of Foreign Wars presents its Emergency Services Award to an individual for outstanding contributions to the community in the field of emergency services.

We are pleased to present this year's award to a man who has

dedicated his life to serving his community. Throughout a distinguished career, Captain Gregory Rogers has established a wide recognition for his expertise. He received an official City of Bayonne Citation in 1997 for the Fire Fighter of the Year Award.

He joined the Bayonne Fire Department on November 25, 1980. Upon completion of training, Captain Rogers served for ten years as a fire fighter. In January of 1995, he was promoted to his present position of Fire Captain.

In 1996, Captain Rogers single-handedly rescued several people from a burning building while he was off duty. He did this without the aid of protective clothing or equipment and before the Fire Department arrived. After he evacuated the people, he then assisted in fighting the fire by supplying the arriving engines with information on location of the fire and where he had already searched the building.

For his heroic act, Captain Rogers received several awards, including the Valor Award from the 200 Club of Hudson County.

Captain Rogers' actions, dedication and expertise as a fire fighter exemplify the courage and sacrifices of all emergency services personnel who serve our communities across the nation.

Yesterday, I received a letter from Fire Chief William J. Kosakowski of the Bayonne Fire Department. I quote a portion of that letter. "I would like to express my congratulations to Captain Rogers. His actions personify the professionalism the Bayonne Fire Department strives for. You make us all proud to be fire fighters."

Please welcome Captain Gregory Rogers, the 1998 recipient of the VFW Emergency Services Award.

"The Emergency Services Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Captain Gregory Rogers, Bayonne Fire Department.

"In special recognition of his distinguished career as fire fighter and in sincere appreciation for his selfless and dedicated service as evidenced by his single-handed rescue of several people from a burning building while off duty and without the aid of protective clothing or equipment, Captain Rogers' actions, dedication and experience as a fire fighter exemplifies the deeds and sacrifices of those of the emergency services who serve our communities across the nation.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 3rd day of September, 1998."

This has been signed by our Commander-in-Chief Moon and our Adjutant General Larry Rivers. Congratulations.

In addition to the Citation and Gold Medal, Captain Gregory Rogers, we would like to present to you a check for \$1,000 payable to the Bayonne Fire Project Air Lift, your charity.

RESPONSE - CAPTAIN GREGORY ROGERS

MR. GREGORY ROGERS: Thank you. Thank you very much and good morning. I am from a relatively small, densely populated and highly industrial town in New Jersey called Bayonne. Bayonne is about ten miles from New York City, neighbored by Jersey City and Hoboken, and bordered by water on three sides, a peninsula town.

Some of the old timers on the Fire Department tell me that Bayonne was the home of the PT boat, including the famous PT 109, and boats were built there and tested in our waters. I also understand that the military ocean terminal located in Bayonne invited many soldiers to enjoy their liberty time in our city which explains why we have so many taverns and bars.

In any event, I was born in Bayonne 39 years ago. I was hired by the Bayonne Fire Department 18 years ago. I served as a fire fighter for ten years, a lieutenant for five years and currently as captain for three years. It is not very often that I leave Bayonne, but recently, and to my complete surprise, I received correspondence from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander-in-Chief John Moon inviting me to be with all of you here in San Antonio at the VFW National Convention to be the recipient for the 1998 VFW Emergency Services Award.

During my flight to San Antonio, I enjoyed a quiet moment pondering why I had been selected for this award. The more I thought about it, the more I began to realize the enormity of this honor. To have been chosen as the sole recipient of the Emergency Services Award throughout the entire nation is recognition beyond my comprehension.

But to have been chosen by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, an organization comprised of war veterans, with the ultimate in search and rescue and who have made major sacrifices for this country, and in so many instances made the ultimate sacrifice, make for a humbling realization.

The realization that the true honor for me is the honor of being in the presence of so many of you fine veterans. You are truly the national heroes. You are truly my inspiration. I would like to add to that my recent feeling of the movie "Saving Private Ryan" solidifies that feeling.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all of you fine members. I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief John Moon, the New Jersey State Commander Dennis Clark, the Past New Jersey State Commander and all those that had a part in me receiving this award.

I want to especially thank Bayonne Post 226 and the City of Bayonne and the Chief of Bayonne Fire Department and its staff for all your support and consideration. I would like to extend a special thanks to Nancy Pomeroy for demonstrating the considerate hospitality of Veterans of Foreign Wars by arranging for my stay here in San Antonio. I will treasure these memories my entire life. Thank you once again and may God bless you.

PRESENTATION OF VFW J. EDGAR HOOVER AWARD,
GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO CAPTAIN FRANK F. RIZZUTO

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrades, I am pleased to present the VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award for outstanding service in the field of law enforcement to an outstanding police officer from the City of New Orleans.

Officer Rizzuto has continually displayed courage and dedicated service to the citizens of the City of New Orleans. During his service, he has received two Department Purple Heart Medals, three Medals of Commendation, and his most recent award, the Medal for Life Saving.

In addition to the Department awards, he has been honored by numerous civic organizations as well as receiving countless letters of appreciation from citizens.

Officer Rizzuto received the Department Medal for Life Saving, one of the Department's highest awards, for responding with his partner to a call of an attempted suicide on May 24, 1997. The subject jumped from the Walkway Avenue Bridge into Bayou St. John.

Disregarding his own safety, Officer Rizzuto immediately jumped into the bayou after the drowning man and successfully dragged him to shore. Officer Rizzuto's deeds, dedication and expertise as a police officer exemplify the highest standards of service and sacrifice of our nation's law enforcement officers.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to our 1998 VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award recipient, Police Officer Frank F. Rizzuto, of the New Orleans Police Department. We present the J. Edgar Hoover Award, Gold Medal and Citation to Officer Frank F. Rizzuto, New Orleans Police Department.

"In appreciation of his outstanding service, professionalism, bravery and knowledge in the field of law enforcement and in special recognition of his heroic actions as evidenced by his jumping into Bayou St. John to save an attempted suicide victim with complete disregard for his own personal safety.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 3rd day of September, 1998."

This citation has been signed by our Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon and our Adjutant General Larry W. Rivers.

In addition, Officer Frank Rizzuto will get an honorarium for \$1,000 to be donated to his favorite charity.

RESPONSE - OFFICER FRANK RIZZUTO

OFFICER RIZZUTO: Good morning. Commander-in-Chief John Moon and Distinguished Guests, the stay here in San Antonio, I have met your families and your friends. This morning I would like you to meet my

family and my friends.

First, my lovely wife and friend, Darlene Rizzuto. Also my hunting and fishing buddy, Anthony Rizzuto. Probably one of the greatest moms in the world, my mom, Edith Rizzuto. I have two sisters. One could not be here today because of a prior commitment. My sister, Loretta, made the trip. Also Ms. Ruth Ashley from the New Orleans Police Department, Public Affairs Division. Also Mrs. Madeline Morris, when in January I received the Henry Morris Award. Her husband was the Chief of Police and I served under his command.

I would like to say special thanks to Mrs. Priscilla Wilkewitz and to Charlie Wiggins, our past State Commander, and our present State Commander Landry Saucier, '98-99, and my Post Commander, Gerald Snyder, Post 8973, all from Louisiana. Last but not least, there are two other men in my life: Mr. Bubba Martin and Mr. Manuel Curry.

On that night that I jumped in that bayou to save that man's life, a good friend of mine was with me. He is now a sergeant. He has been recently promoted and serves in the Sixth District in the New Orleans Police Department. His name is Dale Albert. Without him, I would not be here today.

When I jumped in that bayou, I knew the risk I was taking at that time. When I jumped in, I knew this man was trying to kill himself and there was a risk I would not make it back alive. When I entered the water, the man tried to pull me under and tried to both drown me and himself. If it wasn't for the good voice of Dale Albert in thinking quickly. He threw me a rope and we saved that man.

I would like to read a little poem at this time.

"I never dreamed it would be me, my name for all eternity.

"Recording at this hallowed place, alas my name no more, my face.

"In the line of duty, I hear him say.

"My family now the price will pay.

"My folded flags stained with tears. We only had those few short years.

"The badge no longer on my chest, I sleep now in eternal rest.

"My sword I pass to those behind and I pray to keep this thought in mind. I never dreamed it would be me.

"With heavy hearts and bended knees, I ask all of Thee in the past, Dear God, let my name be the last."

This was written by Sergeant George Hand of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Over the past couple of months, I have lost several friends of mine on the New Orleans Police Department. I would like to take a moment and pay respect to them.

It has been an honor and a privilege to receive this award. I will wear this medal with great honor and great pride. Thank you, and may God bless you all.

PRESENTATION OF JAMES C. GATES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE
AWARD
TO MR. RICHARD C. WORMWOOD

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Officer Rizzuto, for those inspiring words.

It is now my distinct honor to present the prestigious James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Richard C. Wormwood.

He is a veteran's advocate in the truest sense of the word. Hired in the early seventies as a local Veterans Employment Representative in Rutland, Vermont, he quickly developed a rapport with employers, enabling him to become one of the most successful Veterans Employment Representatives in the State of Vermont.

Through Rick's devotion to veterans as a local Veterans Employment Representative and then as Assistant Manager, Rutland Office of the Department of Employment and Training, he has always met its federally-mandated veterans' preference goals.

He is an exceptionally innovative, highly motivated and extremely effective leader who revolutionized the way the Rutland office served the employment and training needs of the veteran community.

Rick has been instrumental in developing computer capability; implementing a veterans' newsletter; establishing a veterans' network; producing video resumes; conducting Job Fairs; assisting homeless veterans. The list goes on and on.

Comrades, I now present to you a gentleman whose efforts have enhanced the Veterans Employment Service in the State of Vermont and has gone that extra mile for our nation's veterans, Richard "Rick" Wormwood.

The citation that we present is the "James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award presented to Richard C. Wormwood, Veterans Program Manager, Department Employment and Training.

"In recognition of extraordinary achievement and exceptional leadership in advancing employment opportunities for our nation's veterans and distinguished service in promoting the goals and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

It is presented this 3rd day of September, 1998. It has been signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Mr. Wormwood.

RESPONSE - MR. RICHARD WORMWOOD

MR. WORMWOOD: Commander-in-Chief Moon and National Employment Director Magill and Comrades — I still remember the distinguished guests — thank you very much. I humbly accept the James C. Gates Award on behalf of all the local veterans employment

representatives and all of the program specialists.

I accept this award at a time much work still remains to be done to assure that all America's unsung heroes, our nation's veterans are proud, productive and fully employed in the world's greatest nation. From a small town of less than 20,000 people and from a small state, Vermont, from where one of our most prominent citizens, President Calvin Coolidge is remembered as Silent Cal, I was somewhat at a loss for words today, so I turned to one of Vermont's other natives Robert Frost, who wrote the poem, "The Road Not Taken."

Part of it reads as follows:

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could where it bent in the undergrowth then took the other, just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear."

But for many American veterans, that road was not all that fair, Iwo Jima, Normandy, the Argonne Forest, and then later the Chosin Reservoir and the cold Korean winters, and then to the jungles of Vietnam, and more recently Kuwait and the desert sands of the Persian Gulf.

For me, there was never any question about any of the services, although I did grow up knowing about World War II from my father and my uncle. For me, the real important role came in the summer of 1971, after I had gotten out of the army and began looking for my first civilian job.

Every morning I made it a point to type up and mail out a minimum of three resumes and cover letters, but week after week, for almost three months, the only response I ever got was "No, thank you." Finally, a well-intended friend who worked in the Resource Department of a local business offered to redo my resume. I gladly accepted her offer. I know her advice was well-intended.

After reviewing my resume, this respectable business person suggested I delete all mention of military experience from my resume. Needless to say, I rejected this lady's advice, but I still often talk about her and the profound effect her well-intended advice had on my career.

Thanks to Katie, I began looking at the human service jobs and a month later I went to work for the Vermont Job Service as a Local Veterans Employment Representative. Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by and that has made all the difference.

Yes, comrades, it brought me to San Antonio today but I have worked and we face new challenges as well. We must continue to advocate for and focus the national spotlight on the homeless veterans. We must continue to apply political pressure on licensing and certification procedures for separating veterans so they don't have to undergo costly and redundant training to qualify for civilian jobs.

Now that H.R. 1385 has been signed into law, we must remain ever vigilant about safeguarding veterans preference rights on both the local and state work force assessment force that will be charged with

designing and overseeing future programs for adults, youths and dislocated workers. Comrades, our journey is far from over. We still have miles to go before we finish. Thank you and God bless America.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Mr. Wormwood. In addition to your citation, we have an honorarium for \$1,000 that I am sure you will use to assist veterans somewhere.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL LARGE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The Veterans of Foreign Wars is now honored to bestow its Largest Employee of the Year Award to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Topeka Systems Maintenance Terminal. Centrally located in Topeka, Kansas, the Topeka Systems Maintenance Terminal is one of three mechanical department heavy repair facilities and is one of the largest and oldest rail repair shops in the industry.

Of the approximately 700 people employed at the maintenance terminal, about 450, or 64 percent, are military veterans. Of this number, approximately 70 are service-connected disabled veterans.

Before their merger, both Burlington Northern and Santa Fe exhibited uncommon support for our nation's military. During Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Burlington Northern painted one of their locomotives with camouflage paint and put yellow ribbons on all their locomotives.

Santa Fe flew flags on all their locomotives and cabooses. Both railroad extended benefits in salary to cover their full-time employees who served on active duty during the Persian Gulf War, not just the two weeks that were required.

There is no doubt that the Topeka maintenance terminal has a long-term commitment to the hiring of military veterans. The maintenance terminal has proven, and is continuing to prove their commitment to veterans.

Accepting the award for the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe, Topeka Systems Maintenance Terminal is shop superintendent, Monte Johnson.

The certificate reads, "The National Large Employer of the Year Award presented to Burlington Northern Santa Fe Topeka Systems Maintenance Terminal, Topeka, Kansas, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans."

This has been signed September 3, 1998, by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General. Congratulations.

RESPONSE - MR. MONTE B. JOHNSON

MR. MONTE JOHNSON: I had a gentleman pick me up at the

airport yesterday evening and he gave me a brown envelope. It brought back *deja vu*. Then I started remembering that I was released from active duty 30 years ago this month. They asked me to prepare a short two to three-minute speech, and you will not get all two or three minutes of it.

I accept this award in behalf of the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railway and we appreciate this. I have to be to some other events and I wanted to just say my piece from the heart if I could. We do a lot of things on the railroad today. The emergency firemen, with regard to deregulation, we look for the right kinds of people. We really do.

If you can envision in your mind a triangular. At the peak of the triangular hangs the word "Safety". Over one corner, the right-hand corner, hangs the word "Quality". On the opposite corner hangs the word "Production". I talk to all the new hires that come into our facility. We have 700 people.

I talk to all the new folks and shortly thereafter I call them in individually and put them on the carpet, as I call it, and we go through some things and we discuss how they feel about the railroad, their new environment. If you could imagine safety, everything we must do has to be labeled to safety.

It has to be addressed with quality. It has to be addressed with production to meet the system requirements. Safety is of the utmost importance of everything we do in the railroad today. We will not be in business if we can't do it safely.

Things that I look for when I am doing the hiring, veteran-type situations just automatically come to mind. Technical training, the technical training is already there in most cases. We have to brush it up and direct it toward the direction we need it, whether it is in the repair of freight cars or rolling stock, whether it is in regards to the repair and servicing of diesel locomotives.

The discipline is already there with the veterans. I spent a couple of years in the military and I know about discipline. When a gentleman gives me a brown envelope, I take it and I open it. We go from there. You talk about commitment and dedication, that's clear in the veterans. Half of your work is already done for you.

Lastly is loyalty. The folks are loyal. As I announced in earlier handling of one of these, it is we, the employer, that should be giving you folks the award for providing us with the good employees. I appreciate this very much. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Monte. In addition, we have an honorarium to the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railway Foundation for \$1,000.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL SMALL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: It is now my

honor to present the VFW National Small Employer of the Year Award to Lear Siegler Services of Milton, Florida, in recognition of its outstanding achievements in hiring, promoting and training veterans.

Lear Siegler Services is exclusively committed to providing aircraft maintenance and aviation services. For the past 25 years the company has established an enviable record in providing services to the Department of Defense, several other United States government agencies, more than 25 foreign governments, and many companies in the private sector, as well.

Lear Siegler has established an extremely close working relationship with the Job Service Office of Milton, the result being that the vast majority of its employees are veterans.

Of the 18 newly-hired employees brought aboard last year, 16 were veterans. This outstanding company is to be commended for its utilization of local veterans employment representatives and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is honored to present the National Small Employer of the Year Award to Lear Siegler Services. Accepting the award is Paul Stelzner, the company's Personnel Manager.

The citation that we are to present reads, "National Small Employer of the Year Award presented to Lear Siegler Services, Incorporated, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans."

This has been signed the 3rd day of September, 1998, by Commander-in-Chief Moon and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. PAUL D. STELZNER

MR. PAUL STELZNER: I am just going to say a few words. Being a veteran myself, it is really a great honor for me to be representing the company accepting this award on behalf of all our employees. Our employees is what makes our company work.

It is the unique blend of the veterans versus the non-veterans that we have that make the professionalism of our company. Just to make a point, you out there will probably appreciate this. Since December, 1981, when we really started contract maintenance and to this date we have had over 1.2 million hours of maintenance-free accident hours. That tells you about the caliber of the people we have working for us, the veterans.

Certainly, proof of another point to us, because I had to call the office last night, and they had 116 aircraft in the hanger and did it in less than two hours. Let me tell you, folks, the training, the education, the professionalism of the veterans, you just can't speak highly enough of them. Thanks for training them and thanks for the Milton Job Service for giving us a bank and pool of people to pull from. Enjoy the rest of the convention. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We have an

honorarium for Lear Siegler Services, Incorporated, for \$1,000.

MR. PAUL STELZNER: It will go back into the community. Thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much. We are very pleased to present these awards to the large and small employers for the work they do in hiring veterans.

MR. PAUL STELZNER: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL LOCAL OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AWARD

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: We are now honored to recognize the Pierce County Lakewood Job Service Center of Tacoma, Washington, as the recipient of the National Local Office Service Award.

The Pierce County Lakewood Job Service Center has not only excelled in finding jobs for veterans but has truly become an outstanding member of the community.

The Lakewood Job Service Center is the only job service center to provide full employment service on any Army installation, Air Force Base or Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. They initiated a program called "The Year of the Veteran" which has now been expanded to 43 other states along with Guam, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

The Lakewood Job Service Center has a close working relationship with small and large employers in their area resulting in exclusive referral agreements with many of them. Each year the Lakewood Job Service Center contacts over 1,000 employers, giving veterans the opportunity for gainful employment.

Their accomplishments clearly demonstrate that the Pierce County Lakewood Job Service Center has excelled in its service to veterans and deserves recognition by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Here to accept the award is the Local Veterans Employment Representative, Sal Cantu.

The citation reads, "National Employment Service Office Award presented to Pierce County Lakewood Job Service Center, Washington State Employment Security, in recognition and appreciation for meritorious professional employment service rendered to veterans."

This has been signed this day, September 3, 1998, by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. SAL CANTU

MR. SAL CANTU: Well, I have got my envelope here. As all of you know, when you get your envelope, because you have seen it in the service for years, the envelope tells you where to go. It gave me a real push that here is my orders.

Basically, what I want to do is to thank the VFW for considering us as an office that has done the job for veterans. As all of you know, employment is the main thing in this country. Without employment, we are not going anywhere. One of the things that our office is really good at is trying to get veterans employed in the State of Washington.

We have over 650,000 veterans. Our offices in Ft. Lewis deal with about 15,000 veterans a year. The majority of them are disabled veterans. There are over 300,000 or 400,000 veterans that are helped every year, just with what you guys are doing. When I came over here, the veterans we are representing, and the shirt I have got on here for the work study program, is just one of the events that we hold every year.

This event is where we are going to have this year for the VA Work Study Program. It is a program that very few people know about, and when the Work Study knew I was coming here and that we were running this across the country this year, they said, "Take something down there and show those guys what we are doing."

The VA Work Study or the people that work in VA offices, in military and veteran hospitals, and in employment offices, and they get to see millions of veterans every year. They are the ones, the little guys that nobody really pays attention to.

They get minimum wage while they are going to school. They are veterans. The majority of them are disabled. A lot of them are with over 50 percent disabilities. These are the guys that are out there that nobody else knows, but are guys that are really helping the veterans and the families of all the veterans.

We are real proud to get this award and be recognized for what all of these guys do out there. I am just a representative from the office and I want to thank you.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: In addition, we would like to present an honorarium, in the amount of \$1,000. No doubt, you will continue to use this to assist veterans. Thank you.

MR. CANTU: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF OUTSTANDING VA HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: The National Hospital Committee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has established an award recognizing an Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year. This award is presented to a VA employee who was nominated by a VFW Post for taking those extra steps and providing exemplary service to veterans and their families.

I am pleased to recognize this year's recipient, Ms. Judy Hamilton, a licensed practical nurse at the Fayetteville, Arkansas, VA Medical Center. Ms. Hamilton, assigned to the outpatient triage area, evaluates the severity of a patient's illness.

With compassion, understanding and professionalism, she works closely with patients in waiting areas to ensure that they are not in any distress.

Ms. Hamilton is courteous, efficient and highly competent in dealing with patients and their families. She knows when to circumvent routine processing procedures for patients who present themselves with any type of life-threatening symptoms.

Possessing a wonderful disposition and displaying a warm comforting smile, she cares about her patients' well-being all the time.

It is with great pride that I present this year's Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Ms. Judy Hamilton from the Fayetteville, Arkansas, VA Medical Center.

The citation reads: "Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider Award presented to Judy Hamilton in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding VA Health-Care Provider of the Year."

This has been signed this day, September 3, 1998, by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MRS. JUDY HAMILTON

MRS. HAMILTON: Greetings from Fayetteville, Arkansas. I have spotted Arkansas way over there. Hello. I want to just thank you for this honor. I am truly humble. Also, I want to thank you for all the dedicated and very hard-working veterans of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that we have in our hospitals. Without you, we couldn't do all the work that is assigned for us to do.

You are very helpful, unselfish giving of your time and unselfish spirit, and I appreciate that very much. Thank you, too, for helping me care and helping all of us care for our fellow veterans.

Finally, I can't go without saying I must thank the Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior, for giving me the ability to do what I do. Without him, I am nothing. May God bless you, our veterans, may God bless our country and protect it and have mercy on America. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much. We also would like to present you with an honorarium in the amount of \$500.

MRS. HAMILTON: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: This year we are honored to present the VFW Outstanding Community Health-Care

Provider of the Year Award to Mrs. Catherine O'Dougherty of Kinnelon, New Jersey.

Mrs. O'Dougherty is a certified hospice nurse with the Compassionate Care Hospice Company in Clifton, New Jersey. Her normal duties involve providing such things as family supportive care, pain management and bereavement counseling. She helps her patients live the last days of their lives in comfort, and after the final hour has passed, she assists the family with the final arrangements.

Displaying compassion and understanding, she is an exemplary care provider who gives of her time to help people in her community.

With a gentle, sensitive and comforting manner, she works tirelessly to resolve community needs. Families of deceased patients continue to call her with thanks and appreciation for the care she has provided their loved ones.

She is a true healer who will never stop helping until the sick and distressed receive a ray of her spirited love and compassion. Mrs. O'Dougherty has gone beyond her normal responsibilities and boundaries to provide comfort to those in need.

I am honored to present this year's VFW Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year Award to Mrs. Catherine O'Dougherty of Kinnelon, New Jersey.

The citation reads, "Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider Award presented to Catherine O'Dougherty in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Community Health-Care Provider of the Year."

It has been signed this 3rd day of September, 1998, by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MRS. CATHERINE O'DOUGHERTY

MRS. O'DOUGHERTY: First, I would like to thank a special person that is with me today, my husband, Danny, for putting up with me going out in all different areas in my community and different hours in the middle of the night. He also helps me drive when I have difficult weather to families that were in crisis or when a patient has expired. He also helps me comfort the patient and kind of helps me after I come back and am kind of drained.

Also, I am really honored to receive this award and I would just like to thank the VFW and the delegates and officers, and especially another special person who is in our audience, Lou Pella, who is also a delegate, and his wife for coming with me and supporting me, and also supporting my work in my community.

I really hope I can continue to promote good health care even if it is at the end of your life, because we are only going into a next life. So thanks again to everybody, and I will continue to promote better health

care to veterans and their families. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Catherine. In addition, we would like to present you with this honorarium of \$500.

MRS. O'DOUGHERTY: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: It is a great pleasure for me to present the VFW Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award. This is the fifth year the VFW has presented an award recognizing an individual for exemplary service as a health care volunteer.

This year's recipient is Mr. Charles "Ben" Napier, who is a volunteer for the veterans of Northern Georgia. Ben works closely with VFW Post 3679, who submitted him for this award. He is a highly-dedicated volunteer and a hard-working advocate for veterans.

His ability to provide needed comfort items for the VA Hospital and its patients is exceptional. No veteran in need is left to fend for themselves.

Equally important, is the amount of time he spends visiting veterans, not only in their homes, but at the VA, private hospitals and nursing homes. He makes it a routine to visit at least one facility each day, and if time permits he will visit several facilities just to let patients and residents know that someone cares about them.

You can call on Ben for any type of assistance knowing he usually delivers within 24 hours. He is known throughout Northern Georgia as the man to get the job done. He is a true friend of all veterans and their families.

I am proud to present this year's VFW Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award to Charles "Ben" Napier of Rossville, Georgia.

The citation reads, "Outstanding Volunteer award presented to Charles B. Napier in special recognition of your individual achievements in support of the program and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year."

This is dated September 3, 1998, and signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

Mr. Napier.

RESPONSE - MR. CHARLES NAPIER

COMRADE NAPIER: I would like to thank the local Post in Georgia, my Post, that is sitting back here on the back row. I want to thank every man out there. If it wasn't for you, what you did, I would not be able to be up here today. I want to thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, and I appreciate everybody.

I don't know anything else to say, fellows. When you go back home, try to get a veteran in your organization. We need every man. Thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: In addition, we would like to give this honorarium of \$500. I know you will put it to good use.

COMRADE NAPIER: Thank you very much, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Moon assumed the chair.)

INTRODUCTION OF MR. JIM CHANCELLOR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I ask you this morning to please welcome James Chancellor, a Vietnam veteran and a VFW member of Post 6498, who is here to present a military service ring he designed and created in recognition of those who have served in our armed forces.

Now, Jim Chancellor, from the great state of Indiana.

PRESENTATION - MR. JIM CHANCELLOR

COMRADE JAMES CHANCELLOR: Hello, friends. Thank you once again for having me back this year to make this very special presentation of the VFW veteran's ring to our incoming National Commander. Each year I speak to you about several different things.

Early on in Chicago, with Billy Ray, I talked to you about the need to take down all road blocks and welcome the Vietnam veteran into our organization so we might address the issues that that war produced, I talked to you about what we needed to do as an organization. We needed to be a political voice, be united and be one political voice.

Several years ago, I talked to you about responsibility, quoting the poem from Flanders Field: To your hands I pass the torch, to be yours to hold high. Well, this year I am going to break that down from "we" to "I". I am going to tell you what James Chancellor is going to do this coming year.

