

**P R O C E E D I N G S O F T H E
102nd N A T I O N A L C O N V E N T I O N O F T H E
V E T E R A N S O F F O R E I G N W A R S
O F T H E U N I T E D S T A T E S**

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]



Milwaukee, Wisconsin ::: August 18 - August 24, 2001

PROCEEDINGS
of the
102nd ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
(SUMMARY OF MINUTES)

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

August 18-24, 2001



Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS; PROCEEDINGS

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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, 2001

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 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 18-24, 2001, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Senk, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

JOHN J. SENK, JR.
Adjutant General

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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.
1998-1999	Thomas A. Pouliot	Elected at San Antonio, Texas
1999-2000	John W. Smart	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri
2000-2001	John F. Gwizdak	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin
2001-2002	James N. Goldsmith	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2000-2001

Commander-in-Chief	John F. Gwizdak
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	James N. Goldsmith
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Raymond C. Sisk
Adjutant General	John J. Senk, Jr.
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	A. Lynn Hall
Surgeon General	Raymond W. Schlueter
National Chaplain	John F. Leonard
National Chief of Staff	Richard Branson
Inspector General	Precilla Wilkewitz
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
Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General - Operations	Robert Crow
Deputy Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Director, Buddy Poppy & Member Services	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, Citizenship Education & Community Service	Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Communications	Steve Van Buskirk
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	Robert A. Crider
Director, Marketing Service	Kevin C. Jones
Director, Membership	James R. Rowoldt
Director, Military Assistance	Bud Haney
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, VFW Foundation	Wilburn "Bud" Meador, Jr.
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Youth Development, Scholarship & Recognition	Gordon R. Thorson
Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director, National Legislative Service	Sidney Daniels
Director, Administrative Services - Washington	Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
Director, Public Affairs - Washington	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.
Meeting & Events Coordinator	Vanessa Kane

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
2000-2001

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	.Donald W. Linscott, Jr.
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	.William L. McCarthy
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	.William A. Goode
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	.Robert A. McGowan
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	.Omar F. Kendall
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	.Robert B. Kesling
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	.John Furgess
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	.Charles R. Stephens
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	.William J. Jolin
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	.Bobby G. Julian
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	.Curt J. Taylor
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	.A.L. Ellefson
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	.Billy C. Smith
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	.Donald G. Riegel
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	.Vincent J. Mitchell
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	.Marcus S. Butler
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	.Charles D. Fuller
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	.Salvatore J. Capirchio
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	.W. Hugh Long
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	.Allen Q. Jones
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	.Clyde F. Davis, Jr.
DISTRICT C	(New York)	.George S. Smith
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	.George H. Cox
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	.David L. Adams
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	.Ernest E. Meyers, Sr.
DISTRICT G	(California)	.Robert J. Maxwell
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	.William D. Bell
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	.Robert M. Sprute
Past Commander-in-Chief		.John W. Smart



John F. Gwizdak
Commander-in-Chief
2000-2001



James N. Goldsmith
Commander-in-Chief
2001-2002

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2001-2002

Commander-in-Chief	James N. Goldsmith
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Raymond C. Sisk
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Edward S. Banas Sr.
Adjutant General	John J. Senk, Jr.
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	Victor W. Fuentealba
Surgeon General	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr.
National Chaplain	William B. Moody
National Chief of Staff	John J. Harrow, Jr.
Inspector General	Thomas J. Tradewell
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
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
Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General - Operations	Robert Crow
Director, Buddy Poppy & Member Services	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, Citizenship Education & Community Service	Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Communications	Jerry Newberry
Director, Development	Kevin C. Jones
Director, Emblem & Supply Department	M.L. "Bud" Cale
Director, General Services	David L. Swindler
Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing	Robert A. Crider
Director, Membership	James R. Rowoldt
Director, Military Assistance	Bud Haney
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, Technology Conversion	Robert B. Greene
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Youth Development, Scholarship & Recognition	Gordon R. Thorson
Director, Action Corps & Deputy Director, National Legislative Service	Sidney Daniels
Director, Administrative Services - Washington	Edward L."Leo" Andrew
Director, Public Affairs - Washington	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	William Bradshaw
Manager, Information Technology	Alan F. Jones
Manager, Meeting & Events	Vanessa Kane
Manager, Member Benefits	Kris Keller

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
2001-2002

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	Paul J. Chevalier
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	William L. McCarthy
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	Joseph F. Rosetta
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	Robert A. McGowan
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	Charles F. Thrower, Jr.
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Robert B. Kesling
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	Jeff A. Phillips
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Charles R. Stephens
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William C. Cox
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	Bobby G. Julian
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	Robert C. Peters
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	A.L. Ellefson
DISTRICT 13	(NE, KS)	Richard N. Weston
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	Donald G. Riegel
DISTRICT 15	(NM, CO, AZ)	Tyrone M. Benson
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Marcus S. Butler
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Johnnie B. Janes
DISTRICT 18	(CT, RI)	Salvatore J. Capirchio
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	Landry E. Saucier
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Neale H. Deibler
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Donald L. Porter
DISTRICT C	(New York)	Jack I. Simons
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	George H. Cox
DISTRICT E	(Minnesota)	David L. Adams
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	James A. Van Hauter
DISTRICT G	(California)	Steven D. Jacobs
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	William D. Bell
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	Richard J. Fitzgerald
Past Commander-in-Chief		John F. Gwizdak

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE
102ND NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
AUGUST 18 - 24, 2001

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2001

(The Memorial Service of the 102nd Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, presiding. The Gold Star parents, Gold Star wives, National Officers and Past National Chaplains were escorted by the Sergeants-at-Arms.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the hall for the advancement and posting of the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Captain of the VFW National Honor Guard, prepare to advance, salute and post the American Colors.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard advanced the Colors, followed by the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance.)

(Whereupon, the Festival City Barbershop Chorus sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" at this time.)

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We ask that everyone that is standing in the back to please move forward and take a seat so we can go on with our Memorial Service.

Will you, please, stand for the Invocation by Father Edward E. Lisowski.

FATHER EDWARD LISOWSKI: With this beautiful hymn still singing in our hearts, let us pray. O, God, we ask your blessing on our annual gathering for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the leaders, all members, the Ladies of the Auxiliary, their families, the multitude of volunteers and all those who have made this event possible.

We are here to honor our beloved dead. In your image, Lord, you created them. Yes, in your image, O, Lord, to reflect that infinite goodness

and dignity that belongs to each person. We are not products to be used and then discarded like an old automobile that is thrown on the junk pile when we are old with a lot of miles on us.

O, Lord, you do not create junk. As we get older, our bodies may get weaker, but our spirit grows stronger with wisdom. Strengthen our spirit to love you, to love our families, to love our beloved and precious country. It is with honor that we commemorate those that have gone before us, the sacrifices of our soldiers and the American veterans that still carry scars of war on their bodies and minds in our VA hospitals. Only you know the depth of their pain and suffering.

Lord, in the past few days we discovered the bodies of thirteen of our soldiers who died in the Pacific Islands 59 years ago. We brought them home, we buried them here with honor and dignity. May this be a sign for the whole world of our depth and deepest respect for our soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the events of freedom. May they live in eternity and promise of ever-lasting life with you in heaven.

Lord, we are free people, the people of whole. May we always remember the sacrifices made to sustain that freedom. Bless our dead soldiers. Give them everlasting peace. May our children and grandchildren for generations to come remember the sacrifices made by the past generations and live in hope so as to maintain our freedom. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Audience, you may be seated. I would like to at this time acknowledge the presence of Mrs. James Kimery, widow, and family of our Past Commander-in-Chief James L. Kimery who passed away on November 21, 2000.

I would like to also acknowledge the presence of Ms. Gay Hilton, daughter of Frank Hilton, Jr., son of Past Commander-in-Chief Frank C. Hilton who passed away on March 20, 2001.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain John Leonard presided during the Memorial Services performed by the National Officers in accordance with the Ritual.)

(At the conclusion of the Memorial Services, the National Soloist for the Ladies Auxiliary, sang "Amazing Grace.")

INTRODUCTION OF MEMORIAL SPEAKER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We are honored to have with us this morning Father Eugene Newman. Father Newman completed eight years of graduate and postgraduate studies at St. Francis Seminary in 1970 and was ordained a Priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Father Newman joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard in 1975, and was commissioned a First Lieutenant on May 28th, and assigned to Headquarters, in Headquarters Company Second Battalion, 128th Infantry in Elkhorn, Wisconsin. He completed a Commanding and General Staff Officer course in 1990 and has been serving as the State Chaplain since 1997.

Chaplain Newman has participated in overseas deployment in 1986 with the advancement of the parties to the 32nd Special Infantry Brigade, and from December, 1990, to June, 1991, as Chaplain during Desert Storm and headquartered in Headquarters 74 Special Group and the Key Barracks in Southern Germany.

Father Newman will now deliver the Memorial Address for this 102nd VFW National Convention.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

FATHER EUGENE NEWMAN: First of all, good morning, everyone, and a special thank you to the Commander-in-Chief and the leaders of the VFW who are here, and honored guests, and all of you that have joined us this morning.

I was born in 1944. As the brief bio said, I joined up with a group of people who remember the impact of World War II on their lives. A number of people who were part of my own family, neighbors, people that I grew up with in the country outside of Watertown and Oconomowoc in the State of Wisconsin.

That war had not only impacted them, not only brought some sense of fear and apprehension during the war, but also brought a sense of completion when that war ended. For the many of you who have served in that war, plus the war in Korea and the Vietnam War, we have all gone through all those same feelings again.

We all know to some degree the impact war makes on all of us. We have little understanding unless you have been there yourself, what it does to us as individuals. And those things that we find difficult to forget, impossible to speak of, and those images that continue to haunt us, to carry that kind of cost is very much like that second verse of "Amazing Grace."

We have come so far and been dealt so many things, faced so many dangers, and many of them still inside of us, and yet praise will lead us on. I often feel that the nation and many of our people for the last two or three decades have not been able to understand the honor, the pride and the respect that all those who have served in the last major two conflicts that our country has faced and that so many of you have been a part of.

On behalf of myself, I express my deepest gratitude. For this address, I would like to move to the very beginning of who we are as a nation and the action that took place that led to our independence and the struggles that were faced at the very beginning of our time. We were just known as colonies and we considered ourselves back in the 1800s and the 1700s still citizens of England. It was many things that brought about the difficulties that eventually happened between the colonies and Great Britain.

Britain had become in the 18th century a mercantile country. They were very much into manufacturing. They were buying goods at a number of places, manufacturing products and selling them, and the difference between the two made for them a good profit.

They thought they were not getting enough out of the colonies that were performing in this new land, so in 1665 they passed an Act called the Navigation Act. This Act stated that because of the economy of the country of England, those who lived in the colonies could buy no goods that were not made in England nor could they manufacture goods in the colony that they could purchase from England.

In 1773, an Act was imposed on sugar and molasses. A Stamp Act was included in 1765. The monies from this particular Act were used to support British troops that were keeping peace in the colonies. Concern out of this particular form of taxation, and a lot of petitioning done by the Continental Congress persuaded the Parliament and King George, III, to repeal this particular Act.

In 1767, taxes were imposed on lead, glass and tea. Colonists were denied trial by jury in any case that involved reuniting or the possession of smuggled goods. The colonist's house could be searched without warning in case any smuggled goods could be found.

There was a strong protest about this particularly in Boston, and people gathered in front of the Boston House of Government and decided to argue about the taxes that were being levied at this particular time. They got kind of vociferous and the British troops a little upset with the Boston Massacre which included five deaths that took place as the troops fired on the people at that time.

In anger and frustration, the people of Massachusetts rose up and decided that the ships that Britain had harbored in their port would be boarded and their goods thrown into the sea. That is the Boston Tea Party. England, of course, retaliates and there is a new Act called the Intolerable Act, and designed specifically to punish Massachusetts.

Boston Harbor was to be closed until the cost of the tea was reimbursed to England. Town meetings were forbidden and public buildings were taken over by British troops. All of these things are happening and there just this rushing towards each other in frustration and in anger.

In 1774, the first Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia and seeks a resolution with England. They considered themselves British citizens and they wanted to maintain relationship with Britain because there are some benefits that come their way maintaining that relationship. King George, III, is encouraged by them to respect their rights as English citizens.

On April 18, 1775, British troops, as was their custom, and at this point two companies of about 180 men were going through the various towns of New England and their colonies, always checking in each colony to see if there had been any gunpowder or weapons stored by the colonists.

They had been doing this for about a year and a half. Whenever they entered the town, the troop would ring its church bells and the other town four or five miles away would hear those bells and they would ring their bells and warn all the towns, so all the towns could take whatever gunpowder and weapons they had and hide it so the British couldn't find it.

They had come into Lexington on July 19, 1775. At that particular

time, a Captain Parker, who was a Captain of a Minutemen Company, got 77 of his troop to stand in the village and just to stand at attention holding their weapons. You can picture the leader of the British troops when he rode into town, and instead of taking the road and taking the troop's route, the general on the road, he brought his troops up to the general, very close to and almost in front of the soldiers.

The Captain of the Minutemen said, "Hold your fire, men, and hold your weapons." And they did. And there is a civil stare-off that was going on. Their Captain said, "Gentlemen, we have made our point. We want them to know that we are willing to do anything that is necessary to stop their aggression and their unlawful search," which was a violation of the British civil right laws, rights of freedom guaranteed to all British citizens of unauthorized searching. "Just put down your weapons and walk away."

About ten or twelve men put down their weapons and started to walk away. A shot came from somewhere and the British unleashed a violent fire and nine Minutemen were killed. It was later disputed who began this particular event. The British newspapers said that it was the British.

Captain Pitcairn, when he was interviewed, stated after the shot was heard the colonists returned the fire, which seemed to indicate the shot was indeed first coming from the British forces. Captain Pitcairn had to get his men out of Lexington fast. He still had to stop at the City of Concord.

There was a skirmish there, and from there he had to go to the City of Boston at night through the woods with 200 militia following and firing. When he got to Boston, he had lost 47 men, 125 wounded and 25 missing. The war was beginning in earnest.

The problem we had at this particular time, though, or that the colonists had at this particular time was their numbers. The population of the 13 colonies was just roughly two million people. They were kind of apprehensive. Not everybody supported this concept of war with the British or being revolutionaries in fighting the British and trying to get some of our rights reinstated they had taken away from us. So there was not a great deal of support.

The Second Continental Congress on May 10, 1775, declared war but would not declare independence. They sent another petition to King George seeking justice for their rights as British citizens. The King's response was to hire 20,000 troops to subdue the colonists.

While all these things are going on, General Washington is looking to the north. He looks to the north because Canada was a British colony at this particular time. The French had it originally, the French and Indian War, which was really the French and British War. The Britains took over Canada. If they come down out of Southern Canada they would take New England without a problem.

In May, 1775, Ethan Allen takes Port Tinconderoga, which was held by the British and all their supplies. In August of this same year, two generals, Benedict Arnold and Richard Montgomery, moved into Canada and invaded it. One of their purposes was to make Canada the fourteenth state.

It would have been a big state.

Those were also the main reasons, once again, was to stop the flow of militia groups as long as they could come into the colonies out of Canada. Arnold takes Montreal. Forces capture the city. In December, Arnold and Montgomery forces come together and attack Quebec. They are repulsed.

Montgomery is killed and they move back into the colonies, yet action delayed British involvement from that part for well over a year and a half. There are a number of battles that take place, Breed's Hill, which is called the Battle of Bunker Hill. We lost, but the British lost quite a few troops.

On July 2, 1778, the Congress declares independence. Those who signed the Declaration are many. All who signed it are affected. Of the landholders that signed that particular document wound up losing all their property and many died in poverty.

Several had their families destroyed, completely wiped out by British troops. One was a soldier fighting along side Washington as an aide, and when they came to a house that was being used as the center of command for General Howe, it happened to be the house of this aide, and he said, "Destroy it. As long as the British are using it, I don't want it." The building was destroyed. The recruitment was slow.

Up to 1776, they won very few battles, if any, and the response of the people in the states when the Congress would impose quotas for the troops were very small. At one point, Washington had fewer than 4,000 men to fight the battle. In 1776, they requested troops of the 13 colonies.

In 1776, 46,900 troops were eventually recorded as well as the militia. Each state sent its own militia. The troops that are part of the Continental Army served for about a year. Their pay was about \$8 a month and \$1.45 a month was taken out for the cost of their uniform.

A militia of 42,000 was sent by the colonies. They would serve for different terms, each governor deciding he would let part of his militia go for two months, four months, and in some cases up to eight months. There is no way of knowing how many men served in the Continental Army.

It was basically made up of mostly militia and Minutemen, and a lot of times when they finish their tour of one year, eight months, or two months, they would go back in again. Whenever the colonies would send out a group of militia, a whole bunch of other people would simply join them.

So, instead of Virginia sending 2,000 militia, it turned out to be 3,500. There is no way of knowing just how many fought. It is estimated perhaps 220,000. Washington takes Trenton plus a thousand troops in 1776 on Christmas Eve, and he continues on to Princeton and tries to move the forces into New York and takes New Jersey.

The battles continue. Some are successes, some are failures, and things just continue to happen as this war continues to unfold. It looked like for a while they were going to lose. It was just luck when things just started to happen differently.

The biggest turn was in 1778 when the French began recognizing that these colonists could, in effect, possibly win, so they sided with the

colonists, recognizing the independence of the United States, and sent money, soldiers and ships to the colonies. This was not done just out of love for the independence of the colonies, it was done out of a mutual dislike for the British.

In 1779, Washington moves to West Point and starts to solidify his position. He is going to be able to at some time when he has enough troops. He only has about 5,000 at this time at West Point, but there is a strong force that is living in New York and has been there for five years.

It had been commanded by General Howe. The commander at this particular time switched to General Sir Henry Clinton. Isn't that a great temptation for us? General Clinton was in control of New York. They had developed this clever little plan they were going to send troops from Canada, from Ontario and from the valley out of New York and out of New England completely. They lost many of those campaigns.

Those three armies were destroyed by the Minutemen. There were some brief circumstances but nothing seemed to help. In 1779, the British were able to take control of the Carolinas and they were trying to consolidate their victories by moving on up once again to Virginia.

It was in Virginia that Cornwallace fortifies Yorktown and waits for reinforcement being sent by General Clinton by ship down the coast to Virginia. The French, who have been helping us, allowed those reinforcements not to arrive. They kept them away.

They sent troops, and eventually 15,000 French and American troops lay siege to Yorktown and Cornwallace surrenders on October 19, 1781. During the course of this war, 25,700 colonists are killed. Remember that at this particular time, with his million population, there are roughly 400,000 men between the ages of 18 and 45.

That means 50 percent of every household in the colonies was touched by death. It was the largest per capita impact on this nation than any of the world we have been in, in terms of personal losses and families. Of the 25,700 casualties, 4,000 were the result of the military action.

Now, 3.5 thousand were the result of dying as prisoners of war. The remainder died of disease or starvation, or freezing to death when they didn't have enough clothing. It took two years for us to finalize a treaty with Britain, the Treaty of Paris, which was signed on September 3, 1783.

At that particular time, the boundaries of the United States were changed and its most western boundary became the Mississippi River and everything else was considered part of the colonies. The Northwest Territory was created in an area surrounding the Great Lakes and a ten-mile buffer remained in the hands of Britain.

Florida and Louisiana remained in the control of Spain. When the war ended, the Army was reduced to 900 men. By 1789, all the ships that they had were sold or were given away. They were all sold. They needed the money desperately. There were 59 ships in the Continental Navy, four of them borrowed from friends and 25 were purchased, and the remainder built between 1775 and 1777. Twelve were captured, 24 were destroyed.

The remainder were all sold off.

After the Treaty of Paris, Washington realized we still had a lot of problems as a country. Not only with the Indian uprising that he had to deal with by the troops, but we had garrisons, British troops who were still within our own territory and that little boundary along the Great Lakes, so he decided to reconstitute the Army to a strength of about 12,900 men.

It took him several years to establish peace and also to remove all foreign forces from the boundaries given by the Treaty of Paris. During the Adams Administration, we found that the French, who had been our allies during the war, suddenly they were shipping a lot of things that they thought were pretty good, so their privateers began taking a lot of our merchant shipping.

Adams desired to rebuild the Navy, reinstitute the Marine Corps in 1798, and all things began to happen. It takes about four or five years, but we take control of our own forces and our shipping. All of these things that are being described are just a brief sketch of what happened in a way that took place an awful long time ago.

The people were far too numerous than ours, and the people with far less advantages than we have ever been able to understand. When the militia were called up, they had to bring their own weapons and their own equipment. The Army was given as much as the Congress could afford, but it often was not very much at all.

The impact of that war on the population of that time caused a major change in shifting in the way that the country thought of itself and how we thought of ourselves. It was at that particular time that these 13 states began.

The American clergy was part of New England and had been a part of the United States or the colonies for some time, also Tories in support of the British cause. As a result, when the war was lost by Britain, all of them returned to England, almost all of them.

So religion started to shift a little bit in the colonies as well. Practice of religion began to shift. New religions were springing up all over the place and, yes, the colonists and the cities and the places continued to grow. Organizations began moving not only around those who were holding land, but the new ethnic groups that were coming in and the new militia groups that were being formed might have been just the German groups or Irish groups, or groups from Italy somewhere because it became like a sort of a club and something they could do so often.

They were successful in controlling some of the disturbances or problems in their cities. They were the major fighting force in the United States. They were the only standing force. Well, not really standing force, but the only force they could call on in case of real problems and difficulties.

It wasn't until 1840 that the government began giving extra training and funding to help improve their training and their status as troops. It was in the 1900s when they were recognized as a group called the National Guard, but there also was a group that was already calling themselves that

in New York in 1865.

We continued as men and women of the military and as the descendants and dependents of military independence personnel to deal with the issues of honor, respect and integrity. Even in the Revolutionary War we had problems with respect to integrity.

We were a nation as divided about that war as our nation was divided by Vietnam. There were certainly some division regarding Korea as well. Certainly, there have been enough divisions regarding the 50 mobilizations that have taken place since 1990, as we find ourselves in so many different places wearing our uniforms, doing those things that the government asked us to do.

All of these things are just part of what it means to wear not only this uniform but to honor these men who have gone before, this flag which is the symbol of the freedom that has been purchased for us by someone else over 200 years ago. As men and women, I sometimes wonder if we understand the sacrifices that they made, if we remember the issues they had to deal with, and I think they were far more difficult than those that you and I have to deal with for.

While we still struggle with the difference between politics and military action, we continue to deal with the issues of soldiers and peacetime. We need to remember that we continue to serve a nation and the people and the world for what we believe and what we live.

Hopefully, the concept of peace and how we act brings about this peace. When the war was ended and the Congress decided to reduce the size of its Continental Army to 900 troops or one regiment, they did so for this reason. It is our belief that the regulars could have been possibly dangerous to the liberties of the free people. A strange attitude about their own soldiers, right?

That is not the case for those who are here, or those who have come after us. All of us work for a sense of freedom and that grace indeed will take us wherever we need to go Thank you for your time. Thank you for your service, and thank you for all that you have done as so many others on behalf of this nation. God bless. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The Festival City Barbershop Chorus will now sing "This Is My Country" and "God Bless America."

(Whereupon, the Festival City Barbershop Chorus sang "This Is My Country" and "God Bless America.")

BENEDICTION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Let's remain standing for the Benediction by Deacon Sam Lupo

DEACON SAM LUPO: Let's take a few moments of silence and let the presence of God be with us today. Almighty God, you have given us the good land for our heritage. We humbly ask you today if we could always prove ourselves people mindful of your favor and glad to do your will.

Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning and good manners. Save us from violence, discord and confusion, from tirade and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people brought together from many races and creeds, that those who know your name place trust in the authority of the government, that there may be justice and peace at home.

Bring your honor to our country through obedience to your laws. In time of prosperity, fill our hearts with that fullness and in time of trouble, put our trust in you. O, Lord, our God, we commend this nation to your merciful care, be guided by your province and may we always feel secure in your peace.

Grant to the President of this United States of America, the Governor of the State of Wisconsin and the Mayor of the City of Milwaukee, and to all of authority, wisdom and strength to do what is right and just. Make them always mindful of their calling to serve the people with love and honesty and compassion.

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and safekeeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and around the world. Defend them day-by-day with your love and your grace. Vent them from your trials and temptations. Give them courage to face the perils that we beset them and grant them the sense of your abiding protection wherever they may be. Lord, our God, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has always been there for their servicemen and women sitting in death. Help those troubled veterans who suffer in anxiety, depression and injuries of war helping to feel sorrow for the family of their fallen comrades.

This morning I would be remiss if I did not take this moment to offer a heartfelt thank you for being truly faithful to each other, for you surely are your brothers' and sisters' keeper. May the Lord bless and keep you, the Lord let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace. Amen.

RETIRING OF COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will now have the Retiring of the Colors by the VFW National Honor Guard

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will remain for just a few moments while we escort the Gold Star parents and Gold Star wives from the room, please.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Festival City Barbershop Chorus and Father Newman that contributed to make this program a success. Let us please give them a round of applause. (Applause)

Tomorrow, of course, the metal detectors and things will open at 6:00

o'clock a.m. Please make sure you are there so we can start our program on time tomorrow morning. Leave back in the room any medals, chains and so forth and some of your pins.

Let's get in here tomorrow morning so we can go ahead and start on time. Thank you for your participation. It has been an honor, I know, for you as well as I to participate again in commemorating our departed brothers.

Sergeant-at-Arms, to you and your Honor Sergeants-at-Arms, thank you again as you always do a wonderful job. You are dismissed.

This concludes our Memorial Service.

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2001

(The Joint Opening Session of the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 88th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary, was called to order on Monday, August 20, 2001, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by Adjutant General John Senk.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am John Senk, Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Welcome to Milwaukee. At this time we would like to dedicate the 2001 VFW National Convention to the men and women who lost their lives while in service to their country during the past year.

This solemn list includes those from the USS Cole, the 17 members from Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and the 21 National Guard members killed in Georgia when their C-23 crashed in a field during heavy rain.

We must be forever mindful that although we are a country at peace, peace does not come without a price. Our active-duty military and reserve forces face danger and hazards on a daily basis. We need to thank them for putting their lives on the line for us.

Along with these service members, we also want to remember one of our own, Clyde McCarthy, 2000-2001 Commander, Department of Montana, who passed away in January. At this time, would all the Department Commanders who served with him please stand.

ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS AND
OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POSTS

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: One of the most prestigious awards earned as a Commander in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is to be named a member of the All American Commanders team.

This year, 177 Commanders have earned the right to be called All American.

Following the All American Commanders into the hall are the 2000-2001 Outstanding Community Service winners, represented by their Commanders and Auxiliary Presidents.

Please welcome Past Commander-in-Chief, and a proud Korean veteran, and this year's National Chair of the Convention, from the great State of Wisconsin, Walter G. Hogan.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: On behalf of myself and all who are working so hard to make this convention a great success, I welcome you. We sincerely hope the time you spend with us will renew your pride in our nation, rededicate your commitment to America's veterans and bring new excitement to your work as a member of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary.

Please rise as we officially open this convention with the advancing of

the colors.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room to advance the colors.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

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

INVOCATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: For this morning's Invocation, we have the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Monsignor John F. Leonard.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LEONARD: Almighty Father, you are the source of all that is good and worthwhile. Without you, our efforts are in vain.

We ask your blessing upon the membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary, especially those gathered for this convention.

As we strive to honor the dead by helping the living, the widows and orphans, may all our efforts rebound to your glory and be a fit sign of our union.

As your sons and daughters, bound by our love of you, of one another, and for the United States of America, may our work on behalf of veterans, living or dead, those presently serving in the military and for all our citizenry, be uplifting and achievable. Amen.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrades, Brothers and Sisters, please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem sung by Mr. Ron O'Shea, and the posting of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was had at this time followed by the National Anthem sung by Mr. Ron O'Shea.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the opening ceremonies for the Joint Opening Session have been performed.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: You may be seated. The house lights will now dim for a special presentation.

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

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN F. GWIZDAK

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: It is now my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has served America's veterans for many years, and was elected to the position of VFW Commander-in-Chief at the 101st National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 25, 2000. He is the second Georgian to be elected to this office.

Born in Revloc, Pennsylvania, and raised in Carrolltown, he joined the United States Army in 1958. In 1968, he attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant.

In January of 1969, he went to Vietnam as a heavy mortar platoon leader in Company E, 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade. He eventually became Commander of Company E, thereby earning him the distinction of having served in every leadership position in the company from squad leader to commander. He retired from the Army in the rank of Captain in 1978.

His military decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, four awards of the Bronze Star, including one for valor, Purple Heart, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, three Army Commendation Medals, Army of Occupational Medal (Berlin), Vietnam Campaign and Service Medals, three Good Conduct Medals, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Parachutist's Badge and Drill Sergeant's Badge.

He joined the VFW in 1977 and is a Life Member of VFW Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia. From Post level to National positions, he has served with distinction. In 1988-1989, he achieved All-American as Department Commander. He was elected to the National Council of Administration in 1994 for a two-year term.

A true veterans advocate, he has testified on veterans issues before the United States House of Representatives and the Georgia Legislature. Gwizdak is listed in the 200 Millennium Edition of Who's Who in Executives and Businesses as a Veterans Advocate.

He served as Adjutant/Quartermaster for the Department of Georgia from 1992 to 1998. He is the owner and president of a construction company, and the owner and broker of a realty company.

Please give a warm welcome to a man whose friends call him a real people person, John Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Commander-in-Chief John, it is now my pleasure to turn over to you this convention by presenting you with the official gavel and your official badge. I personally thank you for all you do for our organization. (Applause)

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. I appreciate it, sir. We

will officially open the convention at this time. Thank you, Wally, for that kind introduction and also the comments, and to each of you, thank you for being here. I must start off by thanking my family for giving me this opportunity to be here.

I want to thank my Post, the State of Georgia and so many of those sitting on the stage today, the National Officers and staff of our great organization, and the Ladies Auxiliary. I thank you all for permitting me this opportunity to serve this great organization of ours.

We dedicated this convention to all the men and women who served in our nation's military that lost their lives during the past year. Their loss defines the realms of military service, the dangers, the risk and chance involved in protecting our way of life.

Although we mourn, we can still rejoice because there is spirit that continues to live among us. Our men and women in the military choose to serve and assume many risks. We should be profoundly grateful for all they do.

Last year, as I assumed the duties of Commander-in-Chief, I pledged to you that I would do everything possible to uphold the tenets upon which the Veterans of Foreign Wars was founded. I have always been aware of the importance and the tremendous responsibility and trust you assigned to me upon selecting me as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Twelve months ago I expressed the importance of implementing a Strategic Plan. The importance of employing the plan still holds true today. If the VFW is to live up to its mandate of service, we must be able to keep pace with the world today and do what is necessary and give a clear sense of danger, but we must always have a direction and a key sense of tomorrow.

Simply put, the VFW cannot afford the past, being in the glory of the past 101 years and neglect as prospects for the future. We must be more than equal for ideals that they are important. They grow and change in response to concrete action so we must always continue forward.

The price of freedom has never been cheap. The price of freedom shall not reduce the cost. The price of freedom cannot be purchased without a lot of price. The price of freedom that you and I have purchased for America cannot be purchased with a couple of dollars.

There are too many white crosses and Stars of David all over this world that mark the graves of those that have been committed to this, that have made the sacrifice that it takes for America to be what it is. Freedom is not free. It shall never be free. You cannot think about it as a half-price sale. There will not be any midnight blue light specials for freedom. If you want to see the price tag, all you have to do is to come to monuments, go visit the VA Hospitals, and you will see the price of freedom. (Applause)

You and I who have borne a chance to face the bullet have made one major mistake. We have permitted America to have freedom as a household word, the household word of freedom, inflection of the voice doesn't even change when they talk about it. But the price of freedom shall

always be visible when we endure the pain that we suffer.

So, yes, as we continue to move forward, we must understand that our act of duty, our guarded reserves, must always be at their highest point of abilities. You and I should never stand back and say, "Well, maybe I don't have to go so I don't really worry about it."

How we treat our active duty, I think you and I probably understand that we won't have to fight another war. But our grandchildren may and their children, possibly. So we have got to ensure that every weapon they have, the pay is right, and the mission, that mission, must be defined. (Applause)

I have worried on many occasions that we are now a police force. Well, I wonder what we are doing in 101 locations if we are not doing a police job. However, maybe it is better to police than to bring home body bags.

Change is evident. Dynamic organizations and dynamic individuals, when they are through changing, they are through. The Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary is not through. We are not dead. We are much alive, because if we are dead, you-all look good. (Laughter)

No, we are not dead. We are going to continue to do what is right and, yes, when the deep six comes to get us, or if we are called along, then our mission has ended at that time and not until. I strive to continue my thought process that as this changed process takes place, here is going to be change for the better. But when we change, we cannot forget the traditional value of what made us who we are.

We can remember the strike of the bullet and the sting of the blood. You made us eligible for this great organization of ours, and that tradition should never be watered down. It should never be made easy just so we can get a few more members. (Applause)

They say, "Well, we are going to lose everybody one day." Well, that will be fine. But until that day, every time we look at a white cross or a Star of David, or we look at the monument of the Arizona, we have got to remember that each of those people that lie there were join this organization but they never complained because they made a supreme sacrifice.

In that memory we cannot just say, well, we will let anybody and everybody join, and then you and I will lose the special unique and different feeling to belonging to the most important, the most gracious and the most powerful veterans organization in the world, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary. (Applause)

You must hold everybody accountable. There is no middle of the road politics. You have got to remember that there are some scowly faces, but they are not here today. So, as we continue to move forward in the things we have done, may I say to each of you God has been kind to America, but the kindest kindness he ever gave here was the veterans who made America strong, beautiful, a wonderful place that we live in and the freedom that was gained for all the veterans of this great world of ours. (Applause)

I am going to finish out with this and I hope we can continue to move

forward with our business. There are so many things that have to be done, so many congratulations that have to be done, so many awards that must be presented and the business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars must be completed so the new Commander-in-Chief, as he moves forward, will have his mandates on what he needs to do.

However, at this time I would like to say this to you. I know that God loves each and every one of you or you would not be here today. I know that America needs to love you for your sacrifice. If you have never been told that and welcomed home, may I do this. From one old crusty infantry captain to all of the warriors in the audience, may I say this to you: Thank you for what you have done for America and by all means welcome home. (Applause)

Now, with my final thought, I love you-all.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE SCOTT McCALLUM, GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: After a successful record as a State Senator, Scott McCallum won the Republican United States Senate Primary and went on to win the general election against a formidable incumbent.

In 1986, he announced his candidacy for Lieutenant Governor and ran on a platform of restoring confidence in state government and rebuilding confidence in the state's ability to tackle any problem.

His years of experience as Lieutenant Governor have served him well in his new role of Governor of the great State of Wisconsin.

Please welcome our distinguished guest, the Honorable Scott McCallum, Governor of Wisconsin. (Applause)

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE SCOTT McCALLUM, GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN

GOVERNOR McCALLUM: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief, thank you for your very kind comments, your very appropriate remarks this morning. It is a privilege to be here to welcome the 102nd VFW Convention and the 88th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary.

I am especially pleased to welcome all of you to Milwaukee, and to the great State of Wisconsin. We are extremely that you have chosen to hold your convention here in Milwaukee. Last year, you learned to appreciate Wisconsin so much that you returned again this year. I know that all of us in Wisconsin hope this is a start of an enduring tradition.

It is also my great personal honor to speak to you in the same morning that you will hear from the nation's Commander-in-Chief, President George W. Bush. The visit by President Bush says all that needs to be said about the magnitude of this convention. Truly, this is an outstanding and an important convention.

Again, we in Wisconsin are thrilled to have you. One of the best parts of my job is to be able to brag about our state and everything it has to offer.

Milwaukee, our largest city, is a busy cosmopolitan community that has retained the original old world charm. Along Milwaukee's eastern shore is Lake Michigan, one of the two great lakes bordering our state. We are indeed pleased in Wisconsin with splendid lakes and rivers that we cherish and protect.

In addition to Milwaukee and other great cities, we have hundreds of small towns and abundant rural areas. Our farms are some of the most productive in the world. We wear the title of "America's Dairyland" with great pride. Our forests are teeming with wildlife, and you don't have to wander far in our state to experience all that nature has to offer.

Our natural beauties are exceeded only by the warmth and friendliness of our people. We live, work and play with the joy and optimism because of our deeply-rooted sense of community. Veterans have always been an important part of our strong communities and in large cities and small villages we have active and vibrant VFW Posts that serve fellow veterans and fellow citizens in countless ways.

The nearly 48,000 VFW members in Wisconsin and their 342 Posts have essential roles in civic life. They are supported by 228 Auxiliaries with more than 18,000 members.

Throughout my life, I have seen the VFW in action. You have set a sterling example of what it means to be proud Americans. Our VFW members maintain a heritage of patriotism and service that has been a part of Wisconsin since we became a state in 1848.

Since the beginning of statehood, Wisconsin certainly has produced its share of military heroes. Douglas MacArthur lived here in Milwaukee when he received his appointment to West Point. Some of our state's other military heroes include Billy Mitchell of Milwaukee.

Many of you landed at Milwaukee's General Mitchell's International Airport on your way to this convention. America's all-time Flying Ace and Medal of Honor recipient, Major Richard Bong was born and raised in Northwest Wisconsin in the small town of Poplar.

He shot down 40 Japanese aircraft before returning to the United States in 1945 to serve as a test pilot for the military's first jet fighter. During the test flight, the engine flamed out with all power lost. He could not prevent a crash landing. He died in the crash on August 6, 1945, the date when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan.

All Wisconsinites are justifiably proud to share a common heritage with these heroes. What we are equally proud of is veterans whose names and deeds are not reported in the history books. We understand and appreciate all they have done for us even though perhaps they have received little individual acclaim.

As I have said on countless occasions, veterans are true American heroes. You and your fellow veterans are more deserving of our respect and admiration than the athlete, the movie star or our celebrities. (Applause)

You have my thanks and admiration and the gratitude of my fellow Wisconsinites who have worn the protection that you have provided.

Here in Wisconsin, we have shown appreciation for our veterans in tangible ways. Just a few days ago, I dedicated a new Wisconsin Veterans Home about 30 miles from here. In June, I dedicated a new State Veterans cemetery in Northwest Wisconsin.

I am also proud that Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs provides a comprehensive array of benefits that complement the Federal Benefits Program. This is the least we can do for our veterans who put their lives on the line. This point was made clear to me very recently when we paid our final respects to Jason Wilthong, a young soldier from Wisconsin who was tragically killed in a training accident in Kuwait in March.

At his burial, veterans and current members of the armed forces joined together to honor Jason and to console his family. I saw firsthand the unity that exists among all those who have worn a military uniform with pride and distinction. I cannot remember a more heartfelt and emotionally touching ceremony.

Your service in the military and as members of the VFW is an inspiration to your fellow citizens. It is because of your efforts and those that came before you, the United States is the greatest nation on earth, the sole remaining super power.

The worldwide crusade for freedom is your legacy and the triumph of democracy is your victory. Again, thank you for honoring Milwaukee and Wisconsin with your 102nd National Convention. I know you will enjoy your stay here and will appreciate the hospitality of our citizens.

God bless you for what you have done, God bless all of you and God bless America. Thank you.

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

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE JOHN O. NORQUIST,
MAYOR OF MILWAUKEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: For the second year, the City of Milwaukee has played host to our National Convention. As such, Milwaukee has earned a special place in all of our hearts. We have been shown great hospitality and friendship, and we will be forever thankful to all of the people of Milwaukee.

Here to greet us today is the Mayor of the fair city of Milwaukee, the Honorable John O. Norquist.

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE JOHN O. NORQUIST,
MAYOR OF MILWAUKEE

MAYOR NORQUIST: Thank you very much. Welcome to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to the City of Milwaukee. It is a great honor to have you here. The Veterans of Foreign Wars have very stringent membership

standards. I am very proud and honored to have served in the military as an Army Reservist from 1971 to 1977, and I am not eligible to join the VFW because I served in Louisiana and Texas, and that's it.

My father is a member of the VFW, and he served in the Philippines and was captured by the Japanese on April 30, 1942, and was released in September, 1945. He was one of the lucky ones, because 58 percent of the people that were captured by the Japanese in World War II, Americans captured by the Japanese, died in captivity.

So he is 81 years old and still living, and still healthy and still a member of the VFW Barbed Wire Post. Even though it would be really nice to go to those meetings, I think that your membership standard is the right standard. People like my father and all of you who have served in foreign war should have your own organization.

It is none of my business to tell you what to do, but I think the standard is appropriate. There is somebody else that many of you know who died nearby you, and that one of the great purposes of the veterans organization is to remember the horror of war and why it was necessary to fight for the freedom of our country, and all of you that served in that way should be proud, and you should know that Americans, maybe they neglect to say it, but I think that a lot more of them appreciate you than let on. Deep down inside a lot of people know that.

I was in a school class last spring and they were teaching sixth graders about World War II and World War I, and the Korean War and the Vietnam War, and so forth. The young people actually asked a lot of intelligent questions. So, I wouldn't give up hope on that.

I feel somehow that Americans are not going to expect the credible bravery of people that are older than them. The young people by their very nature may not show it. I think that there is a lot of respect for veterans in this country, and something that you very much deserve.

Now, I want to welcome you to Milwaukee. There is a lot of great things to do here. You have a program that is just packed with interesting things, but in the few free moments that you have I encourage you to take a look around. If you walk to the east end of Wisconsin Avenue, you will see a big blue body of water. That is Lake Michigan.

Right in front of it is the Veterans Memorial, and underneath the Veterans Memorial is the Art Museum, and there is a new addition to the Art Museum which is very beautiful. I urge you to take a look. If you want to take a walk, just go down Wisconsin Avenue to the east.

It is about a mile, maybe a little less, and take a look and go in and say hi to the veterans who serve there, including a little USO operation that the sailors from the Great Lakes, their parents always wanted them to come up to Milwaukee.

A lot of them go to Chicago on the weekend, but they come up here and we try to treat them right. You can stop in and say hello to them. Also, there is a lot of fun and entertainment in town, including swing bands, for those of you who remember that. I enjoy that.

It is a band in town I especially like called John Snyder and his Orchestra. I don't know where they are playing, but somewhere around downtown. John is known for being able to sing like Fred Astaire and dance like Bing Crosby. So, he puts it all together in one package.

At any rate, have a great convention. We are so proud to have you here in Milwaukee, and I know you are going to have a great time. I wish all of you a wonderful, wonderful convention here. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SETS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is now my pleasure to introduce Betty Royston, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, presenting flag sets to Governor McCallum.

LADIES AUXILIARY PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR BETTY ROYSTON: National Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, National President Jan Jankowski, National VFW and Auxiliary Officers, Distinguished Guests, Comrades and Sisters: It is an honor for me to stand before you today and present to our Governor this beautiful emblem of our country.

Yet, I would be remiss if I did not first thank you, the veterans, who have made this possible. From the Concorde Bridge to Kosovo, you have flown our beautiful flag and followed her into battle, and for this we mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, grandmothers and granddaughters thank you for our eligibility in the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. And a special thank you to my brother Jimmy Cantrell for my eligibility in this organization.

Governor McCallum, will you join me at the podium, please. On behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it is my pleasure to present to you this beautiful emblem of our country and may she always fly proudly in your office.

GOVERNOR McCALLUM: Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Let's, please, give a round of applause for the presentation. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT PATRICIA JANKOWSKI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Patricia Jankowski was elected National President of the over 700,000 member Ladies Auxiliary at its 87th National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 25, 2000.

Throughout the past year, Patricia's theme "Today-Tomorrow-Always-Remembering Yesterday," has challenged her organization to new levels

of accomplishment. She has demonstrated exceptional strength and commitment as she led the Ladies Auxiliary to new heights of patriotism and committed service.

Pat Jankowski has dedicated many years to the Auxiliary and has been actively involved on all levels of the organization. She has a keen sense of what needs to be done, as well as the courage of conviction to carry it through.

I am proud to have had the chance to work with her during her year as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. It has been an amazing experience, and for that we honor her today.

Please welcome from the great state of Michigan, a most gracious lady, and the recipient of the VFW Gold Medal of Merit, the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Pat Jankowski. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Gold Medal of Merit and this citation awarded to Patricia Jankowski, National President, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 2000-2001, in sincere recognition of her untiring dedication to our country and in sincere appreciation for her exhilarating leadership as evidenced by the exceptional contributions of the National Ladies Auxiliary to the purposes and programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Her theme 'Today-Tomorrow-Always-Remembering Yesterday', united veterans and their families with visions of the past and dreams of the future.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the Official Seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 2001." This has been signed John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT PAT JANKOWSKI

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JANKOWSKI: Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, National VFW and Ladies Auxiliary Officers, Comrades, Sisters and Guests:

Thank you very much for this very special, special honor and award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am deeply, deeply honored. I would like to take this award in memory of all the work of my sisters of the Ladies Auxiliary because I am not the person that should wear this award.

The 698,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars who have stood beside the veterans of this organization and led this organization this year to great heights deserve this medal, not myself. I want to thank all of you for that great award.

I would also like to remember at this time the reason for which I stand before you. My father, who gave his life for his country, my dad who raised me, a disabled veteran, I would like to remember them and all veterans who gave so much so that this country and all of us could remain free and live in a world and a country that they made beautiful.

I would like to thank the Ladies Auxiliary for all of their work, their love and their kindness. It has been a memorable year for both the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary. I am very proud to have served as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary, particularly with such a terrific and outstanding Commander-in-Chief, John Gwizdak. (Applause) Our convention marks the end of the 87th year of the Ladies Auxiliary and the end of the years that we have partnered together with the VFW to serve the veterans and other members of our communities throughout this great country of ours.

One of the best rewards during the past year has been able to see the happy faces of those whom we have helped, who have helped brighten our country. From the young face of a student scholarship winner, to the cancer research, to the active duty military, who I had the honor and great pride to meet and to be able to give the long distance prepaid calling cards to while I was overseas. The members of the Ladies Auxiliary are very proud of our legacy of service and look forward to many, many more years of working together with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and for America.

This morning I would like to say a very special thank you to each VFW member on behalf of those 682,716 members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are proud of what we have achieved together over the years and we thank you for your continued support of our organization.

Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, I wish you and all the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars a very successful convention, and I am sure that it will be a grand finale to our grand year. Thank you very much.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: A very gracious and very sharp lady, and as we went on this thing we decided we would try to do as much together as we could, as far as bringing our organizations to thought processes and to do the right thing.

Patricia, thank you so much for being the lady and the leader that you are. It is great.

INTRODUCTION - LIEUTENANT GENERAL WU, CHI-LIANG (RET.),
VICE CHAIRMAN OF VETERANS COMMISSION, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: One of the things that makes the Veterans of Foreign Wars unique is our close relationship with other veterans organizations around the world. Perhaps none of these relationships is warmer than our relationship with the veterans organizations around the world. Perhaps none of these relationships is warmer than our relationship with the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China.

The Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China has been successful and creating employment and development programs that have provided immeasurable benefits to the military veterans of that great nation. For more than 20 years, the VFW is proud to have been a part of encouraging those programs.

We are pleased to reaffirm our pledge of brotherhood and comradeship with this outstanding group this morning. I just spent about four days with these folks, and I wish that each of you could have had the opportunity that Betty and I had to really see the nursing homes, the hospitals, the construction company, the medical company, everything designed for one purpose, and one purpose only, that is caring for the veterans of that country.

So, please join me in welcoming the Vice-Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, Lieutenant General Wu.

REMARKS BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL WU

LIEUTENANT GENERAL WU: Good morning, Dear Commander-in-Chief, National President, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is my great honor to come to your National Convention of the year 2001 held in Milwaukee. I have been to other National Conventions of other American veterans organizations in the previous years, but this is my first time here with you, the VFW.

Chairman Yang Te-chih had scheduled to come to the convention himself, but because of an unexpected event he asked me to come in his behalf and bring all of you best wishes from all the veterans in the Republic of China.

The VFW and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China have been long allies over the past decades. We had comrades fighting for common goals. We fought for freedom, we fought for democracy, and we fought for justice. We did that. Our children are keeping the sacred mission, and we hope their children will not need to encounter the undesired work. It is, therefore, our endless duty to bring peace to the world in our lifetime by supporting our government with all our might while our children are fighting the militants, the terrorists and the aggressors on the forefronts.

Dear friends, I come here not to preach; I come here to share your joy as VFW veterans, who once gave their best part of life, defending their country, and who are now still doing their share, looking after their pals and seeking ways to make veterans live more happily ever after.

I am also here to share with you what we are doing for our veterans who had given the prime time of their life defending their country named the Republic of China. They are getting old, just like everyone will, and they deserve the respect and services from whom they had served.

Learning very much from you, we, the Veterans Affairs Commission, provide for them free medical care, home care, educational assistance, and employment assistance. Most of your Commanders-in-Chief and National Presidents, both incumbent and past, have visited with us in Taiwan. We appreciate the opportunities of receiving them, because through their visits we do not only continue the sound relationship that our two organizations enjoy, we also learn new ideas of improving our services for our veterans.

My dear friends, I want to also express sincere thanks for your continuous support for our country by passing resolutions every year

urging your federal government to maintain ally relationship with our country which is still standing tall, in defending human rights, from Communist threats on the west brim of the Pacific Ocean.

The Republic of China has always been proud to be a long-time ally of America, and all my fellow Chinese veterans will love to join my countrymen in cooperating with our American comrades in the cause of striving for world peace and freedom for all mankind.

In closing, I will take this opportunity to once again thank you for your general assistance in the past, and on behalf of General Yang Te-chih and all Chinese veterans, I wish you a great successful annual convention in the great city of Milwaukee. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. HANS SONG: On behalf of the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, Lieutenant General Wu would like to present the Medal of Cloud and Banner with Cravat on behalf of my country, the Republic of China to the contributions and great achievements made by Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak. Here is the certificate accompanying the award of the Medal of Cloud and Banner, in the year 2001, Yi-jih, numbered 15796, on the date of August 20th, in the year 2001.

"Mr. John Gwizdak, 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 peoples of the United States of America and the Republic of China, and to the support of Republic of China's re-entry to the United Nations.