I am going to tell you what I am going to do for the veterans. Before I tell you that, I must tell you why I have this change of heart from "we" to "me". Last year, I attended a funeral in Paducah, Kentucky, of a friend of mine named Jerry. Jerry and I served together in Vietnam.

We were both crew chiefs with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. I only saw Jerry one time since Vietnam, but I talked to him often and I knew quite a bit about him. I knew he was a God-fearing man. I knew he loved his country, he was honest and a caring father.

When I got to the funeral home, I didn't know very many people, and I thought that I would listen on some conversations and try to find out how other people felt about Jerry. They were all pretty much the same.

Jerry was outspoken, Jerry had strong convictions to what he believed in.

Jerry would let you know immediately how he stood on an issue. He was a patriot and he believed in what our forefathers fought for. When I left that funeral that day, I thought, gee, that is a great way to be remembered, an honest, caring man, with strong convictions that is not afraid to get up on his soapbox and tell people what he believes in. I dedicated a new way of life that day to Jerry and to myself.

So with that said, let me tell you what I am going to do for the coming year. I am going to spearhead and work hard to institute a plan for all combat and combat area veterans in the great state of Indiana for lifetime medical and educational benefits. We have deserved these benefits.

They have been paid for in full by courage, sacrifice and honor. Preventative maintenance has been the less-expensive way. We need to institute this plan as soon as possible. If a veteran, regardless of his age or income, needs to go to the hospital for physical or psychological reasons, he needs to go. We need to get this done.

My children both went to college on my Purple Heart benefit. I don't see why I can't. I think that if a World War II or Korea veteran wants to go back to college, if he wants to further his education, or if he gets laid off and he needs to re-educate, he needs to be able to do that in any state-sponsored school. I am not speaking of room and board or any special treatment. I am talking about reduction of tuition and class costs. That is all.

I would like to talk to you about a movie called "Saving Private Ryan." "Saving Private Ryan" has a double-edged sword with it. I am sorry for the World War II veterans that are struggling with this ugly war again, but on the flip side of that sword this movie has shown young Americans what it really cost to be free.

It has shown the sacrifices of the World War II veterans. I have a young friend enrolled in Lowell, Indiana, that is 17 years old. He went to that movie and he came back and he was dumfounded. He said, "Jim, it was terrible." He said, "The first 25 minutes of that movie was graphic and intense and was terrible."

He said, "If that movie is even close to reality, I want nothing to do with war. I want nothing to do with being a veteran who might be called to defend this country." The movie has had a major result. There are now 800,000 World War II veterans that might be struggling with the war.

Fifty years later, shell shock, post-traumatic stress or battle fatigue, or whatever you want to call it has raised its ugly head again. I lecture on post-traumatic stress and the effect that war has on veterans in high schools and colleges. I think all of us need to do that, too.

I would like you to go home to your universities and call people. I would like you to call professors in the History Departments and say we need to educate our young Americans, our decision-makers of tomorrow on the long-lasting effects of war and the sacrifice made by the veterans.

When they turn to you and say who will come to our universities to speak, you tell them Jim will. I will gladly travel to and lecture at any university that is willing. I will coordinate that with the local VFW Post so that interested students and professors might meet the local veterans and get a better perspective of what debt they have paid, what the truest price of freedom is.

I know that fighting for these benefits many questions will be asked. I know that I am going to have a tough fight, but I pledge my time and my efforts. I realize I am going to have to show the elected officials the difference between why and how. They have traditional answers to all questions is why it can't be done and what we need to do is teach them how it can be done.

Once all of their questions are asked and I have answered them all, I will simply ask them one question. I am sure most of you have heard it before. Why is it that our convicted felons sleep in dry, warm beds? They have access to our libraries.

They can continue their education without any cost and have medical available to them. Our homeless combat veterans sleep in cardboard boxes. I would gladly answer their questions if they would publicly answer mine.

Now for the primary reason I am here today. I am here to present a Vietnam veteran's ring to our incoming National Commander. The Vietnam veteran's ring is worn internationally. It is worn all across the world, Australia, Germany, Japan and in every state in the United States.

It stands for, "I know, I understand and I care." I know about war because I have been there. I understand what it can do to you and your families, and I truly care about the veterans and the future of America. I don't want this ring to be worn by all veterans.

I want this ring to be worn by all veterans that care, that will take the time to talk to another veteran who might be struggling with the whys and why nots. Talk to our youth and young Americans, our decision-makers of tomorrow.

Early on, I talked to you about how I would like to be remembered, an honest, caring man, a person who is not afraid to get up on the soapbox and tell you how he feels. I share with you my commitment for the coming years. Our incoming National Commander is all of these and more.

Duty, honor and love of our country are just not just words to him but a way of life. That is this type of leadership that has led the VFW in the past and it is this type of rich traditional leadership that will lead us in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and friends, I am very honored and pleased to present to the incoming National Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot in the presentation of the Vietnam veteran's ring.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much for this ring. I accept it on behalf of all of the veterans of the

Veterans of Foreign Wars. Whenever I wear this ring and whenever I see it, I will remember your charge to know, to understand, to hear and care.

I will urge us to know and care about veterans, all our members and every veteran in the United States. We will be concerned about health care and we will be concerned about entitlements. We will be concerned about the homeless veterans. This ring will be a constant reminder. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: And it is now my pleasure this morning to present an award to Mr. Chancellor in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the veterans of our country. On behalf of our membership, I would like to present the VFW Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. Jim Chancellor.

The Certificate reads in part: "In appreciation of his support for the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and in special recognition of honoring the incoming Commanders-in-Chief by the presentation of a military service ring depicting their service to our country.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 3rd day of September, 1998."

This has been signed by John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

COMRADE CHANCELLOR: Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO GEORGE F. SARVER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Throughout the history of the VFW, the success of conventions like this one and conferences and other major business meetings of the organization have benefitted from the services of a group of comrades known as the National Sergeants-at-Arms.

They take care of more details than you will ever see, but because they are here everything flows smoothly and there is always order and decorum at our meetings. It is not very easy. It requires long hours of hard work, and it takes a certain type of dedicated individual to fulfill the requirements of the job.

And it also requires the dedication and hard work of that person known as the Sergeant-at-Arms, the one who is in charge of the entire detail, their training, their performance, their evaluation. This individual puts in long hours, does more work and carries more responsibility.

For 29 years, we were most fortunate in having as our National VFW Sergeant-at-Arms an individual who took the position and then refined it to the point of perfection. In other words, he rewrote the book and made everything better. That is what leadership is all about, and George Sarver was a leader in everything he did for this organization.

A Korean War veteran, who served in the United States Army, George Sarver was appointed Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms by Past

Commander-in-Chief Rich Homan, in 1968. In 1983, Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson appointed him National Sergeant-at-Arms, a position he held until our 98th National Convention last August.

Now retired, he continues to serve through his very active membership in VFW Post 402, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

For the presentation of the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation, please give a warm VFW welcome to our most recent Past National Sergeant-at-Arms, George Sarver, from the great state of Pennsylvania.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to George F. Sarver in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of nearly three decades of distinguished and unselfish service to the officers and delegates of the National Conventions and Conferences of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, fulfilling with unparalleled dignity, indisputable discipline and impeccable protocol, the duties and responsibilities of the offices of Assistant National Sergeant-at-Arms and National Sergeant-at-Arms of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 3rd day of September, 1998."

This has been signed by me, John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - COMRADE GEORGE F. SARVER

COMRADE SARVER: Oh, boy. Please, everybody be seated. I just want to take a couple of minutes to start with the Past Commander-in-Chief Rich Homan, who promoted me and placed me on the sergeants. Of course, Julian Dickenson told me when I got there, if I ever made a mistake he was going to break my yankee neck.

I was a little bit cocky and I made up my mind I would not make mistakes. Only God can say that. I don't have the right to say that, but I did. However, there are people I have to take the time and commit suicide by trying to remember to thank, and I am going to attempt that.

After Rich Homan, I was put on to the sergeants by Ray Gallagher. He was the one that probably cemented the appointment. Then finally, we come down to John Staum, and I am going to keep this very short and brief. I went to John Staum when he was coming to Pennsylvania for the Past Commanders Banquet in Uniontown, which was a mammoth affair.

I said, "John, we have got to do something with these uniforms, these khaki jackets and the brown boots and shoes are out, and we can't get khakis and they are the same color. I want to change the uniform of the sergeants to one complete uniform where we all are alike." He said,

"Do it."

That in turn put me back in contact with Howard Vander Clute, who I might add has just been an absolute blessing to a man in my position and any of you sergeants. You all know what Howard Vander Clute has done for all of us. Anyhow, he said, "What you are proposing is probably \$30,000 or \$40,000 in the budget."

I said, "I want it." There was no argument, no problem. Howard, being a good executive as he was, Russell Cutright came into the picture and I was to get the sizes and dimensions, and Russell Cutright, dealing with the Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, procured all of the Sergeants-at-Arms' uniforms. That is the reason that you have the most up-to-date and modern dress is because of the foresight of this organization.

Then further on comes Larry Rivers, the next appointed Adjutant General, and he, too, contributed mightily to the sergeants. Prior to that, we used to work from 6:30 in the morning until sometimes 10:30 or 12:00 o'clock at night. Going back, there was the parade, the competition, the major banquets and the Commander's Ball, which lasted from 6:00 to 11:00 or 12:00.

Consequently, we were gone from 6:30 in the morning until 7:00, 8:00, 9:00 or 10:00 o'clock at night. In the interim of that, if you had a minute off, the Secret Service and the White House Security would come and say I want as many of your men as I can get. We are going to brief you and there will be three hours of briefing, and by the time the President or the Secretary showed up, or whomever, and by the time it happened, they said, "Sergeants, do what you want to do, but just don't put your hand on the President."

You all know that drill and how boring it got, but Larry said that will stop. If you have anything to say to these men, you will say it to me and I will take care of it with the sergeants. Then life got easier.

My great Department back there, will you-all please rise so I can thank you from this podium? Thank you very much for your dedication. This is a tremendous group of people. Thank you.

I have one more thing that I wanted to convey to you. I am being honored today with this award. It should be divided with all of these people standing in front of me. Incidentally, it is nerving the hell out of me, fellows. I am not used to this kind of attention.

You are supposed to be hollering at me. Never, never, as long and boring as the job got, did any of these people ever once get argumentative or cross. They didn't like it sometimes and they walked away, but they did it and they did it so admirably that I am being honored today as being a great leader when it was their work and their mechanics that put me here and put this medal around my neck.

In closing, I want to say that I have had many accolades and I have been complimented to no end. Mother, will you come here, please. This is my wife, Margaret. Every man, when he gets to the microphone and he

is honest, he stands there and he says, "Without the help of my wife."

Well, I would have never been able to live without her. Let me tell you just a couple of stories. The reason I went through the scenario with John Staum in the changing of the uniforms and everything, that also meant those little brown boots and old brown shoes had to be polished and spit-shined every day.

So after working until 11:00 or 12:00 o'clock at night or parading until 2:00 o'clock in the morning, I would come home and I would drop in bed. I would sleep and at 4:30 this woman would be up spit-shining the boots starting at 4:30 in the morning. It was not me. She did that so I could sleep until 6:30 in the morning. That is just the kind of help and dedication that these people, my family and my wife and all these people here have helped me.

John Stang, who under the direction of Howard Vander Clute, and Larry Rivers said, "You will deal with John Senk," and I know I aggravated them. I had them nervous at times with requests and things, but I want to tell you something, John Senk never once said "no" to anything the sergeants ever asked, requested or wanted to do.

So in closing, once again, this is the second time I have said it now, Andy Warhol once said, "Every citizen on the face of this earth has 15 minutes in the sun and glory." My fellow comrades and sisters, you are giving me my day in the sun, my 15 minutes of glory, and I thank you, and God bless you for letting me serve.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Thank you, Comrade Sarver, for all you have done for us. I salute you on behalf of the team.

PAST NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: During this Convention, from time to time, we have been very fortunate to have with us the distinguished group of gentlemen who have exceeded in many, many ways over the years in the history of our Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I would ask them all to rise so you can give them one large round of applause. Some of them have registered and one did have to leave, we know, and there is an illness that makes one go home. They are Billy Ray Cameron, John M. Carney, Ted C. Connell, George R. Cramer, James R. Currieo, Arthur J. Fellwock, Robert E. Hansen, Walter G. Hogan, Cooper T. Holt, Allen F. Kent, James F. Kimery, Clyde A. Lewis, John W. Mahan, James E. Nier, Clifford G. Olson, Eric E. Sandstrom, Joseph A. Scerra, R. D. Smith, Jr., Raymond R. Soden, Paul A. Spera, Norman G. Staab, John J. Stang, John S. Staum, Howard Vander Clute, Thomas C. Walker, Robert E. Wallace. These are all Past Commanders-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Comrades, let's give them a great round of applause. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For many years and in many positions, the next individual has served the Veterans of Foreign Wars and served it well: from Post to District, to Department and in many national positions. He has furthered the aims, the ideals and the purposes of our organization.

During his year as Commander-in-Chief in 1988-1989, his theme was "We Remember." In everything he did he saw that American veterans were never forgotten. He took their message to Congress, he took their message to the White House, and he took their message to the governmental agencies responsible for veterans affairs.

Following his years as Commander-in-Chief, he was appointed Executive Director of the Washington, D.C. office. In that position, he was the VFW point man in Washington, D.C. He continued to fight for the veterans' rights and veterans' benefits.

In 1994, he was appointed to the VFW as Adjutant General, the individual charged with the day-to-day operation of our organization. He quickly brought the VFW into computer age, and in doing so increased staff efficiency and service to our members.

As Adjutant General his impact is felt throughout our organization. "We Remember" was not just the theme for one year, it was his creed and his commitment. Larry Rivers never forgot the veterans and the veterans will never forget Larry Rivers. Please give our Adjutant General Larry Rivers a very warm VFW welcome as he comes to the podium to receive the VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation.

It reads, "In special recognition of the extraordinary service and as our articulate spokesman and exceptional advocate for our nation's veterans during his two and one-half decades of distinguished and effective leadership which he was accorded all-American honors with the Department of Louisiana in 1981, elected to the office of Judge Advocate General in 1981-'82, appointed to serve as the National Chief of Staff in 1983-'84, followed by his election and advancement through the chairs of the highest office of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1988-1989, during which time his motto 'We Remember' said it all, and in sincere appreciation for continuing to serve the organization with great dignity, high esteem and unparalleled expertise, and innovation for another nine years as the Executive Director of the VFW Washington office and the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 3rd day of September, 1998." It is signed John E. Moon, Commander-in-Chief.

RESPONSE - ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, thank you

very much for that recognition, and I do appreciate it. You know, I guess I am going through what many of you in your professional lives and working lives have gone through as well. I wondered as these days approached exactly what kind of emotions I would have when this day finally arrived.

I think probably my emotions are a lot like yours in that when this time comes you remember the good things and the good times, and the outstanding opportunity that you have had, and you remember friends. You certainly do not remember the stressful times or the very difficult times, or you do not dwell on those that wish you ill.

You try to think of what is in the future and that is exactly what Connie and I are doing as we get on with our lives. I do not want to try to go through all the people that deserve special recognition that have played a part in my life and career over these past 12 years on the national level, and eight or nine years before that on the state level.

But if you will bear with me for just a moment, I do think that it is necessary that I give special recognition to my home Post in Alexandria, Louisiana, and those members who have been so loyal to Connie and I over the years, and to my State of Louisiana who has always been supportive in all that I have done, and certainly to my great Southern Conference.

For fear that I would leave out individuals, I do not want to call names, but there are several I think I must. I particularly want to thank Wally Hogan, who served in the chairs as the Junior and Senior when I was the Senior and Commander-in-Chief, and a man for whom I have great admiration and respect, not only for his service in wartime but for his friendship and for his hard work on behalf of the VFW, who asked me to come to Washington to represent us there and gave me the opportunity to do that.

Particularly, these past two years with Jim Nier and John Moon, you know, I have this old saying that I try to weigh my friends by those that I want with me in a fire fight. Having been there before, I take that very seriously. Not only would I like to have Jim Nier and John Moon with me in a fire fight, but I think they would probably agree that these past two years they have been in a fire fight. You two gentlemen, I will never forget your steadfast and loyal support and your undying friendship.

As I leave, I want to give special thanks as well to the men and women in both Washington and Kansas City that I have had the opportunity to work with over these past years. They are dedicated, loyal employees. They do a tremendous job for you day in and day out.

They are working also under difficult circumstances and working long hours, and giving timeless devotion. They deserve all the good things that you and the members of the National Council bestow on them and they certainly deserve your support.

To my successor in this office, and I might add to my very good friend, John Senk, I have told you privately and I have stated it publicly, and I will do it here, that I will do everything in my power to ensure that John

succeeds in his new office, because I know how difficult that task is.

To my good friend Joe Ridgley, who does such a tremendous job for you and has done for so many years, it has been a pleasure, Joe, working with you over these years as well. I want you to know that it has meant a lot to me to have the opportunity to represent veterans.

I am not the kind of person, the ones of you that have known me for a while, that will dwell on the past. I honestly believe that the ones of us you honor to hold high office and appointment, and when I look back over my brief VFW career I probably have been honored to hold more high offices and important positions in this organization than any other individual in the 99-year history.

I think this membership, particularly this special membership, I think that when you bestow those kind of honors on people and put those people in positions of responsibility, we have an obligation to conduct ourselves in such a way that it brings honor to this organization.

I hope I have been able to do that for you and I want to ensure you in the future I will continue to do the very best that I can to uphold the dignity of the offices I have held in a way that will make you and my friends proud. I will continue to do the very best job I can do for veterans.

Before I go, let me one more time recognize my wife, Connie, who has been my partner throughout these years and supported me and got me through the job.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

INTRODUCTION OF LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT CONNIE ATKINSON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Microphone No. 2.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to announce the presence of the Ladies Auxiliary President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Please rise. I am stealing some of our National President's thunder. When she spoke to us the other day she said that each time that you have a Commander-in-Chief or a National President, as you are about to end that term of office you say that I have had the greatest Commander-in-Chief to serve with her.

I have had the greatest National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to serve with. I am joining that group sometime tomorrow and I will say that same thing. But I have been so fortunate over these past few years, as I have started through the chairs, to work with a great lady who from time to time has been able to give me the assistance and some of the guidance, because she knows how edgy and jumpy I always am.

She is so calm doing yeoman's work with me as we have been able to work with the many, many details that follows with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and this Ladies Auxiliary, as we have continued this

partnership of love and dedication and determination to see to it that the nation's veterans have the proper care, concern and guidance to which they richly deserve.

I introduce to you this morning my National President, our National President, the great National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Connie Atkinson, from the great state of Arkansas.

REMARKS - NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT ATKINSON

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT ATKINSON: Thank you, Chief. Thank you, Commander. It is indeed an honor and privilege to have the opportunity to address the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We have had a great year for the Ladies Auxiliary and for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We have topped \$3 million in our cancer aid research program. Part of that is because of your help with your Ladies Auxiliary in your own local areas in raising these funds. This is the tenth year in a row we have topped the \$3 million. We volunteered 2.2 million hours to the VA Medical Centers and other hospitals around the country.

We went online with our Web site, and we have made our presence known with the women on Capitol Hill. This morning I want to thank you for your cooperation on our joint programs that we do each year. We can all be proud of the results that have been achieved.

I also want to extend my sincere thanks to all of you for your assistance to me personally during the year. I know that many of you are very involved in making my official visit a success. I thank you very much for that.

I want to particularly say thanks to John for everything that he did to make this year so pleasant. It has been an honor to serve with you. As a token of my appreciation, I would like to present to you this flag set and this very special gift. Here is your flag set and here is your very special gift. Thank you very much.

I can't see you very well out there, but to those of you that are of the Vietnam era, I would like for you to stand. I would like for you to know that I am the first National President whose only eligibility is through the Vietnam conflict where my husband served in Vietnam.

I only say that because I want you to know and I want the World War I and World War II veterans to know that we of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are also moving ahead. I am the first National President that was born after World War II.

I have a great deal of respect for those veterans before the Vietnam conflict. Your knowledge, your courage that you have demonstrated, what you have learned, the valuable lessons that you have need to be passed on to each and every one of us so that we may 50 years from now be in your position.

I thank you for all that you have done for the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the last 84 years and we are beginning our 85th year we have served as your Ladies Auxiliary. We are very proud and very honored to have the opportunity to serve as your Ladies Auxiliary.

I thank you all for your service to our nation in its time of need. If there is anything that the any of the Ladies Auxiliary can do for any of you in our joint programs, if you will just let us know we will be johnny-on-the-spot, you better believe it. Thank you for all of your assistance. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I have, comrades, deeply been honored to serve with Connie this year. It has really been a pleasure because she has been so gracious and kind. Her staff, the representatives that she has sent out to the various states that I have been able to go to have been so tremendous in their support of this great organization.

Along with Connie this morning, she brought over her Chief of Staff, Linda Evans, from the great state of Arkansas, and my wife, Susie Moon. I am deeply honored that she came over this morning. It is my privilege and honor at this time to present Connie a check I was supposed to have presented over there a little bit ago.

NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT ATKINSON: Over on our side, we give instructions when we want something done. (Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I have learned from Connie, I have to ask.

NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT ATKINSON: Thank you. I know you have a very busy agenda and I don't want to take up any more of your time. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the excellent staff, the officers that are coming up through the line, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, your Adjutant General and your Quartermaster General.

All I can say is they have provided the Ladies Auxiliary with numerous amounts of support in many, many ways. We are very appreciative to your National Adjutant General designee. I wish for you the most success. If there is anything we can do to assist you, because I know you have assisted us many times, please don't hesitate to call on us. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort the ladies at this time.

Tomorrow morning my Chief of Staff must leave the convention early. He has a commitment in Georgia, and it is a very fine commitment. His grandchild is going to be married. I told Jim that before he left I wanted to pay the proper homage to him for everything he has been able to do for me for the many years of my campaign and through the three years I have been coming to be Commander-in-Chief.

James Thiel, for many years, has been dedicated to promoting Veterans of Foreign Wars programs, not only in and around his home area of St. John, Indiana, but through the great state of Indiana and across this great nation.

Jim, I thank you for everything that you have been able to do to make this organization stronger, make it vital and make it move into the 21st Century. Jim, please stand. I would like to give you one great salute. Jim Thiel, Chief of Staff, from the great state of Indiana, thank you. (Applause)

CHIEF OF STAFF THIEL: Thank you.

VISIT OF NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For over 70 years, the VFW National Home at Eaton Rapids, Michigan, has been a haven of comfort, safety and hope for hundreds of children and adults, as well. It is one of the most profound examples of veterans helping veterans, and the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary members fulfilling our commitment to honor the dead by helping the living.

From a small farm in the Michigan countryside, the home has grown to a large bustling community. Modern facilities contain the latest in education and recreation resources, while comfortable houses and caring staff provide the homes that the children need to grow and thrive in and reach their greatest potential.

We are honored today to have with us the President of the VFW National Home, Harold Weber, who has brought with him two very special guests, the Executive Director of the home, Susan Shoultz, and the 1998 Buddy Poppy Child, Tyler Willett. Let's give them a real big VFW welcome.

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL HOME

COMRADE HAROLD WEBER: Good morning, comrades. To you, Commander-in-Chief John, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tom and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John, and all the officers and councilmen and you comrades out there, I bring you greetings from the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

We have 83 children, 20 families, 19 single mothers and one single father on campus as of the end of last month. It gives me a great deal of pride to be the president of the trustees this year to reach that goal, the highest we have had since 1989.

I want to say that school has started. The children go to the local school in Eaton Rapids. We have 22 children that are taking piano lessons and 10 taking dancing lessons, and they are involved in all kinds of activities. Sue will have a few words to say about the home.

I would like to tell you a little story. Before I do, I would like for my delegation from South Dakota to please stand. There they are. Give them a big hand.

Last December, when we had the Cootie Christmas party, a young lady came to me and said, "Mr. Weber, I want to tell you since you are from South Dakota that you and the comrades and the Veterans of Foreign Wars

have turned my life around for myself and my three children. We now have a home to live in and we are living in the South Dakota home, and we have a life together, and we are going great places."

With that, I would like to introduce to you our Buddy Poppy boy who happened to be from that family, and his name is Tyler Willett.

REMARKS BY 1998 BUDDY POPPY CHILD - TYLER WILLETT

BUDDY POPPY CHILD WILLETT: Hello. My name is Tyler Willett. I live in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, at the VFW National Home. My house is South Dakota. I am honored to be chosen as your Buddy Poppy Child for the next year.

Let me begin with introducing you to my great-grandfather who passed away in 1981. His name is Richard E. Christi. He is the reason why me, my mom and two sisters are able to call the VFW National Home "home sweet home." He is why we are able to call the VFW our heritage.

My family and I have been living at the VFW Home for the past year and one-half. It is changing our life for the better. My mom, her name is Susan Willett. Thanks to the VFW, she is standing on her own two feet and doing very well. She is always saying that she has had such a big blessing and such an awesome break, and she is grateful every day.

My mom asked me today to thank you so very much. She has a decent job and is returning to college. She will be graduating in May of '99 from Siena Heights University with a Liberal Arts/Bachelor's Degree. Then my mom says she will be looking for a higher-paying position or job.

As you can see, the VFW organization has turned my family around and our future is full of hope and sunshine. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and the hearts of my family members. My mom is also getting a lot of much-needed support in raising me and my two teenage sisters, which is good because girls are very different.

As for me, I am starting in the fifth grade. I took seventh place with my rabbit in 4-H. I am ten and my birthday is October 7th. I hold a part-time job with the Maintenance Department. When I grow up, I want to be a meteorologist and maybe join the Coast Guard.

During my time at the VFW, a lot of things have happened. We get school clothes and lots of school supplies. Well, holidays are a dream. I have learned about poison ivy and steroid shots. We have fine playground equipment in our recreation area, and they provide computers and pool tables.

We have the Fire Department and a place for fishing. We live in a most comfortable house. It is a mansion, warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Life is just about perfect. Thank you for the change in my family life and giving my family a second chance for a great life. Thank you.

COMRADE HAROLD WEBER: Comrades, I would like to introduce to you our Executive Director and the Mayor of the VFW

National Home at Eaton Rapids. She didn't know she had that second title until yesterday when I conferred it on her. She is the Mayor of that little town three miles out of Eaton Rapids. Let me introduce to you Susan Shoultz.

REMARKS BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHOULTZ

MS. SUSAN SHOULTZ: Good morning. To our Chief, Officers and Comrades: As always, I am thrilled to be with you today and have an opportunity to bring you a little update. One year ago, the National Home Board of Trustees established a Strategic Planning Committee to address the future of the National Home.

Since its first meeting of the National Convention in Salt Lake City, there have been regular meetings throughout the year. Almost immediately two conclusions were reached. The first being that the National Home Commission provide care for children while serving as a memorial to our nation's veterans will continue to have meaning and purpose for future generations.

Secondly, is the National Home more fully utilize its resources in order to provide a greater level of financial support into the future. It is the plan that at the 75th Anniversary of the National Home in the year 2000 will serve as a time of re-commitment to the National Home and its mission.

We will focus our energies on perpetuating the Endowment Fund, while celebrating 75 years of honoring the dead by helping the living. Today there are 83 children as well as 20 single parents and four scholarship students who are participating in the programs at the National Home.