"In appreciation of his meritorious assistance, Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak is presented the Medal of Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulations." This has been signed by Chin, Shui-bian, President, and Chang, Chun-hsiung, the Premier, and Wu, Shih-wen, Minister of National Defense. (Applause)

And on behalf of the chairman of my organization, the Veterans Affairs Commission, a plaque will also be presented to Mr. John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief. The inscription reads as follows:

"In appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China." This has been signed by General Yang Te-chih, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, the Republic of China, on the date of August 20th, in the year 2001. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Again, if I could ask you to kindly give another round of applause for a great nation that cares for their veterans. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW AMERICANISM AWARD TO HEATHER FRENCH HENRY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Heather French Henry is known

to millions of people around the world. After being crowned Miss America 2000, she chose to direct the spotlight of her title toward awareness, funding and volunteerism for homeless veterans' programs. As the second lady of Kentucky, she has remained committed to those in need; veterans' issues have remained a total priority.

Heather French Henry, the daughter of a disabled Vietnam veteran, has traveled countless miles sharing her passion for America's homeless veterans' programs. The VFW is proud to have been a part of that effort.

Together, Heather and the VFW have brought much-needed attention to homeless veterans' efforts around the country. Following this convention, we will continue that effort to ensure that America is aware of its homeless veterans and how they can be helped.

I am certain that no other single individual has done more to bring attention to the plight of homeless veterans than Heather French Henry. For that reason, I am honoring her this morning with the VFW Americanism Award for her continued efforts in support of veterans.

Please welcome the lady who will be the Veterans Miss America forever, Heather French Henry.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads, "Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Heather French Henry in recognition of her dedication and commitment to the plight of our nation's homeless veterans. Since ending her reign as Miss America 2000, she has continued to travel the length and breadth of our country, advocating for veterans, volunteering at VA Hospitals and increasing awareness for funding to eradicate homelessness among veterans, thus earning her the admiration 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 20th day of August, 2001. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - HEATHER FRENCH HENRY

MS. HENRY: Well, it seems just like yesterday that I was here. It is wonderful to be back amongst family again. Last year was such a pleasure to be here speaking before you, and it seems that, well, I am coming back home to a reunion, to a homecoming. Now, where is my Kentucky crew out there? There we go. (Applause) It is good to see you-all today, too.

Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, Madam President of the Ladies Auxiliary, it is a pleasure to be back in Milwaukee to your National Convention and to be speaking before so many wonderful men and women who truly are our nation's heroes. I have actually brought someone with me that I want you to meet because I know a lot of you out there feel a little bit of ownership over me. I wanted to get your approval.

My husband, Lieutenant Governor Steve Henry from the State of

Kentucky, is with me today. (Applause) I also know you can't see the picture, but my daughter, Harper Renee Henry. She is here in spirit and she was six weeks on Friday. So, I wanted you-all to see your granddaughter. (Applause)

You know, after giving up the title of Miss America, a lot of people wondered what does a Miss America do after her year? Well, most Miss Americas continue to travel and especially this Miss America, who once the daughter of a veteran, always a daughter of a veteran. I was inducted into your family and I will continue forever to travel on the basis of having homeless veterans receive the best possible treatment and the best quality of life that we can possibly give them, because they deserve to be brought home and they deserve that. That is just as everyone in this audience here, who has served and is the spouse of someone who has served, deserves to be the nation's top priority. You know, last year I was given a special present which I still travel with today. A gentleman had given me his Purple Heart — I know you remember this story — in Augusta, Kentucky, for homecoming.

This gentleman, he gave me his Purple Heart and he said this is so you will never forget why you fight, and on those days when you get tired you can continue to look in this box and you will remember what people did for this country, those who died, who never came home.

You know, you honor those who fell by serving those who are continuing to live. That is my passion. To be honored by your organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and, of course, as a lifetime member of the Ladies Auxiliary, I will continue to work. Around this country tonight over 250,000 veterans will be homeless on the streets.

During my reign as Miss America, I established the Heather French Foundation for Veterans, and today we are continuing to travel across the nation speaking on behalf of that issue, whether it is health care for homeless veterans, housing, Hepatitis C and Type 2 Diabetes, this is an issue that will not go away unless we work and unless we love.

Getting the word out to non-veterans, to the American public, to show them what our homeless veterans are being put through, and that they have not come home, and that our motto is never leaving our widowed behind, well, we have not really lived up to that as the United States of America.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is time to bring those men and women home. Because of what they have done for this country, your brothers and sisters, they deserve to be where we are living a part of that American dream, because they fought for that. (Applause)

So it is this year with great pleasure that I get to see all of your smiling faces again and hopefully we will keep in contact in the future, and please, please keep us in your prayers as we continue to travel to take on your works and those who do the work for veterans because you are our nation's heroes. God bless you and God bless America. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation to Heather French Henry.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Heather, on behalf of the

Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Americanism Award that is being presented to you is also accompanied by a \$5,000 honorarium.

MS. HEATHER FRENCH HENRY: Thank you so much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: On behalf of the VFW, here is a small gift for the new baby. (Applause) What a Miss America, VFW's Miss America. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO 2001 ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Ladies and gentlemen, one of the most prestigious achievements in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is to be a member of the team of All American Commanders. To join this honored group, a Commander must reach a minimum of 100 percent of the previous year's membership and place in its Membership Division in accordance with the assigned allocations.

To encourage support for the Military Initiative Program, MIP, the All-American Program was divided into two divisions: the Distinguished Division for those who do not have access to the military, and the Honor Division for those using MIP members to achieve their assigned allocations.

I would like to now read the list of Commanders for the presentation of Distinguished All-American caps, citations, and pins.

From the Department of Alabama, Post 4190, Lawrence O. Sepanski. From Post 668, Roland L. Day. From Post 2214, George R. Grigbaum. From Post 2702, Victor R. Burlingame. Gerald O. Jenkins, from Post 4572. Lawrence O. Jenkins, Post 4572. Laurence E. Truman, Jr., Post 4765 Wilborn C. Smith, Post 5226. Eric G. Cline, Post 5228. Richard H. Kizziah, Post 6022. William F. Robinson, Post 10774. Larry Sepanski, District 1, Post 4190. From Arizona, R. B. Smith, Post 549. James A. Connolly, Post 1433. James B. Mauer, Post 7968. Francis G. Schlick, District 1, Post 8242. Vincent A. Rigo, Department Commander, Post 1433.

From the Department of Arkansas, James F. Gilbert, Post 4548.

From California, we have the following: William M. Draeger, Sr., Post 1943. Bobby R. Price, Post 2111. Charles F. Gardner, Jr., Post 4647. Bob Davis, Post 5394. Quintin E. Naschke, Post 5554. William R. Rowell, Post 7041. William E. Pfeifle, Post 9009. Edward A. Hamilton, District 1, Post 2111. Glenn O. Wilson, District 17, Post 8985.

From Colorado, Leon G. Witham, Post 2551.

From Delaware, George M. Blades, Post 7234.

From the Department of Europe, Franklin E. Marsh, Post 10436. John T. Stoops, District 3, Post 10506. Bruce A. Withers, Department Commander, Post 11058.

From the Department of Florida, Joseph R. Wolstenholme, Post 2391. George R. Wiltshire, Post 2473. Robert J. O'Keefe, Post 4250. Donald G. Eckerdt, Post 4781. Ronald C. Kerr, Post 10097. Carl T. Likes, District 6, Post 4351. Theodore G. Harding, District 21, Post 1658. Michael J. White,

Department Commander, Post 10068.

From the Department of Georgia, Frank Hyde, Post 9949, and Frederick Englehardt, III, Department Commander, Post 8385.

Idaho, Gary T. Whitworth, Post 63. Odell J. Howard, Department Commander, 2146.

From Iowa, Clinton F. Hoferman, Post 6172.

From Kentucky, Claude P. Johnson, Post 1410.

Latin America/Caribbean, Darryl S. Dalley, Department Commander, Post 3822.

From Louisiana, Richard L. Cook, Post 3106. Thomas J. Kijak, Post 5951. Lennard J. Martin, Department Commander, Post 8971.

From Maryland, Joseph A. Winner, Post 6506, and Lawson E. Van Ormer, Department Commander, Post 8175.

From the Department of Michigan, Ervin E. Lancer, Post 2780. Martin M. Mieras, Jr., Post 3023. Gene N. Ferguson, Post 4249.

From Minnesota, Harry LaVan, Jr., Post 5555, and Clint Bucher, District 7, Post 5919.

From Missouri, Michael W. Wormington, Post 4207, and Clinton E. Fry, Post 10906.

From the State of New York, we have the following: George Whitney, Post 412. George D. Radford, Post 524. Harold A. Van Appledorn, Post 1019. Forest E. Robinson, Post 6196. Raymond J. Gorski, Post 6251. William E. McGarr, District 3, Post 6196. Robert C. Stinger, Jr., District 4, Post 6530. Virginia C. Payne, District 6, Post 8647. Lester G. Magoffin, District 7, Post 202.

North Carolina, Donald G. Belle, Post 2019.

From Ohio, Steven D. Yeager, Post 4239. Joseph Cooper, Jr., Post 7174. Harold M. Blosser, District 12, Post 108.

From Oklahoma, Kenneth C. Hardy, Post 3916. Jack R. Reeves, Post 4777. Francis L. Neel, District 4, Post 5805.

From Oregon, we have Andres W. Egger, Post 81, and Daniel W. Wakefield, District 3, Post 81.

From the Pacific Areas, Frederick M. Schomburg, Post 8180. Stanley E. Stewart, Post 11435. Michael R. Jugan, District 3, Post 8180. Paul T. Caspersen, Department Commander, Post 11435.

From Pennsylvania, we have Ronald L. Craker, Post 264, and Kathie D. Schiebel, District 28, Post 264.

From South Carolina, Oliver Smith, Post 4262. Francis W. Havlin, Post 8760. James O. Dudgeon, Post 10420. Lyn D. Dimery, Department Commander, Post 10420.

From Tennessee, Harold Taylor, Post 11160.

From the State of Texas, John L. Skidmore, Post 812. Enedino Bryan, Post 2641. Robin L. Walker, Post 4372. James F. Cooper, Post 4692.

Pedro L. Guerra, Post 6873. Lonnie Garza, Post 9186. Kenneth E. Madison, Post 9191. Johnnie E. Wymes, District 14, Post 9191. Troy A. Ellis, District 19, Post 3907. James H. Hoffman, District 21, Post 6111.

From Utah, John A. Jones, Department Commander, Post 8307.
From Vermont, Lynn P. Shepard, Department Commander, Post 6689.
From the State of Washington, Kenneth A. Silver, Post 466. Gary E. Grant, Post 969. Reginald E. Watts, Post 2995.
From Wyoming, Harold E. Lowe, Department Commander, Post 4343.
We are honoring the 2000-2001 All American Commanders.
From Alaska, William Timmons, Department Commander, Post 9978.
From California, Frank A. Emery, Post 1512. George D. Willey, District 2, Post 10694. Arthur Harris, Department Commander, Post 5179.
From Colorado, Edward J. O'Leary, Post 859. George A. Knox, Post 1459. Harvey M. Timmerman, Post 3541. Duane E. Knutson, Post 4051. John C. Donahue, Post 4061. John R. Lewis, District 2, Post 4061. John R. Yost, District 4, Post 4671. Gregory P. Wawrytko, District 5, Post 101. James L. Mitchell, Department Commander, Post 8121.
From Hawaii, Ralph E. Moore, Post 970, and Frank S. Lamson, Department Commander, Post 970.
From Illinois, Timothy C. Peters, Post 805.
From Kansas, Michael S. Clark, Post 56. Larry F. Tyson, Post 6957. McKinley Smith, Post 8773. Tom G. Sanko, Department Commander, Post 1714.
From Louisiana, Clarence L. Woods, District 6, Post 3106.
From Minnesota, Raymond C. Trebus, Post 6316.
From Nebraska, Robert D. Fenton, Post 2503. Richard E. Morrison, District 10, Post 8334. Gary C. Steckelberg, Department Commander, Post 7419.
From Nevada, Walter Lewis, Department Commander, Post 1002.
From New Jersey, Frederick J. Hague, Post 4589, and Joseph A. Butler, District 8, Post 3117.
From New Mexico, George A. Martinez, Jr., Post 401, and Frank J. Rivali, Department Commander, Post 1793.
From the State of North Carolina, Don N. Hancock, Post 5631. Sandra F. Clagett, Post 6018. Quinzell Hayes, Post 9133. John W. Shelander, District 8, Post 670. Michael T. Burris, Department Commander, Post 2615.
From Oklahoma, Donald R. Fenter, Department Commander, Post 5263.
From Rhode Island, Leo R. Swider, Department Commander, Post 2929.
From South Dakota, Raymond A. Durband, Post 628, and Rudolph Dean, Jr., Post 1273.
From the Department of Texas, Robert L. Carter, Post 2034. Dennis M. Barber, Post 3892. Richard P. Destramps, Post 8577.
Robert C. Willis, District 20, Post 6012.
Buddi C. Harlan, Department Commander, Post 4010.
From Virginia, Kim A. Deshano, Post 392. Eugene O. Broughman, Post 4809. Early R. Chappell, Department Commander, Post 1115.

RECRUITER AWARDS

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: During this past membership year, Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak wanted to stress the importance of recruiting as well as rewarding those individuals who worked so hard to recruit new, reinstated or MIP members into the VFW.

The recipient of the National Recruiter of the Year Award for 2000-2001, for recruiting the most new or reinstated members, excluding MIP, is William J. Landers, member of Cables Trail Post No. 8534, Lacona, New York. Mr. Landers receives a cap, citation and \$1,000 award.

The citation reads as follows:

"National Recruiter of the Year Award presented to William J. Landers, in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of your outstanding service in the VFW Membership Program.

"Your exceptional initiative and untiring effort during the 2000-2001 membership year contributed immeasurably toward the national membership goal of recruiting 180,000 new or reinstated members.

"You are commended for your professional achievements and recognized for your dedication to the goals of the 'Follow Me' team.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

The recipient of the Military Initiative Program Recruiter of the Year Award, for recruiting the most new active duty, reserve or National Guard members is John R. Lewis, member of Royal Gorge Post No. 4061, located in Canon City, Colorado.

John distinguished himself by recruiting, and listen to this, over 4,000 members this past year. Mr. Lewis receives a cap, a citation and a \$500 award.

The citation reads as follows:

"MIP Recruiter of the Year Award presented to John R. Lewis, in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of your outstanding service in the VFW Military Initiative Program.

"Your exceptional initiative and untiring effort during the 2000-2001 membership year contributed immeasurably by personally signing up over 4,000 new MIP members.

"You are commended for your professional achievements and recognized for your dedication to the goals of the 'Follow Me' team.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

The winner of the National Convention Recruiter Award is presented to

Leonard D. Ott, a member of Michael G. Gecik Post No. 6330, located in Jonesboro, Georgia. Comrade Ott is one of many who signed up 25 new or reinstated members and had their name entered in a drawing for this award. Mr. Ott receives a cap, citation and a \$500 award.

The citation reads as follows:

"National Convention Recruiter Award presented to Leonard D. Ott, in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of your outstanding service in the VFW Membership Program.

"Your exceptional initiative and untiring effort during the 2000-2001 membership year contributed immeasurably toward the national membership goal of recruiting 180,000 new or reinstated members.

"You are commended for your professional achievements and recognized for your dedication to the goals of the 'Follow Me' team.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 20th day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMRADE JOHN LEWIS (Post 4061 - Colorado): Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF "CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP" CITATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: For thirty-four 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 significant milestone.

Now in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on Vincent Rigo, better known as "Crash", the Immediate Past Department Commander of Arizona, to accept this "Consecutive Years of Membership Growth" citation.

Congratulations to you and the Department of Arizona. (Applause)

The citation reads: "Certificate of Commendation presented to the Department of Arizona, in recognition of thirty-four consecutive years of membership growth evidencing the attainment of three decades of continuous membership gain by a Department 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 20th day of August, 2001."

CERTIFICATION OF APPRECIATION TO THE 101ST NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Commander-in-Chief would like to present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 101st National Convention

Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's national convention held here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Here to accept the award on behalf of the Committee is Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Convention Committee Chairman for the 101st Convention. Where did Wally go? Let me read the citation and we will present it to him privately.

For all those in the Department of Wisconsin, the certificate reads as follows:

"Certificate of Appreciation presented to the 101st National Convention Committee, in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of their dedication and tireless efforts to ensure the success of the 101st National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 19-25, 2000.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 20th day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, and Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We are pleased to have with us this morning the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony J. Principi.

Appointed by President Bush and confirmed last month by the Senate as the nation's fourth Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Principi brings to this key cabinet post a wealth of experience as a veterans advocate.

A naval veteran of the Vietnam War, Mr. Principi served as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs from 1989 to 1992. He was named Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs by then President George Bush and served until 1993.

He served as Chief Counsel and Staff Director to the Senate Committee of Veterans Affairs from 1984 to 1988.

In 1996, Mr. Principi was appointed Chair of the Senate Committee on Service Members and Veterans Transition Assistance. This committee reviews services and benefits for veterans and members of the military.

A strong veterans advocate, he oversees the nation's largest health-care system, a system with an annual budget of \$48 billion and a work force of some 210,000 people at hundreds of medical centers, clinics and national cemeteries.

Please give a warm welcome to a VFW Life Member and Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony Principi.

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI,
SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SECRETARY PRINCIPI: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, National President Pat Jankowski, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk, Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, members of the Ladies Auxiliary, Distinguished Guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you, Commander, for that kind introduction. And thank you-all for your warm reception. I am honored to be with you.

Since 1899, VFW members have worked for veterans' rights, taken an unwavering position for a strong national defense, exemplified the ideals of patriotism, and reached deep into their communities to help build a stronger America by your unselfless commitment of labor, time and financial support.

Indeed, your extraordinary work on behalf of my Department for cancer aid and research, and your volunteer contribution is truly unprecedented.

The air, the land and the waters of the America you fought for are cleaner because VFW is a proud steward of the environment. America's children, who are growing up in a world made safer by your service, are better educated, thanks to the VFW's commitment to educational excellence.

The VFW is building the character of America's young people. That character has been passed down from generation to generation, from American to American, by men and women like you who have not been afraid to stand up for freedom. I commend you for taking that stand not only in every day of your service, but also in every day of your lives.

Our nation is strong and vibrant, not just because VFW members care so much for their communities today, but because you were willing yesterday to make sacrifices for the future of the American way of life.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life; and while all contribute of their substance, the soldier puts his life at stake, and often yields up in his country's cause. The highest merit, then, is due the soldier."

I applaud the Veterans of Foreign Wars for your selfless commitment to freedom's defense. The VA is no less dedicated to honoring your service with programs to help meet your health, housing, education, compensation, pension and memorial needs.

When I came on board six months ago, I brought with me memories of the VA that I had known and worked with for many years ago. The VA of my earlier days is not the VA today, and I have a five-part vision to make it even better.

My first vision is for the VA to be the nation's recognized leader in the provision of the highest quality health care to a clearly defined segment of the American people. In particular, I want us to lead in the areas where we have a unique role to play in America's health care: spinal cord injuries,

blind rehabilitation, care for the seriously mentally ill and geriatric care. Because of our aging population, we need to make the investment in and be profiled for the great health care we provide to American veterans.

My second vision for our Department is to be the nation's recognized leader in disability compensation and disability evaluations. This is a core mission of our Department and we must do better, much better. It is the foundation upon which the VA is built and the basis for our programs. I want to see us take the lead in the development of the expert software systems that will integrate data from the time the young man or woman enters the military entrance processing station throughout his or her career, and during the time that they are veterans so that we can more accurately and timely provide them with the disability compensation and pension that they have earned. (Applause)

I am particularly concerned with the fate of America's former POWs. Survivors of the Bataan Death March, Korean War POWs, and Vietnam POWs suffered from captivity at the hands of captors who repudiated basic humanitarian responsibilities for soldiers taken prisoner.

I have been quoted in the media as stating that Japan should apologize for mistreating American POWs during World War II. (Applause) Our former POWs turned to me for help and as the principal advocate for our nation's veterans I am proud to stand up for them. I also believe that we must find a way to compensate former POWs for the lifelong effects of prolonged captivity and mistreatment.

My third vision for VA is for the VA to be the nation's recognized leader in research, focused on patients whose illnesses, disease and injuries are the product of military service. Our core mission is to care for those who have borne the battle. Our research program should support that core mission.

My fourth vision for our Department is to assure America that her sons and daughters who so proudly served in times of war and peace will forever be honored in national cemeteries recognized as national shrines, secured by their service and thereby dedicated to their memories. Last year 83,000 veterans were so honored.

Finally, my fifth vision is for VA to be the recognized leader in the entire nation, both the public and private sectors, in the application of sound business principles that will allow us to be our country's most effective and efficient provider of benefits and services.

The VFW and the leadership of all of our nation's veterans' service organizations are our partners in identifying problems and in developing solutions to the problems I will have to solve in order to make my vision concrete.

In the past few years, the VA has dramatically transformed the veterans health care system. Our Veterans Health Administration moved from an inpatient model of care characterized by limited facilities often far from your homes to an outpatient model with more than 800 new sites where veterans can get care.

Today, I believe we provide better quality care than ever before. We

treat more than 500,000 additional veterans with 25,000 fewer employees. The cost of treating individual patients has gone down by nearly 24 percent. The VA leads the entire health-care industry in making important areas like patient safety, computerized patient records, telemedicine, rehabilitation, clinical and health services research.

I am very, very proud of all of our people who bring VA to life. They are the finest public servants anywhere in the world. They have written a strong record, but I believe we can do better, we must do better.

We have announced the selection of 16 new sites for outpatient clinics throughout America. We have established six new centers specializing in research, education and clinical care for Parkinson's disease. We have developed a policy to pay for emergency care in non-VA hospitals for eligible veterans who are enrolled in VA health-care systems.

We have found two new centers specializing in studying the treatment of war-related illnesses, and six new sites that are focused on changing the way we approach care for veterans at the end of their lives. The VA's spinal cord injury Centers of Excellence are transforming the way America treats spinal cord injured patients and help them live with their injuries. I have recently announced the formation of a new Center of Excellence to find a cure for paralysis at our VA Medical Center in Miami.

We have changed our policy on the patenting, marketing and licensing of new technologies developed by our researchers so that the VA gets the credit and revenues from them. And we can use those revenues to improve the care we provide.

I am tired of hearing the news of some new medical breakthrough that was created in VA laboratories, thought up by VA researchers, and paid for with VA funds, and hearing absolutely no mention of the VA anywhere at all. That should stop. (Applause)

We must break down the barriers that impede the transfer of medical and personnel records from DoD to us for both disability claims processing and health-care purposes. At a time when Federal Express guarantees that any package they deliver anywhere in the world will absolutely, positively get there overnight, how can it take three months to transfer a veterans' records from St. Louis to Milwaukee, or any other place in America? (Applause)

I know that you are very concerned with the amount of time it takes our Department to process benefit claims. Let me tell you, so am I. My highest priority is to reduce this enormous backlog of over 600,000 claims that are currently pending before our Department. It is a national tragedy.

Because we understand that the hazards of the modern battlefield include more than bullets and shells, we have agreed to provide disability compensation for Vietnam veterans with Type 2 Diabetes. I know this has been a long-standing issue for many of our Vietnam veterans. I believe that while this will add significantly to our benefits case load, it is the right thing to do.

And the backlog will increase because of the need to review prior decisions as a result of recent legislation reinstating VA's duty to assist veterans in developing their claims, which never should have been stopped

in the first place. That will add to the backlog, but that is good, too.

The President has given me a no-holds-barred go-ahead to declare a war on claims processing delays. We need to address this crisis with a sense of urgency. It may have been a different time but, you know, during World War II our nation came together and we would build shipyards out of bare dirt and we would launch Liberty ships at the rate of one a day because we had to in order to win.

When Yorktown was badly damaged in the Battle of the Coral Sea and limped back to Pearl Harbor and was told it would take months upon months to repair, Admiral Limit said, "I need that ship back on the line in 48 hours." And guess what? That ship was on that line in 48 hours on its way to Midway. Now, if we could do that during World War II, certainly we can address this backlog with the same sense of urgency. (Applause)

In response to the President's direction, I have formed a "Tiger Team" at ten sites around the country to take on the oldest claims filed by our nation's oldest veterans. I never again want to report to the President, or to you, that a veteran has died while his or her claim languished in a VA file drawer, or on someone's desk.

The "Tiger Team", headquartered out of Cleveland, will make decisions on claims filed by veterans over age 70 whose claims are now over a year old. If the claim is waiting for medical information, this Team will have my authority to cut through all red tape and proceed to get the necessary records or exams from the VA Medical Center immediately.

I will be holding our entire Department responsible for this effort, not only those directly responsible for processing veterans' claims, but also our health administration, our general counsel, our information technology people, because this is a VA problem and not an administrative problem.

Last spring, I commissioned a Claims Processing Task Force, headed by Admiral Dan Cooper, who is Chairman of our Nuclear Power Submarine Forces in the Atlantic Fleet, to conduct a top to bottom review of our claims system. The Task Force will soon provide me with recommendations to speed our decisions by changing our organizational and administrative procedures.

I have not waited for the Task Force's report to take action. Since January, we have added more than 900 decision makers to help reduce the claims processing backlog, the highest increase since the Vietnam War, and we will add 60 more before the end of September. We have trained nearly 500 of those newly hired and promoted employees in proper claims processing procedures, and will train 900 more by October 1.

We have developed a computer system that for the first time will allow us to rapidly access veterans' electronic medical records into our regional offices, that will be fully online by the end of September.

Finally, I have directed our Board of Veterans Appeals to gather additional information on cases they are reviewing, instead of returning those cases to the Veterans Benefits Appeals.

I don't understand why an attorney or a paralegal, or a law clerk, at the

Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington can't just pick up a telephone and get what they need to rate a case rather than instead of making veterans wait longer by remanding their cases back to the Regional Office, where it will sit for a year or longer. That is unacceptable. (Applause) I think one of our greatest generals said it very, very well: "We are dealing with veterans, not procedures, with their problems, not ours." Of course, that was General Omar Bradley.

We have been so focused on processes that we have forgotten about the most important thing, that veterans are the bottom line. Veterans, not the VA, are the victims of these delays. That is unconscionable to me.

I want to go back to a time when claims decisions are made in 90 days and done right the first time. I want decisions that veterans can read and understand, not 25-page legal brief requiring veterans to hire Philadelphia lawyers to interpret.

It is sad but true that the process takes so long that aging veterans with claims die before their claims are rated. You couldn't survive this way in the private sector business and certainly you should not be allowed to continue it in the public sector as well.

I believe our national cemeteries are national shrines, hallowed grounds where Americans young and old can come to gain a greater appreciation of the noble sacrifices of the generations of men and women who saved the world more than once.

I will do my utmost to ensure that our nation's national cemeteries are worthy of the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have earned the right to lie in eternal rest under the flag they defended.

And finally, the VA must use sound business principles to accomplish our mission. We must use the resources we have as efficiently and effectively as possible. I do not want us to waste even a dollar of the taxpayer's funds we hold in trust for America's veterans.

Because every dollar we waste is a dollar not available to provide care for veterans, and we must do better.

America's veterans preserved America's promise for tomorrow's citizens. In turn, America entrusted VA with fulfilling our national obligation to those who served so well.

We are called upon to meet the most profound words of President Lincoln in his Civil War challenge to America: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves and with all nations."

Mr. Lincoln's promise to veterans of the 19th century must be our promise at the VA to veterans of the 21st century.

Tomorrow's veterans must be able to count on continued high quality health care, prosthetic devices, home loan mortgages, compensation and pension benefits programs and the memorial needs.

VA's 219,000 employees want to make those visions of tomorrow come true for America's veterans today. I share with the VFW your dedication to helping every veteran achieve his or her dreams, and I commit to you that I will work very, very closely to ensure that those goals and visions are met. Together we can repay the debt America owes her veterans and their families for their service and their sacrifices.

Let me conclude with the words of President Lincoln, once again, in one of the most beautiful inaugural addresses, his second inaugural address, in our history. He wrote, "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We, even we here, hold the power, and bear the responsibility. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

America just celebrated its 225th anniversary. We are barely a teenager when compared to the dowager nations of Europe, and we are but babes when measured against the long life spans of some Middle Eastern and Asian cultures. Yet America's will to live in, and work for, peace through democratic principles, protected by the selfless service of men and women like you, transcends the years on the calendar.

It is your legacy of service. That legacy is alive today in the young men and women who are patrolling the DMZ, in the Persian Gulf, keeping the lid on that caldron edifice all too often engulfed first year and the United States in war in the Balkans.

You are to be honored for keeping the beacon of hope burning for all the world to see and for making America, as Lincoln once wrote "still the last best hope on earth." God bless you and thank you so very much.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: I would assume that it is pretty obvious that the President is close by. I would ask everyone standing in the back of the hall to please come forward and fill in the seats. I would ask that the Uniontown Band please provide some music interlude until the President arrives.

(Whereupon, the Uniontown Band provided a musical interlude at this time.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. Please welcome the National Security Advisor to the President of the United States, Dr. Condoleeza Rice. (Applause) Please welcome the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony Principi. Please welcome the President of the United States, George W. Bush, accompanied by Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: My comrades, sisters and

friends, I am very pleased and honored to introduce at this 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States our very distinguished guest. Please give a warm VFW welcome to the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush, who has already started the moment he walked into office to make things a little bit better than they have been. Thank you-all. (Applause)

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you-all. (Applause) Thank you very much. At ease. (Laughter)

Thank you for that warm welcome. Before I begin my address, I know you will want to join me in paying tribute to a fine friend and a good man who left us last week. We mourn the loss of Floyd Spence, who served our country well as a Congressman from South Carolina. He was Chairman of the Committees on National Security and on the Armed Services, a senior member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs. He was a strong advocate for national defense. Our prayers are with his wife, Deborah, and his four sons. (Applause)

My, time flies. I was here a year ago, minus one day. (Laughter) Since then, I have had a change of address, and I received a great honor (Applause). Another honor comes to me today, to speak as Commander-in-Chief to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America. (Applause)

Today, I bring the respect of our nation and a special greeting from one of your own members, from VFW Post 4344 of Houston, Texas, the former President, George H. W. Bush. (Applause)

I want to thank your Commander-in-Chief. John has been in the Oval Office. He is a true advocate for the veterans. He has done a fine job. And like me, he married well. (Applause)

And I want to congratulate John's successor, Jim Goldsmith. And I look forward to working with Jim, just as I have with John.

I also want to thank Bob Wallace. I want to thank Bob Wallace, the VFW's man in Washington, D.C., for working closely with my administration and representing your interests very well. (Applause)

I want to thank Pat Jankowski of the Ladies Auxiliary who are gathered here as well in Milwaukee, and I want to thank her for her leadership. I want to congratulate Diana Stout, who will be becoming the incoming President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

As well, I want to thank the Governor of Wisconsin, Scott McCallum for his hospitality, and I want to thank all the good people of Wisconsin, particularly Milwaukee, for being such a welcoming city to this great convention. (Applause)

I want to pay tribute to a good friend of mine and a good friend of yours, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Tony Principi. (Applause) Last year, he was giving me advice about Veterans Affairs. This year, he sits around the Cabinet, making sure I understand what we are doing in Veterans Affairs.

And I appreciate so very much Tony's return to public service. He is doing a fine job. (Applause)

I want to thank you-all for having me come to this convention. I have been looking forward to this. You know, I appreciate every chance I get to travel our country. It is important for a President never to become isolated in the seat of power. As great and influential as that city is, sometimes the President just has to get out of Crawford, Texas. (Laughter)

This is a fine organization. General Douglas MacArthur called the VFW the greatest organization in the world. He and his dad were both members, and they would be proud of all you have done for your country, and they would be proud of the more than 1.9 million members of the VFW.

Each one of you is a living example of the special kind of patriotism, the love of country, expressed not just in word but in lifetimes of service. You defended America in hours of need. You helped your fellow veterans in times of their need. And you have done so much to build the character of our young people, to teach them to live by good values, to honor their parents, to trust in God. You helped them to appreciate freedom, to love America, and to respect our flag.

You understand as well that showing a basic respect for our nation's flag is not merely the option of every citizen; it should be a matter of constitutional law. (Applause)

In Europe last month, one of my last stops was Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo. I went there to thank our servicemen and women for their sacrifice for our nation. I took the occasion to make good on a promise, by signing a bill to allocate over \$2 billion in additional appropriations for military pay, benefits, health and housing. (Applause)

To restore the strength and morale of America's armed forces, we must first take care of the people who wear our uniform. I believe we are making every branch of service a place where men and women are proud to serve, and as importantly, proud to stay. (Applause)

My administration understands America's obligations not only go to those who wear the uniform today, but to those who wore the uniform in the past: to our veterans. And at times, those obligations have not been met. Veterans in need of care have been kept waiting, and thousands of veterans' claims have been delayed or in some cases lost in the bureaucracy.

Many veterans have observed that the government seemed to work a lot more efficiently when it wanted something from them. When the draft board got your file, it worked efficiently. (Laughter) But now, when you need health care, forms get lost and answers come late. That is no way to treat America's veterans, and that is going to change. (Applause)

Secretary Principi is conducting a top-to-bottom review of the claims processing. Currently, there are about 600,000 pending applications, of which 53,000 have been pending over a year. Many of those belong to veterans over 70 years of age. That's not right. I have given Secretary Principi the clearest of clear mandates.

He must bring those claims to a speedy and fair resolution. We must

move as quickly as possible on the backlog, and we will. We will improve cooperation between the VA and the Department of Defense in providing care to those who served.

In May, I signed an executive order creating a Presidential Task Force to recommend major reforms in the delivery of health care to veterans and military retirees. Two distinguished Americans will lead that task force: Dr. Gail Wilensky, an expert on health policy and a faithful friend to the veterans, and former Congressman Jerry Solomon. One might be tempted to call him an ex-Marine, but we all know there is no such thing as an ex-Marine. (Applause)

We are making great progress on implementing the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act to ensure that our veterans receive high-quality care. In the budget I submitted to Congress, I requested an increase of \$1 billion additional money for veterans services. Secretary Principi recently announced new health-care facilities for veterans, six new centers for Parkinson's disease, research and care, and 41 new outpatient clinics in 28 states. Veterans are a priority. (Applause)

Veterans are a priority for this administration. I put a good man in charge, and that priority is reflected in my budget. Our budget also meets the most fundamental responsibility a President bears, to provide security for the United States of America. Not only does the budget take care of our people, but we give today's military what it needs to operate, equipment, spare parts, advanced training.

In all, I have asked Congress to provide our military an increase of \$39 billion over the original 2001 appropriations. This is the largest increase in military spending since Ronald Reagan was the Commander-in-Chief. We are not only going to spend more on national defense, we are also going to spend it more wisely.

Secretary Rumsfeld is charged with developing a strategy to bolster today's military and he is charged with developing a strategy to develop a military that is ready to defend America tomorrow as well. A modern military requires major investment in research and development, so that our military is always the finest in the world. (Applause)

And something I offered last year as a promise is today a commitment to research, develop and deploy a defense against ballistic missiles. These are the priorities I submitted to Congress in February and priorities reflected in the budget amendment in June. I trust they will be reflected in the appropriations bills Congress sends me this fall for my signature.

As we enter the appropriations process, I have great hopes but no illusions. Washington has its own way of doing things, especially around the time of year when final appropriations are made. Spending bills are passed one after another, thirteen in all. Everybody in Washington knows there is a budget. But new spending gets thrown in along the way.

Finally, when it is time to pass the last bill, they realize they are just about to go over the budget. And often, and sadly, the final bill has been the Defense Appropriations bill. And, therefore, defense appropriations has

gone without adequate funding. That's the old way of doing business. That's old style of thinking.

I have a better idea. Let's abandon the old ways of gamesmanship, standoffs and government shutdowns. Let us keep our priorities straight and start with the things that matter most to our country's security and our country's future. This year let us have responsible spending from day one and put the national security and education of our children first in line when it comes to the appropriations process. (Applause)

I hope you-all watch very carefully. It's important that people pay attention to what goes on in Washington. It will be an interesting signal about the priorities of the leaders of the United States Congress when they let those appropriation bills out to come to my desk.

I am confident I can work with Congress on appropriations, because we have worked closely together on other issues. We saw bipartisan votes on the budget itself and they passed and I signed and the mailman is delivering the first major income tax relief in a generation. (Applause) And we also worked together in honoring veterans.

Members of the VFW have long advocated a fitting memorial to those who served in the Second World War. The World War II Memorial has been in the works for an awfully long time. The final obstacles have been removed. I have signed it into law, and soon the veterans of World War II will have their place of honor in the heart of our nation's capital. (Applause)

In the heart of Washington, D.C., that monument will stand for all time as a reminder of service and sacrifice. Not far away are monuments to those who fought in other wars across the world. For all of you, service in time of war was a defining experience in your life. Your brave and selfless conduct has defined the best of our country.

America does not seek to produce more generations of war veterans; we are a peaceful nation. But we will always need the commitment and courage and honor that we find in our veterans. Those who have worn the uniform have made a contribution, not just to the defense of our nation, but to the character of our nation. You have given your best to America and in so many ways you are the best that is in America.

For all that, you have the deep respect of those who wear the uniform today, the Commander-in-Chief as well. And you have the gratitude of a nation that is in debt. Thank you for letting me come. May God bless our veterans.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades and Sisters, if you will please take your seats. We are going to continue the program so you can hear from the Youth Essay Contest Winner and the winner of our Voice of Democracy Contest.

INTRODUCTION OF GILLIAN LINMAN - YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST WINNER

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Last year was

the sixth year of the Youth Essay Contest, a contest designed to give seventh and eighth-grade students an opportunity to express their opinion on a patriotic theme.

This year's theme was "What Does It Mean To Be Patriotic?"

The Youth Essay Contest has gained strength and momentum during these beginning years. We can be very proud of the results:

1) More than 80,000 students entered the competition nationwide.

2) Savings bonds and other incentives totaling more than \$739,000 were distributed by our membership to young people across our nation.

We are very pleased to have with us this morning, the 2001 National Winner of the Youth Essay Competition. She was a seventh-grade student at Seattle Christian School when she wrote her winning essay. She is sponsored by VFW Post 9430 and its Ladies Auxiliary from Seattle, Washington. She is accompanied by her mother.

Here to present her award winning essay, "What Does It Mean To Be Patriotic?" the 2001 First Place National Youth Essay Winner and recipient of a \$10,000 United States Savings Bond, Gillian Linman. (Applause)

NATIONAL YOUTH ESSAY WINNER - GILLIAN LINMAN

MS. GILLIAN LINMAN: First of all, I would like to thank the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary for this wonderful opportunity. I feel very honored to have won this award. I would like to give a special thanks to Mr. Thorson for all his hard work and dedication to this program, and to Pat for showing us a good time and chaperoning us around the city yesterday. I would like to thank Post 9430 for sponsoring me. I would like to thank the VFW and the Ladies again for all their kindness and generosity. Now, I would like to give you my essay.

Many people think that being patriotic means celebrating the Fourth of July, but it is more. Most see patriotism as fighting in a war or dying for their country, but it can also be something less obvious. The truth is, being patriotic is not simply shooting off fireworks: Patriotism is defending, supporting, and dedicating one's self to their country.

Throughout our country's history, many people lost their lives defending it. From the Revolutionary War, when America fought to gain its freedom, through the 20th Century, when America fought for the freedom of others, millions of Americans risked and lost their lives to uphold their patriotic beliefs.

During World War II, millions of men went to battle and fought patriotically, while others, mostly women, also helped in the struggle. They went to work in industry to build the machines of war and keep America running. Patriotism revealed through defending one's country, is more than just fighting and dying. It is doing whatever it takes to serve one's country and maintain its success.

Fighting for one's country is definitely a form of patriotism, but wars do not happen every day. Simple things people do daily can be patriotic.

Paying taxes, for instance, is a basic way of showing support because it funds the government. Serving on jury duty is supportive, because without this system our courts could not function. Obeying laws can be patriotic because doing so helps to maintain order. Patriotism is clearly demonstrated through the supportive duties of citizens during their daily lives.

Having a patriotic spirit means living with dedication and principles throughout a lifetime. It means feeling pride, showing pride and having confidence in what it stands for.

Adlai Stevenson stated that living with patriotism is “to walk with it in serenity and wisdom, with self-respect and the respect of mankind; a patriotism that puts country ahead of self; a patriotism which is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotions, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.” True patriotism involves a complete dedication to one’s country.

It is clear that being patriotic is more than celebrating a holiday. It means defending one’s country regardless of cost. It means supporting one’s country through the common responsibilities of citizenship. It means the steady dedication of one’s self to their country for a lifetime. Although the demands of patriotism to one’s country are great, the reward is a great country. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much. Here is the \$10,000 bond that I am going to present to you. You have done a beautiful job. Thank you for caring about America as much as you do. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF LINDSEY LIBERATORE - 2001 VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Over the past 54 years, the Voice of Democracy contest has enabled high school students from across the country and overseas to think, write and speak out for freedom and democracy. These students compete for more than \$139,500 in national scholarships, not to mention the more than \$2.5 million in awards and scholarships given by Posts, Districts, Departments and their respective Ladies Auxiliaries.

These VFW scholarships enable many young Americans to continue their education in colleges and universities of their choice. We are pleased to have with us today the 2001 First Place National Winner in the Voice of Democracy Contest. She was a junior at Apponequet High School in Lakeville, Massachusetts, and was sponsored by VFW Post 6643 and Ladies Auxiliary in Freetown, Massachusetts, when she entered the contest.

Here to present her award-winning essay, “What Price Freedom?”, the 2001 First Place National Voice of Democracy winner and recipient of the \$25,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, Lindsey Liberatore. (Applause)

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER - LINDSEY LIBERATORE

MS. LINDSEY LIBERATORE: Thank you. Before I begin my speech, I

need to take the time to thank the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary. First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Gordon Thorson for all the work he does to support the students and for his endless hospitality and generosity. Thank you so much. I would like to also thank Pat for acting as a chaperon/shopping partner. Thank you to my home state of Massachusetts and my Post 6643. I just want to take a few minutes to say I am so grateful for the opportunities that have been extended to me.

The Voice of Democracy program is absolutely amazing. It was the most remarkable experience I have ever had, having the opportunity to be with other students in our nation's capital. I was privileged to go to Washington, and it was just wonderful. I just can't say enough good things about it.

I just want to say that, most of all, I have gained such an appreciation for how much the VFW works to support students and to support my generation. I just want to say that I'm so grateful for the sacrifices that have been made so that I can have a choice and so my generation can have a choice. Thank you.

What Price Freedom?

Names. Thousands of names, all carved delicately and precisely into panels of marble, and together these names form what is commonly called the Wall. They are the names of those soldiers killed in the Vietnam War, the names of those soldiers who fought and died for the sake of an idea, for the sake of an idea known as freedom. Like those who came before and after them, they gave their lives to aid in the achievement of this idea. They were killed for fighting for a common cause, and will be forever remembered and honored for their sacrifice.

I first visited this monument when I was three years old. I went with my father, and have always thought that my memories of that visit were a dream. I can remember the way my father looked. He was wearing very dark sunglasses, and was kneeling, touching one of the thousands of names before him. I walked over to his side, and he lifted me up into his arms as we walked away. When he returned home, I recall asking my mother, "What's the matter with Daddy?" She simply said that he was sad, for what reason I didn't understand at the time.

It wasn't until last week that I learned this memory was not, in fact, a dream, but had actually happened. I also learned why my father had been so "sad". I have always known that my father served in the Marines and was in combat in Vietnam, but never knew the full extent of the ordeal he went through.

In 1967, he reported to boot camp on Parris Island in South Carolina. A young man named Steve was also sent to training in this same platoon. Almost instantaneously, the two became inseparable.

They spent every waking minute, making light of every situation possible, whether it be scrubbing the mess hall with toothbrushes, or having to remake their bunks if a dime didn't bounce a certain height when dropped onto the surface. They became best friends. The two survived boot camp, but were separated when my father was sent to Vietnam. However,

to each one's surprise they met again, and were stationed together during part of their tours.

It was like they never spent any time apart. The jokes and pranks started again, and the good times surpassed the bad. Never did the two think about the distinct possibility that one would make it home without the other. My father was on a base, making arrangements to report home, when he learned of Steve's death. There was an explosion in the ammunition pit, and Steve was one of the several fatalities. His name now lies on Panel 25 of the Wall, and it was there that my father knelt, tears streaming down his face unhidden by his sunglasses 13 years ago.

When I was working on this paper and trying to determine what freedom really means, and how one could possibly put a price on something that indefinable, my father said something that truly made me think. After telling me his story, he stated that most people might never know the true price of freedom.

They will take their freedom for granted, and accept it as a given, until the threat of it being taken away is poised, or until they lose someone they love to the idea of freedom.

My father said that every day he thinks of Steve, and when I was born he thought of Steve and when he taught me to ride my bike he thought of Steve, and when he taught me to drive he thought of Steve. He thought of what he has been able to experience and Steve could not, and he thought of just how much was sacrificed to obtain freedom for all.

Our world has lost a countless number of individuals to the fight for freedom, and we will give our all to keep it within reach. We mourn for those whom we lost, and perhaps we mourn for the sacrifices we have all had to make, but we will always work to never lose sight of our freedom.

We will always work to appreciate just how beautiful and precious freedom is, and all its definitions. We will always feel blessed to be allowed the chance to express ourselves, and be thankful for our personal freedom. We will always hold what we may not realize close to our hearts, we will hold our freedom close to our hearts.

For all of these reasons and for many more, for Steve and my father, and all those who have made sacrifices, I have come to the conclusion that the idea, or rather the ideal of freedom is, and always will be priceless. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I am to remind you about a charity auction that begins at 12:30 that is located right here. That will be 12:30 the auction begins, and those items that were donated by each Commander from each Department. So those are the items that will be auctioned.

Again, thank you for staying and thank you for all the courtesies that you have shown all of our guests today. At this time we are going to go ahead and have the Benediction and we will recess until tomorrow morning.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MONSIGNOR LEONARD: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the blessings you continually offer us. For this day, for our convention, for the year to come, may the goals of the VFW and its Auxiliary whereby justice, rights, dignity and freedom are advanced ever begin and be directed by you. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for today's joint session have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much. We will be in recess until tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:05 o'clock p.m.)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
AUGUST 20, 2001

(The Distinguished Guests Banquet of the Veterans of Foreign War of the United States, meeting in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was called to order at 7:00 o'clock p.m. by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith, serving as Master of Ceremonies.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the 102nd VFW National Convention Banquet.

I am Jim Goldsmith, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the VFW and your Master of Ceremonies for the evening. I hope all of you have enjoyed your first day here in Milwaukee. We are pleased to have you with us this evening, especially the VFW National and Department leaders and our VFW Ladies Auxiliary leadership and members.

We are honored by the presence of our distinguished guests and I will introduce them to you following the dinner. Please stand for our Invocation and remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Invocation was given at this time by National Chaplain Monsignor John Leonard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

(Whereupon, the dinner was enjoyed at this time.)

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith introduced the distinguished guests at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It is my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has served America's veterans for many years. It has been a privilege for me to be a part of his "Follow Me" leadership team for the past year.

He has been a source of pride and inspiration to all of us. I know that many others share in their gratitude for a man who has done so much for so many.

He is unique in that he possesses an eloquence not only of speech, but more importantly, an elegance of spirit and heart. He is a man who truly walks the walk.

He was elected to the position of VFW Commander-in-Chief at the 101st National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 25, 2000.

In 1968, he attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. In January of 1969, he went to Vietnam as a heavy mortar platoon leader in Company E, 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade. He eventually became Commander of Company E, thereby earning him the distinction of having served in every leadership position in the country from squad leader to commander. He retired from the Army in the rank of Captain in 1978.

Among his many military decorations are: Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, four awards of the Bronze Star, including one for valor, Purple Heart, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, three Army Commendation Medals, and the Parachutists Badge.

He joined the VFW in 1977 and is a Life Member of VFW Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia. From post level to national positions, he has served with distinction. In 1988-1989, he achieved All American status as Department Commander.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in proudly welcoming our Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak.

Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation to Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Jim for the introduction. I will try as I always have to keep my remarks brief this evening.

In retrospect, I am astounded as how quickly this last year has slipped away. All 12 months have gone in the blink of an eye.

From now on, everything that occurs will seem anticlimactic. Events will pale in comparison to the honor I have had serving as Commander-in-Chief of the greatest veterans organization ever in this country, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

That organization has been baptized in love, it has been sacrificed on the battlefield all over this world. That uniqueness, that specialness, the difference that you have made to the bullet makes the difference. You are the finest and you are the greatest, because no other organization has the criteria nor the demand for those who have served other than the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

In that respect, I have been privileged to serve because it has afforded me more opportunities and occasions than most people experience in an entire lifetime. As leader of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I have met with our President, members of Congress, visited the White House, and traveled to distant lands to meet with foreign heads-of-state.

I have been able to visit our nation's service people here and abroad, listened to their concerns, and delivered the VFW message of commitment to them, assured them that we will be here for them as long as necessary.

Yes, it has been quite an experience. But what will remain with me the longest are the memories that 2.7 million members of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary have provided.

Through their work and good deeds, I have tasted the exhilaration of their accomplishment of purpose; felt the poignant generosity of their hearts; shared with them the sorrow of the passing of a comrade; and stood with them time and time again, filled with pride and amazed at the perseverance of their spirit.

The men and women of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary demonstrate the true worth of those who would hurl themselves into service and action for the greater good.

They have traveled the distance from war to peace on the strength of

conviction and sense of purpose. The men and women of our organization have steadily served in time of war and peace. Their invincible determination to do everything possible to honor the dead by helping the living will continue to inspire me for all of my days.

As my year as Commander-in-Chief comes to a close, I am internally grateful to all of you. Thank you for every precious memory. I will cherish them forever. May God continue to bless each of you and may God continue to always bless the greatest nation on earth, America. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY TO THE VFW PATRICIA JANKOWSKI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Patricia Jankowski was elected National President of the nearly 700,000 member Ladies Auxiliary at its 87th National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on April 25, 2000.

Throughout the past year, Pat's theme has been "Today-Tomorrow-Always-Remembering Yesterday," has challenged her organization to new levels of accomplishment. She has demonstrated exceptional strength and commitment as she led the Ladies Auxiliary to new heights of patriotism and service. She has been a gracious lady and we have traveled this year in unity and togetherness as we brought our 2.7 million members together again to serve a great nation.

Please welcome the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Pat Jankowski, from the great state of Michigan.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation to National Ladies Auxiliary President Jankowski.)