They have come from 18 different states to begin their lives new at the National Home. They have come from such states as far away as California, Washington, Nevada, Texas, Alabama, Florida, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, and as you can see today I am in the company of a young man.

Tyler, this is to you. You live in times where it is difficult to find heroes to look up to. But today you are a lucky young man, because every face that you see in this room is the face of a hero, men and women who served their country when called and were willing to sacrifice for others.

Tyler, come back up here and let me introduce to you the American heroes.

COMRADE HAROLD WEBER: Commander-in-Chief, will you come forward, please. Commander-in-Chief John Moon, it is a pleasure for me to present to you this memento from the National Home. It is presented to John Moon, VFW Commander-in-Chief, 1997-'98 from the VFW National Home. Thank you, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: As the Sergeants-at-Arms are coming forward, I would like to announce that this year the Veterans of

Foreign Wars have been honored for the fact we are going to begin celebrating many, many events. But in doing so, we have celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the National Honor Guard in around the Washington, D.C. area.

We owe these individuals a great deal of gratitude for their service to this nation and to the greatest veterans organization, the VFW.

INTRODUCTION OF SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At this time you see standing behind you our sergeants-at-arms. Let me express my appreciation to a group of men that we see annually at our National Convention.

They come to this convention and are up early in the morning and the first ones in the hall. They arrange for seating on special occasions, and they keep order in the hall at all times. They try to seat everybody and maintain order that is necessary during the meeting itself.

These individuals don't get a lot of money to do this. It is obvious that a labor of love is there for them. I am sure that everyone recognizes they do an outstanding job for us. The sergeant-at-arms assembled staff here, I would like to introduce them at this time.

From the great state of Kansas, Post 6240, Barry A. Hoffman, Sergeant-at-Arms. The Assistant Sergeants, from Post 1656, Massachusetts, Carl C. Aiello. I have been informed that he is ill and not in attendance. Convey our thanks to Carl, please, Sergeant-at-Arms.

From Post 9134, North Carolina, Gary W. Barringer. From Post 1911, in Ohio, Dan Brown, who is ill and unable to attend. From Post 3979, Minnesota, Joy Collins Baxter. From Post 2275, California, Keith McDonald. From Post 2083, Connecticut, Nicholas Polansky. From Post 4847, Minnesota, Joseph M. Schirmers. And from Post 4159, Michigan, Fred H. Von Hinken, Jr. These are the comrades that every time something goes wrong we start screaming at them. If something does go right, we forget to say thank you to them, and we go on to other business.

I want to in front of this body say publicly thank you to each of them, the members of this great team, the Sergeants-at-Arms of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am proud of each of them and they have handled themselves as professionals, and I am deeply honored for the opportunity to serve with each one of them.

I say to all of you thanks in behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. You have done an outstanding job. Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms for a marvelous job.

I call to the mike at this time our Assistant Adjutant General John Senk.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 99th National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives for printing as a House document in accordance with

Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 2, 1968, Title 214 of the United States Codes, Section 1332.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL RIDGLEY: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been seconded by Quartermaster General Ridgley, a delegate to the 99th Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Is there any question on the motion? Hearing none, we will call for a vote. All those in favor will say "aye"; all opposed say "no". The motion carried unanimously.

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For Commander-in-Chief, I call forward John W. Mahan, Past Commander-in-Chief, 1958-'59, from Post 1116, Helena, Montana, for the purpose of a nomination.

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN: Thank you, John. It is my privilege today to nominate a friend, a comrade and associate for the VFW's top position, Commander-in-Chief. I do remember Tom when he was a small boy with his father, George, who was an active member of Post 1116, and his mother, Mary, even though she was the mother of 11 children, including Tom, was active in the Ladies Auxiliary.

As you can see from that, Tom grew up with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Tom attended school in Helena and graduated from Helena High School. It can now be said that the school holds the distinct honor of graduating two United States Senators, presently serving Senator Max Baucus of Montana, and Senator Roth of Delaware. After Tom, it can be said it graduated two Commanders-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Tom then entered the United States Navy as an Air Crewman and served in Vietnam. Upon discharge, Tom took advantage, as many of us have done in the past, of the G.I. Bill. He entered college in San Jose, California, graduated, and then attended the University of Montana Law School and graduated as an attorney.

Since graduation, Tom has held positions as attorney for the State of Montana, a judge, as well as a private practicing attorney in Helena. Tom has served the VFW well from the grass roots up. Tom has been Post Commander, District Commander, All American Commander, as well as holding many high national positions, which include Chairman of the National Legislative Committee.

Now a Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Tom is ready for and I now nominate Tom Pouliot as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I call forward to the podium for a second to the nomination of Tom Pouliot as Commander-in-Chief, Eric Sandstrom, Commander-in-Chief, 1978-'79, from Post 969, Tacoma, Washington, followed by George F. Riedel, Jr., District 14 National Council Member from Post 969, Tacoma, Washington, also.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ERIC SANDSTROM: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, two years ago I rose to second the nomination of Tom Pouliot as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. At that time I said three things. It isn't very often that a Marine will stand up and nominate a little swabby for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I was personally wrong.

Yes, I am still a Marine, but Tom Pouliot is not a little swabby, he is a big, big, big swabby. Then I said I knew that he was an attorney. I didn't know at the time if he was a good attorney. I cannot answer that question now because I really don't know too many good attorneys.

Then I said that he had a cute wife. She is not only cute, she is beautiful. It is a great honor for me to stand here as a humble Marine to second the nomination of Tom Pouliot for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMRADE GEORGE RIEDEL (Post 969 - Washington): Has anybody ever heard of a humble Marine?

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Past National Commanders, Officers and Delegates to this great 99th VFW National Convention. I am George Riedel from Post 969 in Tacoma, Washington. I am privileged to stand before you and second the nomination of Tom Pouliot for the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the ensuing year.

Tom has given us years of dedicated leadership, years of great enthusiasm and many years of personal friendship to many of us. The time is now, my comrades, to elect Tom to the highest office in this great organization. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. Are there any other nominations at this time for Commander-in-Chief? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I call forward to the microphone Clifford T. Olson, Past Commander-in-Chief, 1983-'84, from Post 9699, Milton, Massachusetts, for the nomination of the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart of Post 483, New Hampshire.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON: Thank you, Commander. Comrades to the 99th National Convention, once again it is my distinct honor and profound pleasure to come to this podium and place in nomination the name of a comrade who certainly has lived up to and surpassed his advanced billing.

I advised you good comrades at the 98th National Convention,

and I have never taken this action lightly, at that time I spoke of his service with the Miracle Division and the 176th Salt Pepper Squadron in Vietnam. I spoke to his ability and dedication to the aims and ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars at all levels.

I told you in his civilian suit he is a dedicated and sincere fire fighter, and finally I told you of his ability to learn and to progress in the office to which he was elected. He has shown this ability at any level or any position that he has held, both civilian and Veterans of Foreign Wars' positions.

His dedication to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, his knowledge, his desire to assist all veterans and their dependents, his dedication to the MIA/POW interest, his ability to serve those in need has placed him a step above the rest.

My comrades, this past year he has performed over and above expectations. He has traveled far and wide throughout our great organization and throughout the world, and he is recognized for his knowledge and dedication of all issues. He has shown that he is a team player, but he is not afraid to challenge those things that he feels are not in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in general.

He has shown concern for all and he has certainly proven that he has the qualifications and the desires to fulfill the duties of the higher office. He continues to have the outstanding support of his loving wife, Mary, and the entire family, along with his home Post 483 in Nashua, New Hampshire, and certainly the Department of New Hampshire.

With all this being said, my comrades, it is my pleasure and privilege and my honor to place in nomination for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief a friend and a comrade from the Granite State of New Hampshire, John W. Smart.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For purposes of seconding the nomination of John Smart from New Hampshire as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, we have Past State Commander John M. Packard of Post 8546, Salem, New Hampshire, and Robert W. Madigan, District National Council Member from Post 483, Nashua, New Hampshire.

COMRADE JOHN PACKARD (Post 8546 - New Hampshire): Commander-in-Chief, Distinguished Guests at the head podium, I think Cliff Olson has given all the qualifications that John has and I can give a little more. I call him my protegee. He listens and he pays attention. It is with pride and honor that I second the nomination of John Smart for National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMRADE ROBERT MADIGAN (Post 483 - New Hampshire): My name is Robert Madigan and I am District No. 1 Councilman. I have not only been a Councilman from New Hampshire but also Vermont. John has been a very, very good friend of mine for many, many years.

We belong to the same Post, Nashua 483. Without John Smart, I wouldn't be standing here as your District No. 1 Councilman. John has helped me immensely in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. At this time I would

like to second the nomination of John W. Smart for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any other nominations for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I call forward to the microphone R. D. "Bulldog" Smith, Past Commander-in-Chief from Post 4346 in Georgia, for the purpose of nominating John W. Gwizdak, Post 5080, from the great state of Georgia.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and National Officers, Fellow Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

I first met the person, whose name I will place in nomination for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, 21 years ago at a Southern Conference meeting held in Daytona Beach, Florida. I met a very beautiful young lady who, of course, most of our ladies in Georgia are good peaches, who was at that time serving as State President of the Ladies Auxiliary in Georgia.

It must have been love at first sight, because they later became married and he moved to Georgia and became very, very active at that time in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. John Gwizdak was born July 7, 1940, in Revloc, Pennsylvania. He was raised in Carrolltown and graduated from the Carrolltown High School.

He earned an Associate of Arts Degree in Human Resources and Administration from the University of the State of New York. John retired from the United States Army in June, 1978, and after completing over 20 years of service as a non-commissioned and commissioned officer, he holds the distinction of having served in all leadership positions, from squad leader to officer of an infantry company.

He earned his eligibility for the Veterans of Foreign Wars through the occupation of Germany, Berlin, and a tour in Vietnam where he served with the 199th Brigade as an infantry heavy weapons platoon leader and company commander. His military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, four awards of Bronze Star Medal, including one for valor, Comrade Infantry Badge, Purple Heart, Vietnam Cluster and three Army Commendation Medals, the Army Occupation Medal in Berlin and the Vietnam Campaign and Service Medals, three Good Conduct Medals, Armed Forces Reserve Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Expert Medals for both rifle and pistol, and the sharp shoot.

John joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1976 and is a Life Member of Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia. He is also a Life Member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Disabled American Veterans.

His membership also includes the MOC, American Legion, American Veterans Association and the Combat Infantrymen's Association.

John has worked in real estate as a sales broker and builder since retiring from the Army. He is owner and principal of John F. Gwizdak, Inc., and the owner and operator for Builder Realty. He is currently serving his seventh term as Georgia's Adjutant Quartermaster.

Since joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars, John has constantly applied his extensive leadership gained in the military to the betterment of this organization. He has supported proposals at the national level to clarify and define service and represent our veterans.

John has served with distinction from the Post level to achieve All American Department Commander for the year 1988-1989 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. During this tenure, he was instrumental by his testimony before the late Congressman Sonny Montgomery's Committee on Veterans Medical Care to preclude the closing of Surgical Services at the Dublin Medical Center in Dublin, Georgia.

He has also been the veterans' advocate before the Georgia State Legislature on many occasions, and at the national level John served on the National Council of Administration 1990-1992. He was Appeals Chairman, and Chairman of the Americanism Committee, and lastly, he served two terms as Vice-Chairman of the Legislative Committee and Vice-Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and three years on the National By-Laws and Review Committee.

John is married to the former Betty F. Burns of Georgia. Betty is a Past Department President of the Ladies Auxiliary in Georgia and served as Eighth District Council Member on the National Council of Administration of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

John and Betty have five children. John is a people's person. In every elected or appointed position he has had, he has been a veterans advocate. John has already become very, very popular with members of this organization, and he returns that popularity tenfold by his expert professionalism in serving our membership.

He has demonstrated action, past and present, clearly established himself as a man with a potential to represent us in the future. We need this dynamic leader and articulate speaker in positions where he can share our views and our concerns are heard.

As stated earlier, John's popularity became so widespread within the Southern Conference that he received the conference endorsement without any opposition whatsoever, and I mean he ran for this high office the last four years without any opposition. I can't recall that ever happening in the Southern Conference.

It is my honor and pleasure to nominate John F. Gwizdak, Jr., for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For the purpose of seconding the nomination of John Gwizdak of Georgia for the office of Junior Vice

Commander-in-Chief, I call to the podium William Cox, Adjutant Quartermaster and Post 7883, Cary, North Carolina, and Richard Branson, Department Service Officer and Campaign Chairman from Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia.

COMRADE WILLIAM COX (Post 7383 - North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to this Convention, my name is William C. Cox, and I am a delegate from Post 7383 in North Carolina. I am pleased to participate in the nomination process of my good friend John F. Gwizdak for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the Department of Georgia.

As you can see, my colleagues, I hope that they are here, the Adjutant/Quartermasters of the Southern Conference have joined me in this joyous occasion. We have observed John's leadership capabilities as an Adjutant/Quartermaster. The current stability of the Department of Georgia tells the story of this great leadership.

Comrades, John Gwizdak served as a Combat Company Commander in Vietnam where his leadership was recognized as one who cared and took care of his men. I served in a Combat Infantry Company in Germany in 1944. Therefore, I know firsthand the responsibilities of the Company Commander, which is to keep his men alive and to provide leadership which will command the respect of those serving in his company.

Gwizdak has this great leadership quality. Leadership is crucial at the national level now more than ever. We, from the Southern Conference, know that Comrade John Gwizdak is the individual to lead us as we enter the 21st Century.

I am pleased to second the nomination of John F. Gwizdak as the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of a great organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMRADE ROBERT BRANSON (Post 5080 - Georgia): Good morning, comrades. This is a great day in America and a great day for the VFW. I am privileged to be afforded the opportunity to assist in the presentation to you today of John Francis Gwizdak for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I have served as John's campaign manager and friend for many years. I know him well and he is my brother. He is a dynamic individual with all the requisite leadership and personal skills to successfully launch this organization into the 21st Century.

His creed is honor with integrity. He never waivers from his creed even when the decision process gets tough. He refers to this membership body as heroes all the time. You may be assured that he will represent you in the highest esteem. He is proud and humble for all of your friendships.

He is eager to tell anyone who will listen, "I am a member of the VFW." John has commented to me many times, "I don't believe that comrades get up in the morning and decide to do things contrary to our by-laws." He believes that most probably serve the VFW with lack of

communication and training.

His leadership skill is contagious. He will proactively approach problems and seek swift decisions. You will witness firsthand his capabilities to do a superb job as a Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and ultimately Chief of this organization.

It is my distinct honor and with great pride that I am afforded the opportunity to second the nomination of John Gwizdak to the position of our next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any other nominations for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

I call forward to the microphone at this time William J. Radigan, State Quartermaster/Adjutant from VFW Post 4061, South Dakota, for the purpose of nominating the Quartermaster General, Joe L. Ridgley from Post 8220, Missouri.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 4061 - South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am joined this morning in making this nomination with some of my fellow Adjutant Quartermasters, and I ask your permission to have them step forward and introduce them.

COMRADE BILLY KING (Post 2346 - Massachusetts): My name is Billy King. I am a member of Post 2346, Massachusetts, and I am a Past State Commander of that Department and presently serving as the State Quartermaster for my second term.

It is my honor and privilege to be standing before this convention and seconding Joe Ridgley's nomination as Quartermaster General.

COMRADE CLEVE COX (Post 7383 - North Carolina): Again, my name is Cleve Cox. On behalf of the Quartermasters from North Carolina, we will be seconding the nomination for our good friend, Mr. Ridgley.

COMRADE DAVID ROATH (Post 5606 - Missouri): I am David Roth, Department Adjutant/Quartermaster from Missouri. I am a member of VFW Post 5606 in Kansas City.

COMRADE RHETT DAVERIO (Department of California): I am Rhett Daverio, from the Department of California, Adjutant/ Quartermaster.

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 4061 - South Dakota): Thank you very much. Comrade Commander-in-Chief and National Officers, my Comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

I am privileged today to appear before you for the purpose of placing in nomination the name of Joe Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General. In 1970, Joe graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration.

He went immediately into the United States Navy and served five years. When he came out of the United States Navy, he applied for

employment with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, beginning a service there in 1976. During that time, he has served in many capacities, some of which are Manager of the Accounting Department, Life Membership Director, Director of the VFW Emblem and Supply Department and other offices.

In March, 1995, Joe became Quartermaster General. He is a well-qualified individual and he is well-versed in this organization. He has worked for the National Headquarters for nearly 23 years. He is a fine young man, still young compared to many of us, and he is very capable physically to handle this very stressful job.

Joe is married to his wonderful wife, Judy, and has a son, Jade, and a daughter, Jessica. They are a good family. Joe enjoys his family, but he also enjoys serving the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I could talk for some time about the qualifications of this individual, but time is of the essence.

So, I will only say that I have attended 45 National Conventions, and one of the real honors I have had is today when I am privileged to nominate and present to you for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Joe Ridgley of Post 8220, Belton, Missouri, for the very high and very distinguished office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For the purpose of seconding the nomination, David L. Roath, the State Adjutant/ Quartermaster from Post 5606, Missouri, representing Cleve Cox from North Carolina, Rhett Daverio from the Department of California, and the various Adjutants/Quartermasters from their respective states.

COMRADE DAVID ROATH (Post 5606 - Missouri): Commander-in-Chief, Past Commanders, National Officers, Delegates to the 99th Convention: It is indeed an honor for me to stand before you again this year and second this nomination. We know from past experience what Joe Ridgley has done not only for the organization but for the high office of Quartermaster General.

He has demonstrated the ability to serve the organization and handle the finances that it takes to run this organization. We have no reason to believe that will not happen next year and into the future. I stand here with other Quartermasters from the other conferences and I am proud to second the nomination of Joe Ridgley for Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you. I call forward to the podium at this time Glen Gardner, Department Adjutant/ Quartermaster of Post 3359 for the nomination of Judge Advocate General R. Earl Lord from Post 10351, Department of Texas.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Thank you,

Commander-in-Chief. Delegates to this 99th National Convention, the Chief has granted me just a moment of personal privilege before I make this nomination on behalf of our Chairman Jim Nier.

Our Vice-Chairman Ted Connell and myself say once again thank you to the many volunteers in District 20, Department of Texas, for making this convention such a success. We hope you have enjoyed your visit to San Antonio. We could not have made this convention such a success without those hundreds of volunteers that have spent many hours helping you, helping the National Organization and helping the Department to do so.

So, we would be remiss if we didn't do that and we will continue to do that throughout this convention and for the next couple of months.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, with a great deal of pleasure I stand before the delegates today to place in nomination the name of R. Earl Lord for Judge Advocate General for 1998-'99. A Life Member of VFW Post 10351, Hemphill, Texas, he has served this great organization as a Post Commander, a District Commander and the 1991-'92 Department of Texas Commander where he achieved All American honors.

Since serving as Department Commander, he has served this organization on many National Committees. A Navy veteran, Earl served from January, 1944 to 1949, in the Pacific campaign, and won many medals. Earl graduated from South Texas University.

While in school in Houston, in 1957, he worked for Humble Oil Company as an attorney for 15 years and has been a practicing attorney in Hemphill for 31 years. One of the few attorneys that I will honestly count as one of my friends.

Earl also served as a member of the Senate where he was appointed for two terms. A confirmed bachelor, Earl lives in Hemphill, Texas. Therefore, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I nominate a comrade who is respected and admired by not only members of this organization but by members of his local community, for the office of Judge Advocate General for 1998-'99, Earl Lord, from Post 10351, Hemphill, Texas.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For the purpose of a second of the nomination for Judge Advocate General Earl Lord, I call before to the podium Lester Kapelka, Post 5850, from Alabama.

COMRADE LESTER KAPELKA (Post 5850 - Alabama): My name is Lester Kapelka, a delegate from Post 5850, Alabama. I second the nomination of Earl Lord for National Judge Advocate. The Lord is going to be with us. Please stand, Earl, and let everybody see who you are.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For the purpose of nomination of Surgeon General, Kenneth S. Snow, Jr., Post 6977, Maine. I call forward Joe H. Gallant, Jr., Vice Commander-in-Chief of Maine, Post 832, South

Portland, Maine.

COMRADE JOE GALLANT (Post 832 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates and Comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Excuse me. Comrades, are there any other nominations at this time for the office of Judge Advocate General? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

COMRADE JOE GALLANT (Post 832 - Maine): It is an honor for me to stand before you and place in nomination the name of an outstanding comrade from the Eastern States Conference and the great state of Maine for National Surgeon.

Comrade Ken Snow, Jr., began his military career as a Seaman Recruit in June, 1955, and served as a Navy Corpsman. In May, 1955, he was assigned and served in a Third Marine Division in the Vietnam combat. He served in this capacity and was commissioned an ensign in March, 1966.

His awards include the Combat Ribbon, Meritorious Service Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Vietnam Service Medal and the Campaign Medal. He received a degree in Business Management from the University of New Hampshire, and a Master's from George Washington University in Management.

Upon retirement in 1985 as a Naval Commander, he was employed in the civilian sector as a hospital consultant and a home administrator, and retired in 1993. Again, he joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1966 and has served as the Adjutant General of the Department of Maine since 1994.

He is married to the former Joyce Elaine Winfeldt and they have three children, eight grandchildren, and currently resides in Topsfield, Maine, where he is active in his Post and the local municipal government. Thank you, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For the purpose of seconding the nomination of Kenneth Snow for the office of Surgeon General, I call forward John M. "Jack" Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, 1992-'93, a member of Post 4643, Satellite Beach, Florida, and Robert W. Madigan, District 1 Councilman, from Post 483, Nashua, New Hampshire.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. National Officers and Delegates to this Convention, it is indeed a rare privilege and honor for me to have the opportunity of seconding the nomination of a comrade that I have known for many years who is dedicated and maintains the highest respect for the veterans of this country.

His concerns about their health and their welfare makes him an excellent candidate for Surgeon General. I am pleased to second his nomination.

COMRADE ROBERT MADIGAN (Post 483 - New Hampshire): Comrades, again at this time, as the District 1 Council Member, I would

like to second the nomination for Kenneth S. Snow for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any other nominations for the office of Surgeon General? There being none, nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning's session.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I will call forward to the podium at this time Donald Porter, Post 454, Bloomington, Illinois, State Commander of Illinois, for the purpose of placing in nomination the name of Tom W. Neville, Post 2327, Illinois.

COMRADE DONALD PORTER (Post 454 - Illinois): Commander-in-Chief and National Officers, and Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars:

It is a great pleasure for me to rise and place in nomination the name of Father Thomas W. Neville for the office of National Chaplain for 1998-'99. Father Neville served in the U.S. Medical Corps in World War II.

He obtained his degree from the school in Baltimore, receiving the Doctor of Divinity and presently earned his M.A. Degree in Divinity from Dayton University. He is a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2327 in Richmond, Illinois.

Having served as an All-State Commander in 1990-'91, he has served as State Chaplain in Illinois since 1990, and was National Chaplain in 1994-'95. Father Neville belongs to the Knights of Columbus, and I am pleased to place in nomination Father Thomas W. Neville from Illinois for National Chaplain for the year 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: For the purpose of a second to the nomination, I call to the podium Jim L. Michael, State Junior Vice-Commander, from Post 1383, Rock Island, Illinois.

COMRADE JIM MICHAEL (Post 1383 - Illinois): My name is Jim Michael, Post 1383, Illinois, and a delegate from the State of Illinois. I proudly second the nomination of Thomas W. Neville, along with all my other comrades, for the high office of National Chaplain. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any other nominations this morning for the office of National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 1998-'99. Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

I must correct myself. Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General this morning? Hearing none, those nominations will also remain open until tomorrow morning's session.

Tomorrow morning's session will begin at 9:00 a.m. It will be in the South Banquet Hall, not here but in the South Banquet Hall. It is where the Council of Administration meeting was held this past weekend.

I call forward the Sergeant-at-Arms. Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms,

will you prepare the room for the closing session.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was given followed by the Benediction according to the Ritual by National Chaplain Dean Derieg.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for today's session have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Comrades, this session is over and we are in recess. We will return tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock in the South Banquet Hall.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 11:40 o'clock a.m.)

FIFTH BUSINESS SESSION FRIDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1998

(The Fifth Business Session of the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, you will call to order the final session of the 99th National Convention.

(Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman led the convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance. National Chaplain Reverend Dean Derieg gave the Opening Prayer.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO GENERAL THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It is now my pleasure to make a presentation that was scheduled for last year's convention, but the recipient was on duty in Bosnia last August and could not attend the convention. Now, home from that military operation, he is the recently-appointed Commanding General, U.S. Air Forces Command, Ft. McPherson, Georgia; a command which has a total personnel strength of 800,000 troops. That includes active duty, guard and reserves.

General Thomas A. Schwartz graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1967. His military schooling includes infantry officer basic course, ranger school, armor officer advanced course,

armed forces staff college and the Navy war college.

He served in Vietnam as a platoon leader and company commander in the 82nd Airborne. Other overseas tours took him to Korea and Germany.

Stateside, the General has served in a variety of positions, including command of Ft. Carson, Colorado, and the Fourth Infantry Division and, subsequently, command of Ft. Hood, Texas, and the III Corps.

His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal and several others.

Please rise and give a warm VFW welcome to General Thomas A. Schwartz, here to receive the VFW Commander-in-Chief's Gold Medal.

The citation reads: "Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation presented to Thomas A. Schwartz, Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces Command.

"In sincere appreciation and special recognition of his remarkable life of service and personal sacrifice as a dedicated member of the United States Army. His distinguished record of service as a highly-decorated officer, platoon leader and company commander in Vietnam and his extraordinary contributions to every assignment during his more than three decades of service to the nation is an inspiration to all Americans and his exceptional achievements have earned him the admiration and gratitude of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 4th day of September, 1998."

This has been signed by me, Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon, and Larry W. Rivers, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - GENERAL THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ

GENERAL SCHWARTZ: Good morning, everybody. How is everybody doing? I think I would rather be the wake-up guy than the guy that puts you down at night. I feel good about this line anyway. They had a big four-star conference newspaper in Washington and I had to go up there, and I was the last speaker at the end of the conference, at the end of the day, so it was pretty hard to get all those guys motivated.

Commander-in-Chief Moon, thank you for having me today. This is a great award. It is an incredible honor. When I walked in here this morning, just like every time I walk in any place that has you veterans and you ladies that served your country like you have and mean so much in the very heart and soul of what this country is all about, I feel special but I feel honored also being in your presence. Thank you for having me here this morning.

I want to thank the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart, and all of you, especially for your continued service. I think that is one of the points I want to

emphasize this morning. I know we recognize lots of time our past performance, but as we sit here today and as I am among you, I can't help but think about your continued service.

I know you served in some of those hard times and many conflicts overseas, but right here and now your presence marks your continued service to our country and you served dozens of programs, through hundreds and thousands of initiatives across our country.

Your collective voice is the voice that will make a difference in our country. Thank you very much. I can feel your collective voice. I understand there is as many as 25,000 people that come together for this conference, and I think that just in sheer numbers alone speaks volumes about who you are, what you represent and the difference that you can make in your collective body.

I want to recognize some of the contributions, because I have heard so much about what you have done in the contributions you have made. When I first came in here, and I was talking to a couple of our ladies, and then I heard that the Ladies Auxiliary had contributed \$3 million in money this year in scholarships. That is just almost mind-boggling when you think about it.