REMARKS - NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY TO THE VFW

PRESIDENT JANKOWSKI: Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, the National VFW and Auxiliary Officers, Comrades and Sisters, and Special Guests:

I am honored this evening to represent 682,716 members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This day has always been the highlight of our National Convention, and I know tonight will be no exception. I want to thank our very special guests that are here tonight for helping us celebrate an outstanding year of service.

To our American veterans, their families and our community, the members of the Ladies Auxiliary have a very proud legacy of service, and we are especially proud that for the thirteenth consecutive year we have raised \$13 million for cancer aid and research.

Many years ago my dad said to me, "Pat, through your life you will walk many roads." The last six years have been the most outstanding roads

that I have ever traveled, and because of people like you and my great Ladies Auxiliary I have been afforded the opportunity as I do later today, to go from shore-to-shore and from mountains-to-mountains, to the Far East, Europe, all over this great world. But most of all, all over this great country.

Those roads were built by veterans, many of you. I thank you for building roads of freedom; I thank you for all that you have given to this country, to me, and to the families all over America. You, the veterans, are my heroes and will continue to be my heroes for the remainder of my life. I thank you all for the most rewarding six years of my life. Bless you and God bless America. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO GENERAL WESLEY K. CLARK (RET.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: General Clark served as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, from July 10, 1997, until May 3, 2000. As Supreme Commander, Europe, General Clark was in overall command of NATO's military forces in Europe and was responsible for safeguarding an area extending from the northern tip of Norway to the eastern border of Turkey. He assured the peace, security and territorial integrity of the NATO-member nations.

General Clark also was the overall commander of the approximately 75,000 troops from 37 NATO and other nations participating in ongoing operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. In 1999, General Clark commanded the alliance's military response to the Kosovo crisis, Operation Allied Force. He is now employed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

General Clark's military decorations include: the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal and the Army Commendation Medal.

Please welcome the recipient of the 2001 Dwight D. Eisenhower Award, General Wesley K. Clark. (Applause)

The citation reads as follows: "The Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Medal presented to Wesley K. Clark, General, United States Army, in special recognition of his numerous contributions in the cause of world peace as the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and for his stalwart support of security and territorial integrity of the NATO member nations. His strong leadership and dedication to those he commands has brought stability and international accord to a troubled region thus earning him the admiration of allied nations and the respect 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 20th day of August, 2001. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by myself, Commander-in-Chief, and Adjutant General

John J. Senk.

Before I ask General Clark to make his remarks, I can only say this to you, sir. You were a soldier, not a politician. (Applause)

REMARKS BY GENERAL CLARK

GENERAL CLARK: Thank you very much, John, for that honor. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much. I can't tell you what a great honor this is and how pleased my wife and I are to be with you. It is especially a great honor to be here after our Commander-in-Chief President Bush was here with you today, and I will always remember this award and what it means. I just want from the bottom of my heart to say thank you.

Now, I don't know if anybody is here from the Chapter of Copperas Cove, Texas. Is there anybody here? There are some members. I am a Lifetime Member of that chapter. (Applause) The good people in Copperas Cove asked me to come out and visit and my staff said, "Sir, you are going to get ambushed out there." That is the best ambush I ever had.

I am really proud to be a member of that Chapter of Copperas Cove. I don't know if any folks are here from our State of Arkansas or not. Are there any? Well, it doesn't sound like many. I guess I have got some work to do. But we are happy you are here.

I am proud to be back home in Arkansas now. I asked John what I could talk about tonight. He said you can talk about anything you want but just remember there are three rules for a speech here. He said a snappy beginning, a snappy ending and keep the two as close together as possible. (Laughter)

I wanted to tell you how very proud I am to be here with you tonight. I was thinking back as I was reflecting today on this award, I was thinking back to the time I was in the hospital in Saigon. After I got wounded, they flew me in there, and I was there three or four days, and they worked on me and moved me out to Japan.

The morning they readied me for the move, there was a young African-American soldier who was going to be on the same flight and some of the troops from his unit coming to visit.

This young soldier had lost his arm below the shoulder, but he wasn't worried about that. He was worried about what had happened in the battle. He was worried about his buddies.

He was worried about the men he had gone through training with. And as I looked at his face and listened to his voice of concern and looked at his friends there, I just felt how powerful it is to have served your country, to have gone to war, to have been part of that great tradition of American veterans who have answered their country's call in time of need. I want to salute the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which you all did that. Thank you for what you represent for our country. (Applause)

When I got out of the hospital at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, I knew I would go on convalescent leave for two months. I contacted the Army

branch in Washington. I didn't know what my next assignment was. I called up and I said, "What do you have in mind?" They said, "Well, Captain, we are looking at your record here and you have not done very much. You have got to prove to us you can command a company."

I said, "I just got wounded in Vietnam commanding a company." They said, "We don't have any record of that at all. So you are going to have to go command another company." So I went back to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and I commanded the 190th Army Brigade. It was a real experience that kept me in the United States Army for four years.

When I went down, that company was wounded, and I was still on convalescent leave, I couldn't run or use my right hand. Everybody in that company had been wounded in Vietnam. Some people had to walk on crutches, carry canes, and others had only the use of one hand or one arm, and we were down in strength, down to seventy.

We had sixteen tanks to take care of and we fixed the tanks during the day and gave the lieutenants some training, and they broke them, we picked them up at 4:00 o'clock and we repaired them and delivered them again, and they broke them again. It went that way all that summer.

Those men were all draftees. Not a one had volunteered to be in the armed forces. It was in the summer of 1970. Every day another shock was delivered to the Union. First, it was going to be an all-volunteer force, no more drafts, and then no more nations, no real valor formation and no company vessel, and people were pretty confused.

But what I saw in that unit was tremendous pride and dignity of the men who had served in Vietnam and fought for their country and come home wounded but proud. They cared about their unit, they cared about the army and they cared about the company, and they had enormous pride in what they had done.

I loved those men, and it is why I stayed in the United States Army. They represented in my view the very best of America, and I hope that some of those guys are in the VFW somewhere today. General Tulley and I and many others worked very hard after the Vietnam War to help build the armed forces back.

We commanded companies and battalions and brigades and General Tulley took the 1st Cavalry Division to Desert Storm and I took over the 1st Cavalry from John in September of 1992. But along the way we discovered we were in a new era.

The Cold War was over by 1990. We had won.

We had no global adversaries. There was only one ideology and it was ours. Some people thought it was the end of history. Some called it a new world order, but the truth was that there were still a few security challenges out there. We still had some flaws and in Korea we have regional instability, and in the Balkans proliferation of chemical and biological weapons.

We had no transport like organized crime and drugs, and we were worried about what would happen in the newly-independent states of the former Soviet Union would fall back on totalitarianism. What we

discovered, as we worked our way through the 1990s in positions in the armed forces, was that the old formulas weren't enough.

You still needed deterrence and you had to still be able to fight to win. You still had to be prepared for major war. You still had to have training in peacetime. But it wasn't enough. There was a new ingredient, and that was we had to prevent the conflict when we could.

We looked at the Balkans, we looked at Haiti, we looked at Rowanda, and we recognized there was a lot of war and these people were not all fighters. Many of them were simply people like you and me who were victims. We knew we couldn't be the world's policemen, but we saw that where we could make a difference, then it was right to do so, and where one also could make a difference in the armed forces, then, it was right for the armed forces to do so.

This was difficult for the armed forces. It wasn't conventional war fighting, it was not what we were prepared for at the National Training Center, on the firing ranges, or in our command posts exercises. We were trying to prevent war, not wage it.

We were using presence, we were exposing ourselves to risk, we were transparent in our communications. We weren't using surprise, we weren't digging in heavy fortifications and we were using mass assault. During this new environment, we delivered supplies to Rowanda and we restored a democracy or at least some betterment conditions in Haiti.

We stopped the war in Bosnia that killed 200 people. We acted in Kosovo to prevent a wave of that cleansing that we have run people out of their homes and brought instability in Southeastern Europe, and stabilized NATO. Along the way we tried to keep the faith with the principles of war, with good leadership, with taking care of our men and women and accomplishing the mission.

Upon all, I think the men and women in the armed forces have always known and felt the lessons that the members of this organization have learned in their own professional services. When you commit the men and women of the armed forces of the United States to active combat operations, you must not lose, you must win. (Applause)

That is what we have done. What I saw as I reflected on this after I got out of the Army and took off my uniform was that in reality we were in a mirror. We had proved beyond a national strategy directed to us, global threat, and we were into a new era where we could focus on opportunities.

We still needed strong armed forces, and those armed forces have to adapt and change to meet the change in front of them. This is a time, a unique time in America's history where we have to reach out and support our allies, help our friends and reinforce those who share our values abroad and in the world.

When I go back to Little Rock, Arkansas, and unpacked 8,000 pounds of gear I had been dragging around for 34 years, I found my eighth-grade newspapers. I discovered that in the eighth grade I had to memorize a poem written by a great American poet, Carl Sandburg.

And as I looked at this poem and thought about it, I realized that I think my English teacher had really misunderstood this poem. It really wasn't about Chicago, even though this was the title of the poem. It was really about America.

If you would let me read just a few lines from this poem, I think you will see what I mean. Carl Sandburg described the greatness of America when he wrote his poem. He expressed it this way about Chicago.

"Hog Butcher for the World,
"Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
"Player with Railroads and Nation's Freight Handler.
"Stormy, husky, brawling,
"City of the Big Shoulders.
"Come and show me another city with lifted head
singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

"Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a
young man laughs,

"Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a
battle."

I think we live this vision. We fought and we won two world wars. Over a 40-year period, we kept our freedom, we deterred Soviet and Spanishism and we won the Cold War. We shed blood in Korea and Vietnam. Nevertheless, we made the American century.

We made the American century with leadership, courage and conviction. Now, we are in a new century. It is a different era; it is not going to be an era for big shoulders and machine tools, but it is an era when American leadership is going to be required.

I think that leadership starts here at home. I think it starts with the great organization like this. I think it starts with the understanding and commitment of the American people to do what they can, when they can, where they can to help others have the blessings of freedom and liberty and the rule of law that we have in this country.

I think none of us knows it so well as those of us who have gone abroad and served and suffered for our country. Today there are thousands of young men and women on freedom's frontier. They are in the Pacific, they are in the Middle East, they are in the Balkans.

Unlike most of us, they were volunteers. They are there because they believe in our country and they believe in the organizations. They believe in the Commander-in-Chief and their chain of command. I want to tell you how very, very grateful all of us in uniform were for the support of organizations like the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We knew you cared, we knew you spoke our needs. We knew you stood up for us. We still need that and I hope we will not only have those

tens of thousands of young people each year and increase the strength of the great organization for our country needs you and so does the world. Thank you very much.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Also, General Clark, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars along with the Dwight Eisenhower Award we present you an honorarium of \$15,000.

GENERAL CLARK: Thank you very much and God bless you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your courtesies and for attending this banquet this evening. I will once again call upon Monsignor Leonard, our National Chaplain, for the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LEONARD: Almighty God, we thank you for the opportunity of gathering together. We laugh and we cry, we think, we wonder and ask your blessings upon our organization and especially those that guide us in freedom this moment.

Let us all join in our favorite song, God Bless America.

(Whereupon, God Bless America was sung at this time by the assembly.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you all for being here. This concludes the evening's program.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 8:50 o'clock p.m.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 21, 2001

(The First Business Session of the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 8:30 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors and the Opening Prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms, all rise, please.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors, followed by the Opening Prayer by Monsignor John F. Leonard. Then the National Sergeant-at-Arms led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies for today's program have been conducted, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. And thank you to all of the Sergeants-at-Arms.

Everybody may be seated, please. I remind the audience, and also the Sergeants-at-Arms that the only head gear that can be worn during the meeting is the official Veterans of Foreign Wars head gear. I would also ask that you do everything you can to keep the noise to a minimum.

I have sat in the audience many a day wishing I could hear what was going on, but I couldn't because someone chose to decide to have a major conversation and a family reunion. We need to try to pay attention, because too often folks say I didn't hear what was going on and I didn't know what we were doing. Maybe that will help if you can hear what is going on. Please insist on that, Sergeant-at-Arms.

The first thing we will do is have a report of the Credentials Committee to Chairman Elwood Rickards, followed by the Committee on Convention Rules, and following that will be the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, which will follow in that order. So those three committees, I would request they be present on the podium.

At this time I would ask for the report of the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Department of Delaware): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this will be a temporary report of the Credentials Committee as of 4:00 o'clock last night.

Total delegates, 10,571.

Total Department Commanders, 54.

Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 28.

Total National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 10,691.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. We will now have the report of the Committee on Convention Rules by Past Commander-in-Chief R. D. "Bulldog" Smith.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I want to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson who served as Vice-Chairman of the Rules Committee.

I will now read the rules as follows. Your Committee on Convention Rules met Sunday afternoon, August 19th, 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. 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 ten minutes each except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present; provided, that the chairman of the 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 that particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.

4. All resolutions offered by individual delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or Department Adjutant. In his absence all resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to committees no later than 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 22nd, 2001, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not submitted 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 organizational 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, on any subject before the Convention.

10. Unit rule of voting shall not be allowed in this Convention.

11. The voting strength shall be determined 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. All the 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 registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.

13. Registered delegates 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 on 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 members of the delegation and a poll of the Department delegates is demanded by three delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the delegates, without discussion or question.

16. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by ten 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. Nominating and election of National Officers will be held according to the National Constitution and 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.

Commander-in-Chief, I move these rules be adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion to accept the Convention rules.

At this time I recognize Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson for a second.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OLSON: I respectfully second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and a second to accept the convention rules as read by the Rules Committee Chairman. Is there any discussion? Is there any discussion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved. The Convention rules are adopted at this time.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you instruct your Sergeants to move the microphones to positions for debate.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF R. D. SMITH: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that completes the duties of the Committee you appointed. As Chairman of the Rules Committee, I appreciate that appointment and ask that you discharge this Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much. Thank you for your service. A copy of the Convention Rules will be available. If you desire them, each Department Commander can pick up the Convention rules. They will be available to the Department Commander for the use of the Department.

At this time for the report of the Committee on the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, John Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I would like to recognize our Vice-Chairman of the By-Laws Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Stang of Kansas.

Comrades, the Committee met on Sunday afternoon with full Committee and the following are our recommendations. The following By-Law Amendments were recommended for approval by the Committee: B-1, Life Members; B-2, Removal of Elected Officers; B-3, Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office; B-4, National Committees; B-9, National Dues; B-15, Men's Auxiliary.

Am I going too fast? I move the adoption of the recommendations of the Committee for the aforementioned by-laws.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STANG: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and a second to accept the by-laws as reported by the Convention Chairman. Are there any set asides? Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ERIC HALVERSON (Post 5065 - Michigan): Commander-in-Chief, I am Eric Halverson, Past State Commander of the Department of Michigan. I would like to have B-1 set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You are asking that B-1 be set aside. Are there any other set asides? Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I ask B-15 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: B-15 will be set aside. Do you have someone that is at Microphone No. 3? Let's move this thing along.

COMRADE PETE SZABO (Department of California): I have a question on B-6. Has B-6 been set aside? I just want to be sure on that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: B-6 has not been recommended for acceptance at this time.

COMRADE PETE SZABO (Department of California): Okay. So if we want to debate on that, does that have to have a separate motion?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: That is correct. Seeing no other persons at the microphone at this time, the motion on the floor, properly seconded, is that By-Laws B-2, B-3, B-4, B-9, those by-law changes at this time are on the floor. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those against "nay". It is so moved. It is accepted.

The set asides, we will start out with Microphone No. 2, because that was the first one that came up.

COMRADE ERIC HALVERSON (Post 5065 - Michigan): I was the one that asked it be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: That is correct. It is on the floor. Go ahead.

COMRADE ERIC HALVERSON (Post 5065 - Michigan): I want to speak on this, but do we have to have a motion to accept first?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: No, go ahead.

COMRADE ERIC HALVERSON (Post 5065 - Michigan): I don't want to make a motion to accept because I am against it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You are speaking in opposition to the acceptance. That is what you do at this time. You tell us why you don't want it.

COMRADE ERIC HALVERSON (Post 5065 - Michigan): I want to speak in opposition to it. Let me go back to a little bit of history. First of all, point one, I have got three or four points I want to raise. What basis — I have not heard any basis why we have to have this Life Membership fee. It would help if we had a history of why this is a critical part of this proposal.

Point two, four or five years ago the National Organization asked for a Life Membership fee raise because the actuarial experts said that the fund would be depleted if we didn't raise the Life Membership fee. That we did after a year's delay.

Now, four or five years later they are asking for another raise in the Life Membership fee, and the actuarial experts again say that we need to have a raise because the fund is being depleted. I assume that is why anyway. As you have noticed, the recommended increase is approximately \$130 for each category.

Point four, I don't know if we have any estimates, but I assume that about 5,000 Life Members pass away each year. Over a ten-year period, we are talking about 50,000 Life Members that pass away. This resulted in a savings to the National Organization of approximately, and I have not got the correct figure naturally, a half million dollars.

It is hard to see why they are asking for a raise when you are saving money on the people that have passed away. If this proposal is passed, that would mean that the Life Membership application for all intent and purpose would probably dry up.

I can't see anybody paying a fee, especially a young veteran, of three hundred some dollars for his Life Membership. I urge everyone in this hall to vote against this proposal. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments.
Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Glen Gardner, a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I stand in favor of the adoption of B-1. First, let me point out that the raise in the Life Membership fees is not a raise being done by the National Headquarters.

The Life Membership Fund belongs to all the Life Members in this organization. The actuaries tell the Life Membership Committee how much is generated in income so that amount can be paid out to the Posts, to the Departments and the National Organization in accordance with the by-laws.

This Life Membership increase would allow that amount to be raised from \$5.50 to \$8.50. We have many Departments and some Posts that are in financial difficulties at the present time. If we don't look for some way to increase these Life Members' payouts in the future, that will only increase as we go forward.

The actuaries have told us that it would take that kind of increase to raise this Life Membership payout to \$8.50. I also see a decline in the pushing of Life Membership on the Post level because now most of our Posts receive at least \$8 to \$13 from their annual dues paying from the per capita when they only receive \$4.50 and \$5.50 from Life Members.

I know there are many in this room that remember back when the Life Member payout was \$1.25 and the per capita on the Department level in Texas was \$4.50. So nobody wanted to push for Life Members. If we don't keep up with the times, if we don't allow this to increase so that we can have this \$8.50 payout, more Posts and more Departments will be in trouble.

Also, I would like to remind the delegates that we stood on this floor several years ago and debated the fact that if we raised the Life Membership fees we would not sell any more Life Members, the number would go

down. I think that the Life Membership Department can tell you that that did not happen. In fact, we are back up to last year where we had 35,000 plus new Life Members signed up for this organization. I would encourage the delegates to look to the future of our organization and approve B-1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will move to Microphone No. 1 at this time.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 11058 - Department of Europe): I rise in opposition. I have been a sentry recruiter for ten years. I have noticed even after the last membership raise that it is very, very difficult to get a young soldier, and I recruit mostly military personnel over in Europe, to sign up for a Life Membership.

If we go to \$130 or \$135 more on a Life Membership, I can tell this Convention that I will not be able to recruit very many Life Members out of our young soldiers. They are having a hard enough time, especially those that are married and have children, to support their families now.

To raise this will kill our Life Membership, at least from the active duty element from the recruiting base that we have in most of the states that have Post installations, and especially overseas. I rise and say that we should defeat this by-laws change.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JIM DORAN (Post 4600 - Illinois): I, too, rise in opposition to B-1 for similar reasons as our comrade from the Department of Europe has expressed. We have a problem recruiting in the Great Lakes area with the young sailors, and the increase in Life Membership fees would cause some more difficulty there.

However, I am not here to speak to the numbers or to the technical data my predecessors have mentioned. I am here to speak at the direct orders of my Post who voted 100 percent in opposition to this amendment to our constitution and by-laws. VFW Post 4600 stands opposed. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado, Past Judge Advocate General. At this time, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, it is my understanding we don't have a motion on the floor, and I am speaking somewhat in opposition to this motion.

I just think from the perception standpoint, when we have somewhat of a declining membership and then we are going to increase our dues, I think it just gives us the perception that is going to make it more difficult to get members.

My Department specifically voted against this proposed by-law amendment. However, there has been a further amendment to that by changing the fees for the older potential members and that makes it more acceptable. I would like to offer a motion to adopt so we have this in proper debate, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The motion on the floor by the chairman was to adopt this. It was a set aside, so it is properly before the membership or the delegates of this Convention by that process. It can be

discussed. It is in proper form.

Microphone No. 1. I will start again there and come back.

COMRADE TED JACKSON (Post 5691 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, good morning. I am Ted Jackson, Post 5691, Collinsville, Illinois. I, too, rise in opposition to Amendment B-1. I think it is time to urge everyone to consider that any dues increase for the Life Members is absolutely not going to be helpful in any way, shape or form in trying to get our young people or current members who are already dues paying on a national basis. It is going to be very difficult.

I suggest that we look at other ways to raise revenue so these other guys paid more. Paid in twice is not the right way to go. I urge the members to disapprove it.

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

COMRADE BILL DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Bill Dobbie, State Commander of the Department of Michigan, Post 4659. I rise in opposition to the passing of B-1. We have had a comrade, and no one wants to argue about this, but we had a comrade that said these Posts need that money.

Every comrade in this room, I would say that any Post that over the next three years that may sign up 25 or so new Life Members will find themselves with an additional \$75 in that third year.

Now, any Post that is depending on getting that \$75 is in deep, deep trouble. The National Organization, I don't know if they need it, but they certainly want it. I understand you are returning two dollars and that is outstanding. The Departments, I can assure you, I probably speak for everyone in this room when I say, "Yeah, they want the additional three dollars."

But the Posts will derive no benefit whatsoever that I can see from this increase from \$5.50 to \$8.50. When all is said and done, I think that this resolution should be restudied and brought back to the next Convention, and maybe we could look at two-thirds of the increase, because that other third that the actuaries say that we need, I don't think the Post needs. I don't think there is a Post in here that would say they do need \$75 in the year 2004. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will move to Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON FRY (Post 379 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Ron Fry from the Department of Washington. I rise in opposition to this motion. We need to remember what we have discussed within our individual groups and what was discussed yesterday by the President, and others, of the problems with our membership, both in the military and within our organizations, not being able to have the money necessary to even live, let alone put money aside at this level for joining a fraternal organization.

This would make us have one of the highest paid Life Memberships in any of the veterans service organizations. Right now I have not heard any

reason or any numerical justification to show the need for this increase in funds on the national level. I think that we need to take this back.

If there is a valid need, put that need in numbers and put it out to the membership so that we can understand why we have got to charge our members more. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE HUGH SULLIVAN (Post 10658 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Hugh Sullivan, Post 10658, Department of Europe. I rise in opposition to this motion on account I am an active-duty soldier, as well in our local community which doesn't do it for the money, the active-duty soldiers.

It is hard for us with the financial strains, especially being over in Europe, for these guys to actually come up with the money on top of what they are paying now. I just see it firsthand. That's all.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN GOLLIHARE (Post 1504 - Nebraska): I vote against this. I wish we could vote this down. I think our membership nowadays, with the way the economy is, on the life member, any raise in any dues is going to hurt our organization real bad.

If you go out in a farming community like we come from in Nebraska, they are making about \$5 or \$6 an hour, with a family of five, and they are paying rent, utilities and they can't even afford to belong to the VFW, to write out the check. We still want to just raise things.

I thought we were supposed to be helping our veterans and not running them out of the VFW. There are some organizations, like the AmVets, that are just waiting until we screw up so they can get our members. I will fight for the VFW as long as I live and I would not like to see any kind of dues raise right now. I would like for you to vote against it and vote it down. I don't think we need it.

I remember in Louisville, Kentucky, when I got up on the floor and we wanted to make that big jump before, and I think we had \$125 million in savings from the Life Membership Program, and I think that day they said that day we were going to go broke in five to ten years.

I think since Louisville, we got up and voted this down, we have got about \$60 million more in the Life Membership Program. Is that true? What do we have in the Life Membership Program, about \$160 million?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I don't have those figures right here. I can find out for you.

COMRADE JOHN GOLLIHARE (Post 1504 - Nebraska): We have \$120 million, so we have gained \$40 million to \$50 million. I don't see where we need this dues increase. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. You are a great man.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1. Excuse me, Microphone No. 1. Before I ask him to

speak, the comrade to speak, can the folks in the back of the room that are seated, can you understand what is being said at the microphones? Yes or no? They say yes. Okay. It is hard for me to understand up here.

Please, Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KEN PIKE (Post 4876 - Oklahoma): Commander-in-Chief, I am Ken Pike, Post 4876, Oklahoma, Department Commander of Oklahoma. For the last five minutes or ten minutes now we have heard nothing but opposition. So at this time I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: What I will do, I will go to Microphones Nos. 2 and 3. Is there anyone at the microphones? Just in fairness, I will give those three people still standing an opportunity to speak.

COMRADE JIM HUGHES (Post 5789 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Hughes, Senior Vice Commander of the State of Missouri. I was up here to also call for the question, so I will second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: As I said, I will take those three before I accept that motion.

COMRADE LARRY MAHER (Post 7356 - Missouri): I can read the tea leaves and I probably would have asked to call for the question myself. I do want to make two points to the delegates at this Convention about this proposal.

First, you have to consider B-1 and M-1 in tandem and together. This proposal is not something that was dreamed up by the National Organization from whole cloth. It was a proposal that came out of the Adjutants and Quartermasters Conference held this year with the Senior Vice Commanders, this year's Senior Vice Commanders, in Reno, Nevada.

At that time there was considerable discussion of the need to assist our Departments and increase the revenues to our Departments so that we could improve their veterans service programs. So, as a result of those discussions, a Life Membership fee increase was proposed and the key thing about this Life Membership fee increase is that the \$8.50 payout that results from the fee increase, that additional \$3 will go to the National Organization, in fact, it doesn't go to the National Organization.

Now, \$1.00 goes into the Veterans Service Training Fund and a second dollar goes into the Veterans Service Grand Fund for the Departments. The purpose and intent of the Senior Vice Commanders and the Adjutant Quartermasters was, in fact, to provide funds from the Life Membership fee to provide service for veterans in the future.

That is what a Life Membership fee increase is about. It is about the future. We can say today that we can't increase the fee, and I think that is what we are going to say, but remember, folks, that \$5.50 you are getting today on that Life Member, that pays today's Life Member fee is the same \$5.50 you are going to get 20 years from now or 30 years from now on that member.

You have to ask yourself can your organization at the state level and can your organization at the national level support that member in the way

that member has the right to be supported on a \$5.50 fee? Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: As I said, I would listen to three more and I think that there has been sufficient debate at this time.

COMRADE BILL DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise for a point of order. I am Bill Dobbie, Commander of the Department of Michigan, Post 4659. I would suggest to the chair that we had a motion and a second to close discussion.

I do believe that the discussion should have been closed at that time and a vote taken to determine whether we do indeed close discussion. I think that it is improper to say, well, we have got a motion but we are going to take these two people or that one. So, if we may, I guess it is a moot point at this point. That is just for your consideration, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Thank you

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I accept the comments from the comrade, but also the chair has a right to ensure that the debate is not restricted just because we call for a motion. The chair has that option to do that. I said I would go to the three people who chose to speak, and I went from that point.

COMRADE BILL DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander, if I may respond. The call for the question is a valid motion and it was properly seconded, and it requires a two-thirds vote of the membership. That is how we close discussion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Under the rules of the Convention, it says the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which shall deter further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution opportunity for at least five minutes of final debate. So I again am trying to be fair with everything that I can up here, and we will try to move forward.

At this time we have By-Law B-1 before us. All those in favor of B-1, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". B-1 is rejected.

The next set aside is B-15, I think. Is that correct?

Please address it, Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dean White, Post 27, Department of Europe. I rise in opposition to B-15. A Men's Auxiliary is a stop-gap measure to change what needs to be changed, and that is we need to change our Auxiliary to an Auxiliary. We do not need to discriminate by sex.

Spouses, sons, cousins of our female members should have full participatory rights in our Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We should have one Auxiliary, one VFW. Let's reject B-15.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments. Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAVE ADAMS (Post 1782 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Dave Adams, National Council Member from District I was at your opening session yesterday, Comrade Commander-in-

Chief, but I left early to go watch our drill teams.

For 102 years, comrades, we have discriminated against the brothers, the sons, the grandsons of this organization. They have every right to continue to participate in the Veterans of Foreign Wars' programs after they turn the age of 18.

I stand in favor of this motion and those that vote against it I hope you go home and tell your son, your grandson and brother that they are not equal to their daughters or the female counterparts of this organization. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you.

We will move to Microphone No. 2.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES GOLDSMITH (Post 4139 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, James N. Goldsmith, from Post 4139, Department of Michigan, I rise in favor of B-15. You know, I told the conferences the other day as I went around to visit them what a thrill it was for me to have my family at the Big Ten Conference when they endorsed me.

My two sons, my brother and two grandsons were sitting there. One little guy was raising heck when they introduced me, because he is probably going to listen to me forever. I said to you in the conferences we ought to have more young people in our audiences.

I look at this by-law change and it does not tell you that you have to have a Men's Auxiliary. We have a Ladies Auxiliary. Does every Post have a Ladies Auxiliary? Of course, they do not. We have a great organization or Auxiliary when we talk about the great organization of the Military Order of the Cootie. Does every Post have one? Of course not.

This does not tell you that you have to have a Men's Auxiliary. I drive by Posts that will hold 400 people on a Tuesday night and nobody is in there. We ought to fill those Posts up with our brothers, our fathers, our stepsons, our grandsons. They will promote us when they are 16, 17 or 18 years old. A good example of that is the Voice of Democracy winner where she stood before you and told you what a good organization that we are.

They are our advocates. They will do the things that need to be done. I go across the country and I hear people say we can't sell poppies, we don't have the people. There is an avenue for you to have the people to help you there. We can't maintain our Posts, we can't paint it because we are getting a little too old. There is the avenue. I urge you to pass the Men's Auxiliary. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I need to return back to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE TOM KEYES (Post 6471 - Vermont): Good morning, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I am Tom Keyes, Senior Vice Commander of the Department of Vermont. This is the third year I have spoken on this motion. As you know, the Ladies Auxiliary have a motion that has been going on for years.

They have tried to put the male side into their organization and it has been voted down. For the good of this organization, we need to put the men

in here. We can make an Auxiliary for the men, and as the Senior Vice just said, it is not mandatory for all Posts or all Departments.

There are those out there that are disabled, they never joined the service. I have a son that is disabled and he spends more time at the Post trying to help out than a lot of the members do. I have got a daughter and two sons, and this is the third time, if we vote this down, that I will have to go tell my sons that they are not eligible to join and do anything in the VFW.

I urge that we pass this, because I understand that prior to last year there were a couple of lawsuits and that is why national brought it to the floor last year. Comrades, vote in favor of this motion. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RON FRY (Post 379 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in favor of this motion. While I was in Vietnam, I was sprayed frequently with Agent Orange. My son was conceived and he suffers from it as well. As a result, I have a son that cannot join the military although he would like to.

But yet all of the ladies that I have on the ladies side of the house can join the Ladies Auxiliary and they have no exposure to any of these things. So in addition to all of the other reasons that have been talked about this morning, I would like for us to consider those kinds of situations as well.

I urge us to adopt a Men's Auxiliary. It is not going to negatively affect the Ladies Auxiliary, I don't believe, and I support the Ladies Auxiliary completely. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TERRY MCKINNEY (Post 886 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Terry McKinney from Post 886, Illinois. I rise in favor of B-15. I can't understand why anyone would go against this. We had one comrade who speaks that we should change our Ladies Auxiliary and allow men in there.

The Ladies Auxiliary is a fine organization, which is a true asset to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Why would we want to break something that is working good? Leave the Ladies Auxiliary as it stands. We have many women. I have a comrade in my Post, she was a nurse in Vietnam. Her husband has a back deformity and cannot get in the military. So we have to tell him he can't come and be a part of us unless he brings his wife.

My son was born with a birth defect and he can't sweat. He tried to get in the military. They wouldn't let him. He served as the State Commander of the Sons of the VFW of Illinois in 1989-90. He turned 19 and we told him don't come back without your father or your mother or sister.

Why would we do such a thing when he would be out there helping us sell poppies? He would be out there helping us to maintain our Voice of Democracy program. He would be a true asset to the VFW. I rise to say to vote for this Men's Auxiliary. It is at the Post level.

If there are any problems, the problem would be the Post's fault because you allowed it. The Posts that have problems with their Ladies

Auxiliary have those problems because you allow them. Those can be changed. Our by-laws provide to correct those problems. Vote in favor of this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments.
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PATRICK LOVE (Post 8203 - Florida): Commander-in-Chief, I am Patrick Love, Senior Vice Commander of the Department of Florida, Post 8203. I stand to ask everyone's approval of B-15. We sit here many times and we talk about how great we are as a family organization, but we discriminate against our own sons.

I have four boys and two girls. My girls are actively involved. My boys cannot be. We need to sit back, think hard and say are we a family organization? We need to get out here and say let's do it.

The second point is, and it is a key point, this is an option. You are not required to have this Men's Auxiliary. You are not required to have it whatsoever. If your Post and your Department don't want it, fine. Let us who have our children and actively support it to get out there to the young members in the military and say let's go, come bring your families, we want you. So I stand, plead, to approve B-15.

Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments.
I move now to Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE LEON JOHNSON (Post 6772 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Leon Johnson, Post 6772, Department of Ohio. I, too, stand in favor of the motion. It is time that the ones that are not in favor of this maybe back off a little bit.

Don't hold it against the Posts that do want it, because you are not required to have this Men's Auxiliary in your Post if you don't want it. Don't punish the ones that do want it and are in favor of it. I would like to go home and tell my son that he is eligible to be a member of our organization just like my daughters. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. I move to Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JIM DORAN (Post 4600 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Doran, Post 4600, Department of Illinois. I stand in opposition to this proposal. We, in the VFW, do not segregate by sex. We have male and female veterans in our Posts.

Why do we have to have sexually segregated auxiliaries? I agree with our comrades that our sons, our grandsons should be allowed membership. I also heard a previous speaker state that the Ladies Auxiliary can't seem to pass an authorization on the floor to allow men into the Auxiliary.

Therefore, I quote Section 1101 of our By-Laws, Paragraph 2. "The Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be governed by such by-laws, rules, regulations and ritual as may be adopted by it and by the lawful orders issued by the national officers of the Ladies Auxiliary, provided such by-laws, rules and regulations, ritual and

orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration.”

Commander-in-Chief, we need to order the Auxiliary to accept male members. I stand opposed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments.

I will move to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PHIL PHILLIPS (Post 322 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Phil Phillips, Department of Colorado, Post 322. I stand for this resolution and remind this body of one thing. From 1945 until 1978, we couldn't bring women into this organization.

In Dallas, in 1978, we finally passed it, that the women that were in combat could join this organization. Since that time in 1978, we still are not getting women into this organization because we will not let their husbands in. We are segregating our own spouses, our women's spouses out of the organization, because we won't let them in.

This is an opportunity. I invite Illinois not to have any Men's Auxiliary if they don't want them, and the rest of us that want them, I ask for a "yes" vote on this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I move to Microphone No. 3. How many folks do I have at Microphone No. 1?

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK, JR.: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John Senk, Jr., a delegate from Post 335, Cranford, New Jersey. The previous speaker made the point that I was about to make. I sat on the floor of this Convention in 1978 and watched what was one of the greatest debates I have ever heard in this organization.

That was the debate to make the female veterans eligible for this organization. Prior to that, it was a travesty on my part that we did not do that. Since we have done that, we have had female veterans, our comrades through our chairs make All-American Department Commander and they are excellent members of this organization.

We are working hard in this organization to recruit the active duty and reserve military today because that is the future of our organization. I get letter after letter across my desk from female veterans who served in Desert Storm, Bosnia and Kosovo, and said yes, we would like to join our organization but I have a husband and I want to make it a family thing. Where can my husband belong?

Comrades, I urge you to allow those Posts that want to have a Men's Auxiliary, give them that opportunity. Don't deny them that right. I urge you to pass this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments.

At Microphone No. 1, is there anyone that is in opposition to the acceptance of this?

COMRADE ARTHUR HARRISON (Post 7660 - Illinois): I rise to speak in opposition to this motion. At this time we do not need another

organization within an organization. I wholeheartedly agree that all the male members of the veterans' families should be eligible to participate in our activities and support us.

However, we already have the Sons of the American Legion. All we have to do is to eliminate the age restriction and we have accomplished what the comrades want. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. I think the comrade meant to say we have the sons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Is there anybody else in opposition? If not, I am going to call for the vote. We are at B-15. The motion is to accept the Men's Auxiliary.

On B-15, all those in favor of B-15, which means we accept the formation of the Men's Auxiliary, please vote by saying "aye"; all those not in favor of B-15 vote by saying "nay". The "ayes" have it. All right. We have taken care of the set asides. Now we will move to the rejects.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY: Those proposed amendments to the by-laws which the Committee recommends rejection are as follows: B-6, B-7, B-8 rejected in favor of B-1; B-10, B-11, B-12, B-13; B-14 rejected in favor of B-15.

Excuse me. B-5 was rejected. Comrade Commander, the question is to reject. So there will have to be a motion from the floor to accept.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 11058 - Department of Europe): I make a motion that we accept B-6. COMRADE AL MITCHELL (Post 5725 - Minnesota): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: All right. I have got a motion and a second. We are now prepared for debate.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 11058 - Department of Europe): Commander-in-Chief, I rise in support of this amendment. If you look at the Congressional Charter for this organization, it does not require U.S. citizenship. We have many, many great comrades that served in our military that are not U.S. citizens, many of whom gave their last breath for this country and for this organization, for that matter, that can't be members. We have many that did survive that should be members.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I had the honor of riding in an automobile with Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera up to Fishkill, New York. He related a story to me where he went to some Indian Reservations up in Canada and met some Indians up there that had served in our U.S. forces. He was told that they were not eligible to join the VFW. They wanted to join but could not do so. I think that is a travesty. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, several years ago a lawsuit was brought to the VFW in specific against the Voice of Democracy program because we had students that wanted to speak and wanted to be a part of the Voice of Democracy program and they were told that they could not. All of a sudden that got changed and we all know why it got changed. I say that we are ready for another change.

One more point. I was ordered by a Department Commander when I

was a Post Commander to go to a retired Sergeant Major's house and get his Life Membership card. He just happened to be a Dutch citizen. He had served in Vietnam for six years, had five Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars, a couple of Bronze Stars with V, and I had to go to his house and order him to give me his Life Membership card.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to this Convention, I tell you, that was a heart-breaking experience and I never want to face that again. I would like to sign up our comrades who served with us and sacrificed their lives for this organization. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. I will go to Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE AL MITCHELL (Post 5725 - Minnesota): I stand here as a living example of that discrimination that was bestowed upon a non-citizen. I am a naturalized citizen now. But in 1965 when I came to this country from Canada, and I am going to speak in behalf of the 35,000 members in Canada that served in the armed forces of the United States that are sitting along the borders of Canada and the British of Columbia and Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and upstate New York that want to join our VFW organization.

I came to this country in 1965 and I found out that I could join the armed forces. I want to read you something I had to do when I joined the armed forces. "I, Al Mitchell, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith allegiance to the same. That I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me according to the regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

I went to Vietnam two years after joining the service. I wasn't in this country six months when I joined. I went over to Vietnam in '67 to '68, and I didn't see combat like some other people did. I was in the Air Force. I watched it from the sky. I was still there.

I was awarded the Cross of Gallantry, the National Defense Ribbon, the Air Medal, and I came back proud that I served this country. I chose to become a United States citizen. That was my prerogative. I didn't do it and have to wait seven years.

The country gave it to me in four because I served in a combat zone. A lot of naturalized people or people coming from other countries, they are proud of their heritage. I am still proud to be a Canadian and say I was born in Canada, but I am more proud of the fact I am an American citizen and I belong to this fine organization and that they are fair and just.

I follow along with everybody else here, and I don't feel we should discriminate against people that served in this military in Vietnam from Canada or anywhere else. In Canada, the Vietnam veteran was not recognized in Canada because Canada did not recognize the Vietnam conflict.

So they couldn't go home and receive the benefits. When they went back there for their disabilities and this thing that happened, there are some

on that Wall in Washington, and I know there are Canadians on that. Somebody asked me about the USS Arizona.

I believe there were foreign people on this one, too. We made them carte blanche members of the VFW. I say we need to look at this. I am not talking about covert operations or CIA operations, I am talking about somebody who took the oath and wanted to serve honorably in the uniform of this military. Nobody else can wear that uniform and take that oath unless they swear to it.

In closing, Comrade Commander, I want to read something here from our By-Laws and Ritual. Article I-Membership. Eligibility. "Anyone who served honorably as an officer or enlisted person, whenever on active duty, discharged under honorable conditions, released to inactive duty or retired shall be eligible for membership.

"2. Hostilities. Persons of the armed forces of the United States shall become eligible for membership immediately upon arrival on hostile soil, in hostile waters, or in air space above the performance of service quality of such person for membership shall qualify."

Comrades, I speak in favor of accepting that resolution.

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

COMRADE RAY BRENNAN (Post 10131 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I speak in opposition to this amendment. In prefacing my remarks, I want to let you know that I have the deepest respect and admiration for those foreign nationals who chose to serve in the military forces of the United States.

However, I am proud to be an American citizen. I, too, served in our military in the United States Navy in World War II. My problem is we are the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

My third point would be this. Every year in February we go to Washington to urge our Representatives and Senators to pass the legislation so necessary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and keeping in mind that our primary purpose is to take care of our veterans, and the legislation that takes care of that comes from our Congress. We go to our Congress, we give them numbers. As you know, they understand numbers. So we go before them with the legislation for our veterans and other activities of this organization, and we are diluting it with non-American citizens.

The non-citizens cannot vote for our Congressmen. He is well aware of that. I submit this, and I admire the comrade from Canada, he chose to become an American citizen. Other foreigners who served in the military of the United States has that same option.

I, therefore, feel we should maintain this as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and keep it for the citizens of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to the approval of this proposal.

As an educator, citizenship should mean a lot to us. I appreciate those who chose to fight with us who are not citizens of the United States. They did it because they believed there was a cause and they wanted to be a part of it.

We have very short memories. Just a few years ago the citizenship rose at this Convention in reference to those that served in Germany and their wives could not be members of the Ladies Auxiliary because they were not citizens. We, the men, at one of the Conventions washed our hands of it because we believed that citizenship meant something to us.

We said to the ladies that you do what you think is best for your organization. Now, here we are at this Convention saying that citizenship really isn't important to belong to this organization. If we do this, as one comrade said, then do the ladies turn around and rescind what they have done because we are doing today something that shouldn't really be done? I believe citizenship is important to this organization. Somebody says that in the original charter it didn't say it. But I don't believe that those who have written the original charter ever thought for one minute that citizenship wasn't important to our organization.

They didn't look at the fact later on something like this would prevail. So I urge this group to maintain that citizenship is a top priority in belonging to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you so much.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RICHARD CRUZ (Post 295 - Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am in support of this resolution. I have some personal experience with this. When I was drafted in 1960, along with a friend of mine from high school, we both were drafted. We both went to Vietnam and we were both lucky to come up unscathed.

After being back a little while, he comes up to me one day and asked me to sponsor him as a citizen of the United States. All my life I had never known this guy not to be a citizen. When he was drafted, he never questioned it, he went when called.

I don't think it is a requirement to go and die for your country that you love and support, and then come back and be required to become a citizen to join the VFW. They are doing it for the love of this country.

Another experience, in World War II, my uncle was getting ready to ship overseas, and they had a furlough of a few days before they went. He and a few friends went to Canada just for a couple of days to visit and come back. The very first question you are asked when you come back from Canada or any other border into this country, "Are you a citizen of the United States?"

The other guys said they were a citizen. He could come in. If a U.S. citizen, they could come in. My uncle said, "No, I am not a citizen." He had lived here all his life and he is a non-citizen. Here he is not allowed to be back in the United States, getting ready to ship overseas.

The people didn't realize you could be drafted today and then not be a

citizen. I said, "How can they draft you and not be a citizen?" All that is required is a D-214, and the love of this country to belong to the VFW. There are no greater people than the people that have already proven themselves.

You are not going out on the street to ask everybody and anybody to come and join. These are people that are battlefield tested. You couldn't ask for a better group of people. Commander-in-Chief, I strongly endorse and support this thing. I think we are doing an injustice to somebody that loves this country as much as you and I. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am in favor of allowing these members into our organization. The title of our organization is not citizens Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, wars that our nation declared or asked for our service.

They didn't ask what citizenship you had when they sent you off into combat. They just said go and serve as these comrades went and served honorably and came back decorated. Now they should have the right to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Secondly, our founding fathers didn't require citizenship. Citizenship was put in after World War II. McCarthyism, scare, we were afraid we were going to be overrun by Communism. No, the United States won the war because of our veterans and those veterans are still there and they deserve to be members of this organization. Please support this proposal.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ARTHUR SHULL (Post 2843 - North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Past State Commander of the Department of North Carolina and an active recruiter. I recruit for Fort Bragg regularly and it is a shame for me to sit there and recruit two young men and one says I cannot sign this because I am not not a citizen of the United States.

But both are in uniform. He is just as sharp as the young man sitting in back of him. They both came back from Bosnia, Kosovo and places like that. I stand in favor of this motion. I urge you to pass it.

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

COMRADE PETE SZABO (Post 3928 - California): I rise in support to change the by-law. Here are a couple of reasons. First, when we had our first veterans organization in this country it was called the Society of Cincinnati. It was the first one.

In that organization, George Washington belonged to it. Von Stuben belonged to it and Lafayette belonged to it. Here were people that came in and really helped not only to train our troops but got the French support. The descendants of those, which is the by-laws of that organization, are still members of that society today.

This is a very emotional issue for me. Why? I went to a college back in New York, Columbia University, that threw out the NROTC when I was in

college. To have that happen, to have something that had existed all the way back since World War II and have it thrown off because people did not like the Vietnam War, to me was a travesty.

What happened was when we got back, these people decided to join the veterans, and I agree with the other comrade from the other microphone, this organization is the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. These comrades were veterans. They wore the uniform. They took the oath.

As was said by our nation's Commander-in-Chief yesterday, when you really get down to it, the government was very nice to make sure that officially they took things from us. These people came, helped us, fought side-by-side by us, and at the end of the day what happens? We tell them they are not worthy enough.

In our original incorporation, Articles of Incorporation, citizenship was not a requirement. The guts to stand side by-side-by our comrades were. Thank you very much, comrades. I urge the delegates at this assembly to approve this particular change in the by-laws. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments. I will go to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RICHARD KENNEDY (Post 9534 - Department of Europe): I rise to speak for this adoption. Number one, any male citizen or any male living in the United States, excuse me, forget the citizen, living in the United States that turns 18 years of age must by law register with the draft. He is called, he goes, he fights, he is discharged honorably; he served this country. I just signed up a young man that was taken out of El Salvador, his home country with his family. He was a young man at that time, came back here and spent four years in an American high school, registered for the draft and went to Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

He has also served in Bosnia. He is put out of the United States military after eight years. Normally, you can't re-enlist the first time if you are not an American citizen. They told him he had to go. It took him over two years to get his citizenship.

He had been trying to join the VFW. He said that I earned it. Nobody is going to give it to me. I earned it. Bill Clinton didn't, so I say our foreign born non-citizens deserve to be in this organization just as much as you and I. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I will go to Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BILL HAWK (Post 9381 - Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, for many years I used to be a visitor up to Canada, the province of Ontario. I like to go up there and go fishing a lot. I have made many friends. One friend of mine was an Ontario Provincial Policeman.

I visited with him also and he visited with me a lot in Ohio. One time in a visit up there, he took me to a policeman's ball. I met many of his buddies. One of the police officers was a Vietnam veteran. We sat and we talked for a couple of hours and, you know, you always heard about the draft dodgers that went to Canada but you never heard about the thousands that came down here and fought with us in Vietnam.

So I asked him why would a young Canadian kid just out of high school come to America, join the United States Army and volunteer for Vietnam. He said, "It was the right thing to do." I was impressed with that. He took the same oath that we all took. He wore the same uniform that we all wore.

He fought the same enemy. He was wounded in Vietnam and when he came back from his tour he was just like most of us. All he wanted to do was to go home. He went home, he became an Ontario Provincial Policeman, and a couple of years after I met him I asked my friend how he was getting along, this particular policeman.

He told me that he had been kicked off the Ontario police force. He had used his weapon in the line of duty. There was an investigation. They found that he didn't do anything wrong, he acted proper, just like any other policeman, but it was brought out in that investigation that he was a Vietnam veteran.

The authorities in Ontario thought that any Vietnam veteran must have homicidal tendencies or be aggressive with a weapon and said he wasn't fit to be a police officer. He was fit to be our comrade in Vietnam, he was wounded in Vietnam. I feel he is fit to be our comrade today.

I ask that you support this amendment, not because we need the membership, but because it is the right thing to do. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. I am approaching a critical time here, because we have some folks that have to come so they can make some plane arrangements to meet up with their flights. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to take their names as they are standing in order and I will limit debate at this time and we will return to it as soon as we finish with some of the things we have to do. Please do so. Again, thanks to the audience for being so courteous.

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL JOHN H. TILELLI, JR. (RET.) PRESIDENT OF THE USO

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The United States Organization, USO, has been a part of American military life since 1941. From home front to battlefield and many places in between, it has brought entertainment and a host of other services to the men and women who guard America's freedom.

We are indeed fortunate to have with us today the President and Chief Executive Officer of the USO, Retired Army General John H. Tilelli.

A combat veteran like all of us here, General Tilelli retired from the service after a career that spanned 37 years. He received his commission upon graduation from the Pennsylvania Military Academy. He then went on to the armor school and the airborne school.

He served two tours in Vietnam and several tours in Germany. He has also served in staff assignments in the Pentagon. As the Commander of the First Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, he deployed with that unit in 1990-1991, as part of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

After his promotion to General on July 19, 1994, he served as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. Prior to his retirement, General Tilelli served as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Nations Command, Republic of Korea/United States Combined Forces Command and United States Forces Korea.

The success of the USO, just as that of the VFW, relies on the dedication of a large number of volunteers. In the USO, 12,000 volunteers donate 450,000 hours of their time to serve five million servicemen and women annually.