So are the statistics that I have heard in terms of millions of dollars of scholarships that I have personally witnessed in some of the places I have been. You give to our dependents and our soldiers that make a difference in their life. So far eight million hours of volunteer service that you do.

When I served in these different Posts around the country, I see your faces. You are the mainstay of the volunteer force in and around the Posts and in and around our communities. I see it all the time. It is our veterans that are making such a difference.

In the dollar contribution alone, the sheer dollar contribution, of \$600,000 to the Korean Veterans Memorial, \$200,000 to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and \$100,000 to the Vietnam Women's Memorial, that is significant. There are scores of programs just like that and many more of citizenship, education, flag sponsorship, and the list goes on, doesn't it, in the outstanding work of our Ladies Auxiliary and the difference they make.

As I walk around you and in and among you, as I said earlier, it is the experience of my life. It makes me feel special. Thank you very much.

On behalf of the 750,800 soldiers that I represent in forces command and that is active soldiers, that is Guard and National Reserve, all of us marvel at the things that you do and the difference that you make. I would like to say to you, Ken Steadman, thanks for asking me here to speak. I will just speak shortly, not too long.

He said talk about some national security measures or matters to us for just a little while. I know nothing of more national security interest or importance than our soldier. So I will talk to you a little bit about our soldier, if I may. Even though I am an Army component of all of this, I think what I say can be extrapolated easily to our sailors, our Marines, our

airmen and our Coast Guardsmen that are so marvelously represented here this morning.

You know today the soldier, I can look you in the eye and I can tell you this, and I know a lot of you have not walked in the ranks like I have today, the soldier of today. I look you in the eye and tell you this young man and this great young woman of today are trained and ready, and they proudly serve, and they are doing a great job.

In my 31 years of doing this, I have never seen it better. That is 31 years I have never seen men and women better trained, better motivated to serve their country and to do the things that represent you and the heritage that you gave them in terms of service to country.

They are picking it up. They are carrying that banner proudly, and you will be proud of them every step of the way. I have got to tell you, training today is the hallmark of the great Army that you have, and all the other services. It is the foremost component of readiness today.

Keep our soldiers trained and ready and we are doing it. We have lots of technology today. We have simulation in the services today that would absolutely be mind-boggling to you. At Ft. Hood alone, there are \$400 million of simulation devices that we have never seen the likes of in our Army. We are using them and they are making us better.

We have advanced more experiments that take place, and we do this in war fighting today that you could only dream of years ago, only dream about that an Army could accomplish or do. That is the state of the art of your service today. But it is just not that technology, it is our great soldiers.

They come because of that from all over the world to see us. Do you know that eighty countries have come in the last eight months to Ft. Hood, Texas, when I was there, eighty countries in eight months to see the great American Army? They have marveled at who we are, what we do, and our soldiers and our technology.

I have got to tell you through all of that they marvel the most when they leave this great country, they marvel the most at the soldier, the man and woman they see. They just marvel. They ask about it all the time, how do you do this, how do you create this volunteer Army that you have?

How have you accomplished this? How can we do that and how can we incorporate women into our ranks? These are the things. How can we build an NCO Corps like you have? You know the answer is I give them lots of times, "Well, you have to go back 222 years and start this great dream that was started then. Start this great formation of what made us great, this Army, all these services, because that is when they started." You don't do it overnight.

You accomplish it through hard work, through a nation of people like you here today who are so committed and so willing to give them your lives and give sacrifice of so much to make this the greatest country in the world. That is how you become great.

You know, these young people that we ask them today, we deploy

them all over the world. We have 27,000 soldiers deployed right now in 83 countries across the world. That is 83 countries. So, when these young men and women come, they don't sit around the Continental United States, they move around this world and we ask a lot of them.

They are near Kuwait, they are in Bosnia, in Mozambique, just to mention a few, all over the world. These young men and women are willing and they do a great job. They accept the hardship, they deal with it and they are trained and ready.

I will tell you, I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that the women, the 14.2 percent of your United States Army that is represented by the great women of our ranks, they are doing an outstanding job. In fact, my daughter is in the Air Force. She is an F-16 pilot in the United State Air Force, and I am tremendously proud of her and the job that she does.

You know, one of the jobs we do, and I want you to know this, one of the jobs we do in the Army today is we continually teach our soldiers about their heritage, because if we don't they will not understand those that went before them. We teach them about values and it is important.

We teach them about respect and loyalty, honor, duty to country, the very values that have made us great. We make sure when they come in we teach them about that. Ken asked me to talk about readiness, and I will say this about readiness. I know it gets on everybody's eye.

I will ask you, when you look at the readiness of the Army today and when I perform, also look at our deployment and judge us by those rather than the rhetoric that you hear. If you judge us by the performance of the deployment of this Army today, it is incredible what they accomplish.

All you have to do is look back a couple of years. When I was at Ft. Hood and the call came to my desk, we need a brigade in Kuwait and we need it now, four days later the 1st Calvary Division was in Kuwait. Six hours from the time they had landed, they were in a tactical assembly area trained and ready to fight.

That is unprecedented and unheard of in the world today. Just one year ago, Saddam Hussein called again. The same call came in. It was with the 3rd Infantry Division, but at this time 10,000 soldiers. We sent them in ten days with 700 tons of equipment, and we sent another brigade and equipment to get them there in ten days, and in less than eight hours when they hit the ground, they were in tactical assembly areas, trained and ready to do what they needed to do.

That is the American soldier today, trained and ready. Judge us by our performance rather than by the rhetoric. You know, I marvel at the technology that we have every day. We have C-17s that do things today that no one dreamed of in terms of airlift capabilities.

We have technology among our ranks and tanks that do things that were never dreamed of years ago that a tank could do. But the bottom line of all that is the American soldier. You know, I will quote this one quote for you because I like this.

This young soldier with the 3rd Infantry Division that we sent over to Kuwait on that short notice that I just talked about, here is a quote from that young man. He said, "I had a wrestling coach in high school who said if you show up for the weigh-in looking scary, you intimidate the other guy."

We showed up in Kuwait looking scary, and the neat part is your soldiers show up all over the world looking scary. In Bosnia, when they show up with all the services over there, people are talking about all the time about don't mess with the American soldier. He and she looks strong.

And I have got to tell you, our adversaries out there are concerned. When they look at all the great services of ours, they are concerned and they are a little scared. You know what, when I used to have those eight countries that came in eight months, we have 7.2 miles of motor pool at Ft. Hood, Texas, and 24,000 combat vehicles, and I used to take them for a ride along there to take a look at them.

I had the Chief of Staff of the Russian Army with me and I drove that 7.2 miles. He spoke a little bit of English. "Good, ready, powerful." I kept saying to myself, "You better believe it" under my hat.

Well, those soldiers are committed. We teach them a lot of great things. Like I said, they are ready to assume the responsibility, they are ready to do the things and you know they are ready to do the ultimate things that you and I respect most, and those that went before us and will never forget about a person who serves his or her country, the willingness to give their lives. These young people today are willing to do that. I marvel at them every day and you should. I know you are proud of them.

I treasure this medal. This will mean a great deal to me. I guarantee if you come to my office in Atlanta, I know there is a Georgia contingency here, you can come see this. I salute everyone in this room. What I said in the beginning was your continued service, and I can tell, we ask in the armed services of our country for your continued support.

Your collective voice is important to our nation's security. Don't ever underestimate that. Your collective good works is what makes this nation strong. It is what makes this nation what it is today. Thank you and God bless you for having me here today. Thank you very much. I love each and every one of you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you again very much, General.

At this time I call to the podium the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Kansas.

FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174 - Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Department of Kansas, Chairman of the Credentials Committee. Comrades, this is a final report of the delegates registered at this convention. The delegate

strength is 13,417. We have 54 Department Commanders; 26 Past Commanders-in-Chief; 36 National Officers. That is for a grand total of 13,533.

Comrades, I would like to tell you this is 690 more delegates than there was last year in Salt Lake City. Commander-in-Chief, this is a final report. In behalf of the committee, I wish to thank you for the appointment and ask that you dismiss us.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. But before doing so, I would call forward those that are present from the Credentials Committee for recognition. Not in attendance this morning but who has been a very dedicated individual for many years on this committee, James H. Willis of Post 534, Missouri, and James L. Mascola, Post 3580, Illinois.

The two in attendance are Elwood B. Rickards, Post 7234, Delaware, and James A. Kennedy, Post 3877, Minnesota. (Applause)

At this time, Mr. Chairman, your committee is dismissed.

I have got a dear friend of mine that has to go across the hall and help assist the ladies on a couple of things this morning, so I would ask the individual to please rise for recognition. That is the Immediate Past State Commander, a dear friend and one of my Post members, and a mentor of mine, Roger Taylor of Post 2873, Grover Hill, Ohio. (Applause)

I call forward to the mike the Assistant Adjutant General who will read the nominations for National Home Trustees.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Those nominated for the Sixth National Home District, representing the Departments of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and Missouri, are Margaret Fesmire, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 4780, Milan, Tennessee; John Bourque, Post 2210, St. Genevieve, Missouri; Bernard McClelland, Post 2618, Brookhaven, Mississippi; Robert Nickerson, Post 6640, Metairie, Louisiana; Rebecca Strauss, Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW Post 280, Columbia, Missouri.

Those nominated for the seat representing the Tenth National Home District, representing the Departments of Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico, Curtis O. Bohlman, Post 1335, Woodward, Oklahoma; Glendola Edwards, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 4548, Jacksonville, Arkansas; F. E. Gene Warden, Post 8552, Del Rio, Texas; and Juanita Workman, Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 8577, Copperas Cove, Texas.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Thank you, John. I was in a breakfast the other morning for All-American Commanders, and sought for and gained their permission for what I felt was a very honorable thing. I asked them for permission to have this convention accept the fact that we had two individuals who served with great honor and distinction this past

year as commanders.

One attained the status of All-American, and shortly thereafter died. He was unable to fill his term. I also asked that in the event, or I guess in response for the individual from the great State of North Carolina, who for the past three years took dialysis four times a day, and he continued to serve throughout his term.

Shortly after leaving the office of Commander, he passed away. Those two individuals, I asked the All-American Commanders if I could grant them honorary status as Captains this year of the All-American Team of the Department Commanders.

That grant was given to me, and it is an honor for me at this time to have this convention accept the fact that we had two outstanding Department Commanders who distinguished themselves well, Larry Sakamoto from Hawaii and William Boykin from the great State of North Carolina. I salute you two comrades where you are resting in peace at this time.

INTRODUCTION OF VFW NATIONAL BAND

So often is the case we just take things for granted, and this morning I would look to my right and your left to Director Phil Arnone, our VFW National Band, sponsored by Post 47, Uniontown, and the distinguished service you have given us for so many years and the outstanding job you have given this week.

Mr. Director, if you will please have the members of your band rise for a round of applause for your efforts and what you have done for us this week.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

INTRODUCTION OF HONOR GUARD

Again, I would like to make the announcement that as of February 8, 1998, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been deeply honored to have as its National Honor Guard those individuals who continue to struggle day in and day out to make sure that events in and around Washington and the National Conventions are carried out with great dignity and honor, the members of the National Honor Guard and their 50th Anniversary this year. Comrades, you are doing a wonderful job. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S FAMILY

As one is sometimes allowed or not allowed to do, I would like to recognize some people this morning that I have on the stage, and then ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he will escort them from the room. If I might start at the far end, a man who we kid back and forth about our little town, he

is a member of our Post but also Mayor of our community, Ray Roth, and his wife Darlene.

Another member, John Wilkin and his wife from our Post. My aunt, Faye Thomas, an Auxiliary member. My niece, Michelle Moon and her friend Tim. Next is Gary Moon. A friend that I guess has been pretty special to me, my brother, Larry Moon and his wife, Sue.

I always say that because Larry spent three years in Vietnam trying to make sure I didn't go over there. Unfortunately, he didn't stay there long enough so now I am eligible for the VFW. Thanks again, Larry.

This little girl behind me is the one that everyone seems to recognize throughout the convention. She, from time to time, may get turned around in some of the sessions, but she always seems to find the hospitality room. I kid her dearly, my mother-in-law and a great supporter of mine for all these years, Ronnie.

These individuals have done so much along with Post 2873, my District 1 in the great State of Ohio, and the entire Big Ten. I was so fortunate to reach this position, but I would not have been able to do so had it not been for so many dedicated comrades from the Auxiliaries and from the various Posts in my great state to give me that honor to come to this position.

I am going to save this other lady until maybe later in the audience so she can leave at that time. But for now, I would like to introduce to you the most special person in my life, one that has put up with me for 24 and one-half of my 28 years in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We kid back and forth, but I met this lady at a VFW meeting at her Post in 1974 when I was District Commander, and it is kind of ironic, sometime they say divorce comes as a result of involvement within the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but marriage came as a result of my involvement with the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I am deeply honored to introduce to you the greatest lady that I could ever have to stand beside me, my wife, Susie Moon.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

MRS. SUSIE MOON: Thank you, guys. I have to tell you, three years ago we were in this same position, different room, different city, and we were in the same position, and you wondered what it is that you are going to say on the day that you leave as an officer of this wonderful organization.

John has been a most gracious husband. He has been my friend, my lover and my husband. Yet, he has always shared our lives with you. He has had a dream since he left Vietnam and joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars immediately upon returning home, and has progressed through the chairs of two different Posts, because once he met me he came to Grover Hill, which was very nice, I thought.

That saved me from going back and forth to Charloe. Then he went through the District and the Department, and then on to National. We

worked as a team in Grover Hill. I was the Clerk and he was the Mayor for a number of years. You know, it has been kind of funny for me, because we were used to always being together and we were a team.

Then when he became the National Commander to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, he was the man, and a lot of times the wife is accused of being, you know, kind of running things. I am here to tell you, he is his own man, and yet fortunately I had a background that when this man was hurting or when this man had a problem, he was able to call home and he was able to have someone to talk with.

I think you men know out there that it is very important to have a mate that you can talk things over with. We discussed the theme of "Courage Under Fire." You know, through John's campaigning, there was always like a subversive culture out there that for whatever reason they didn't want him to achieve his offices.

It took a while, but he was elected in our Department. Then when he was fortunate to gain the endorsement of our Department, he campaigned for national office. During that campaign, it was still that subversive culture out there. You know what, that subversive political base that seems to rear its ugly head at times in organizations like this, you guys out there, the regular members, are who elected John E. Moon to be your National Commander.

You stood up, you said to heck with this political machine, we are going to elect this man. I hope that you can agree with me that this last 54 weeks you have had one of the greatest Commanders this organization is ever going to see. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: She didn't say she was going to say that. Is there any other business to come before this convention before we go into nominations and election of officers? If not, I will release any and all committees at this time that have been assigned to this 99th National Convention.

At this time, I call forward to the podium John W. Mahan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Post 1116, Helena, Montana.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MAHAN: Yesterday, I had the privilege to nominate for Commander-in-Chief my friend, comrade and associate, Tom Pouliot of Helena, Montana, Post 1116. He is now nominated, and I move that the Adjutant General cast a unanimous ballot for Tom Pouliot for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Nominations are closed. The motion is in order. Is there a second?

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: I proudly second

the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The motion carries.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, you have just elected Tom Pouliot as Commander-in-Chief for 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Nomination yesterday for the position of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief was John W. Smart of Post 483, New Hampshire. Are there any other nominations once? Are there any other nominations twice? Are there any other nominations three times? The nominations are closed. Is there a motion on the floor to close nominations?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT (Post 1116 - Montana): I move that we close the nominations and that we cast one unanimous ballot for John Smart for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the 1998-'99 year.

COMRADE PAUL CHEVALIER (Post 1968 - New Hampshire): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been made and seconded. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It give me great pleasure to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of John W. Smart for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: While they are going to the back of the room to get assembled, one of the things we do at the National Convention and I failed to do earlier, is to recognize the Chairman of this 99th National Convention and all the efforts put forth by he and his staff.

I would like to have the audience please rise and pay special honor to Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, and Chairman of this year's 99th National Convention. (Applause)

Yesterday, the name of John F. Gwizdak, Post 5080 of Georgia, was placed in nomination for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Are there any other nominations once? Are there any other nominations twice? Are there any other nominations three times?

The chair recognizes Richard Branson.

COMRADE RICHARD BRANSON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, yesterday, this dynamic leader, John Gwizdak, was nominated by Past Commander-in-Chief "Bulldog" Smith from the great State of Georgia. At this time for this great American, I move, Commander-in-Chief, the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for John Gwizdak.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been made to close the nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for John Gwizdak for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Is there a second?

COMRADE RON WILSON (Department of Georgia):

Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

Comrade Assistant Adjutant General.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It is my pleasure to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of John F. Gwizdak for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: While they are making their round, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals, Larry W. Rivers and the Adjutant General's staff; Joe Ridgley, and the Quartermaster General's staff, and all the Assistant Adjutant Generals and the Assistant Quartermasters for their effort on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars this year. To all of you, thank you very much for a job well done.

The name of Joe L. Ridgley, Post 8220, of Missouri, was placed in nomination for the office of Quartermaster General. Are there any other nominations this morning for the office of Quartermaster General, once? Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General, twice? Are there any other nominations for the office of Quartermaster General, three times?

The chair recognizes Tony Borjas.

COMRADE TONY BORJAS (Post 2866 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tony Borjas from Post 2866, Department Commander in Missouri. I move that nominations cease for Quartermaster General and a unanimous ballot be cast for Joe Ridgley of Missouri as Quartermaster General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Is there a second?

COMRADE JIM MILLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): It is an honor and pleasure to second the nomination of Joe Ridgley for the high office of Quartermaster General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been seconded. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The motion carries.

Assistant Adjutant General, please.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It gives me a great deal of pleasure to cast one unanimous vote for Joe L. Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General for 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Yesterday morning, the name of R. Earl Lord of Post 10351, Texas, was placed in nomination for the office of Judge Advocate General. Are there any other nominations this morning for Judge Advocate General, once? Any other nominations, twice? Are there any other nominations, three times?

The chair recognizes Glen Gardner, Quartermaster/Adjutant from Texas.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move you instruct the Assistant Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for R. Earl Lord, Post 10351, Hemphill, Texas, for Judge Advocate General for 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I recognize Comrade William D. Bell, Department of Texas.

COMRADE WILLIAM D. BELL (Department of Texas): Commander-in-Chief, I humbly am really proud to be here to second this motion for Earl Lord for the position that he seeks.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been made and seconded to close the nominations and instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for Earl Lord for Judge Advocate General. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: I cast one unanimous ballot for the selection of Earl Lord for Judge Advocate General for the year 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: At our morning's session yesterday, the name of Kenneth S. Snow, Jr., Post 6977, of Maine, was placed in nomination for the office of Surgeon General. Are there any other nominations this morning for the office of Surgeon General, once? Are there any other nominations, twice? Any other nominations, three times?

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: I move that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Kenneth Snow as Surgeon General.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL RIDGLEY: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: It has been moved and seconded. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries.

Comrade Assistant Adjutant General.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief, I cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Kenneth Snow, Jr., for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Yesterday morning, the name of Father Thomas W. Neville, Post 2337 of Illinois, was placed in nomination for the office of National Chaplain. Are there any other nominations this morning for the office of National Chaplain, once? Are there any other nominations for the office, twice? Are there any other nominations, three times?

I recognize the State Commander of Illinois.

COMRADE DONALD PORTER (Department of Illinois): Commander-in-Chief, I ask that you instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for Father Thomas W. Neville for National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: The motion has been made to close nominations and cast one unanimous ballot for Father Thomas

Neville. Is there a second?

COMRADE JAY MICHAEL (Post 1303 - Illinois): I proudly second that motion, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries.

Comrade Assistant Adjutant General.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: I cast one unanimous ballot for the selection of Father Thomas W. Neville for the high office of National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 1998-'99.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Again, if we could have everyone to please rise and give all those 1998-1999 National Officers-Elect a round of applause. (Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I call to the podium Assistant Adjutant General John Senk.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Sergeant-at-Arms, will you, please, escort the Commander-in-Chief-Elect to the floor to present the caps to the incoming National Council Members. The National Council Members-Elect are as follows:

District 2, representing the Departments of Massachusetts and Connecticut, Ron Rusakiewicz, from Post 9460, in Connecticut.

District No. 4, representing the Departments of the District of Columbia, Delaware and Europe, G. P. Miserandino, Sr., Post 2979, District of Columbia.

District No. 6, representing Virginia and West Virginia, Bobby R. Walls, Post 2216.

District No. 8, representing Georgia and Alabama, Ray E. Brooks, Post 2785.

District No. 10, representing Oklahoma and Arkansas, Eugene H. George, Post 9969.

District No. 12, representing South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming, Richard J. Belling, Post 7564.

Council District No. 14, representing Montana, Washington and Idaho, George F. Riedel, Post 969.

National Council District No. 16, representing Central America, Pacific Areas, Alaska and Hawaii, Thomas I. Elliott, Post 9467.

Representing Council District D, Ohio, Craig D. Swartz, Post 2947.

Representing Council District No. E, Department of Minnesota, Donald L. Gates, Jr., Post 141.

And representing the Department of Texas, District No. H, Alexander Vernon, Post 9191.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-

ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I call to the podium Commander-in-Chief-Elect Tom Pouliot for the announcement of his appointments for 1998-1999.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT POULIOT: I announce for 1998-'99 the appointment of Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr., from Post 335, New Jersey. The National Chief of Staff, Randy E. Russell, Post 2136, Idaho. The Inspector General, Norbert K. Enos, Post 2875, Hawaii. The National Sergeant-at-Arms, Barry A. Hoffman, Post 6240, Kansas.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I call to the podium at this time John J. Mahan, Past Commander-in-Chief from the great State of Montana. We will now proceed with the Installation of Officers.

Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, is the Installing Officer at the proper position to do the installation services?

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am proud to present Past Commander-in-Chief John Mahan, who has been instructed to install the officers for the ensuing year.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed has now expired. It is my duty to ascertain the following. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Have the books of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: He has.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time, the by-laws prescribe you must within 60 days of election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Have you in your possession the charter and gavel of this organization?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: I have.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: You will now surrender the gavel and charter to me. Past Commander-in-Chief John E. Moon, you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander-in-Chief it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences that you have gained during your term of office. You will now station yourself at my right.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now present the officers-elect at the alter as the Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be as the Sergeant-at-Arms escorts the officers elected to the alter according to rank.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Yes, sir, Past Commander-in-Chief.

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief - John W. Smart

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief - John W. Gwizdak

Quartermaster General - Joe L. Ridgley

Judge Advocate General - R. Earl Lord

Surgeon General - Kenneth S. Snow, Jr.

National Chaplain - Father Thomas W. Neville

National Chief of Staff - Randy E. Russell

Inspector General - Norbert K. Enos

District Council Members:

District No. 1 - Robert W. Madigan

District No. 2 - Ronald Rusakiewicz

District No. 3 - Raymond J. Boyle

District No. 4 - G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino, Sr.

District No. 5 - James R. Mueller

District No. 6 - Bobby R. Walls

District No. 7 - Leroy Ford

District No. 8 - Ray E. Brooks

District No. 9 - William J. Hendren

District No. 10 - Eugene H. George

District No. 11 - William P. Shannon

District No. 12 - Richard J. Belling

District No. 13 - Lewie B. Cooper

District No. 14 - George F. Riedel

District No. 15 - George H. Palmateer

District No. 16 - Thomas I. Elliott

District No. 17 - Frank R. Risewick

District No. 19 - Richard J. Fruge

District A - Charles R. Feltenberger

District B - Rick Frank

District C - T. William Bossidy

District D - Craig D. Swartz

District E - Donald L. Gates, Jr.

District F - Richard L. Lehner

District G - Richard R. Pignone
District H - Alexander Vernon
District J - James DePass
Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief - John E. Moon
Adjutant General - John J. Senk, Jr.
Commander-in-Chief - Thomas A. Pouliot

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Sergeant-at-Arms, are all present?

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: National Officers-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will administer to you the Officers' Obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of your country with your left hand and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, the following Officers' Obligation was given at this time: "I do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, according to the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, all records, money, or other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise, upon my honor, as a loyal citizen of our great Republic. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: As you were; parade rest.

National Chaplain, please.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DERIEG: Almighty God, our God and divine protector, give Thy blessings upon these, our comrades, who now become fellow officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We beseech you, O Lord, that you are always present among us. Grant wisdom unto them so that in their deliberations they continue to favor Thee, our glorious country and the betterment of our organization.

May Thy strength sustain them. May Thy power preserve them. May Thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor to which your comrades have elected you. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your respective offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you,

through your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves clearly with your duties.

The National Council of Administration members will stand and face the dais. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the Commander-in-Chief-Elect to my station.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Installing Officer, I am proud to present to you Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Thomas A. Pouliot.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Commander-in-Chief-Elect Thomas Pouliot, before administering your obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties. You will be held personally responsible for the charter of this organization and that at the end of your term of office, you will deliver it to the officer appointed to install your successor.

It is your duty to see that all National Officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You shall keep yourself informed on all proposed legislation which may affect the welfare of potential and actual comrades of this organization, and strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important questions referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all of your efforts and your accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade Thomas A. Pouliot, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT POULIOT: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, and give your name as I touch your hand, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Pouliot received the following obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, Thomas A. Pouliot, do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge, to the best of my ability, the duties of the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to which I have been elected in accordance with the Constitution, Ritual and By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, the National Charter, all records, money and other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control.

"I do further solemnly promise that I will be fair and impartial in my actions towards all comrades, and I will always strive to promote the best interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So help me God.")

INSTALLING OFFICER MAHAN: Council members, you will resume your station. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession our Charter. Also I present you with this gavel, which is the emblem of your authority. Use it firmly but with discretion.

All National Officers, you will stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me: "Comrade Commander-in-Chief Tom A. Pouliot, to you I pledge my sincere allegiance."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, officers and delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I now proclaim the National Officers duly installed and the organization in working order for the ensuing year.

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrades and sisters. As the first order of business, I would like to have Past Commander-in-Chief John Moon to please come forward.

John, it has been a pleasure to serve with you these past two years. I would like to present to you today your Gold Life Membership Badge and your Past Commander-in-Chief's Pin.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: We would like Shirley Pouliot to come forward to place the cap on the Chief's head. If the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and Mrs. Mary Smart would present themselves. Presenting the cap to the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, John Gwizdak, is his lovely wife, Betty.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: John, it is indeed an honor for me to present to you your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief's Lapel Pin.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is indeed an honor to accept it.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Replacing the cap on the Quartermaster General, because he will not get a new one, is his wife Judy.

Placing the hat on the head of Judge Advocate General Earl Lord will be the State Commander of Texas, Doug Bell.

Placing the cap on the head of the Surgeon General, Kenneth Snow, will be his wife, Joy.

Past Commanders-in-Chief Ray Soden and George Cramer have the honor of placing the cap on National Chaplain Father Neville.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: As many of you know, our Adjutant General John Senk is a single parent raising his 12-year-old daughter, Danielle, and an eight-year-old son, Sean. As you can imagine,

the VFW travel for National Officers is pretty tough, but when you have children at home and no family in the area, it makes it even more difficult.

Fortunately, John has many friends in Kansas City who have been a great source of help and support for his children. We are happy to have two of them with us today, Chris and Barbara Mynatt have been long-time friends of John and on several occasions have cared for Danielle and Sean while John has been away.

When they learned that John would become the Adjutant General, they couldn't believe it. I just added that, John. They came to San Antonio for this weekend to witness this Installation Ceremony. Since Barbara is the supervisor in the VFW Insurance Department, John has asked her to place his cap, representing the employees at the National Headquarters. Ms. Mynatt, if you will please present the cap to Adjutant General Senk. (Applause)

My National Chief of Staff, if you will please come forward. Placing the cap on Randy Russell is Past National Commander-in-Chief Jim Kimery. The National Inspector, Norbert K. Enos, please come forward. It pleases me to have the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak to place the cap.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We served in Vietnam in the same unit, so he asked if I would do this today, and it is my pleasure and honor.

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Now, for a few remarks. I wish to thank all of you for the honor you have given me this day. I hardly know what to say. It seems like it has been a long time to get to this place and I am very humble because I know that only one person in our two million organization gets to be the Commander-in-Chief this year, and I am almost overwhelmed that you have elected me.

Before I forget it, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my family that is here with me. My father and mother, George and Mary Pouliot. My sister, Joan Miller, who many of you know. She has been the socialite in our Hospitality Room.

My twin sisters, Pam Huffman and Pat Fries. Of course, I could not have gotten here without the love and support and encouragement of my bride of three and one-half years, Shirley Pouliot. I humbly accept this position and I promise with your help, with the help of everyone here, all of our All-Americans, our National Council members, the Department, District and Post officers, I will do my best to make sure that the VFW is a stronger and more vital organization next year than it is at this time.

I want to give special thanks to my own Department, the Department of Montana and its Ladies Auxiliary, for their many years of support. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I acknowledge the large debt that I owe you. Please stand. (Applause)

I think I better not even start with any names, because there are a million of them, but I will mention one name, a special friend, someone who has been my mentor and has helped me in everything that I have ever done in the VFW, Past Commander-in-Chief and a good friend, John Mahan.

I wish to also pay special tribute to our VFW Ladies Auxiliary President Jane Bingham. Without the Ladies Auxiliary's special strength and compassionate vision, the Veterans of Foreign Wars would not be the premier organization we are today.

In fact, we are America's elite veterans' group for the right to belong to this organization only belongs to those men and women who have fought for and rescued this country in time of need as soldier, sailors, airmen, Coast Guardsmen and Marines.

The members of our elite veterans' organization are members who have discharged their obligation of citizenship as servicemen and women in the past, yet they continue today to expand their time, effort and energy to serve veterans in America. They are in the true sense of the word "Veteran Volunteers."

This is the slogan I have selected for this year, because it is more than just a figure of speech, it embodies that which has made us great. It is as volunteers that we fulfill our obligation to honor the dead by helping the living. It is volunteers that help veterans, and we have worked for 99 years.

It is volunteers that we answer the question that was given to us by our Keynote Speaker way back in the beginning of our convention, the Honorable Paul Wellstone, the Senator from Minnesota. He said, "Have we done enough?" Our members are those men and women who are the fortunate ones.

We came home. But we refused to forget our former friends and comrades who were buried around the world. We refused to forget the widows and orphans as well as those who did come home who were in need or disabled, mentally or physically by war.

It is now our duty to re-awaken in our former members for our membership they can still honor their comrades-in-arms, that they can still help the disabled, injured and the homeless, by joining our ranks and giving us the power to direct our government to help veterans.

They can still do, as President Abraham Lincoln cautioned us to do, to "help those who bore the brunt of battle, his widow and orphan." I am sure that most of the men and women who are eligible for the VFW, who have failed to join when they took off their uniforms and came back home, felt that our Congressmen and Senators and our President would take care of our comrades-in-arms.

For many years, our government did that. Today, however, things are different. We don't have a majority of veterans in Congress and in the Senate. We don't have a President who is a veteran. So the protectors of our programs in government have all disappeared.

We must rededicate ourselves and never before to go home after this convention and seek out the eligible veterans and convince them that now is the time to join, to be counted, so that the veterans' programs, our hospitals, our nursing homes, our outpatient care will not be lost but will be improved and that a place will be found for the homeless veterans that wander about this country.

Have we done enough? These past two years I have traveled the country. I have visited various Posts. Seeing those projects conducted by our VFW and Auxiliaries, I have experienced a great sense of pride in what we stand for and what we have accomplished.

Our Posts are the rock upon which this organization is founded. They are our basic unit. It is the purpose of this organization, our National Officers and staff, to provide the Posts with everything they need to succeed, because the Posts are not only the site of our patriotic and community activities, but they also present our public face in the world.

The Post represents in the minds of the citizens of our country what the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary is all about. In the course of carrying out their good works, they create a positive image of the VFW within our communities. Sadly, though, only a few of our citizens are aware of our good works.

We must not let this continue. I call upon every VFW Post, every District, every Department Commander to appoint public relations officers, and these officers are to be charged with ensuring that the good we do, whether local or whether it is national, is publicized in their community and in their states.

If we are to reverse the current downward trend in membership, it is essential that we get out the word about what this organization of "Veteran Volunteers" does to help our communities and our veterans.

Membership in the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary is very special. It is an honor coveted by many. But, nonetheless, we only manage to attract a small percentage of our eligibles. There are those who see that this trend is irreversible, it is demographics, it is an aging population and a general decline in civic activism in America.

Let me assure you today that myself, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Smart, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, we know differently. With your help, we can steer the VFW on to a course of growth and we can begin now. We can begin this year.

First, I think we have to look at a few things that maybe we are doing wrong, you and I. We should do a better job in promoting our membership. We should personally reach out to all eligible veterans and ask them to become part of our team. Ask yourself, have I done enough?

Today's veterans are looking for more than comradeship in history. Before joining an organization, they want to know will it speak up on our behalf? Far too many of our eligibles have let to find out that the VFW does this. The blame lies with us.

As a first campaign to rejuvenate our membership, I call on each

of you to go out and sign up at least one new member. I pledge to you that I will and I know that you will. Sometimes it is easily done. It is as easily done as carrying a membership application in your back pocket, because sometimes when you are talking to a comrade on the street, the conversation turns to veterans, and at that time if you have a membership available you will be able to sign someone up.

That happened to me at the convention. I was walking out of the First Business Session and a comrade came up to me and said, "Do you have a membership application on you? I have got somebody over here that wants to sign up, but my membership application is in the room."

I want to emphasize that a growing membership sustained by a strong network of Posts is about far more than our ability to survive as an organization. It is about our ability to fight and win battles in Washington, D.C., because the only voices that really matter there are the voices of those voting constituents who put them into office.

So, without the direct involvement of our grass roots membership, we have no hope in prevailing against those special interests in Washington who have a lot of money to spend. We have seen how often they have taken away our entitlements in the budget battles.

We need active VFW members in our communities and in our Posts to pick up the phone and write letters, e-mail and make personal visits to their members of Congress and inform them what the VFW thinks. We are going to need all the strength we can muster to successfully advance any pro-veteran legislative agenda. The VFW is still fighting to allow VA to collect and retain Medicare payments. Another important issue is the Flag Protection Act which needs to be passed by this Congress.

One of our most ambitious undertakings is authorizing the VA to provide for the long-term care needs of our veterans. We are going to introduce legislation in Congress that will mandate such things as long-term care for certain high-level service-connected veterans as well as authorizing respite care and home-care giver assistance to our veterans.

If we are to succeed in these legislative efforts, we must establish VFW Action Corps Posts in every Department, in every Congressional District throughout the country. If you are willing to be a worker, join the VFW Action Corps. This election year we also need VFW Posts, Districts and Departments to pay special emphasis on registering veterans and their families to vote and ensuring that house-bound veterans either receive absentee ballots or are taken to the polls by VFW members.

As veterans, we need to vote and send the message to the United States Congress that this nation's veterans must be a top priority of theirs every day, not just on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

I have instructed our Adjutant General to direct our Directors of Action Corps and community service to work together and distribute a new "get out the vote" pamphlet that is simplified in step by step to help Commanders at all levels.

I urge you to use this pamphlet and put your own local twist on it

to get all veterans in our community to register to vote and vote in November. Further, I believe we need our members to take off the VFW and Auxiliary caps and work in their Congressional Districts for those members of Congress and those congressional candidates who support veterans' entitlements.

This is not a matter of partisanship, rather we must take a stand and support those lawmakers who support us and get them elected. Only if all of us work together can we ensure that our VA health-care system will have the adequate dollars to take care of all the veterans who walk through the door.

We want to ensure that every veteran who enrolls has his health needs met no matter what priority they are and that the VA Benefits Administration has the necessary dollars and staff to ensure that veterans' benefit claims are correctly processed in a timely manner.

We urge the VA to continue to transform itself into a modern health-care provider. We want them to offer a full array of preventative medicine services. When I learned and you learned that the Senate had in one vote restored our VA compensation for tobacco-related illnesses, and then one minute later took it away and used the savings, some \$15 billion for pork barrel spending in the transportation bill, I was outraged. It is our view that these savings should have been used for veterans' benefits.

As a special project, I intend to ask the Congress to fund the cost of allowing the VA to provide health-care screening for ailments such as high blood pressure, diabetes and prostate and lung cancer to all eligible veterans.

The VA, with its 170 medical hospitals and hundreds of outpatient clinics can easily handle this. The recent study shows that these screening tests reduce deaths by a larger percentage, because they catch it early. Our veterans have received a lot of pain and suffering and many medical costs. We must continue to monitor the system to ensure that veterans receive timely, quality health-care available in successful locations.

One way we do this, of course, is through our Veterans Service Tactical Assessment Center, the 1-800 hotline. Since we have started this hotline, we have processed over 6,000 calls. Our staff has answered each one of these calls individually. Let your fellow veterans know of this service.

As we enter our 100th year of service, we must remain vigilant in ensuring the needs of those brave men and women who are serving today in our military are fully met. The General today indicated that things were pretty good in our military. I have seen our military, they are the finest, those on active duty, reserves and members of the National Guard on duty in Bosnia, and I was proud of what I saw. They have done an outstanding job and the morale is high.

I am concerned that they come home safe and sound and soon they can transfer their mission and their responsibilities to other NATO members. I am also concerned that the military draw-down has left our

armed forces over-extended and less prepared than they ought to be.

Throughout the military establishment, there are growing signs of evidence that our combat strength and troop morale is not as good as it should be. Therefore, we will urge the President and the Congress to act now to reverse this trend in decreasing defense readiness by providing our military leaders with the resources required to accomplish their missions.

In addition, in order to improve the morale and retention of our highly dedicated American servicemen and women, we will insist that the Congress and the Administration take action to stop the erosion of military entitlements and benefits.

As those who went before them, we must continue to work to ensure that they have the best equipment, the best training and the best leadership in the world. We must also ensure that they are properly being paid, and when they leave the military they have a chance to get into the job market.

We must not allow the sacrifice and service of those who have made a career of the military to be forgotten. They have earned our very best effort in seeing that they receive all the benefits and entitlements that they are due.

Have we done all we can for the POW/MIAs? These brave comrades all over the world from all wars must be counted for. We owe it to them and their families.

We have been on the forefront of this issue and it will not change.

My comrades and sisters, this will be the year of commemoration and celebration of our 100th year of service. I ask each one to go back home to your Post and your Auxiliary and bring it in 100 percent this year, so when we go to Kansas City we can celebrate and have a cause to celebrate 100 percent in our 100th year.

This will be the year we work together to turn our membership into a membership growth. This will be the year that our individual VFW members will get more involved in the legislative and political process for candidates who support veterans' issues.

This will be the year our politicians in Washington and our state capitals hear long and strong from the VFW. This will be the year of the VFW "Veteran Volunteers."

I want to thank all of you for the honor you have given me today. I pledge to you that the Pouliot-Smart-Gwizdak team, our leadership team, will devote all of our collective strength and will to elevating this VFW to a position of strength that will take us into our second 100 years. I want to thank you for being here. God bless you for the work that you continue to do for the veterans. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief Pouliot, one of the first of many surprises you are going to get, your mother and father would like to present you with a pin that you will wear as you travel around

this world representing the members of this organization.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, comrades and sisters.

Larry LeFebvre.

COMRADE LARRY LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): There being no further business to come before this convention, the officers having been elected and installed for the ensuing year, I move that the 99th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Is there a second?

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, John Senk seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: All in favor will say "aye"; all opposed. The motion carries. This 99th National Convention has come to a close.

Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the room for the Closing Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, the Honor Guard retired the Colors at this time followed by the Closing Prayer from the Ritual by National Chaplain Thomas Neville.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies of this convention have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: I now declare this 99th VFW National Convention closed.

(Whereupon, the convention was duly adjourned at 11:20 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

B-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 215 — ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 215, National By-Laws, by adding the following after the first sentence of the first paragraph:

“Elected committee members are not Post Officers and accordingly may concurrently hold an elected Post office as provided for in Section 216 of these By-Laws.” (Approved)

B-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 220 — VACANCIES AND REMOVAL OF ELECTIVE OFFICERS.

Amend Section 220, National By-Laws, by deleting the sixth (6th) paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Any elective Post officer whose office is vacated by the Department Commander or by vote of the Post under the provisions of this Section shall not be eligible to serve in any Post office in the same administrative year in which the office is vacated.” (Approved)

B-3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 222 — DELEGATES, COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT, DEPARTMENT AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS.

Amend Section 222, National By-Laws, by adding the following:

“(h) Delegates to the National Convention shall not be recognized unless they personally register their completed delegate card with the National Credentials Committee.” (Approved)

B-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 309 — SURRENDER OR FORFEITURE OF CHARTER.

Amend Section 309, National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Voluntary Surrender. A County Council may voluntarily surrender its Charter only upon a vote at a regular or special meeting of the County Council conducted in accordance with the procedures herein set forth. A proposition to surrender the charter must be made at a stated or special meeting of the County Council at least four (4) weeks before the proposal is to be considered. Due notice of the proposition must be given in writing to every Post in the County Council, and to the District and Department Commanders. If a majority of the Posts vote to surrender the charter, the County Council Commander shall, within thirty (30) days, request that the Commander-in-Chief cancel the charter, unless during the thirty (30) day period the County Council Commander receives a demand in writing from two-thirds (2/3) of the Posts in the County Council to continue the County Council." (Approved)

B-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 603 — CONVENTION; QUORUM; AUTHORIZED ATTENDEES.

Amend Section 603, National By-Laws, by adding the following to the first paragraph:

"Once a site selection and/or dates have been designated by vote of the National Council of Administration a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the National Council of Administration will be required to change the location and/or dates." (Disapproved)

B-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 610 — OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (a) (6), National By-Laws, by deleting the words ", committees and employees not otherwise provided for." and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"and committees not otherwise provided for." (Approved)

B-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

**SECTION 617 — REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS-HOW ELECTED.**

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting the second sentence of the second paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"The regional districts designated D, E, and H shall elect a National Council Member in even-numbered years for a two year term and districts A, B, C, F, G, and J shall elect a National Council Member in odd-numbered years for a two year term."

Amend Section 617 further by making changes and additions to the enumeration of Departments comprising the National Council Districts as set forth below:

- "1. Maine
New Hampshire
2. Vermont
Massachusetts
3. Maryland
New Jersey
18. Connecticut
Rhode Island" (Approved)

B-8 (Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

**SECTION 617 — REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS - HOW ELECTED.**

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence of the last paragraph in its entirety and adding the following:

"Notwithstanding any other provision of this Section, it is the intent that each Department shall be represented on the National Council of Administration at all times. If any action, or failure to act, on the part of the National Convention would result in a Department not being represented, the Commander-in-Chief shall, with the concurrence of the effected Departments, immediately after the National Convention, assign a National Council Member from one of the numerical regional districts to represent that Department until the next National Convention. Should the issue of representation not be resolved at the next National Convention the National Council of Administration would be empowered to assign the Department to a Regional District.

Notwithstanding paragraph two (2) of Section 1301 of the

National By-Laws, any amendment to this Section shall take effect immediately upon passage at the National Convention.” (Approved)

B-9 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1101 — FORMATION, CONTROL AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES.

Amend Section 1101, National By-Laws, by deleting the heading in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliaries.”

Amend Section 1101 further by deleting the word “control” in the second sentence of the first paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“jurisdiction” (Approved)

B-10 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1201 — FORMATION AND CONTROL.

Amend Section 1201, National By-Laws, by deleting the words in the heading “and Control”.

Amend Section 1201 further by deleting the word “control” in the second and third sentences of the first paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“jurisdiction” (Approved)

B-11 (Proposed by Department of Europe)

SECTION 101 — ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, National By-Laws, by deleting the (1) from the third line of the first paragraph and placing a period after the word “Charter” in the seventh line of the first paragraph and deleting the remainder of the first paragraph.
(Disapproved)

B-12 (Proposed by Departments of Colorado, Maine, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Washington)

SECTION 102 — APPLICATIONS - AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS.

Amend Section 102, National By-Laws, by adding at the end of the third paragraph the following:

"The Quartermaster General shall transmit ten dollars (\$10.00) or one half of the annual dues payment to the Department Quartermaster of the members residence." (Disapproved)

B-13 (Proposed by Department of Kansas)

SECTION 102 — APPLICATIONS - AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS.

Amend Section 102, National By-Laws, by amending paragraph 2 entitled "Members at Large" by adding at the end of the paragraph the following:

"The Quartermaster General shall transmit to the Department Quartermaster of the Member at Large's state of residence, all dues received, less only the normal regular member's national per-capita tax."

Amend Section 102 further by removing the words "ten dollars (\$10.00)" in the third paragraph, entitled "Department Members at Large", and inserting the phrase "only the normal regular members national per-capita tax." (Disapproved)

B-14 (Proposed by Department of Connecticut)

SECTION 610 — OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610, National By-Laws, by inserting in sub-paragraph (a) (6) after the words "Adjutant General," the following:

"Assistant Adjutants General,"

Amend Section 610 further by deleting in its entirety sub-paragraph (f) (12) and renumbering the subsequent paragraphs (13) as (12) and (14) as (13).

Amend Section 610 further by adding to the end of sub-paragraph (g) the following:

"Assistant Adjutants General shall be full-time salaried officers of the organization". (Disapproved)

SECTION 610 — OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (d) (14), National By-Laws, by deleting in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

(14) **Annual Budget.** Prepare a tentative budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. Said budget shall set forth all anticipated income and estimated expenses. It shall set forth the amount of all compensation to be received by each of the following officers for the ensuing year: (1) Commander-in-Chief; (2) Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (3) Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (4) Quartermaster General; (5) Judge Advocate General; (6) Surgeon General; (7) Chaplain; and, (8) Adjutant General. Restricted funds shall be budgeted separately in every instance, and the budget shall be in balance. The tentative budget shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for the consideration within ten (10) days following adjournment of the National Convention, and final action must be taken on the adoption of the budget at the first stated meeting of the National Council of Administration, and when adopted the budget shall be the expenditure guide for the ensuing year. Not later than thirty (30) days after the first meeting of the National Council of Administration, he shall forward to all Department Commanders and all Post Commanders detailed copy of the national budget adopted by the National Council of Administration for their information. (Disapproved)

B-16 (Proposed by Departments of Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, New Jersey, Tennessee, Washington)

SECTION 610 - OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (d) (14), National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

“(14) **Annual Budget.** Prepare a tentative budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. Said budget shall set forth all anticipated income and estimated expenses. It shall set forth the amount of all compensation to be received by each of the following National Officers for the ensuing year: Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Quartermaster General, Judge Advocate General, Surgeon General, Chaplain and Adjutant General. Restricted funds shall be budgeted separately in every instance and the budget shall be in balance. The tentative budget shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for consideration within ten (10) days following adjournment of the National Convention. Final action must be taken on the adoption of the budget at the first stated meeting of the National Council of

Administration and, when adopted, the budget shall be the expenditure guide for the ensuing year.

Not later than thirty (30) days after the first meeting of the National Council of Administration, he shall forward to all Department Commanders and all Post Commanders a detailed copy of the national budget adopted by the National Council of Administration for their information." (Disapproved)

B-17 (Proposed by many Departments)

SECTION 615 — NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 615 (e) (2), National By-Laws, by deleting the period at the end of the paragraph and adding the following thereto:

" and shall serve on the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual at the National Convention." (Approved)

B-18 (Proposed by many Departments)

SECTION 617 — REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS - HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting the second sentence of the second paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"The regional districts designated D, E, and H shall elect a National Council Member in even-numbered years for a two-year term and districts A, B, C, F, G and J shall elect a National Council Member in odd-numbered years for a two year term."

Amend Section 617 further by making changes and additions to the enumeration of Departments comprising the National Council Districts as set forth below:

- "1. New Jersey
New Hampshire
2. Vermont
Massachusetts
18. Maine
Connecticut" (Disapproved)

B-19 (Proposed by Department of Connecticut)

SECTION 617 — REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF

ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS - HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Each Department shall constitute a Regional District as enumerated below and shall be represented by a Regional National Council of Administration Member who is a member in good standing of a Post in the Department. The Department Convention preceding the National Convention at which the term is to commence shall, in the same manner and at the same time as Department Officers are elected, elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member who shall be installed into office at the National Convention.

Regional Districts shall bear numerical designations as enumerated below. Regional Districts designated by an even number shall elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member in even numbered years for a two year term and Regional Districts designated by an odd number shall elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member in odd numbered years for a two year term.

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Maine | 2. Vermont | 3. New Hampshire | 4. Massachusetts |
| 5. Rhode Island | 6. Connecticut | 7. New York | 8. New Jersey |
| 9. Pennsylvania | 10. Delaware | 11. Maryland | 12. D. C. |
| 13. Europe | 14. Indiana | 15. Illinois | 16. Ohio |
| 17. Michigan | 18. Minnesota | 19. Missouri | 20. South Dakota |
| 21. Iowa | 22. Nebraska | 23. Wisconsin | 24. West Virginia |
| 25. Virginia | 26. Georgia | 27. Kentucky | 28. Alabama |
| 29. Tennessee | 30. Oklahoma | 31. North Carolina | 32. Arkansas |
| 33. South Carolina | 34. Mississippi | 35. Florida | 36. Texas |
| 37. Louisiana | 38. North Dakota | 39. California | 40. Oregon |
| 41. Kansas | 42. Wyoming | 43. Colorado | 44. Washington |
| 45. New Mexico | 46. Montana | 47. Arizona | 48. Idaho |
| 49. Nevada | 50. Pacific Areas | 51. Utah | 52. Hawaii |
| 53. Alaska | 54. Latin America/Caribbean | | |

Each Regional District Council of Administration Member present at a meeting shall have one (1) vote." (Disapproved)

B-20 (Proposed by Department of Nebraska)

SECTION 617 — REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS- HOW ELECTED

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Each Department shall constitute a Regional District as enumerated below and shall be represented by a Regional National Council of Administration Member who is a member in good standing of a Post in the Department. The Department Convention preceding the National Convention at which the term is to commence shall, in the same manner and at the same time as Department Officers are elected, elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member who shall be installed into office at the National Convention.

Regional Districts shall bear numerical designations as enumerated below. Regional Districts designated by an even number shall elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member in even numbered years for a two-term and Regional Districts designated by an odd number shall elect a Regional National Council of Administration member in odd numbered years for a two year term.

Each Department and the numerical designation of its Regional District is enumerated below:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Maine | 2. Vermont | 3. New Hampshire | 4. Massachusetts |
| 5. Rhode Island | 6. Connecticut | 7. New York | 8. New Jersey |
| 9. Pennsylvania | 10. Delaware | 11. Maryland | 12. D. C. |
| 13. Europe | 14. Indiana | 15. Illinois | 16. Ohio |
| 17. Michigan | 18. Minnesota | 19. Missouri | 20. South Dakota |
| 21. Iowa | 22. Nebraska | 23. Wisconsin | 24. West Virginia |
| 25. Virginia | 26. Georgia | 27. Kentucky | 28. Alabama |
| 29. Tennessee | 30. Oklahoma | 31. North Carolina | 32. Arkansas |
| 33. South Carolina | 34. Mississippi | 35. Florida | 36. Texas |
| 37. Louisiana | 38. North Dakota | 39. California | 40. Oregon |
| 41. Kansas | 42. Wyoming | 43. Colorado | 44. Washington |
| 45. New Mexico | 46. Montana | 47. Arizona | 48. Idaho |
| 49. Nevada | 50. Pacific Areas | 51. Utah | 52. Hawaii |
| 53. Alaska | 54. Latin America/Caribbean | | |

Each Regional National Council of Administration Member present at a meeting shall be entitled to the number of votes as set forth in the schedule below in accordance with the prior year membership of the Department constituting the Regional District as recorded by National Headquarters on June 30th.

Membership	Number of Votes
0-60,000	1
60,001-100,000	2
and over	3

Regional National Council of Administration Members shall be authorized travel expenses for stated and special meetings of the National Council of Administration, the National Convention and one Regional Conference meeting, the Department Convention and one other Department meeting of their receptive Regional District annually during their term of office." (Disapproved)

B-21 (Proposed by Departments of California, New York, New Jersey)

SECTION 617 - REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS- HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Each Regional District with a numerical designation enumerated below shall be represented by a Regional National Council of Administration Member who is a member in good standing of a Post in the Department currently entitled to representation on the National Council of Administration for a term of two years in the order of the enumeration.

Each Regional District with an alphabetical designation enumerated below which consists of a single Department having in excess of 60,000 members shall be represented by a Regional National Council of Administration Member who is a member in good standing of a Post in the Department for a term of two years.

The Department Convention preceding the National Convention at which the term of the Regional National Council of Administration Member is to commence shall, in the same manner and at the same time as Department Officers are elected, elect a Regional National Council of Administration Member who shall be installed into office at the National Convention.

Regional National Council of Administration Members representing Regional Districts designated by an even number shall be elected in even numbered years for a two year term and those representing Regional Districts designated by an odd number shall be elected in odd numbered years for a two year term.

Regional National Council of Administration Members representing Regional Districts designated D, E, H, I and K shall be elected in even numbered years for a two year term and those representing Regional Districts designated A, B, C, F, G, and J shall be elected in odd numbered years for a two year term.

The numerical and alphabetical designations of the Regional Districts are enumerated below:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Maine, New Hampshire | 2. Vermont, Massachusetts |
| 3. Rhode Island, Connecticut | 4. District of Columbia, Europe |
| 5. Delaware, Maryland | 6. Virginia, West Virginia |
| 7. Tennessee, Kentucky | 8. Georgia, Alabama |
| 9. South Carolina, North Carolina | 10. Oklahoma, Arkansas |
| 11. Louisiana, Mississippi | 12. Wisconsin, Iowa |
| 13. Nebraska, Missouri | 14. South Dakota, north Dakota |
| 15. Kansas, Colorado | 16. Wyoming, Montana |
| 17. New Mexico, Arizona | 18. Washington, Idaho |
| 19. Utah, Nevada | 20. Oregon, Alaska |
| 21. Pacific Areas, Hawaii,
Latin America/Caribbean | |

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| A. Pennsylvania | D. Ohio |
| B. Illinois | E. Minnesota |
| C. New York | H. Texas |
| F. Michigan | I. New Jersey |
| G. California | K. Indiana |
| J. Florida | |

If a Department attains membership in excess of 60,000 total members before July 1, it shall constitute a Regional District. If any Department previously constituting a Regional District fails to reach a total Department membership of 60,000 members before July 1, it shall no longer constitute a Regional District. In the event any Department changes status as the result of a change in membership, the Commander-in Chief shall submit a proposed amendment to Section 617 of these By-Laws assigning Departments to respective numerical or alphabetical Regional Districts as appropriate. Notwithstanding paragraph two (2) of Section 1301 of the National By-Laws, such amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption at the National Convention.