Please welcome the man who commands this huge force of volunteers in bringing a “touch of home” to troops around the world, General John H. Tilelli. (Applause)

REMARKS BY GENERAL JOHN H. TILELLI

GENERAL TILELLI: Thank you all. Thank you very much. Commander-in-Chief, Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor and a privilege for me to be here and I am humbled to stand before you today representing the USO and representing our partnership with the VFW. You, as members of this revered organization should be very proud of your accomplishments, not only as citizens, not only as servicemen and women but also for what you do today to keep America strong and keep America free. You have kept America free by selflessly serving our great nation. The veterans are American icons and they serve as a role model for today's service members and their families.

As I look out here, and I met some of you that served with me and who I have been honored to serve with, I not only think of you, but I think of the people who are not here on your left and right, the people who passed before us who guaranteed freedom for America, and the people who are serving today in uniform who will continue to guarantee freedom for America, the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen who every day do their duty to this great nation.

As President of the USO, I am proud to tell you just as during World War II, the Korean War, which is its 51st anniversary this year, in Vietnam, during Desert Storm, Somalia, today with our peace keepers in the Balkans, we, as you do, remain a crucial part of the ongoing effort to improve the life of the men and women in uniform.

You are part of that with us, and I am proud to say that. One of the primary reasons that we are capable and continue to do what we do is because of the VFW and the USO partnership orchestrated by Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak and Ron Browning. One of the foremost highlights of my tenure as President has been the VFW signing on as a USO world partner. I not only thank the leadership for that, I thank every member of this esteemed organization for thinking that caring for soldiers and families, airmen and families, Marines and families, sailors and families, Coast Guardsmen and

families is important enough to join with the USO to do that.

You are the only veterans organization to do that with the USO. We are so proud of that and what you stand for. You stepped up to the plate, and you didn't step up to the plate for the USO, you stepped up to the plate for our troops. Because when I think of the USO, I hope you think of the same thing.

It is not the United Service Organization banner that you see. What you should see is some service member in a place that most Americans don't want to go, who are serving with character and courage every day, and whether it is in peace or war, they are in harm's way.

These American young men and women serving around the world are underpaid. No matter what we give them, they are underpaid. They are under-housed and they are living in places like Korea and in the Balkans that none of us would want to live in. They are under-served around the world and by most Americans, except for people like you who understand what selfless service to the nation is and are unappreciated. I thank you for that.

You underscore the commitment of all VFW members, the 9,500 VFW Posts that are partners with us to help care for those serving in America's military today and who in turn because of what you do and because of the highlight of the things that you do with us will become your legacy; the future members of the VFW, the members that you are talking about recruiting as I listened to the debate this morning.

We are proud of our alliance with you and we will ensure that everyone knows as we go around the world, as we talk to the active duty Commanders-in-Chief, that the VFW is part of everything that the USO does for the men and women who serve in uniform. (Applause)

When you think about the USO Exchange, we still do celebrity entertainment. It is certainly done overseas. We banner your support when we do it. Certainly, when your Commander-in-Chief visited Korea while I was still the Commander-in-Chief there, we acknowledged our partnership and we continue to do that today.

Your logo is so prominently displayed in everything that we do that you would think that we were one and the same organization. So, on behalf of the men and women who serve in uniform, I thank you for your dedicated support. The USO is always proud to be a part of you.

We are also proud to be the only civilian charity chartered by Congress to provide for services to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen and their families. I will tell you as I talk about these men and women, as Wes Clark did last night, each and every day there are men and women who wake up, go to the chow hall and believe that evening they will go back to their domicile, their billets, their barracks, ships, foxholes or whatever, and it is only a rude awakening like the USS Cole, V-22's that have training accidents, bombings that are accidents or actual crisis when Americans realize the selfless sacrifice of these young men and women that serve our great nation.

We try to do our part in 117 locations, five mobile canteens that deploy

all over the world in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, Taza Hungary, DMZ in Korea. We try to provide that touch of home. We deliver America with the VFW to these troops, the USO centers in the Persian Gulf and at DUBY, which are fleet centers.

On Okinawa, which we have read about and understand how our Marines are somewhat restricted in what they can do because of the friction with the Okinawan people. In places like Iceland, where our Air Force is, the primary service there. In Taza, Hungary, where every soldier, sailor, airmen and Marine, who deploys to the Balkans goes through, we are there.

We are there with you, we are there providing a myriad of ways to take care of these men and women, and we are not taking care of colonels and we are not taking care of lieutenant colonels, we are taking care of the 18 to 24-year-old who needs our help the most We do it because of you.

And we have changed. We have family writing centers, we have fleet centers, we have cyber cafes just like the one you have out here. We have readiness through which people deploy. We have telephone banks. We provide most of our services free. We are not competing with anybody.

We want to give these kids, these young men and women, these soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, the most we can. An example, following the bombing of the USS Cole, the first people on the scene in Germany, when these sailors were brought back to the hospital to provide them with the things they need, to include family connections, was the USO.

I can tell you that I still get letters that are so heart-warming. It is unbearable to me, and just as you do, as you think about service to these service members, it is an affair of the heart. We don't do it because of any other reason.

Of course, we have the USO centers throughout the United States. Generally, they are in airports. Just last Friday in Fort Hood, Texas, my home, where the VFW inducted me. We opened a new center at Fort Hood, Texas. We will open another center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in the very near future.

These centers will permit us to provide services to 90,000 soldiers and their families. At the same time, the finest traditions of all those things that you and I recognize, the USO celebrity entertainment, we provide professional and a personal message on behalf of you and all Americans overseas.

This year we provided more than 250 USO overseas entertainment tours to audiences from many places and many thousands, to remote locations generally. They were places that none of us want to be at this particular point in our life. No country in the world reaches out to its service members, its armed forces as the USO does and as we do through the USO and our partnership.

Now, we ask ourselves why do we do this? We do these things on behalf of all of those men and women who are currently serving. We do it on behalf of all of you who want your soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen taken care of, and we do it because they ask for so little and do so much and are more than willing to put themselves in harm's way

and in jeopardy for every American when this country asks. That is just like you did.

So, I will say to you that the future of America, just as it depended on you, just as service members guaranteed the freedoms that we enjoy today, just as America has the prosperity that it has today because of the service of veterans like you, the future will again depend on its service members.

None of us has a crystal ball that can say the time or place when we will be threatened. I think that if history is any indication, we will be threatened again as a nation and we will call again on the men and women who serve our country to defend it.

As you hear about defense budgets and as you hear about high technology and as you hear about all of these great weapons systems we are going to buy, the best and the brightest of America, America's sons and daughters are the silver bullets that America has in fighting oppression and defending itself around the world.

Without that soldier, sailor, airman, Marine, Coast Guardsman, you can have all the technology in the world and you can spend all the money you want on precision-guided ammunition, and I guarantee you they will go nowhere. So our guarantee to our troops is to provide them the best quality of life that we can within the limited resources we have.

These 1.37 million serving in today's military are different than when we joined. Fifty-five percent of them are married and support two million family members. You work on that an awful lot in the things you do, and I appreciate that. 530,000 of those on active duty are in the 18 to 24-year age group.

Like you when you joined, and like me when I joined, they were just kids getting started on life's adventure. In some cases on life's defining moments. I will say to you as I look at this august body that most of you recollect moments while you served that were defining in where you went in your life's history.

These young men and women see us, the USO, the VFW as safe havens where they can get help, a sympathetic ear and care. That is why I am so proud to be associated with you.

In closing, let me just say that in my mind's eye, and I look out here and every age group is represented here this morning, every war is probably represented here this morning, every conflict, every peacekeeping operation that qualifies.

I consider you the veterans of America, America's greatest generation, and you should claim that. It is not just bestowed on one group. You are our nation's precious resource. It is veterans like you without hesitation who have gone in harm's way, who have been wounded, who have served in combat, who have served in crisis, who have served when no one else will serve, who went when they were told and where they were told, who were spat upon when they came back, who gained and sustained the freedom that we enjoy today and who epitomize the ideals of freedom and patriotism that we all enjoy.

Each member of this great VFW has stayed the course and passed the

mantle of responsibility to your legacy to these young men and women who serve today. Those who will serve tomorrow need you. They need what you do. They need your voice.

I would leave you with one challenge because I would say that as you think about all of those things that you talk about and all of the debates that you discuss, that your job is not over. I challenge you just as I challenge myself each day. Can we ever do enough for our veterans? Can we ever do enough for the men and women who serve? My answer is always no.

I challenge you to continue to speak for those men and women who serve. Be the voices for those who must remain silent because they serve today. Be the voices of those who will not speak because they are timid. Be the voices of those men and women who serve today and will be part of you tomorrow.

Speak up for this great country. Speak up for a trained and ready armed force that Wes Clark talked about last night. The money for readiness, speak up for that today. That is the best quality of life that we can give America's sons and daughters, that they are trained and ready.

Speak up for the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and Coast Guardsmen and their families and the quality of life when they are unappreciated and misunderstood by most Americans. They deserve all and more that we can give. The men and women who serve today hold the future of this great nation in their hands just as you did.

You did such a magnificent job we have to arm them with everything they need to continue your tradition as veterans. With your continued support, I give you my personal pledge that I and the USO will continue to deliver everything we can do for these young men and women, America's sons and daughters who serve our country today.

On their behalf, on behalf of the men and women in uniform today, to the veterans here I say thank you. Thank you for your service to the nation and your continued service to the nation, and what you do today and what you will do in the future. God bless you all and God bless your families, and God bless our men and women in uniform. Thank you all. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CHECK FOR \$2.5 MILLION TO AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Three years ago, the VFW launched a massive campaign to fulfill a \$7.5 million pledge to the World War II Memorial. The VFW has remained committed to this effort and is proud of its role in working to accomplish the completion of this important tribute to those who served during World War II.

Last year, the VFW presented a check for \$2.5 million to the American Battle Monuments Commission as the first installment of our pledge. This year, in keeping with our vow to help build the World War II Memorial, I am proud to present another check for \$2.5 million as the second installment of our pledge.

Here to accept our second pledge check is the Executive Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Kenneth S. Pond.

REMARKS BY MR. KEN POND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

MR. KEN POND: Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, they have a term in Italy that says "non shamali", and that means not so bad. It is a great honor to be here again today with the VFW. The work that you do in this country, and especially the efforts on behalf of the veterans, deserve the thanks of all American citizens.

It is always an uplifting experience for me to attend this Convention, to share the spirit of one of America's greatest organizations and to share with you the continuing saga of the World War II Memorial. On many occasions in the past, I have said that this memorial has had so many problems that it was quite like hedgerow fighting in World War II in France. Once you get through one problem you fight through another problem.

There comes a time when you are not certain if you have offended everybody in Washington and you have no friends. I was talking to General Kelly, the former commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, about a year ago, and I told him that I thought back to the days of President Truman who said that if you want a friend in Washington buy a dog.

He said to me, "That's not the full story." I said, "Well, what is the full story?" He said, "A Senator is sitting in the hotel in Washington and he has got a huge dog sitting next to him, and a man comes in and says, 'Does your dog bite?'"

The Senator said, "No, he doesn't."

"Well, he reaches down to pet the dog and the dog bites the heck out of him. He said, "Senator, I thought you said the dog doesn't bite." The Senator said, "That's not my dog."

So, the VFW has helped us sort out our friends and our allies and we are very appreciative. I have a message for you this morning. It is a message that we have waited nine long years to hear. Gentlemen, work has begun. (Applause) As I speak to you today, for the very first time the trucks are being loaded; the equipment is being assembled.

It is being brought together so that it will all be placed on the rainbow pool site in the National Mall on the 27th, and that is when we are really going to get down to business. In past years we have come to this Convention and we have told you that it is not a matter of if the memorial will be built, it is when.

Well, gentlemen, no more "ifs", no more "whens", no more "maybes". We are on our way. We are projecting 30 months or less in the construction process and we are targeting the spring of 2004 for the dedication. I know you have closely followed the events in the past spring when we were mired in legal and administrative issues that threatened to delay construction indefinitely.

When we needed help to untangle things, the VFW was there again. The Commander-in-Chief's personal letter to Congress, the call to action that went out to your membership. Bob Wallace and his entire staff in Washington provided timely and important confirmation that the veterans of this country wanted the debate to end and the construction to begin.

Congress shared your frustration and passed legislation directing the memorial be built expeditiously. 432 out of 435 Congressmen voted. There was unanimous consent in the Senate and the President signed into legislation on Memorial Day, with a number of your representatives there, the law that says bureaucrats get out of the way. We are going to build this monument.

The voice of the VFW was critical to carry out that legislation, to the overwhelming passage of the House and Senate. We thank you again for being there when we needed you as you have been so many times.

I want to interrupt my talk and parenthetically say that a lot of you throughout America come to these Conventions, and you may think in your mind's eye do we have good leadership? Do we have strong support? Well, I am here to tell you I have watched your leaders, I have watched your Commander-in-Chief.

I have watched the things that happen in Kansas City and I have watched the things that happen in your Washington office, and I want you to know that when you make up your mind you want something done, you could not have a better work force to carry it out.

They do a brilliant and a powerful job and they are one of the most powerful voices in Washington, D.C. Over the past four years, the VFW clearly won the gratitude of America's World War II generation. When we came looking for financial support, the organization responded in a big way, quickly setting a fund-raising standard that would lead all veterans service organizations.

Commander-in-Chief, thank you for the check today which is another major step toward the goal that you have established. When the sun sets on this campaign, the VFW will add to its patriotic legacy by topping the list of all veterans organizations in America. (Applause)

But your accomplishment is even more noteworthy than that. We received donations from 450 veterans groups, hundreds of corporations and foundations, dozens of professional and fraternal organizations, 48 states, thousands of school kids and a half million individual Americans. Among all who gave, only Wal-Mart stands above the VFW on the distinguished list of donors.

I must also add a special thanks to Ron Browning for his work in this area. I won't spend a lot of time today on the fund-raising, but suffice it to say, we have \$175 million in the bank. We are prepared to build and we are prepared to pay the checks, and it is thanks to you.

It took a nationwide effort to raise these funds and it has been an extraordinary experience for me to watch the outpouring of support. It has been especially gratifying to see so many citizens anxious to have this long overdue tribute constructed.

When we finally dedicate the memorial, it will mark the end of a road to victory. All who have put their emotions, their time, their financial assets into this historic project eagerly await that day. It will be a final victory for a remarkable generation who did nothing less than save the world.

At this point I would like to have all of the World War II veterans to please stand. (Applause) As you are standing, I just want to say keep standing. I want your peers to look at you, because here we have ordinary men who did extraordinary things. America thanks you for that. (Applause)

In conclusion, my pledge to you is that we are going to build a magnificent memorial in Washington, one that you can be proud of, but a memorial that would never have been built without the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you so much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF MR. JIM ZIEMER, PRESIDENT, HARLEY-DAVIDSON FOUNDATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I would like to call to the podium for a presentation at this time Jim Ziemer, Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer of Harley-Davidson, and President of the Harley-Davidson Foundation.

PRESENTATION BY HARLEY-DAVIDSON FOUNDATION

MR. JAMES ZIEMER: Thank you. It is a great honor for me to be able to be here addressing a huge gathering of American heroes. In fact, on Saturday I welcomed 50 motorcycle riders to Milwaukee. Most of them were VFW riders coming from all across the United States to Milwaukee.

They are raising funds for Project Uplink. It was certainly a successful ride. I know there are plans right now for an even more tremendous ride next year. Today, on behalf of Harley-Davidson, let me welcome you to our hometown, the birth place of Milwaukee Iron.

Harley-Davidson has been connected with veterans throughout its history, starting in 1916 with World War I and continuing on today and into the future. There is no doubt that it is the strong belief in freedom and independence that keeps veterans and Harley-Davidson connected.

My purpose for being here today is to make sure our World War II veterans get the respect that they are due. With that, I would like to make the second installment to Harley-Davidson's total pledge of \$250,000 for the World War II Memorial. I want to thank the VFW for giving Harley-Davidson the opportunity to participate in this great event. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. KEN POND: Jim, thank you. Thanks also to another great American group, all of those at the Harley-Davidson Company, for your support for the World War II Memorial as yet another effort by your company to ensure that veterans are always remembered. Thank you so much for this check and for your past support and the support in the future.

I would be remiss if I did not tell you that a few months back, in May, Harley-Davidson gave to us \$50,000 to place a plaque at the Vietnam War Memorial for those veterans who died from their wounds once they returned to America. In addition to that \$50,000 they gave another \$50,000 to Jan Scruggs, the Executive Director of the Vietnam Memorial, for the maintenance of that memorial.

Harley-Davidson has a special place in the hearts of many Washingtonians. Every year on Memorial Day weekend thousands of motorcyclists come to Washington to participate in Rolling Thunder. They are there to honor our veterans in a truly eye-inspiring manner.

Many of them take part in this patriotic display riding one of the greatest pieces of machinery in America, a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. If there is going to be a salute to our veterans, you can always be assured that Harley-Davidson will be there.

So in conclusion today, I thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I thank Harley-Davidson for your generous support, for your great words of encouragement, and for allowing me to share a few moments with you this morning. I say to you, God bless you, God bless the veterans of the United States of America, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLD MEDAL TO MARK VAN WAGONER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Unlike many within the media who ignore facts for the sake of sensationalism, our next guest does what he does not for ratings sake, but because he is sincere in his belief that veterans cannot be thanked enough for their service to their country.

Mark Van Wagoner has had a long and successful career in television and in radio that continues today. During his radio show, as he has done every morning for the past ten years, he recognizes patriotism and encourages gratitude for our nation's veterans.

One of the most popular segments of his program includes "Raising the Flag," honoring the men and women who have served in the military. His radio show is a great reflection of his love for his country.

Please join me in welcoming the recipient of the VFW Gold Medal of Merit, Mr. Mark Van Wagoner.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: This citation being presented reads, "Gold Medal of Merit and this citation awarded to Mark Van Wagoner in sincere appreciation for his recognition of veterans in promotion of his patriotism during his daily program on KKDS Radio. His 'Raise the Flag' segment, recounting memories by his veteran listeners, coupled with a salute to Old Glory, keeps alive the noble actions of the past and present while installing in his listeners a real appreciation for our nation and all who serve it.

In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 21st day of

August, 2001." This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE BY MR. MARK VAN WAGONER

MR. MARK VAN WAGONER: It is almost impossible for a radio announcer to be speechless, but I am at this point. You know, I think back to ten years ago when we first started this segment of "Raising the Flag." I will never forget going into a meeting with my boss and the owners of the radio station and a consultant.

The consultant said, "If you allow Mr. Van Wagoner to do this segment you will chase away every listener that you have developed so far because this is old-fashioned and nobody wants to hear it." Well, there are certain times when you don't do things because it will gain ratings, you don't do things because it is popular.

There are sometimes that you need to do things because it is right. I will never forget during our program of "Raising the Flag" we do it for two reasons every morning. No. 1, to promote patriotism because there is not enough of that today, and number two, to thank the men and women who have ever put on a uniform, whether it is peacetime or wartime.

Each and every one of you, particularly the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we owe you a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. I mentioned this one time on our "Raising the Flag" segment when I said, you know, we have a debt to you that can never be repaid.

I had a listener and we received a lot of letters from veterans and from the widows of veterans, and I wish I could share some of their sentiments with you. But I received one letter where one listener said, "Mark, you keep saying we can never repay our debts. You can repay us. You can repay us by living the kind of life that we fought and died for. You can repay us by teaching your children to respect this country. You can repay us by living the kind of life and teaching them to live the kind of life that this country was built for."

So we will do everything that we can to do that. You know, this is just another example. It is really impossible to ever get ahead in doing good deeds. You know, it was in the scripture that they were saying there will always be unprofitable servants.

This just is another great example of that, because here I am being thanked for thanking you and still I am in your debt. I will even be further in your debt. But with two sons right now, one serving in Perm, Russia, and another son Santiago, Chile, and as they write letters and tell me of the spirit in that country, particularly in Russia and how so many of the people have lost hope and the appreciation they have for this country and for our flag.

It is truly a legacy that you should be proud to be able to have fought and died for the gifts that I have and the gifts I get to share with my family. Still I don't think there is ever a way to repay you for the service that you have given to our country. I stand in awe.

It is amazing to be in a room with this kind of spirit. It is amazing to

feel the love that you have for your country. It is just remarkable, like last night when we all stood and sang "God Bless America" as the tears were running down the cheeks, or we say the Pledge of Allegiance.

You give us so much great hope that patriotism is alive in this country. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. God bless America. (Applause)

I need to introduce to you not only the co-host on my radio program, but the producer of my radio program, the mother of my five children, my best friend and my sweetheart for the last thirty years. This is my wife, Gail. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE RON KIND, CONGRESSMAN FROM WISCONSIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Congressman Ron Kind is largely responsible for authorizing the Library of Congress to establish an oral history archive of American war veterans' experience and making those histories readily available to the public.

Congressman Kind, representing the Third Congressional District, recognized that "if we are to truly honor our veterans, then we should preserve their memories for future generations."

The Veterans' Oral History Project, a measure supported by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, became a reality when it was signed into law October, 2000. Everyone in this room is eligible to participate in the project, which encourages families, veterans groups, communities and students to videotape the wartime recollections of veterans, and forward the tapes to the Library of Congress.

Serving his third term, Ron Kind has focused his attention not only on issues of fiscal responsibility, agriculture and education, but also on the concerns of veterans. He currently is a member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, the Agriculture Committee and the Resources Committee, where he is the Senior Democrat member of the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee. Please join me in welcoming Wisconsin Congressman Ron Kind. (Applause)

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE RON KIND

MR. RON KIND: Thank you very much, Commander. I can't tell you what an honor and what a privilege it is to be here with you today. I am Representative Ron Kind. I represent the Western District of Wisconsin. On behalf of the Wisconsin Congressional delegation, I would like to welcome you-all again to the great State of Wisconsin and to just warn you that one more National Convention in our state would qualify each and every one of you as honorary cheese heads.

So the next time you are here in the state, we will get our cheese wedges available for you so you can put that on your head while you are enjoying our fine beer and our fine brauts.

Now, as the President of the United States was gracious and kind enough to deliver the warm up back for me yesterday, I will try to make a plug for a piece of legislation which I think is invaluable for the preservation of American history.

We are calling upon you veterans of our great country for yet another contribution. You have something that our country, I feel, needs desperately, your memories. With that in mind, I drafted legislation along with Representative Amo Houghton from New York, Senators Chuck Hagel and Max Cleland, called the Veterans History Project.

The basic idea behind it is since so many of you are starting to get up there in age and the fact that we are losing roughly 1,600 veterans every single day in this country, that we need to preserve your memories, your histories for the benefit of your family, your children, but also for future generations.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you-all for your shared sacrifice, your contribution in the goal of preserving and protecting freedom across the world. It has been said that one of the most important words in the English language is remember: remember who we are, remember where we can from, remember what is truly important to our lives.

We Americans should remember the basic fiber of American society, our freedoms, and to remember who made it possible, you veterans. This year in particular it is important to remember that it was 60 years ago on December 7th, 1941, the Japanese sneak attack upon Pearl Harbor woke our country from its isolationist slumber, united its people in the spirit of shared sacrifice and forged a noble common purpose, at the cost of roughly 1,800 American sailors in less than two hours in Pearl Harbor, including my mother's own cousin who was serving at the time on the USS Arizona.

It is hard to imagine a single event that had greater instant effect on the behavior of an entire American generation, a generation that now has been called America's greatest. Nostalgia and the aging of this generation has led to an explosion of new books and movies and documentaries to help us remember.

Are veterans of all foreign wars, were typically ordinary men thrust into extraordinary circumstances. You bore the burden of defending freedom in our way of life, not just for us in America but also for most of the world. You did it for your country, you did it for your ideals, and you did it for your buddy in the next foxhole.

Thank you, God, you-all did it so well. Now, as you are carried quietly to eternity, you don't ask for our praises although you deserve them. You only ask to be remembered. To our veterans rest assured there are many Americans such as myself and many people around the world who know your deeds will never forget your sacrifices.

Last fall I had the singular honor of visiting the military cemetery in Jarnin Forest in Belgium. If you have not been there, it is a beautiful, immaculate cemetery with roughly 5,000 American soldiers buried there today. It is on American soil.

The government of Belgium donated that land to the American people.

What struck me was while I was visiting these cemeteries and laying a wreath at the cemetery, I noticed a few families from Belgium who were also coming into the cemetery to visit the grave sites. I talked to these families.

I just discovered that the families in Belgium had on their own decided to adopt a military soldier laying in rest at the cemetery as their own. They visit that grave site every year to remember the sacrifice of the American soldiers that liberated Belgium and the rest of Europe for their own freedom and their own opportunity.

They laid flowers and they also write notes that they leave at the grave sites. It is just another reminder that yes, we desire to be remembered in our country and people are not forgotten in other countries. Today we also have a chance to remember the scared young men, sometimes called the lost family in the American war.

We have to answer those that instant call the distant land, Vietnam, despite at times widespread anti-war sentiment. We have a chance to remember our neighbors and friends who fought in the Persian Gulf or over in Somalia. We also have a chance to remember our military men and women serving today. During the war in the Balkans, the native people gathered in the street to cheer our soldiers as they entered their villages. They knew that our soldiers brought with them the hope of liberation and freedom.

Finally, let us remember that freedom does have a price, the price paid by many, who in Lincoln's own words gave their last full measure of devotion and paid by many who were still with us today, those who served and those who are still serving.

We have got to help our country, if we ever do forget. That is why I am very pleased to see the World War II Memorial moving forward. I commend the leadership of the VFW, Ken Pond and many, many other persons, including Senator Dole, who had given on behalf of that project.