Regional National Council of Administration Members shall be authorized travel expenses for stated and special meetings of the National Council of Administration, the National Convention and one Regional Conference meeting, the Department Convention and one other Department meeting of their respective Regional District annually during their term of office." (Disapproved)

B-22 (Proposed by Department of Kansas)

SECTION 717 — RESOLUTIONS

Amend Section 717, National By-Laws, by adding "Section 717 - Resolutions" to read as follows:

"Section 717 — Resolutions.

All Department resolutions which affect matters outside state boundaries must be approved by the originating Department Convention and forwarded by the Department Adjutant to the Adjutant General not later than July 1 of each year.

Resolutions that originate within a Department must bear that Department Convention's approval prior to submission to the National Convention. A resolution disapproved by the originating Department Convention, or not acted upon by that Department Convention will not be considered by the National Convention.

Resolutions may also be originated by Department officers or the Department Convention itself and acted upon by the Department Convention.

A National Officer may originate a resolution concerning National affairs and submit it directly to the National Convention without Department action.

A National Convention Committee may originate a resolution and present it for approval during the National Convention.

Proposed amendments to the National By-Laws must also have Department approval if submitted by a Post, District or County Council, and must be received by the Adjutant General by the first working day in July in order that they may be publicized as required by Article XIII of the National By-Laws. Such proposed amendments must be definite and specific as to the material to be deleted or added, containing the exact wording of the proposed change." (Disapproved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

M-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 217 — NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 217, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last sen-

tence in the tenth (10) paragraph. (Approved)

M-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 222 — DELEGATES, COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT, DEPARTMENT AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS.

Amend Section 222 (d), Manual of Procedure, by inserting after the last sentence in the fourth paragraph the following:

" Payment of convention registration fees as set forth above does not entitle the delegate(s) voting privileges at the National Convention. Delegates must present a properly completed Delegate Credential card to the National Credentials Committee for registration as provided for in Section 222 (h) of the National By-Laws." (Approved)

M-3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 516 — NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 516, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word "ballot" in the first sentence and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"voice vote" (Approved)

M-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 517 — OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN, DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

Amend Section 517 (a) (8), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last sentence in its entirety. (Approved)

M-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 609 — NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 609, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words "by roll call" in the first paragraph.

Amend Section 609 further by deleting the second paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“ In voting for officers, a majority of all votes cast shall be necessary to a choice. Should there be no election on the first two votes, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped, and so on in successive votes until an election is made.”
(Approved)

M-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 704 — RELIEF FUND.

Amend Section 704, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following after sub-paragraph (e):

“ (f) To foster true patriotism through historical and educational programs.” (Approved)

M-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 711 — BUDDY POPPY.

Amend Section 711, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the first two paragraphs in their entirety.

Amend Section 711 further by deleting the fourth (4) paragraph in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Distribution of the Buddy Poppy shall be made exclusively for units of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and of the Ladies Auxiliary. Other not for profit organizations, exempt from taxes under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, may assist in such distribution provided there shall be no division of the proceeds. A donation to such not for profit organization for assistance may be paid from the General Fund of the Post.”

Amend Section 711 further by deleting the words “sale or” in the last paragraph. (Approved)

M-8 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1101 — FORMATION, CONTROL, AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES.

Amend Section 1101, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the heading in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“ Sec. 1101 — Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliaries.”
(Approved)

M-9 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1101 — FORMATION, CONTROL, AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES.

Amend Section 1101 (b), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words “and control” in the sub-heading. (Approved)

M-10 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1101 — FORMATION, CONTROL, AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES.

Amend Section 1101 (b) (1), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word “control” in the first sentence of the first paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“jurisdiction” (Approved)

M-11 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1101 — FORMATION, CONTROL, AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES.

Amend Section 1101 (b) (2), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word “control” in the first sentence of the first paragraph and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“jurisdiction” (Approved)

M-12 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1201 —FORMATION AND CONTROL.

Amend Section 1201, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words

in the heading "and Control". (Approved)

M-13 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1201 —FORMATION AND CONTROL.

Amend Section 1201 (a), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words "and control" in the sub-heading. (Approved)

M-14 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1201 —FORMATION AND CONTROL.

Amend Section 1201 (a) (1), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words "control" in the first and second sentences of the second paragraph and insert in lieu thereof the following:

"jurisdiction" (Approved)

M-15 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1201 —FORMATION AND CONTROL.

Amend Section 1201 (a) (2), Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word "control" in the second sentence of the first paragraph and insert in lieu thereof the following:

"jurisdiction" (Approved)

M-16 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1301 — AMENDMENTS.

Amend Section 1301, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the first sentence in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"The rules and procedures set out in this Manual may be amended from time to time as provided for in the National By-Laws." (Approved)

M-17 (Proposed by Department of Europe)

SECTION 101 — ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word "three" at the end of the second sentence of the first paragraph and adding the word "two". Further delete the "(1)", the word "citizenship", the "(2)", and the "(3)" from the fourth sentence and adding the "(1)" before the word honorable and "(3)" before the word service. (Disapproved)

M-18 (Proposed by Department of Connecticut)

SECTION 101 — ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the section, a new eligibility category as follows:

"National Defense Service Medal (30 consecutive days or 60 days not consecutive duty outside continental limits of the United States)." (Disapproved)	27 June 1950 Indeterminate
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M-19 (Proposed by Department of California)

SECTION 803 — MANUFACTURE AND USE OF SEALS, EMBLEMS, BADGES, INSIGNIA AND UNIFORMS.

Amend Section 803, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the third paragraph under the caption "**Cap**" in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Post officers, members except Post Commanders and Past Post Commanders—gold braid; County Council officers and Past County Council Commanders—bright blue braid; District officers, Post Commanders and Past Post Commanders, except District Commanders and Past district Commanders—bright green braid; Department officers and Past Department officers, Conference officers and Past Conference officers, and District Commanders and Past District Commanders—bright red braid; National officers and Past Commanders-in-Chief—silver braid." (Disapproved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

R-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "**FORWARD**" on page 1, paragraph 4, by deleting the word "Men" and inserting in lieu thereof the word "Veterans".

(Approved)

R-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "**ORDER OF BUSINESS (Post)**" on page 16 by deleting paragraph 2 in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

" 2. Commander: (Leading all members in recitation of Section 3 of the Congressional Charter.) The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever."
(Approved)

R-3 (Proposed by Department of New York)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "FORWARD" on page 1, paragraph 4, by deleting the word "Men" and inserting in lieu thereof the word "Veterans".
(Approved)

R-4 (Proposed by Department of New York)

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States under the heading "ORDER OF BUSINESS (Post)" on page 16, paragraph 2, by deleting the words "Article I, Constitution of" and inserting in lieu thereof the words "Section 3 of the Congressional Charter granted".
(Disapproved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

No. 201 (Submitted by many Departments)

PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SPACE RENT FREE IN VFW WASHINGTON
OFFICE FOR VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

(Disapproved)

No. 202 (Submitted by Departments of Colorado and Connecticut)

SEVERANCE PACKAGE FOR OUTGOING ADJUTANT GENERAL

(Disapproved)

No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)
NATIONAL CONVENTION SITE SELECTION

(Disapproved)

No. 204 (Submitted by many Departments)
ANNUAL SALARIES OF NATIONAL OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

(Disapproved)

No. 205 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)
NATIONAL TO ABSORB MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM COSTS

(Disapproved)

No. 206 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)
CONTINUED PAYMENT FOR DECEASED LIFE MEMBERS

(Disapproved)

No. 207 (Submitted by Department of Europe)
RECOGNITION OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

(Disapproved)

No. 208 (Submitted by Department of Tennessee)
SETTING POST MEMBERSHIP GOALS

(Disapproved)

No. 209 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)
AGE LIMITATION FOR SONS OF THE VFW

(Disapproved)

No. 210 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)
DIRECT NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION TO URGE LADIES
AUXILIARY TO AMEND THEIR BY-LAWS SO NON-U.S. CITIZENS MAY
QUALIFY FOR MEMBERSHIP

(Disapproved)

No. 211 (Submitted by Department of Washington)
POPPY COIN COLLECTORS

(Disapproved)

No. 212 (Submitted by Department of Montana)
REPAYING BONUS BENEFITS

(Disapproved)

No. 213 (Submitted by Department of Montana)
MEMBERSHIP

(Disapproved)

No. 214 (Submitted by Department of Montana)
MILITARY COALITION

(Disapproved)

No. 215 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)
REINSTATE NATIONAL VFW
AMERICANISM RECORD BOOK PROGRAM

(Disapproved)

No. 216 (Submitted by Department of New York)
ENDORSE THE NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR

(Disapproved)

No. 217 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)
OFFICIAL MARCH FOR THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we establish John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes, Forever" as the official march of the VFW. (Approved)

No. 218 (Submitted by Department of Texas)
LIMIT SITES FOR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MEMBERSHIP TRIP

(Disapproved)

No. 219 (Submitted by Department of Washington)
SEVERANCE PACKAGE FOR OUTGOING ADJUTANT GENERAL

(Disapproved)

No. 220 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)
SEVERANCE PACKAGE FOR OUTGOING ADJUTANT GENERAL

(Disapproved)

No. 221 (Submitted by Ohio, Nebraska, and Tennessee)
SEVERANCE PACKAGE FOR OUTGOING ADJUTANT GENERAL

(Disapproved)

No. 222 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
DENY VFW MEMBERSHIP TO
WORLD WAR II ERA MERCHANT MARINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that based on documentation, World War II merchant seamen do not qualify for VFW membership, simply because they were never part of our armed forces and therefore did not receive military campaign or service awards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that no request be made of Congress to alter the VFW Congressional Charter to provide membership eligibility to any person who has not worn the uniform and served as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that despite not being eligible for VFW membership, this organization recognizes the important strategic role the War Shipping Administration played in World War II and the important contribution the American merchant seamen made during this same period of time.

(Approved)

No. 223 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

EMPHASIZE CHANGES TO CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER, BY-LAWS,
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, requested through channels, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters italicize any new or revised text in the Congressional Charter, the By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure and Ritual. (Approved)

**CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL RESOLUTIONS**

No. 301 (Submitted by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief)
U. S. FLAG DESECRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to propose to the states an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which specifies that Congress and the states have the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the United States Flag. (Approved)

No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)
THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER TO REMAIN NATIONAL ANTHEM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we shall go on record to say, "The Star Spangled Banner" shall remain the National Anthem of the United States, despite the efforts of any person or persons to change it to any other piece of music, and the members of the above named group strongly oppose any changes. (Approved)

No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)
RESTRICT DESIGNEES ON WWII MONUMENT

(Disapproved)

No. 304 (Submitted by Department of Texas)
"60 MINUTES" CBS ON DECEMBER 7, 1997

(Tabled)

No. 305 (Submitted by Department of Florida)
FUND OUR VETERANS EARNED ENTITLEMENTS WITH
OUR CONSTITUTIONAL POWER

(Disapproved)

No. 306 (Submitted by Department of Montana)
VFW COMMEMORATIVE COIN

(Disapproved)

No. 307 (Submitted by Department of Montana)
STAR SPANGLED BANNER

(Disapproved)

No. 308 (Submitted by Department of New York)
100TH ANNIVERSARY STAMP

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we shall petition the Treasury Department and/or other appropriate government agencies, in proper manner, in order to effectuate the issuance of a block of postage stamps commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that said stamps shall depict some of the programs and activities of the VFW, as well as the history of the VFW; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall request the right of approval on the design of any block of said stamps that may be approved for issuance. (Approved)

No. 309 (Submitted by Department of New York)

**PROCLAMATION DECLARING SEPTEMBER 29, 1999, AS
"VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS DAY"**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we shall petition the President of the United States to issue a proclamation naming September 29, 1999, as "Veterans of Foreign Wars Day," or such other title as may be deemed appropriate by the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Approved)

**CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND POW/MIA**

No. 401 (Submitted on Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Organization will:

(a) ensure routine distribution to the field of pertinent, credible and responsible information on a routine basis and, as requested, to provide such information about other POW/MIA organizations as may be needed by the Departments;

(b) encourage participation in the program by veterans groups of other friendly nations such as our NATO and Far Eastern allies;

(c) encourage exchange of information among State POW/MIA Chairmen to include publishing up-to-date lists of POW/MIA Chairmen; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Department exercise maximum initiative to maintain the vitality and thrust of the POW/MIA program at Department levels by encouraging such actions as:

(a) display of the black POW/MIA flag, subordinate to the U.S. Flag, at any function at which it is proper to fly the U.S. Flag;

(b) encourage support of information exchange at Post levels;
(c) appoint an interested member at the Post level to act as the POW/MIA project officer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Organization of the VFW supports the annual POW/MIA Recognition Day. (Approved)

No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO RESOLVE
THE KOREAN WAR POW/MIA ISSUE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW is encouraged by the U.S.-North Korean Joint Operations and the visit of a VFW representative to resolve the status of Americans still unaccounted for in Korea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that with renewed vigor, the VFW urge the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments to increase their contact with the North Korean and Chinese governments, to pursue and expand the current joint effort to include the live POW issue and thus seek new opportunities to resolve this humanitarian issue as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW, in keeping with United States laws and in consultation with the Republic of Korean and U.S. governments, continue its contact with North Korea to press for the accounting of the over 8,100 Americans still missing and the investigation of reports of live Americans. (Approved)

No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VFW SUPPORTS KUWAIT'S DEMAND FOR
AN ACCOUNTING OF ITS MIAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we strongly urge the United Nations, the United States Government and other governments to take such action as necessary either unilaterally, through our allies, or the United Nations, that will force Iraq to account for those Kuwaiti citizens still missing. (Approved)

No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE LESSONS OF THE COLD WAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the lessons of the Cold and Gulf Wars taught us that our peace, our freedom and our security can best be achieved by remaining united in common purpose with our many allies and friends whereby we share both the danger and security burden and by maintaining a national defense which in combination with our allies and friends, is equal to those contin-

uing threats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in contrast to the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, the lessons of the Gulf War are apparent: to ensure victory in future wars, the United States, led by resolute leadership and backed by unwavering public support, should quickly and decisively engage the full range of its military power until the threat to our security is eliminated. (Approved)

No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LIMIT FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. BUSINESSES AND PROPERTIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation to limit foreign ownership of United States corporations, companies, businesses and property, and industrial technologies and/or processes which could become vital or sensitive to the national defense of the U.S. and which will protect the economy of the United States.

(Approved)

No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TAKE ACTION ON THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress in the strongest terms to heed these ominous warnings and focus their attention on the immigration problem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition the President and the Congress to expand and strengthen the Customs and Immigration Services, the Border Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard, and enact such emergency measures as necessary to prevent smuggling of illegal aliens and stop, detain and deport potential terrorists or those with ties to terrorist groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, as appropriate and when required, well trained and supervised military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country. (Approved)

No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR CASTRO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Government to continue its present policy of no trade with Communist Cuba and no diplomatic recognition of that communist state and to increase the economic and political pressure on Castro; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the U.S. Government to

use all measures, short of violence and/or invasion, to increase the pressure on Castro in conjunction with his isolation, to hasten the time until Castro's dictatorship is overthrown and Cuba can regain its freedom. (Approved)

No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
PUNISH TERRORISTS NOW

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the U.S. to take decisive action against all terrorists and bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts and to serve as a warning that all terrorists — no matter what country gives them refuge — will be hunted down and brought to justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to urge decisive action in the war on terrorism by:

(a) remaining on the offensive against terrorists rather than passively remaining on the defense;

(b) instituting and pressing our allies to support a quarantine on those "rogue or outlaw states" guilty of inciting, harboring or aiding and abetting terrorists;

(c) holding all countries accountable for the security of American citizens traveling within their borders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congress should authorize and the President should declare a quarantine against the outlaw Qadhaffi regime of Libya and other terrorist states found to support and harbor terrorists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our civilian leaders and military commanders should take all necessary steps to ensure U.S. servicemen and women stationed abroad are adequately protected against the threat of terrorist attacks and that both foreign governments and U.S. authorities be held accountable for such lapses in security that endanger the lives of our servicemen and women. (Approved)

No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
STRATEGIC DEFENSE IS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support both a deployable theater ballistic missile defense and a strategic ballistic missile defense before the end of this century as a priority defense requirement. (Approved)

No. 410 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW calls on all elected and appointed officials to publicly recognize the major contributions and sacrifices made by those in military

service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our elected and appointed officials acknowledge the professionalism of our servicemen and women by ending the erosion of entitlements and expanding the benefits of service and by so doing, show that this nation cares for those who unselfishly served and sacrificed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on our elected officials to provide military pay raises that continue to close the "pay gap" between the military and private sector. (Approved)

No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE LIFTING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BAN
ON HOMOSEXUALS IN THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally oppose the efforts of homosexual organizations and other organizations to force the military services to accept and/or retain homosexuals and urge that federal law (10 U.S.C. section 654) and implementing DOD policy which provides for the discharge of those engaging in homosexual conduct be consistently and properly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Uniformed Code of Military Justice should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised in an effort to eliminate any possible question that any denial of civil rights is based on moral, religious or ethical behavior and that there is no intent to deny civil rights to any servicemember, rather our concern is to maintain the good order, discipline and readiness of our Armed Forces and their ability to operate effectively. (Approved)

No. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE U.S. COAST GUARD

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to provide the funding necessary for the Coast Guard to carry out its mission and numerous tasks, including but not limited to, drug interdiction and enforcement, military readiness, pollution control, maritime safety, search and rescue missions as well as their many other duties and responsibilities. (Approved)

No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STANDING FIRM FOR DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will always stand firm for liberty, and in furtherance of the ideals of liberty and democracy, we support a foreign policy that nourishes the newly won liberties in Europe and elsewhere, and we maintain our mil-

itary strength against both the possibility of the reversal of Europe's liberties and the threats to other important regions of the world. (Approved)

No. 414 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL STRATEGY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to support a national strategy of peace through strength, the general principles of which should be:

(a) maintaining a strong economy at home and protecting our overseas resources of energy and vital raw materials;

(b) maintaining an American military presence in Europe and Asia to stabilize the military balance in these regions and help our friends and allies to defend themselves from aggression;

(c) maintaining such strategic, nuclear and conventional military forces (including active Reserve and National Guard components) trained and equipped with such high technology weapons and equipment and with sufficient bases and infrastructure which in the judgment of our military leaders are more than equal to the current threats and adequate to meet our current defense requirements;

(d) helping formerly communist controlled countries in their process of converting to freely elected democratic governments;

(e) maintaining effective security and intelligence capabilities to prevent strategic surprise from any quarter; and

(f) employing the leadership necessary to inspire, focus and unite the national will and international unity to further our goal of peace and freedom.

(g) maintaining alliances as required by our national strategy, protect our national interests, support our friends and promote peace. (Approved)

No. 415 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HALT THE EROSION OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reject deep reductions in our national intelligence agencies, instead supporting appropriate expansion and funding to ensure that we will have adequate warnings of future political, military, economic or technological changes that would increase the risks to our national security and vital national interests abroad and that Congress appropriate necessary funds to strengthen the intelligence services. (Approved)

No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we urge the Government of the United States to increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern state of the art weapons and technology to safeguard her freedom, and promote the security in the Pacific and Asian regions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States, in concert with its allies, bring pressure to bear on North Korea to comply with the nuclear safeguard accord of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to be a responsible country in the community of nations and to come to the table for peaceful dialogue directly between the South and North.
(Approved)

No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that to prevent further endangerment to our troops, we support the view that unless unforeseen circumstances arise, the U.S. forces assigned to Operation Joint Guard should be gradually withdrawn from the former Yugoslavia while transferring remaining responsibilities to other NATO members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States oppose the deployment of U.S. military forces to the Serbian Province of Kosovo for peacekeeping or peacemaking operations.
(Approved)

No. 418 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ASSIST VIETNAM'S RECOVERY OF MIAS AS A SIGN OF GOOD FAITH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that at each level of the VFW — National, Department, District, County Council, Post — strenuous efforts be made to collect any information which might be of value in determining the fate of Vietnam's 300,000 MIAs and of assistance in the recovery of their remains; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge all levels of the VFW to solicit all Vietnam veteran members (and non-members) for any information or material that could be used to determine the fate of Vietnamese MIAs and their graves. Such information and material include battlefield souvenirs especially if they contain names or other identifying information; personal effects such as photos, letters, identification documents, taken from casualties; sketch maps, photos, overlays (annotated with dates and locations if possible) which would be of help in identifying Vietnamese grave sites; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW National Headquarters publicize this effort and provide Departments with materials which might be used in further publicizing our efforts and that the VFW Washington Office act as the collecting point and repository of all such information obtained from our members and the public at large; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on subsequent trips to the region by VFW National Officers, such information be turned over to Vietnamese authorities as an expression of our desire to assist them in recovering their MIAs and to encourage their greater effort in helping us reach the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs. (Approved)

No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE U. S. FORCES UNDER FOREIGN COMMAND

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any plan or directive placing U.S. military forces under the command of foreign military officers including those who are operating exclusively under orders from the United Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress be urged to examine Presidential Decision Directive 25 to determine if any Constitutional authority has been misused, and if so, to find an appropriate remedy. (Approved)

No. 420 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that while recognizing the settlement of the legitimacy question remains an issue between the two countries, we support and urge the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United Nations and other international bodies so that those agencies can be useful in fostering a spirit of cooperation and assisting the resolution of the legitimacy question; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to adhere strictly to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state of the art military equipment, weapons and technology to include modern aircraft to the Republic of China on Taiwan as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capabilities to provide for military balance and stability in the area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the United States Government to employ the full range of its economic, diplomatic and military influence if it is necessary to contain the overtly aggressive posture of the Peoples Republic of China and to use this influence to further the peaceful settlement of remaining disputes. (Approved)

No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE DOWNSIZING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT POW/MP OFFICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we believe the downsizing of the Defense Department's

POW/MP Office would have a disastrous effect on achieving our goal of the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs and would have the following dampening effects:

(a) it would slow the momentum of a POW/MIA effort that has taken years to develop;

(b) it would prevent us from taking full advantage of new opportunities that are becoming available to resolve this issue;

(c) it would send the wrong signal that the United States is downsizing its effort to recover our missing men to those countries where the search for our men still continues, or as in the case in Korea, where the search has just begun and the effort is expanding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars goes on record as adamantly and unalterably opposed to any downsizing of the effort or of the resources put into the effort to reach the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel. (Approved)

No. 422 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RETAIN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW goes on record as supporting the ongoing existence of the Selective Service System in its stand-by status and urges the United States Congress to provide the funds necessary to retain the Selective Service System. (Approved)

No. 423 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MONITOR THE PANAMA CANAL CAREFULLY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress to closely monitor conditions in the Republic of Panama, to be prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the Canal and to ensure continued freedom of passage, and to carefully reexamine the conditions of Panama and the region before the scheduled turnover with a view to balancing the views, concerns and interests of Panama, its neighbors and the United States. (Approved)

No. 424 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

KEEPING FAITH WITH THE AMERICAN MILITARY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of State to initiate changes to the Status of Forces Agreements, the Geneva Conventions and other international agreements to improve the legal protections for United States military personnel and their families serving in foreign countries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of

Defense and the Department of State to periodically provide written, factual assurances to the Congress, the public and our military that legal protections have been put in place to bring to trial those guilty of murder, execution or assassination of members of our military service in foreign lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congress of the United States and the Administration find a solution and take the necessary steps to ensure that the El Salvador murders of LTC Picket and CPL Dawson are brought to trial and punished. (Approved)

No. 425 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

(Disapproved)

No. 426 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
NATO ENLARGEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the enlargement of the NATO Alliance and the extension of the United States mutual defense commitment to the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic as it is important to the security of that region, our own vital interests in the region as well as world peace; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this enlargement be accomplished in a non-threatening manner so as not to force other countries into an opposing alliance and that in order to project a peaceful image we urge consideration be given to adoption of a declared policy that U.S. forces and weapons will not be stationed, based or deployed (except for training) in the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any future enlargement of NATO beyond the countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic be approached with careful analysis as to the costs, benefits and risks involved. (Approved)

No. 427 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
REQUIRE ALL EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD CITIZENS TO REGISTER
FOR MILITARY DRAFT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States to support legislation that would require all United States citizens, both male and female, be required to register for the Military Draft upon reaching their 18th birthday. (Approved)

No. 428 (Submitted by Department of Kansas)

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL NAVY MEDICAL AUGMENTATION TEAM OPERATION URGENT FURY
(GRENADA)

(Disapproved)

No. 429 (Submitted by Department of Nevada)
ISSUANCE OF COLD WAR VICTORY MEDAL

(Disapproved)

No. 430 (Submitted by Department of Washington)
SPECIAL MEDAL FOR WWII NAVY ARMED GUARDS

(Disapproved)

No. 431 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)
AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge the President of the United States of America and every member of the Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. servicemen who are still prisoners of war or missing in action. (Approved)

No. 432 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 432, TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A NUCLEAR RADIATION MEDAL FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

(Disapproved)

No. 433 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
INTERMENT OF AN UNKNOWN FROM VIETNAM

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if there are other remains that in all likelihood cannot be identified by known forensic medical techniques, and after all means of identification have been exhausted, the U.S. Government make every effort to inter one of our unknown honored dead from the Vietnam War to rest in peace along side his comrades from World War I, World War II and the Korean War in this hallowed ground. (Approved)

No. 434 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVE MILITARY READINESS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to act now to reverse this trend in decreasing defense readiness by providing our military leaders with the resources required to accomplish their missions and the military strategy of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in order to improve the morale and retention of our high quality, dedicated American service men and women, that the Congress and the Administration take action to stop the erosion of military entitlements and benefits, and restore military retirement benefits to the level that existed prior to 1986. (Approved)

No. 435 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TIGHTEN U.S. POLICY ON HIGH TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the President and the Congress to reverse the present U.S. policy on exporting American advanced "dual-use" technologies and supercomputers to China and Russia, and strengthen the rules that limit the export of American "dual-use" technologies to any country that poses a possible ballistic missile or any other significant threat to the U.S.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Administration stop any U.S. commercial activity which facilitates the improvement of Chinese ballistic missile capability, and provides any information or technology that would provide new military capability, including any long-range missile technology, to any country that poses a significant threat to our nation without prior U.S. government authorization. (Approved)

No. 436 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE FOR THE UNITED STATES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to immediately accelerate efforts to develop and deploy a National Missile Defense System to protect the United States against an accidental or unauthorized ballistic missile launch; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and the Congress to take immediate actions to stop the proliferation of ballistic missiles and technologies to any potentially hostile or rogue states and terrorist groups that may seek to target the United States directly with long-range missiles. (Approved)

No. 437 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE THE DEFENSE BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to take what ever steps are necessary to increase defense spending and reverse the fourteen year pattern of declining defense budgets; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in light of the first federal budget surplus in three decades, and the current strength of the U.S. economy, we urge the nation's bipartisan political leadership to reopen negotiations on the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 in order to provide for a reallocation additional of national resources to the defense budget, and to sustain period of real growth in defense spending. (Approved)

No. 438 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

(Disapproved)

No. 439 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
IN SUPPORT OF ARMY MEDIC MICHAEL NEW

(Disapproved)

No. 440 (Submitted by Department of Kansas)
INTERMENT OF AN UNKNOWN FROM VIETNAM

(Disapproved)

No. 441 (Submitted by Department of Delaware)
RESTORE PRE-ATTACK RANKS TO ADMIRAL HUSBAND E. KIMMEL
AND GENERAL WALTER C. SHORT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States to restore the honor and reputations of Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and General Walter C. Short; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President of the United States to take necessary steps to posthumously advance Admiral Kimmel and General Short to their highest wartime rank of four-star admiral and lieutenant general. Such action would be appreciated greatly to restore the honor of these two great American servicemen. (Approved)

No. 442 (Submitted by Department of Latin America/Caribbean)
SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and the rest of the members of the United States Senate to pass S.472 before the adjourn-

ment of the 105th Congress. (Approved)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SEXUAL TRAUMA TREATMENT FOR ALL VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that there will be permanent VA programs established for veterans who need sexual trauma treatment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States insists there be absolutely no limitations or restrictions to VA sexual trauma treatment services thereby making sexual trauma treatment available to all veterans of the Armed Forces regardless of their length of service or reserve status. (Approved)

No. 602 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
**ADEQUATELY FUND THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress in its annual appropriations, to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs construction to allow it to carry out a program of modernization or replacement of aging facilities, which includes a sound system for setting construction priorities, which in combination will ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veterans. (Approved)

No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget and appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of the benefits and entitlements programs and enhance Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. (Approved)

No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
**AMEND THE UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER
SPOUSES' PROTECTION ACT**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, seeks to amend PL 97-252, the Former Spouses' Protection Act, to allow for the termination of court-ordered payments to ex-military spouses upon remarriage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars

seeks legislation that would prohibit forcing a service member from making payments to his former spouse on the date the service member first becomes eligible to receive retired pay if the service member elects to remain in the service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars seeks legislation that ensures any increase in retired pay resulting from increased service or promotion after a divorce is final becomes the sole property of the service member. (Approved)

No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF RETIREMENT PAY AND
VETERANS DISABILITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly advocate legislation to be enacted to permit the concurrent receipt of longevity military retirement pay without reduction of the Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we also support legislation that initially limits the disability categories and/or the dollar amount of offset, with the final goal of having all disabled retirees receive full concurrent receipt of all money. (Approved)

No. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMENDED TAX RETURNS FOR MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress amend current law whereby a military retiree will be allowed to file amended tax returns involving receipt of VA disability compensation beyond the current three (3) year limitation. (Approved)

No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUDE GUARD AND RESERVE INCOME WHEN DETERMINING ELI-
GIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation that standardizes Unemployment Insurance eligibility rules to the extent that Guard and Reserve income will be excluded for purposes of determining eligibility for Unemployment Insurance. (Approved)

No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISHMENT OF A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON VETERANS ENTITLEMENT AND BENEFITS POLICY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we support legislation authorizing establishment of a White House conference on veterans entitlement and benefit policy with the mission of improving and preserving veterans benefits. (Approved)

No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM (FEHBP) FOR
MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to offer military retirees the full range of FEHBP under the same terms as do all other federal departments, agencies, and the post office; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we also support legislation that initially limits FEHBP to only Medicare eligible retirees with the ultimate goal of allowing all retirees to participate in the program. (Approved)

No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
FULL FUNDING FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE
MOBILIZATION INSURANCE PROGRAM (MIP)

(Disapproved)

No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING PROGRAM
FOR RECENTLY SEPARATED VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to take immediate action towards the creation of and implementation of a nationwide On-the-Job-Training Program for recently separated service members. (Approved)

No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
THIRD-PARTY REIMBURSEMENT WITHOUT OFFSET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Department of Veterans Affairs collect and retain all third-party reimbursements without offset from its appropriation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that legislation be enacted to make up any Medical Care Cost Recovery (MCCR) shortfall with supplemental appropriations. (Approved)

No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend Public Law 104-262 to mandate the provision of nursing home care for all veterans. (Approved)

No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SUPPORT AN EFFECTIVE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support a viable and effective Veterans Employment and Training Service which has necessary funding and capability to assist veterans in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment and re-employment opportunities. (Approved)

No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SERVICE CONNECTION FOR THE RESIDUALS OF TOBACCO USE

(Disapproved)

No. 616 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
IMPROVED VA HOSPITAL FACILITIES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress provide funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) specifically for the purpose of improving the quality of hospital facilities and services available to women veterans at VA hospitals. (Approved)

No. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S
VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
NECESSARY FUNDING FOR THE LOCAL VETERANS
EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVERs) AND
DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (DVOPs)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to appropriate sufficient funds to support the number of LVERs and DVOPs positions as required by Title 38. (Approved)

No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SUPPORT PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS TO ALL
FEDERALLY FUNDED JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation which will mandate priority of service to all eligible veterans in federally funded job training programs. (Approved)

No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
BENEFITS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS AND SCOUTS WHO SERVED WITH
THE U. S. ARMED FORCES DURING WWII

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to recognize veterans of the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II, as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of Army to issue a certificate of service to every national of the Philippine Islands deemed by the Secretary to have performed any military service in aid of the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II. (Approved)

No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR VA BENEFICIARIES
AND MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide timely annual increases in an amount at least commensurate with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Department of Veterans Affairs' beneficiaries and military retirees. (Approved)

No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VA MEDICARE SUBVENTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the swift enactment into law of legislation authorizing VA to collect and retain Medicare dollars. (Approved)

No. 623 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
EXCLUSIVE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES FOR
THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to establish separate appropriations sub-

committees exclusive to the Department of Veterans Affairs in both the House and Senate. (Approved)

No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FUNDING OF SBA VETERANS PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the strengthening and sufficiently fund an effective veterans entrepreneurship program in the United States Small Business Administration. (Approved)

No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish an open ended presumptive period until the medical and scientific community determines an appropriate time in which conditions associated with Gulf War service will manifest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for all veterans whose health has been adversely affected by the Persian Gulf War and to conduct all necessary tests to determine the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, veterans of the Persian Gulf War be afforded the same rights and privileges guaranteed to all other veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to act in accordance with 38 USC, 1117, and develop, at the earliest possible date, appropriate definitions or diagnoses of the illnesses associated with service in the Persian Gulf; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Service and Veterans Affairs, and the Congress to fund appropriate research into the causes of these illnesses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW continue to closely monitor this issue, identify and research problems, and urge appropriate corrective action to assist Persian Gulf War veterans and their families.

(Approved)

No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HONOR GUARD FUNCTIONS AT FUNERALS FOR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to provide active duty and recognize, as a federal function, Reserve and/or National Guard participation at veterans' funerals, with necessary appropriated funds. (Approved)

No. 627 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VA TO PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF COST OF CARING FOR VETERANS
RESIDING IN STATE VETERANS HOMES

(Disapproved)

No. 628 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
RETAIN EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR
VETERANS AND DISABLED VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any elimination of federal oversight and control of the employment assistance entitlements earned by America's veterans/disabled veterans through their honorable service. (Approved)

No. 629 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
FUNDING OF NATIONAL VETERANS' TRAINING INSTITUTE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to support full funding of the National Veterans Training Institute as required by PL 100-232. (Approved)

No. 630 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
VETERANS PREFERENCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support veterans preference in federal, state and local employment as provided by a grateful nation, and oppose any and all efforts to eliminate or undermine this earned entitlement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall aggressively support enactment of legislation that strengthens the Veterans Preference Act of 1944 and all subsequent amendments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly urge Congress to enact legislation which provides that any intentional violation of a provision of the Veterans Preference Act as a "prohibited personnel practice" and therefore be subject to corrective and disciplinary action, and intervention by Office of the Special Counsel. (Approved)

No. 631 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge standardized *licensure* and *certification* requirements be adopted by the appropriate federal and state agencies in all 50 states; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that recently separated service members be afforded the opportunity to take licensing and certification exams without a period of retraining. (Approved)

No. 632 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDING EMERGENCY SERVICES TO ENROLLED VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress enact legislation that mandates the VA to pay for emergency services in non-VA facilities for all enrolled veterans if emergency services are not available within a VA facility. (Approved)

No. 633 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TOBACCO INDUSTRY SETTLEMENT AND
VETERANS HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Administration and Congress advocate more aggressively for a portion of the "tobacco settlement" to be directed solely to offset VA health care costs and the promotion of smoking cessation and prevention programs for veterans with tobacco-related disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States insist that any such funds the VA receives from a federal tobacco settlement will not be offset from VA's annual medical care appropriation. (Approved)

No. 634 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE STAFF REDUCTIONS
FOR THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we recommend Congress includes sufficient funding in VA's appropriations to increase FTE in the Compensation and Pension Service by 500 and maintain FTE at the FY 1997 levels in the other VBA components. (Approved)

No. 635 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EQUITY IN VA HEALTH CARE COPAYMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress urge VA to find a more equitable means to determine a non-service connected veterans outpatient co-payment. (Approved)

No. 636 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

GULF WAR UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESSES

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, support President Clinton's November 1997 directive mandating National Academy of Sciences review of scientific and medical research toward possible establishment of presumptions for Gulf War undiagnosed illnesses and urges Congress to immediately pass legislation that will reinforce this endeavor. (Approved)

No. 637 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROVIDING
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO
VIETNAM VETERANS CHILDREN WITH SPINA BIFIDA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the Agent Orange Benefits Act of 1996 to provide Vietnam veterans children with *Spina Bifida Cystica* with comprehensive health care coverage, attendant services, independent living services, up to 48 months of educational assistance, adaptive housing and transportation assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Act be amended to include outreach and service coordination assistance to: (1) ensure that Vietnam veterans children with Spina Bifida and their families are aware of their eligibility for VA benefits and services and, when needed, in fully accessing such benefits; (2) assist such children in protecting Supplemental Security Insurance and other federal and federally-supported benefits and services from unwarranted reduction or termination due to the receipt of assistance under the Act; and (3) assist such children in accessing other specialized human services for persons with severe disabilities offered by federal, state, and local government agencies and other human services organizations. (Approved)

No. 638 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan as the best approach toward resolving the current claims processing problems, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars fully supports the improved technology initiatives by the Department of Veterans Affairs and we urge that the Veterans Benefits Administration's planned information technology program be fully developed and instituted at the earliest possible time. (Approved)

No. 639 (Submitted by Department of Arkansas)

AMEND HIRING RESTRICTIONS OF DVOPs

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States,
that Chapter 4103(a)(1) of Title 38 USC be amended to remove the requirement that
DVOPs must be Vietnam era veterans and that the position be open to veterans who are disabled, have employment barriers or recently separated.
(Approved)

No. 640 (Submitted by Department of Arkansas)
REWRITE TITLE 38, USC, CHAPTER 41

(Disapproved)

No. 641 (Submitted by Department of Arkansas)
AMEND SECTION 4212, CHAPTER 42 OF TITLE 38 USC

(Disapproved)

No. 642 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)
OPPOSE EXCESSIVE CO-PAYMENT FOR OUTPATIENT CARE

(Disapproved)

No. 643 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)
REFORM OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCESS TO VA HEALTH CARE
FOR RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL

(Disapproved)

No. 644 (Submitted by Departments of Maine and Delaware)
VA DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR ALZHEIMER'S FACILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the need for an Alzheimer's Facility for veterans, under a congressionally authorized demonstration project, through the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this demonstration project be a uniquely designed facility for veterans with Alzheimer's disease using other than the routine medical or psychiatric care models. The project should include Alzheimer's research as an integral part of the veterans treatment program. (Approved)

No. 645 (Submitted by Department of Rhode Island)
VA TO PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF CARING FOR VETERANS
RESIDING IN STATE VETERANS HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, we support a VA per diem payment that equals 33.33% of the national average cost of providing care in a state veterans home; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress of the United States to fully fund State Veterans Home Construction Grant Priority on projects for fiscal year 1999; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support a ranking system, whereby State Home Construction Grant Program requests would be prioritized in the year they are received, utilizing current VA needs criteria. Grant requests, received in future years, would be prioritized in the same manner, with the understanding that they will not receive funding until projects submitted in previous years are funded. However, states without state veterans homes would automatically become eligible for funding regardless of the year their requests are received. (Approved)

No. 646 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN HOUSING

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we strongly support veterans preference in federal, state, and local housing. (Approved)

No. 647 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE CEMETERY
AT FORMER CLARK AIR BASE IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

(Disapproved)

No. 648 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

NATURALIZATION PROCESS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS
OF WORLD WAR II

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation for the naturalization of all categories of WWII Filipino veterans. (Approved)

No. 649 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

BENEFITS FOR FILIPINO VETERANS AND SCOUTS WHO SERVED
WITH THE U.S. ARMED FORCES DURING WWII

(Disapproved)

No. 650 (Submitted by Department of District of Columbia)

RESTORE GRANT IN AID HOSPITAL PROGRAM TO THE
FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN THE PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we petition the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the President, and the Congress to restore the Grant In Aid Hospital Program under the management of the Manila Regional Office to assist in the medical treatment of surviving Philippine-based WWII veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all inequities proportioned at the time of the original suspension be evaluated so as to bring the Philippine Veterans Memorial Medical Hospital in line with U.S. hospital standards and procedures. (Approved)

No. 651 (Submitted by Department of Nebraska)

DOWNSIZING VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE

(Disapproved)

No. 652 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

(Disapproved)

No. 653 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

BENEFITS FOR SAIPAN MARINE SCOUTS WHO FOUGHT ALONGSIDE
U.S. FORCES DURING WORLD WAR II BATTLE OF SAIPAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to recognize the Saipan Marine Scouts who served alongside U.S. soldiers during the Battle of Saipan as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of Defense to issue a certificate of service to every Saipan Marine Scout deemed by the Secretary to have performed military service in aid of the Armed Forces of the U.S. during the WWII Battle of Saipan. (Approved)

No. 654 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE CEMETERY
AT FORMER CLARK AIR BASE IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States government, by legislative or administrative action, to seek a long term solution to the neglect of the Clark Cemetery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that until a long term solution is reached, we seek support from all available sources to assist VFW Post 2485 and supporters with the annual cost of the repair and upkeep of the Clark Cemetery. (Approved)

No. 655 (Submitted by Department of Georgia)
AMEND 38 USC TO INCLUDE SERVICE CONNECTION
FOR CHRONIC PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY
AS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE
BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United
States, that we request an amendment to 38 USC to include Chronic
Peripheral Neuropathy as a service connected disability as a result of expo-
sure to Agent Orange. (Approved)

No. 656 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)
VA PROJECT FOR ALZHEIMER'S FACILITY

(Disapproved)

No. 657 (Submitted by Department of Kentucky)
EQUITABLE RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

(Disapproved)

No. 658 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)
REQUESTING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO
ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR VETERANS EXPOSED
TO BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, NEUROLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL,
STRESS PRODUCING CONDITIONS WHILE IN MILITARY SERVICE

(Disapproved)

No. 659 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)
REQUESTING THE HONORABLE TOGO D. WEST, SECRETARY OF VET-
ERANS AFFAIRS, TO REDUCE THE WAITING TIME FOR A DECISION ON
A CLAIM FOR THE U.S. BOARD ON VETERANS APPEALS

(Disapproved)

No. 660 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)
VA TO GUARANTEE FULL REPAYMENT OF LOANS FOR
THE PROVISION OF MULTI-FAMILY TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 661 (Submitted by Department of Texas)
VETERANS PROGRAM TO REMAIN A NATIONAL MANDATE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States, that we oppose any such elimination of Federal direction and control over the employment assistance entitlements earned by America's veterans through their honorable service. (Approved)

No. 662 (Submitted by Department of Texas)
SUPPORT OF FULL FUNDING FOR ALL VETS PROGRAMS

(Disapproved)

No. 663 (Submitted by Department of California)
IN SUPPORT OF VETERANS AND THEIR RIGHTS TO USE THE HERB,
CANNABIS, FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES

(Disapproved)

No. 664 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 76, PERMIT MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE MILITARY RETIREES
THE OPTION TO ENROLL IN THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

(Disapproved)

No. 665 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 303, PERMIT RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED
FORCES WHO HAVE A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY TO RECEIVE
COMPENSATION FROM THE VA CONCURRENTLY WITH RETIRED PAY,
WITHOUT REDUCTION FROM EITHER

(Disapproved)

No. 666 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT S. 1334 MILITARY RETIREES OPTION TO ENROLL IN FEHBP

(Disapproved)

No. 667 (Submitted by Department of California)
PRESERVATION OF THE NATIONAL SOLDIERS' HOME
LOCATED AT THE
VA MEDICAL CENTER, WEST LOS ANGELES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we request the United States Congress to ensure adherence to the expressed wishes of the donors of said land, that the terms and consideration of the grant be adhered to, that the Pacific branch of the National Soldiers' Home for Disabled Veterans be maintained on said property, that an opportunity be offered to those who were displaced from said National

Soldiers' Home to return thereto, and that the admission requirements for entering the home revert back to the original status. (Approved)

No. 668 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 2572, CAP ON PRIVATE ATTORNEY'S FEES WITH
RESPECT TO VETERANS CLAIMS IN THE APPEALS PROCESS

(Disapproved)

No. 669 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 1362, VETERANS MEDICARE
REIMBURSEMENT DEMONSTRATION ACT

(Disapproved)

No. 670 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 836, FILIPINO VETERANS EQUITY ACT OF 1997

(Disapproved)

No. 671 (Submitted by Department of California)
AMEND INTERNAL REVENUE CODE FOR STATE FINANCIAL VETERANS
HOME MORTGAGES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we support legislation to amend IRS code of 1986 to allow veterans who served after January 1, 1997, in a military operation and are authorized a military campaign medal to qualify for the state veterans home mortgage bond program. (Approved)

No. 672 (Submitted by Department of California)
AMEND TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE (USC), CHAPTER 41

(Disapproved)

No. 673 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 1241, AMEND INTERNAL REVENUE CODE FOR
STATE FINANCED VETERANS HOME MORTGAGES

(Disapproved)

No. 674 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 1766, DEMONSTRATION PROJECT USING THE
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM FOR
MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES UNDER THE MILITARY HEALTH
SERVICE SYSTEM

(Disapproved)

No. 675 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 3613, MILITARY HEALTH CARE FAIRNESS ACT

(Disapproved)

No. 676 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT H.R. 3653, VETERANS BURIAL RIGHTS ACT OF 1998

(Disapproved)

No. 677 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT S. 224, MEDICARE-ELIGIBLE MILITARY RETIREES OPTION TO
ENROLL IN THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

(Disapproved)

No. 678 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT S. 1825, VETERANS BURIAL RIGHTS ACT OF 1998

(Disapproved)

No. 679 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT S. 324, HONOR GUARD FUNCTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE
NATIONAL GUARD AT VETERANS FUNERALS

(Disapproved)

No. 680 (Submitted by Department of California)
SUPPORT S. 623, FILIPINO VETERANS EQUITY ACT OF 1997

(Disapproved)

No. 681 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)
ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF VETERANS' WIDOWS/SURVIVING SPOUSES
AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(Disapproved)

No. 682 (Submitted by Department of Tennessee)
MILITARY AND VETERANS HEALTH CARE

(Disapproved)

No. 683 (Submitted by Department of Europe)
TO RETAIN PERSHING HALL AS A MEMORIAL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we oppose any change in present regulations that would violate the original purpose of having Pershing Hall serve as a memorial. (Approved)

No. 684 (Submitted by Department of Connecticut)
THE PEACE HEART MEDAL AUTHORIZATION

(Disapproved)

No. 685 (Submitted by Department of West Virginia)
SUPPORT THE TERMS OF THE NATIONAL TOBACCO SETTLEMENT

(Disapproved)

No. 686 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
RESEARCH ON THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF DEPLETED URANIUM
AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EDUCATION AND SAFETY TRAINING
PROGRAM FOR ALL GROUND TROOPS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Secretary of Defense to immediately direct and verify the full implementation of the Depleted Uranium training program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an independent, non-profit scientific organization, under federal contract from the Department of Veteran Affairs, conduct appropriate studies regarding the health effects of DU, with additional instructions to review and evaluate all other agencies' scientific studies regarding DU, for the purpose of issuing a comprehensive report identifying the health effects related to use of DU. (Approved)

No. 687 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING LOANS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress to initiate legislation allowing VA to underwrite/guarantee, on a limited basis, selected commercial loans made to non-profit organizations to construct and maintain selected multi-family transitional housing exclusively for use by veterans and their dependents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this legislation must require the participating non-profit housing organizations to closely and continuously coordinate their efforts on behalf of homeless veterans with VA, as well as state and local housing authorities, to share technical expertise and to avoid

wasting time. (Approved)

No. 688 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
**SERVICE CONNECTION FOR HEARING LOSS AND TINNITUS FOR
COMBAT VETERANS**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we request Congress to enact legislation that will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection to veterans with documented combat service and who have been diagnosed with hearing loss or tinnitus at any time after discharge from military service. (Approved)

No. 689 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
COST WILL NEVER BE A FACTOR FOR VETERANS' ENTITLEMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we correspond forcefully to Congress and the President that never again can veterans' entitlements be negotiated based on solely economic factors. (Approved)

No. 690 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
SPECIALY ADAPTED HOUSING ALLOWANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we seek legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. §2102 to allow a veteran to qualify for a second allowance not to exceed 50 percent of the maximum amount authorized under 38. (Approved)

No. 691 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)
**REFER VETERANS TO VETERANS SERVICE
ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTATIVES**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Secretary of Veterans Affairs establish a policy whereby all veterans that seek VA medical care or inquire about other entitlements be informed that Veterans Service Organization representatives are available for assistance.

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

**COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE
AND RITUAL**

Chairman: John M. Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida
Vice Chairman: Alcuin G. Loehr, Post 4847, Minnesota

(River Room A, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Charles H. Ayers	6837
Alabama	Lester E. Kapelka	5850
Alaska	Leander P. Carr	9978
Arizona	John M. Jackson	3632
Arizona	Greg A. Woodring	10308
Arkansas	Bobby G. Julian	6527
California	Judge Brown	7792
California	Everett R. Martin	1732
Colorado	Terrance D. Jacobson	3471
Colorado	John R. Lewis	4051
Connecticut	Edward L. Burnham	1724
Connecticut	Brian J. Kennedy	1523
Connecticut	Robert A. Stevens	10690
Delaware	Le Roy J. Rench	3238
Dist. of Col.	Philip L. Anderson	284
Europe	Jarold K. Stottlemire	10810
Florida	Raymond D. Brennan, Jr.	10131
Florida	James W. Carlisle	10097
Florida	John M. Carney	4643
Florida	James De Pass	10068
Florida	Eugene R. Manfrey	6827
Georgia	Olin C. Wright	7331
Hawaii	Norbert K. Enos	2875
Idaho	Gray I. Clawson	3012
Illinois	Norman J. Busch	5915
Illinois	Eddie J. Griffith	1301
Illinois	Terry W. Vance	9789
Indiana	John L. Dahman	1421
Indiana	James M. Leavitt	5782
Iowa	Muriel E. Allan	3633
Iowa	Leslie G. Portwood	817
Iowa	William P. Shannon	733
Kansas	Robert B. Greene	846
Kansas	Gerald D. Mangold	7521
Kansas	Lawrence D. Tholen	2864
Kentucky	William J. Apple	1170
Latin Amer/Carib	Marion H. Lasater	3876
Louisiana	William M. Procter	1736
Louisiana	Larry W. Rivers	1736
Maine	Arthur J. Roy	1603
Maryland	Norman H. Geisel	2632
Massachusetts	Theodore R. Eaton	2104

Massachusetts	William L. Mc Carthy	.864
Michigan	Assad Allie	.147
Michigan	William P. Bennett	.7573
Michigan	Lawrence Le Febvre	.552
Michigan	Barry F. Walter	.4005
Minnesota	Alcuin G. Loehr	.4847
Minnesota	Dean E. Means	.1642
Minnesota	Lester G. Orton	.363
Mississippi	J. H. Smith	.480
Missouri	Paul E. Connors	.30
Missouri	Charles R. Hauer	.6840
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	.7356
Montana	Calvin L. Burr, Jr.	.497
Montana	Paul D. Westwood	.10010
Nebraska	Billy C. Smith	.7028
Nebraska	Dwaine D. Wilson	.1652
Nevada	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr.	.10047
New Hampshire	Robert W. Madigan	.483
New Hampshire	John M. Packard	.8546
New Jersey	Donald J. Dooner	.1439
New Jersey	Donald L. Scott	.7247
New Jersey	John J. Senk, Jr.	.335
New Mexico	Tyrone M. Benson	.7686
New Mexico	James H. Ferguson	.7686
New Mexico	Raymond Sierra	.3015
New Mexico	Frederick H. Smalley	.3221
New York	Ralph U. De Marco	.885
New York	Daniel J. Dwyer	.161
New York	Elton C. Klein	.478
North Carolina	Paul G. Yeager	.7315
North Dakota	Paul S. Aaberg	.6139
North Dakota	Richard J. Belling	.7564
Ohio	Gerald W. Gilgenbach	.8847
Ohio	Steven W. Mardis	.693
Ohio	Craig D. Swartz	.2947
Ohio	Myron E. Young	.9571
Oklahoma	Roderick V. Himber	.4876
Oregon	Johnnie A. Baugh	.1383
Oregon	Patrick L. Jordan	.4248
Pacific Areas	Gerald L. Kraus	.3457
Pennsylvania	Charles R. Feltenberger	.2435
Pennsylvania	Joseph G. Hertzler	.6704
Pennsylvania	Allen Q. Jones	.21
Pennsylvania	Frank J. Zenzer	.676
Rhode Island	John Sivo	.2396
South Carolina	Johnnie C. Robinson	.2889

South Dakota	Delane E. Fickbohm	6149
South Dakota	Tom Sherman	3342
Tennessee	Joe A. Murphy, Jr.	1289
Texas	Anthony J. Emmite	6378
Texas	Glen M. Gardner, Jr.	3359
Texas	N. F. Layne	3990
Texas	Alexander Vernon	919
Texas	William B. Warren	8564
Vermont	Clifton E. La Plante	782
Virginia	Charles B. Wilkerson	9808
Washington	Allen E. Bell	379
Washington	Donald E. Bracken	2289
West Virginia	Danny P. Woofter	8129
Wisconsin	Curtis J. Taylor, Jr.	1318
Wyoming	Charles E. Fresorger	579

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: James E. Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas
Vice Chairman: Thomas J. Dougherty, Post 3474, Pennsylvania

(River Room B, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Travis W. Ledbetter	3016
Alabama	Benjamin R. Minshew	49
Alabama	Gordon R. Shewmake	3016
Alaska	Robert S. Green	1685
Alaska	Preston E. Nelson	10046
Arizona	Kenneth A. Buckley	9400
Arizona	Donald G. Glynn	549
Arizona	Ronald L. Slater	9829
Arkansas	Carthel B. Parrott	3543
Arkansas	Raymond J. Smorol	4513
California	Earl D. Cauthen	7142
California	James D. Duff	8737
California	Richard L. Eubank	85
California	Richard Fenn	7243
California	James R. Rowoldt	10040
California	Glenn O. Wilson	8985
Colorado	James E. Mauck	2601
Colorado	Henry F. Sexauer	1
Colorado	Claudio E. Trujillo	61
Connecticut	Raymond A. Heroux	5157
Connecticut	Donald A. O Connor	9066
Connecticut	William B. Watson	3263

Delaware	William W. Waites	475
Delaware	Louis R. Walls, Jr.	5447
Dist. of Col.	John P. Breen	2979
Dist. of Col.	George A. Lange, Jr.	284
Dist. of Col.	Gerard P. Miserandino, Sr.	2979
Europe	Norman J. Hirschman	10658
Europe	Gladwin K. Spohr	10692
Florida	Paul Y. Goldych	4256
Florida	John E. Hamilton	7909
Florida	Donald L. Pierce	8696
Georgia	Ray L. Christie	5080
Georgia	Robert K. Nelson	3200
Georgia	William J. Wilson	7007
Hawaii	William A. Merryman	3845
Hawaii	Royal G. Vida	3850
Hawaii	Richard J C. Wong	3292
Idaho	Dale W. Smith	3646
Illinois	Clyde F. Davis	1604
Illinois	Rick Frank	1461
Illinois	Edward F. Jarnell, Jr.	8081
Illinois	Tom Morgan	1592
Illinois	Russell R. Rieke	5694
Indiana	Darrel W. Cavin	1130
Indiana	Larry A. Dewitt	985
Indiana	Robert E. Green	1154
Indiana	David G. Havelly	5864
Indiana	Stephen J. Shedlock	3790
Iowa	Ronald T. Deters	839
Iowa	Jerry L. Frederiksen	7083
Iowa	Laurel E. Phipps	839
Iowa	Patrick J. Shanahan	788
Kansas	Ronald G. Browning	846
Kansas	Lewie B. Cooper	1174
Kansas	Larry C. Duncan	7253
Kansas	Francis A. Mc Cann	56
Kansas	Daniel M. Shea	7397
Kansas	Orlin L. Wagner	112
Kentucky	James L. Bunch	5706
Kentucky	Jeff A. Phillips	1170
Latin Amer/Carib	Walter F. Griggs	40
Maine	Vinal E. Abbott	9699
Maine	Peter F. Miesburger	9389
Maryland	Raymond J. Boyle	6027
Maryland	Kenneth L. Britter	9862
Maryland	John R. Dickerson, Sr.	7460
Maryland	John J. Gistedt	2678

Massachusetts	Thomas M. Brennick	.834
Massachusetts	Gordon L. Crosby	.1526
Michigan	Wayne A. Buck	.1888
Michigan	Eric L. Halvorsen	.5065
Michigan	Arnold E. Huuki	.6507
Michigan	Donald L. Nettler	.2645
Minnesota	Harold Genrich	.1222
Minnesota	Merlin O. Hanson	.1639
Minnesota	William J. Manor	.3871
Minnesota	Steven P. Van Bergen	.6587
Mississippi	James W. Austin	.3036
Mississippi	Johnnie L. Richard	.6285
Missouri	Kenneth L. Davis	.5789
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	.7356
Missouri	Charles F. Thrower, Jr.	.3838
Missouri	Donald W. Watts	.5553
Montana	David E. Goff	.1087
Montana	Gerald D. Mallo	.5609
Montana	Wade S. Smith	.3831
Nebraska	John L. Iossi	.3704
Nebraska	George A. Lee	.1652
Nebraska	John F. Olson	.3704
Nebraska	Earl Stiner, Jr.	.3421
Nevada	Daryl L. Mobley	.3630
New Hampshire	Michael S. Annis	.2860
New Hampshire	John A. Knapper	.1772
New Hampshire	Robert T. St Onge	.8214
New Jersey	Henry J. Adams, Jr.	.3525
New Jersey	George J. Lisicki	.2314
New Jersey	Hugh F. Mc Nulty, Jr.	.1439
New Jersey	John J. Senk, Jr.	.335
New Mexico	Walter P. Diegnau	.7686
New Mexico	Charles T. Durbin	.3271
New Mexico	Joe F. Ford	.401
New York	Philip C. Schiffman	.8691
New York	Thomas X. Szewczyk	.1374
New York	James A. Wilson	.9132
North Carolina	James E. Clark	.10630
North Carolina	Frank P. Durbino	.9133
North Carolina	George E. Walker	.7315
North Dakota	Richard N. Hagel	.756
Ohio	Clifford E. Bauer	.3360
Ohio	Robert C. Cockrell	.1082
Ohio	Robert W. Crow	.4027
Ohio	Keith E. Harman	.3035
Ohio	Roy C. Jones	.1598

Ohio	Thomas L. Kissell	9648
Ohio	Joseph P. Seibert	6428
Oklahoma	William C. Bender	4446
Oklahoma	Robert B. Thomas	1098
Oregon	Harold E. Goin	2468
Oregon	James F. Hand	5233
Pacific Areas	Paul T. Gasperson	9612
Pennsylvania	Howard L. Adler, Jr.	456
Pennsylvania	Thomas J. Dougherty	3474
Pennsylvania	Stephen J. Grassetti	6082
Pennsylvania	Allan C. Jameson	928
Pennsylvania	Frank G. Mills	1754
Pennsylvania	Patricia S. Potter	5424
Pennsylvania	Joseph T. Tragis	6082
Rhode Island	Salvatore J. Capirchio	2396
Rhode Island	Frank E. Lightowler	6342
South Carolina	Melvin L. Emore	641
South Carolina	William E. Pruitt	9509
South Dakota	Fay J. Hendricks	6149
South Dakota	Lawrence J. Howell	750
South Dakota	Pietro A. Mazzio	1273
South Dakota	William J. Radigan	3061
Tennessee	John Furgess, Jr.	1970
Tennessee	David H. Wilson	4848
Texas	Ronald Foster	9168
Texas	James E. Nier	8919
Texas	Benito C. Sanchez	10462
Texas	David H. Slider	6441
Texas	Peter Stack	4344
Texas	Clifford T. Teer	2148
Utah	Roy S. Brown	8307
Utah	Steven P. Meeker	4355
Vermont	Roger W. Eastman	771
Virginia	James L. Booth	2216
Virginia	Robert J. Klausung	609
Washington	George C. Berthiaume	969
Washington	Clarence L. Hedglin	1045
Washington	Gary W. Hulsey	1949
West Virginia	Billy E. Javins	8129
West Virginia	Milroy W. Wells	2716
Wisconsin	Robert J. Collins	2037
Wisconsin	Gordon R. Faust	11244
Wisconsin	Kenneth D. Munro	2534
Wyoming	Pete Quinnell	7756
Wyoming	Robert G. Reed	2673

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: John S. Staum, Past Commander-in-Chief, Minnesota

Vice Chairman: James N. Goldsmith, Post 4139, Michigan

Vice Chairman: John F. Gwizdak, Post 5080, Georgia

Vice Chairman: Paul R. Phillips, Adjutant, Department of Delaware

(Fiesta A & B, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center)

Alabama	William J. Burgess	6020
Alabama	George A. Ganey	5660
Alaska	Harvey A. Johnson	9569
Alaska	Larry J. Patch	2509
Alaska	William Timmons	9978
Arizona	Lyman F. Chapman	1760
Arizona	Donald E. Maynard	7968
Arizona	James L. Montgomery	10308
Arkansas	Lester R. King, Jr.	4554
Arkansas	Clarence L. Moore	5742
Arkansas	Raz T. Munholland	4548
Arkansas	Verlin F. Williams	1991
California	Albert J. Butler	1512
California	Robert A. Crider	1744
California	Robert W. Drew	.85
California	Robert S. Hockenhull	2337
California	Robert G. Houchins	1123
California	Armando C. Pereira	7636
California	William E. Pieters	6563
California	Ossie Richardson	2658
Colorado	John J. Holland	.1
Colorado	Arthur F. Ledesma	3971
Colorado	George H. Palmateer	4171
Connecticut	Edward S. Banas	10004
Connecticut	Ronald Christopher	5095
Connecticut	Howard C. Harris	9460
Delaware	Leland A. Du Bois, Jr.	.615
Delaware	Paul R. Phillips, Jr.	2863
Delaware	Charles E. Price	3792
Dist. of Col.	Benjamin F. Willis	9755
Dist. of Col.	David F. Wood	1085
Europe	Sidney L. Jenkins	10436
Europe	Joe L. Lofton	10614
Florida	John J. Clark, III.	5968
Florida	Lester W. Davis	10093
Florida	Robert P. Loftus	4643
Florida	James E. Talbert	8093

Georgia	.Ray E. Brooks	.2785
Georgia	.John F. Gwizdak	.5080
Georgia	.Donald F. Ziegler	.6447
Hawaii	.Kenneth T. Ito	.10154
Hawaii	.Aloysius Spenser, Jr.	.3850
Idaho	.Thomas E. Monson	.63
Idaho	.Thomas B. Norris	.735
Illinois	.Donald Hartenberger	.3553
Illinois	.George R. Lobb	.3579
Illinois	.Robert J. Mc Mahon	.2298
Illinois	.Thomas W. Neville	.2327
Illinois	.Robert P. Witcher	.7980
Indiana	.Allen E. Chlupacek	.1130
Indiana	.Paul D. Curtice	.1257
Indiana	.William A. Thien	.3281
Iowa	.Merle L. Duffy	.839
Iowa	.Roger D. Schwieso	.941
Iowa	.Daryl R. Shinker	.2349
Kansas	.Russell R. Cutright	.1650
Kansas	.Elmer E. Friesen	.971
Kansas	.Roger H. Sellers	.6654
Kansas	.Mckinley Smith	.8773
Kentucky	.William R. Coffey	.5710
Kentucky	.Charles W. Lee	.5662
Kentucky	.Ronald M. Myers	.1096
Latin Amer/Carib	.Austin L. Curtis	.3835
Louisiana	.Ernest W. Bryant	.7286
Louisiana	.Joseph Guidry, Sr.	.3121
Louisiana	.Robert V. Martin	.8973
Maine	.Joseph C. Rump	.4917
Maine	.James M. Sawyer	.6859
Maine	.Michael L. Williams	.11299
Maryland	.Clayton A. Deaver	.1858
Maryland	.Joseph F. Rosetta	.9619
Massachusetts	.Walter G. Gansenberg	.834
Massachusetts	.Michael J. Gormalley	.2016
Massachusetts	.Michael J. Imbracsio	.639
Massachusetts	.Robert A. Malmberg	.1526
Michigan	.Lowell E. Elston	.3243
Michigan	.Garry J. Goff	.2406
Michigan	.James N. Goldsmith	.4139
Michigan	.Gary A. Housknecht	.3243
Michigan	.Richard E. La Fave	.5670
Minnesota	.Patrick T. Bohmer	.246
Minnesota	.Calvin D. Ferber	.612
Minnesota	.Francis J. Ginther	.210

Minnesota	John S. Staum	9625
Minnesota	Ted B. Theodorsen	6320
Mississippi	Leslie C. Blanchard	6731
Mississippi	Willie L. Lindsey	9832
Mississippi	Johnnie Sartor	5573
Missouri	Ralph H. Fiehler	4219
Missouri	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
Missouri	James R. Mueller	5077
Missouri	Melvin L. Page, Sr.	2069
Missouri	Calvin C. Vogelsang	3838
Montana	Allen L. Kirkeby	1116
Montana	Erich J. Maki	4198
Nebraska	John R. Gollihare	1504
Nebraska	Norbert J. Koenig	247
Nebraska	Arnold L. Miller	2280
Nebraska	Gary C. Steckelberg	7419
Nevada	Herbert Tellkamp, Jr.	2313
Nevada	Odis Ward	10047
New Hampshire	Frank E. Casey, Jr.	816
New Hampshire	Kevin P. Mc Keating, Jr.	483
New Hampshire	Richard A. Robinson	816
New Jersey	Patrick J. Botbyl	1593
New Jersey	Vincent Brinkerhoff	335
New Jersey	Pierre Lamereaux	2314
New Jersey	John D. Reed, Sr.	7859
New Mexico	Albino B. Fajardo	4293
New Mexico	C. H. Thornton	7686
New York	T. W. Bossidy	7466
New York	Anthony M. Ferrarese	16
New York	Peter G. Mazzarella	416
New York	Vincent J. Siesta	546
New York	George S. Smith	53
New York	Harry C. Wurth	5253
North Carolina	William C. Dohl	4309
North Carolina	John J. Mc Graw	9133
North Dakota	David A. Erbstoesser	1326
North Dakota	Wayne L. Paulson	753
North Dakota	Kasimir Schmaltz	6831
North Dakota	Gordon R. Thorson	7564
Ohio	James Comedy	3383
Ohio	Frank Hofstetter, Jr.	2947
Ohio	Curtis M. Jewell	1090
Ohio	Richard G. Kleparek	2898
Ohio	Robert D. Louth	6772
Ohio	Ronald G. Townsend	4713
Oklahoma	Dean Derieg	4613

Oklahoma	Eugene H. George	9969
Oklahoma	Roy Isom, Jr.	3649
Oregon	Larry M. Newman	5653
Oregon	Forrest O. Viles	4362
Pacific Areas	Leon R. Vileo	9951
Pennsylvania	Melvin R. Baker	8896
Pennsylvania	Glenn C. Dashner	464
Pennsylvania	Neale H. Deibler	6493
Pennsylvania	John M. Gunn, Sr.	2506
Pennsylvania	Gary L. Moon	631
Pennsylvania	Ronald G. Tyler, Sr.	1462
Rhode Island	Kuno Grosskurth, Jr.	4487
Rhode Island	James R. Ross	6342
South Carolina	Bobby K. Bryant	9539
South Carolina	Eugene Moore	641
South Carolina	Gerald T. Pothier	10256
South Dakota	Rick W. Barg	628
South Dakota	Kenneth Jorgenson	750
South Dakota	Lorne F. Ruzicka	3312
Tennessee	Henry Hooper, II.	11333
Tennessee	Carl T. Jackson	684
Tennessee	Joseph J. Tirello	684
Texas	Donald A. Brown	2399
Texas	Charles L. Cannon, Jr.	5076
Texas	Anthony W. Graf	1815
Texas	Donald L. Harwood	6794
Texas	Bernard E. Henke	9170
Texas	Edward J. Krenek	8787
Texas	John F. Simmons	6796
Utah	Fred L. Every	10900
Utah	Joseph H. Lauter	3586
Vermont	Curtis E. Brown	758
Vermont	Wayne R. Chase	7779
Vermont	John J. Zuba	1034
Virginia	Lawrence F. Mattera	5500
Virginia	Paul T. Moore	4491
Virginia	Clifford Williford	3160
Washington	N. J. Adamson	10018
Washington	Theodore J. Buringa	1474
Washington	Steven A. Kerber	2100
Washington	Richard A. Petersen	10018
West Virginia	Conrad H. Bennett	5578
West Virginia	Roy D. Cooper	1212
West Virginia	Wesley J. Thomas	573
Wisconsin	Brian R. Feltes	1465
Wisconsin	Rodney J. Getschman, Jr.	1916

Wisconsin	Walter E. Hahn	721
Wisconsin	Steven D. Lawrence	10272
Wyoming	Ralph J. Logan	2311
Wyoming	Gary K. Mathisen	2221

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Wisconsin
 Vice Chairman: James L. Kimery, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Mexico

(Fiesta E, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: Billy R. Cameron, Past Commander-in-Chief, North Carolina
 Vice Chairman: Roger D. Taylor, Post 2873, Ohio

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Gerald S. Brock	2702
Alabama	Peter Frauenhoffer	5658
Alaska	John P. Guinn	10041
Alaska	Robert R. Klotz	9785
Alaska	Richard L. Mc Cluney	9981
Arizona	Forrest E. Barker	1796
Arizona	Charles A. Brown	10308
Arizona	Dennis E. Kane	3632
Arkansas	James E. Ford, Jr.	3031
Arkansas	Ron L. Helton	9095
Arkansas	Donald E. Spears	5225
California	Gerald D. Anderson	2835
California	James A. Green	1622
California	Robert J. Maxwell	1932
California	Kenneth M. Murray	2075
California	Arthur A. Napiwocki	1614
California	Harry H. Tanabe	9879
Colorado	Mike Bokan	1771
Colorado	Charles G. Milligan	5231
Colorado	Richard Wellensiek	4171
Connecticut	Thomas C. Deere	6726
Connecticut	Benjamin T. Lord, Jr.	5095
Connecticut	Henry P. Milum	2096
Connecticut	Laurence Pitcher	6933
Connecticut	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Delaware	Benjamin Pernol, Jr.	3792

Delaware	William G. Schaeen	475
Dist. of Col.	Robert W. Harkins	2979
Dist. of Col.	Helen M. Jeffrey	346
Dist. of Col.	Paul Mays, Jr.	7284
Europe	George W. Eby	10692
Europe	George M. Hunter, Jr.	10557
Florida	John N. Fabbro	4206
Florida	Richard Fitzgerald	7721
Florida	Normand R. Gauouette	8681
Florida	Walter E. Rudd	4337
Georgia	Edward P. Grealish, Jr.	3200
Georgia	William R. Johnson	658
Georgia	David G. Pipes	2518
Hawaii	Stanley E. Igawa	10276
Hawaii	Zoilo A. Kupukaa	4951
Idaho	Richard T. King	4900
Idaho	Richard M. Lyon, Jr.	2905
Illinois	John W. Johnston	7190
Illinois	Maurice H. Kerckhove	2153
Illinois	Vernon A. Soukup	7452
Illinois	John C. Vrtjak	1612
Indiana	John S. Etsinger	985
Indiana	Jerell O. Herston	5864
Indiana	Rex A. Lewis	9323
Indiana	Richard F. Swan	7119
Indiana	James J. Thiel	717
Iowa	Robert M. Capron	839
Iowa	Robert S. Randall	839
Iowa	A. A. Weber	1623
Kansas	Denny L. Lawson	1186
Kansas	Robert J. Sander	1751
Kansas	Joseph Wahrman	1133
Kansas	Lester W. Wenndt	1714
Kentucky	Leroy Ford	5480
Kentucky	John E. Kramer	10017
Kentucky	Francis L. Wimsatt	5421
Louisiana	Stanley P. Breaux	3665
Louisiana	Alva Nash	4586
Maine	Wallace C. Berard	1285
Maine	Albert A. Paul	1641
Maryland	Elwood S. Knight, Jr.	5118
Maryland	William J. Mooney	5118
Massachusetts	William Ferrantino	6907
Massachusetts	John F. Leonard	639
Massachusetts	Peter P. Rondeau	7556
Massachusetts	Frank J. Tucker	10339

Michigan	Dale J. Brubaker	3941
Michigan	John J. Harrow, Jr.	3724
Michigan	Richard L. Lehner	1735
Michigan	Jackie L. Pickard	2780
Michigan	Richard B. Ross	1887
Minnesota	Calvin G. Abers	7902
Minnesota	Joe J. Mach	210
Minnesota	Jerry L. Sanborn	8510
Minnesota	James D. Vetter	3289
Minnesota	Larry G. Ziebarth	6843
Mississippi	O. R. Compton	79
Mississippi	Glenn O. Patterson	4302
Mississippi	Donald L. Verucchi	9573
Missouri	Glenn E. Davis	4294
Missouri	Eugene L. Hoeltge	5077
Missouri	James M. Hughes	5789
Montana	Eugene J. Mc Donald	1634
Montana	Robert C. Smith	3177
Nebraska	David A. Christiansen	2503
Nebraska	James L. Klug	2503
Nebraska	John R. Liebsack	2503
Nevada	Bernard J. Juran, III.	3819
Nevada	Michael H. Musgrove	2350
Nevada	Frank R. Risewick	10047
New Hampshire	Jerry A. Parenti	8546
New Hampshire	Eugene A. Pawlik, Sr.	1617
New Hampshire	Steven R. Rousseau	8214
New Jersey	Charles Bonafiglia, Jr.	2071
New Jersey	Richard C. Bradshaw	4589
New Jersey	James A. Nelson	493
New Jersey	Joseph G. Retkovis	5579
New Mexico	Felix J. Coca	2951
New Mexico	William F. Festing, Jr.	3277
New Mexico	James L. Kimery	9354
New Mexico	Carlos J. Roybal	2951
New York	Joseph T. Gumo	1582
New York	Arthur E. Koch, III.	6780
New York	Samuel C. Pilato	307
New York	Harold C. Steiger	161
North Carolina	George A. Bayer	7315
North Carolina	Don N. Hancock	5631
North Dakota	Jerome R. Berg	4221
Ohio	Robert W. Bishop	1031
Ohio	John R. Johnson	8850
Ohio	Donald J. Limer	7576
Ohio	Edward H. Marzec	3483

Ohio	George M. Rinkowski	5530
Ohio	Terry A. Roan	3124
Oklahoma	Charles A. Huckaby	5994
Oklahoma	Robert K. Mc Gill	4876
Pacific Areas	Thomas I. Elliott	9467
Pacific Areas	John F. Welsh, III.	2485
Pennsylvania	William C. Allen	7213
Pennsylvania	John A. Biedrzycki	418
Pennsylvania	Paul J. Kopp	8896
Pennsylvania	Anthony J. Longo	5205
Pennsylvania	Charles R. Mc Cormick	1810
Pennsylvania	Norman F. Rettig, Jr.	249
Pennsylvania	Robert L. Snyder	6954
Rhode Island	John J. Barone	8955
Rhode Island	Leo R. Swider	2929
South Carolina	James J. Johnson	8166
South Carolina	William J. Jolin	6087
South Dakota	Ordean A. Amundsen	3061
South Dakota	Harold H. Brost	3312
South Dakota	Walter F. Joynt	1273
South Dakota	Larry L. Scudder	1273
Tennessee	Eldrie Duff	4728
Tennessee	Hubert C. Stacy	7175
Texas	Jerry D. Baker	3990
Texas	Samuel F. Gregory	6873
Texas	William B. Moody	2034
Texas	Charles S. Pearson	1533
Texas	Chuck E. Sinclair	8905
Texas	Melvin R. Townsend	5398
Utah	Clarence R. Peterson	2379
Vermont	James H. Lane	6689
Vermont	Donald D. Waterhouse	9653
Virginia	Luther E. Anderson	392
Virginia	Early R. Chappell	1115
Virginia	Bruce R. Harder	1503
Virginia	Earl E. Harris, Jr.	2216
Virginia	Samuel D. Mc Fall	1115
Washington	Robert H. Berleen	9430
Washington	George F. Riedel, Jr.	969
Washington	Ricardo E. Wilson	9430
West Virginia	Robert W. Caruthers	9926
West Virginia	Robert C. Johnson	6450
West Virginia	Calvin L. Moran	4326
Wisconsin	Leland L. Burnett	8337
Wisconsin	Walter G. Hogan	6498
Wisconsin	Matthias Mayer, Jr.	6498

Wisconsin	George Pfielsticker	305
Wyoming	Herb J. Carstens	579
Wyoming	Gary P. Shinneman	4343

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: George R. Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois
 Vice Chairman: Ted C. Connell, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

(Room 107, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Alton S. Jones	5797
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Alaska	Gary L. Kurpius	10221
Arizona	Manuel Ferra	3516
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Arkansas	Ernest D. Kyzer	7769
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California	Richard R. Pignone	3173
California	Susumu Satow	8985
California	Raymond C. Sisk	9791
California	Pete Sozzoni	1900
California	Jerry A. Williams	7636
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Connecticut	Dominic J. Romano	7330
Connecticut	Glenn N. Tewksbury	10362
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Delaware	John J. Siekierda	3257
Delaware	Clinton A. Slack	475
Dist. of Col.	James E. Mack	7358
Dist. of Col.	Flora V. Moore	284
Europe	John C. Neilson	2566
Europe	Bruce A. Withers	11058
Florida	Rocky E. Albert	4174
Florida	J. D. Morris, Jr.	3559
Florida	Robert M. Sprute	5625
Georgia	Richard Branson	5080
Georgia	William Satchell, Sr.	660
Hawaii	Monte R. Briggs	970
Hawaii	Gary I. Masumoto	1540

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Idaho	Donald G. Riegel	889
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Illinois	Julius C. Grantham	4183
Illinois	Walter C. Luksta	9115
Illinois	Edward A. Trennert	2255
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Indiana	Everett D. Foreman	5864
Indiana	Robert L. Jenkins	6919
Indiana	Omar F. Kendall	673
Iowa	Donald L. Gilbert	733
Iowa	Clinton L. Hoferman	6172
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Maine	Donald R. Libby, Jr.	832
Maryland	William E. Berry	6694
Maryland	Hugh F. Shelton	9376
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Massachusetts	Gardner Mc Williams	2425
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Massachusetts	Robert M. Van Kirk	2394
Michigan	Sherman J. Gauthier	6165
Michigan	Norman T. Haskins	3941
Michigan	Martin M. Mieras, Jr.	3023
Michigan	Raymond G. O'Neill	147
Michigan	James R. Pintar	6165
Michigan	Elmer J. Wurster	7546
Minnesota	Daniel Bartholomew	3144
Minnesota	Donald L. Gates, Jr.	141
Minnesota	Thomas L. Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Donald E. Heuer	9433
Minnesota	Lyle B. Horner, Sr.	494
Minnesota	Richard A. Zierdt	6587
Mississippi	Matthew L. Brewer	5393
Mississippi	Melvin J. Johnson	4934
Mississippi	Bobby Miller	4490
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Missouri	Paul G. Jones	2866
Missouri	John E. Vawter	1829
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Montana	Charles R. Melaney	1507
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Nebraska	Vernon L. Fleshman	3755
Nebraska	Paul B. Knievel	2503
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New Mexico	Allan W. Kuchinsky	7686
New Mexico	Joe D. Salas	401
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New York	Roger L. Haas	358
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North Carolina	William J. Hendren	2031
North Carolina	Glenn P. Milliman	2401
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Ohio	Ralph F. Ruhe	9294
Ohio	Gregorio J. Vela	7424
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Oregon	Robert L. George	3973
Pacific Areas	Edward L. Fondrick	8180
Pennsylvania	Robert M. Carrara	6231
Pennsylvania	William H. Conner	7132
Pennsylvania	Peter Krenitsky	6082
Pennsylvania	Almon J. Long	283
Pennsylvania	Joseph M. Salvo	5267
Pennsylvania	Howard Stegemann, Sr.	928
Rhode Island	William G. Crawford	4487
Rhode Island	Arthur W. Williams	183
South Carolina	Richard L. Mayhew	641
South Carolina	John D. Patty	2889
South Dakota	Daryl L. Halling	3164

South Dakota	William A. Hollmann	7319
South Dakota	Hugh S. Jensen	6149
Tennessee	David R. Cordray	7175
Tennessee	Ramsey P. Locke	5066
Tennessee	David W. Tipton	9629
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Texas	R. Earl Lord	10351
Texas	Manuel O. Rivas	8782
Texas	Wesley E. Strom	6008
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Virginia	Perry Smiley	2524
Virginia	Bobby R. Walls	2216
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Washington	Delbert W. Gilliland, Jr.	379
Washington	Miles S. Irvine	379
Washington	Blaine E. Teachman	9301
West Virginia	Gail L. Harper	3466
West Virginia	Ralph W. Honaker	1064
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