It is long overdue. It should have been done a long time ago, but it now appears that the remaining obstacles have been removed so we can move to ground breaking. Finally, there is the Veterans' History Project. We are asking you to consider contributing something that you have. It is your memories.

A few years ago I was at a family reunion and my father for the first time started talking about his experience in Korea and his brother next to him started talking about his experience as a flying bomber pilot in the Pacific during the Second World War.

I was sitting there and listening in wrapped attention, listening for the first time to these stories. I told them to wait momentarily, and I ran into the house and I brought the family video camera out because I wanted to record their testimony, not only for my benefit but for my little two boys' benefit who are just three and five years old and not old enough to appreciate it or get it.

I am not sure how much longer my father or my uncles will be with us. But I wanted to capture that moment and capture their moments so that my children and their children after them will be able to see what their

ancestors did for the sake of their country.

That was really the impetus behind the veterans' history project. What it will do is establish a national archives at the Library of Congress and what we hope to be able to accomplish is to videotape as many of you that want to participate as possible.

Encourage other family members to sit down with their loved ones in the family and videotape the experience, encouraging students in high schools to go out and make contact with the veterans in their communities and videotape those experiences.

We have over 78 private organizations so far who are getting behind this project. Of course we had the strong support of the VFW, the American Legion across the country.

Most of all, we are hoping and calling upon you to consider contributing to it.

Once we collect these videotapes, the Library of Congress has the ability to index them, to digitize them and make them available over the Internet. Those of you who may have some grandchildren know how difficult it is today to get kids to read American history. They are very visual now in how they learn and what captures their attention.

This project, I think, could prove to be a very powerful history lesson. Imagine for a moment a student in high school sitting in a history class, perhaps 200 years from now reading about the Second World War. They would have the opportunity to pop on their computer screen the full oral testimony of a veteran who served at the Battle of the Bulge or who perhaps was island hopping in the Pacific with General MacArthur.

What a powerful history lesson this could be for the future generations so we don't forget, so they have an opportunity to learn of the sacrificed and the duty that you-all answer. Later this week, I believe tomorrow afternoon, the representative from the Library of Congress, Allen Lovell, will be hosting an education seminar talking about the Veterans' History Project.

The Library of Congress has prepared a History Project kit with guidelines, which are very simple to follow, that can take you through the steps and take the interviewers through the steps of videotaping. It is more than just the videotaped statements.

We are asking for copies of letters that you may have sent home, copies of diaries that you may have kept, copies of photographs that you may have taken so we have one national repository in the Library of Congress in order to preserve these memories and in order to preserve this important part of American history.

So as I leave you today, don't be surprised if there are members or leaders in your community or especially students who try to make contact with you asking to be able to interview you upon your experiences. I hope that many of you will once again answer the call that your country is making so we have the ability to preserve over the most important national treasures that we have, your veterans and your members.

Thank you again very much for the opportunity to welcome you to

Wisconsin, and I am glad that the Green Bay Packers were able to delight you with the preseason victory last night. I think I hear the folks from Colorado. Where is the Denver section?

I know the veterans from Wisconsin are seated somewhere back there. But thank you and enjoy the rest of your visit here in Milwaukee for the rest of the week. God bless you veterans and God bless your families, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLD MEDAL
TO GENERAL HENRY H. SHELTON, U.S. ARMY,
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: This morning, I am honored to present the VFW Gold Medal of Merit to a distinguished American, a great leader, a soldier's soldier, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton.

Prior to his confirmation as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1997, General Shelton was the Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, which includes elite and specially trained forces from the Army, Navy and Air Force.

In 1966, at the VFW's 97th National Convention, General Shelton, as Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, received the VFW's Armed Forces Award for his role as the Commander of "Operation Uphold Democracy" in Haiti.

From Vietnam to Desert Storm, he has proven his skill and courage. A distinguished leader and a decorated soldier, General Shelton has helped mold and guide our military forces to meet the national security challenges facing our nation.

Please welcome the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "The Gold Medal of Merit and this citation awarded to General Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in recognition of his distinguished military career that included positions of command from Washington State to North Carolina, New York to Hawaii, as well as two tours in Vietnam and duty in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

"His integrity, character and exemplary leadership is evidenced by his rise from the rank of Second Lieutenant to General in 33 years, culminating with his selection as the fourteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is respected as a proud father, noble warrior, and shining example of a true American hero who lives the creed, "For God and 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 21st day of August, 2001." This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

REMARKS BY GENERAL HENRY H. SHELTON

GENERAL SHELTON: Thank you very much. Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, Congressman Kind, Distinguished Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning and thank you very much for that Commander-in-Chief's Gold Medal of Merit. I am very deeply honored as well as very humbled to receive this award which I accept very proudly on behalf of all the great soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and members of the Coast Guard who proudly carry on your service to our nation all around the world.

It is really great to be here in Milwaukee with you this morning. As I look out in this audience, I am reminded of a comment made in 1952 by a manager of the Milwaukee Braves, a manager that was coaching one of the Braves' farm clubs. One day after practice, he looked out at one of the prospects and he said, "You can't play baseball."

Well, that kid was Hank Aaron who, of course, went on to a great career in baseball and the Hall of Fame. If you had ever knew Hank Aaron, you know the definition of a truly great and humble American. Ladies and gentlemen, as a coach of America's first team, our great armed forces, as I look out on this Convention floor this morning, I see a whole lot.

I see a very select group of great Americans, of patriots, of citizens whose service to country still holds a special place in one's heart. For the members of the VFW, I salute you for a lifetime of service to our nation.

Please let me pause for just a moment this morning to also recognize and salute the memory of another great American, the late Congressman Floyd Spence from South Carolina. Congressman Spence, as you know, was a true friend and a great champion of the issues of concern to both our veterans as well as our men and women in uniform. Congressman Spence will be sorely missed by us all.

Ladies and gentlemen, during the last few years I have had the chance to travel extensively around the globe and see America's first team in action. I am proud to tell you that America's men and women still proudly serving in uniform today continue to do a great job of safeguarding America's interests around the globe.

They sail their ships, they fly their aircraft and they go on patrols quietly and professionally. America and her allies are safer and enjoying greater prosperity in part because of their efforts. They are indeed America's and the world's finest military force.

But let me also say I believe we have a few challenges that we have got to overcome if we are going to remain the world's preeminent force. Those two challenges I would like to discuss with you momentarily today are two simple words: complacency and change.

Let me explain. Today we are in a period of relative peace. I think we all recognize that. As you know, we remain firmly entrenched as the only world super power. One or more of our friends are embracing democracy and embracing the rule of law that global economy continues to expand

and consequently

I believe that Americans no longer perceive of any real threats to our national security.

In short, we are at peace. Our tendency as America in times like these is to become complacent, one symptom that is found in the level of investment that we as a nation are putting into our national defense. Today, we invest about 30 percent, a little less than that, to be truthful of our gross national product in defense. That is the lowest level since before Pearl Harbor.

This investment for defense for the next fiscal year is deemed by some Americans as not necessary. It is important that we begin to change that mind set, because we distinctly know we must remain vigil and the armed forces must remain combat ready in what is still a very dangerous and very uncertain and very unpredictable security environment.

We all remember the shock of Pearl Harbor that Congressman Kind referred to just a few moments ago. The sudden profile of Pearl Harbor, of Yallow River and Saddam Hussein's little surprise attack against the country of Kuwait.

The truth is that we have never predicted the use of force of any of America's wars. We were surprised each time. If we allow ourselves to become complacent, we open ourselves up to some other serious consequences. The increased vulnerability to strategic supplies, like the examples I just cited, the increased vulnerability to threats, threats from terrorists using chemical, biological or eve potentially nuclear.

The threats to warfare, and an increase vulnerability to sudden changes in the character as well as the technologies used by others in war. The net result is then that we face increased risk to our armed forces as well as to our nation.

As we all know, this has happened before.

For those who fully fought many years ago, you know who paid the price that this nation was unprepared for war in the Pacific. Let me pause here for just a moment to share with you this year that we have been celebrating or commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Korean War.

Let me ask all the Korean veterans to stand. I will ask everyone to join me in a big round of applause. (Applause) It was you, the great group that just stood and their contemporaries who paid the price, who perished in Korea. It was for us to prevail in the long run.

There are three points I think that come to mind. First and foremost, if you remember we significantly cut the size of our armed forces after World War II as we have done after every major conflict in our history. We have dramatically scaled back and in some cases eliminated good combat training for many of our leaders as resources were reduced.

We continued to rely on worn-out and outdated equipment. As a consequence, the brave and talented people that were standing guard in a peace time occupation duty in Japan and other places in the Pacific suddenly found themselves in a bitter fight in Korea, which they were not prepared and ill-equipped.

We have grown complacent. We have grown complacent not only in the theater but an increasing vulnerability to attack. We have become complacent within our nation and we are not providing the resources required to maintain and train an outfit. We must not learn that lesson again.

This leads me to a second lesson that we have learned. That is the second challenge that we must change and transform the military so that we also will be prepared for future threats that we invariably will face as a nation and as the armed forces.

As many of you are aware, we are in the middle of an aggression mandate in Washington. It is a review that requires us to look at our defense strategy, our force structure and, yes, our budget. But we are not starting at square one. Three years ago your Joint Chiefs and the Commanders-in-Chief of the geographical areas solidly changed the way we do business to deal with the threats we saw on the horizon.

These changes were recommended and approved by the President in 1999, the Unified Command Plan. They were designed to deal with the threat of sovereign warfare and the central threat to our ever-increasing alliance and technology as well as on information superiority, so we formed a Joint Task Force Computer Network Operations and put it under the auspices of the Space Command located out in Colorado.

That was a move that defensively has already paid tremendous dividends as we have been subject to solid warfare. Additionally, this move has now given us potentially a new offensive tool to put in our kicking bag. We envision the Federal Management Agency or some other type of organization having to lead in the appropriate defense offense, being organized and trained and equipped to respond and help in the event of a catastrophic event.

Our goal there is to see those organizations, and they are joint, to see they are equipped and ready to respond and assist the local responders when they would become overwhelmed. Additionally, we transferred our old Atlantic Command located in Norfolk into the Joint Forces Command and placed emphasis on joint war fighting, since that is the way that the Chiefs and all other Commanders-in-Chief believed we would fight in the future.

This command will provide forces that are trained and equipped and prepared to fight in this environment, and will again have the task of leading the DoD trench efforts to make sure that we organizationally are prepared to deal with our threats of tomorrow.

Finally, we are still persuade by the technology that is necessary in order to protect America from the horizon and terrors of ballistic attack. As you-all know, change is very difficult. I am reminded of a story that they tell about Robert Fulton as he tested his first steam locomotive on the Mississippi River.

A crowd went out to the riverbank and the crowd was watching, and they put the machinery in the river, and the skeptics in the crowd started to chant, "She will never start, she will never start." Finally, amid the clamoring and hammering, smoke came up, the paddle started. It turned

and the steamboat started to pull away from the bank, and the crowd stood back at it in awe as the magnificent steamboat started to move out in the river.

Then after a moment of standing in awe, the chant started again, “She will never stop, she will never stop.”

Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you we have got our share of skeptics, those that are standing on the sideline, those that are convinced that our ideals and change will not work.

The fact is that the skeptics are notwithstanding. I believe that we must change and, in fact, we must go full throttle and continue to transform our forces to ensure that we have the capability of dealing with the future threats that our great nation will face. (Applause)

We must make sure that we have got the capability to defend our homeland against the wide range of relatively new threats as well as continuing to protect America’s interests around the globe. While we may have a good beginning, I think we still have got a lot of work to do.

We need to take on wholesome capabilities. We have the finest Army in the world, the finest Coast Guard today, the finest Navy, and we need to continue our emphasis operationally to make sure that we can have an armed forces that is highly trained, that is highly mobile, that is more lethal than it is today and more maneuverable than it is today.

In order to do this, I would also submit that we have got to do away with all antiquated and archaic procurement and business practices that we deal with today. For example, it would not surprise you to know that in the Pentagon today it takes longer to develop a new system than the system’s life would make it salable.

In other words, it takes us longer to develop the equipment than the threat that we have got to deal with. We have to overhaul the system. We have to deal with the threats and we have to have the technology up to speed and effective. We also need to make sure that our new equipment is designed to be for fighting.

We in the Joint Chiefs are making sure that, in fact, occurs. As you know, that wasn’t the case back in the Cold War period. Now, I am not in favor and I want to make sure you all understand that, I am not in favor of doing away with tradition, with the cultures and the unique capabilities of our services, but rather we are looking for ways to merge these into a single, unified web that will provide a maximum contact to the commanders in the field.

I am happy to report that we are making considerable progress in that regard. We want to have the best Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines in the world, but we want to make sure that we fuse their capabilities together and bring together the capabilities they have that has done so in a seamless manner that provides our commanders leverage on the battlefield.

Finally, I submit we want to have high tech equipment. We also need to make sure that our efforts include our people. We need to recruit and we need to retain the quality of people that make these concepts, the doctrine

and the equipment come as a package that makes us the super power we should be.

If we only transform the equipment and the material, then we truly have not transformed in the manner that America needs to have the armed forces trench formed. It is our people, you know, that give us our greatest competitive advantage over our adversaries.

I think you can see this philosophy in President Bush's statement and Secretary Rumsfeld's statement and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as we work together to transform America's military. We owe it to our men and women in uniform, and we owe it to our veterans to show us the way it is.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would also tell you that you can help in this effort. When so-called experts and pundits make comments such as we are at peace, why do we need such a large military, or why do we need to spend all this money on new technology, a new weapons system, you can tell them we learned the lesson of complacency, of not being ready and we paid the price in blood.

We don't need any more Pearl Harbors. We don't need any more Desert Storms. When someone asks you why do we have to listen to all those jets and helicopters flying around and all that artillery firing on the installation, you can help by saying that is the sound of freedom. It helps you preserve our readiness. (Applause)

It helps to ensure that our country is safe. Isn't it wonderful hearing that? What we should be worried about is when we don't hear it. Those of you in this room today, our veterans, have the credibility and the clout to be able to rally public support for a strong national defense.

Indeed, part of our nation's collective strengths come from the armed services like yourself, the people from Milwaukee to Houston, Boston to Honolulu, men and women who know the challenge that we are faced with and take the opportunity to do something about the problems we face around the world.

I tell you that the VFW can make a real difference. You can make it in the halls of Congress, you can make it in every Post in every town and in every local newspaper. With your help, I believe that we can avoid the complacency, which is the biggest concern for our armed forces today, and that we can get the resources that we need in order to effect real change that will allow us to deal with it.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I look at my watch, I have probably spoken too long already. I am reminded at this time of a book report I saw that was written by a little boy. He was writing about Julius Caesar. It went like this.

"Julius Caesar lived a long time ago. Julius Caesar was a gentleman. He just gave long speeches and they killed him." I don't want to make the mistake that Julius Caesar made. So let me just leave you with a few thoughts.

As many of you probably know, I will retire from the Army in a few months after a short 38 years of service. It has been an extraordinary journey, both for me as well as my family. The very best part of it has been the honor and the privilege of serving with real American heroes,

individuals like you, America's fighting men and women.

Soon it will be time for me to take up that last salute and it will be difficult, but I am comforted by the fact that I will have acquired at the same time a new title, Hugh Shelton, veteran. May God bless all of you and may God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and may God bless America.

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

PRESENTATION BY THE VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have at the podium at this time the PAC Chairman Joe T. Wood.

COMRADE JOE T. WOOD: Commander-in-Chief, I have been directed by the Political Action Committee Board of Directors to present to you the Eagle Award for the superb leadership which you have given this great organization and you have rekindled the life of the PAC with your speeches throughout this great land of ours in our various Posts.

I would also like at this time to ask Past Commander-in-Chief Carney to help me make this presentation. (Applause)

Just a couple of reminders. Wednesday afternoon, at 2:00 p.m., we will have the PAC Workshop and it will be in Room 203 D and E.

I would also at this time like to give a word of appreciation to an outstanding comrade of ours, who is Charles Lawson from the State of Montana. Under Charles' leadership, every VFW Post in Montana made a contribution to the VFW-PAC. Charles, I want to commend you. (Applause)

Commander-in-Chief, that is my report.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. I appreciate it. At this time we are going to go ahead back into debate. We will stop all debate at 12:00 o'clock regardless of where we are, because there are some other scheduled events that are a part of this Convention.

Our debate is based on B-6, which was recommended to the Convention floor for rejection. However, now it has been moved for adoption. Debate will continue at this time with Microphone No. 3. No, I am sorry, it will continue with Microphone No. 1. I got myself in the wrong direction here. I am hopeless, remember. (Laughter) Please, Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MICHAEL DePAULO (Post 5988 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, good morning. I am Michael DePaulo, Post 5988, and a delegate to this Convention. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise to speak in favor of doing away with citizenship requirement for a number of reasons.

Probably the most significant of which is 35,000 Canadians joined the U.S. armed forces during the Vietnam War.

There were 40,000 in total; 35,000 went. They suffered the same

maladies and problems, percentage of wounds as our own people, and they are treated by and taken care of by the Department of Veterans Affairs in the United States.

When they die, they are eligible to be buried at Arlington or Warren, Massachusetts, or any other national cemetery. The fact of the matter is they joined the U.S. armed forces because they believed we were doing the right thing for everybody.

To deny these people membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, where they wore the uniform of this republic and fought for this republic, seems to me to be unconscionable. As you well know, Commander-in-Chief, the French, recognizing the United States liberated France and Normandy, I was made an honorary member of the Mohawk Nation.

There were 19 Mohawks who were drafted, who answered the draft notice in World War II and were at Normandy during the invasion. So it just seems to me if they can fight with us, eat with us, save our lives, die with us and be buried with us, they ought to be able to participate with us and to help promulgate who we are, what we are, and those principles that make up this great organization.

Remember, it is not from what citizenship you came from, fought and served for, it is that they served. They gave the same price as everyone else.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I will go to Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PETER LUSTE (Post 8862 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am here to raise my support on this particular issue. It is especially emotional for me. I was originally drafted and nobody asked me what citizenship I was; nobody.

I was drafted because I was needed in the United States Army. I was not asked. I was not asked what citizenship I had. When we stand in uniform, it is especially hard to identify each one of the soldiers and treat them as citizens and non-citizens.

It says "U.S. Army" in gold stitches. If I bring twenty veterans in here that are sitting in wheelchairs and have this distinguished audience make the choice of who should be admitted to the VFW and who should not, I do believe it would be extremely difficult to tell those who are not citizens no, you cannot be allowed.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt those individuals have not chosen to be in the service, they just served. They fulfilled the requirements for the government. The issue of citizenship has never been raised. They made the choice, and I do believe that at this time there are quite a few American citizens who have never had to make the same choice as those soldiers. Thank you for your attention. I hope the distinguished audience will vote in favor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I move to Microphone No. 3. I will not recognize the first persons that have already spoken on the issue until all other comrades who have not spoken on the issue are recognized.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RUDY INES (Post 5471 - District of Columbia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in support of this amendment to the by-laws on

the citizenship of the United States. I speak on behalf of the thousands of my countrymen who fought in World War II to defend the United States and the Philippines.

Up to now they have not yet received their dues, their benefits for having answered the call of the great President Roosevelt on July 26, 1944. They answered his call. They were not citizens of the United States, my friends, but they came and fought.

They suffered. They fought at Bataan in World War II. Now, their services have been rendered and they have not yet received their benefits for their citizenship. For that reason, and on behalf of my Post, I support strongly this amendment that citizenship of the United States not be considered and veterans should be a member of this great organization of ours like the Philippines does with their veterans. Thank you.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 1444-Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Paul Spera, a delegate of Post 1444, Boston, Massachusetts. I rise today to say that this is an idea whose time has come. The history of this by-law change back in 1945 has not to do with the honorable service of those individuals who wore uniforms of our nation but had to do with the fear of the movement, a fear that Communism was going to take over, a fear that Communism was going to infiltrate all of the things that we had in America, including our great organization. That is an idea whose time is dead.

When we joined the military and went through basic training, the individual who went through next to us endured the same suffering that we did, wore the same uniform, shared the same oath to defend the Constitution of the United States from altering whomsoever, who traveled with us to foreign lands, who shed the blood, left their limbs, and in many cases left their lives.

The tree of liberty periodically has to be blessed with the blood of the patriots and heroes. We know that as Americans we respect that kind of sacrifice from our citizens. But those individuals who came from other nations, who swore to that oath of allegiance, who put on the uniform of our nation, who willingly stood beside us, who willingly nourished that tree of liberty with their blood, their suffering, deserve the right to sit in this hall with each and every one of us.

If they were good enough to suffer, if they were good enough to serve, if they were good enough to bleed, if they were good enough to die, then they are certainly worthy of the title of comrade in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I urge you to strongly pass this by-law change.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CARLOS GORDON (Post 3835 - Department of Panama): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, my brother was drafted in 1969. I followed in 1970. I was in Vietnam and we were not asked what are you? You just went over. There are those that never came home to become citizens, those engraved on the Wall.

There is none in this room that has not had a brush with a name but knows that funny-talking soldier who fought along your side, who entertained you with his funny talk. It is about time that we stopped alienating those veterans, because that is what they are, veterans.

No one asked what are you? You are a veteran. Today, my brother lives with diabetes, blotches over his skin from Agent Orange. It didn't kill him. He fought what he had to do, not by choice. He was drafted. I urge that we bring home all veterans irregardless of what they did.

They wore the uniform and fought the wars and many, many paid that utmost sacrifice that we may stand here and debate this issue. I thank you for your time. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you.

Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS (Post 1736- Louisiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this amendment. I would like to state several reasons. I want to begin by saying I do not believe anybody in this hall has any more respect for those who were not U.S. citizens, who fought for us in Vietnam.

As this debate has gone on, I cannot help but remember two sergeants, platoon sergeants, that were Canadians in my rifle platoon that distinguished themselves very well. I had the honor of pinning a Bronze Star on one of them. You know, we talk about the emotion of the moment, and it is very easy for us to get caught up in saying the way we think that together for those non-citizens that fought for us it is to change our rules and allow non-citizens in the VFW.

We try to frame it so if somehow you are opposed to that you don't honor the service and sacrifice. Nothing can be further from the truth. I think we need to remember the principles on which we were founded as an organization. I am not prepared to say those founders did not have good and valid reasons for ensuring that citizenship was part of their requirement of being a member in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

As you know, a veteran serves as a vet in this country that has been denied citizenship by this country, despite their service, and we need to hear from that person at the microphone. I know of no such person. There are choices in life.

This organization, we are a patriotic and fraternal organization by charter. Patriotic means that we proudly stand up and pledge our allegiance to this country. By being members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we reaffirm every day our commitment to our country.

We are not deserting our country whatsoever. In our membership application, please allow me to read just one sentence. It says: "I will bear true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America and I will always be loyal thereto."

Now, I think I need to understand something in this debate. Are we saying if we allow non-citizens to become members of the VFW that we also have to change our obligation? How can you ask a citizen of another

country, in order to be a member of the VFW, to bear a true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and I will always be loyal thereto?

That is determined by serving, but how can you always be loyal? How can you ask someone not a citizen to pledge allegiance to the United States instead of their flag in Canada or the flag in the Philippines, or in Europe? How could you be loyal to two masters?

That is the reason we have a citizenship requirement. Those that served in active duty that were not citizens have served this country well, and I don't see any of you joining me in saying you want to be a citizen of this great republic.

It has nothing to do with the quality of their service. It has nothing to do with whether or not they served the country well, because they did. You know, we get caught up in this day and age in the emotion of the moment. I will help any veteran from overseas on their citizenship papers.

I will help make them a citizen and sign them up in the VFW and buy a Life Membership if they want. But it is not too much to ask to be a citizen of this great republic, and when you sign this application you swear that you will always be loyal to it.

You can't be the President of the United States if you are not a citizen. I am from Louisiana. Could you imagine what would happen if we had a visitor in our Post in Louisiana that was a Canadian, and we all stand up and pledge allegiance to the United States of America, and one person is left standing and says, "Wait a minute. I don't pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America."

We have a patriotic purpose in the VFW. We have an obligation to the country. True, we have an obligation to those that we serve and that is to honor their service. I urge you to put this in proper perspective. We are citizens of the United States of America.

We are not denying those that served with us. We are saying we want you as a member of the VFW, but more than that we want you in our family as a citizen so you can forever be loyal to the Constitution of this great country. You cannot serve two masters. I urge you to consider carefully your vote and reject this amendment. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MICHAEL WHITE (Post 10068 - Florida): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am Mike White, a delegate from Post 10068, Immediate Past Commander of the Department of Florida. I couldn't get more emotional about a subject than this one. I think it is absolutely imperative that we try to keep the emotions out of it as much as we can.

The United States of America is the most forgiving country on this planet. Our World War II veterans know all too well that they fought Germany, Italy and Japan, and we turned around and as a nation rebuilt those countries. We gave them their independence.

I have to tell you of a story a couple of years ago. As the Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Florida, where an individual walked

into the Post and wanted to join. He was dedicated to this organization, and I couldn't get off the bar stool quick enough to welcome the person and talk to him.

I said, "What is your eligibility?" He said, "I fought in World War II and I fought in Korea." As we went through the conversation we found out that individual fought with Germany in World War II and fought with the United States Army six years later in Korea.

I wonder how a World War II veteran would feel standing next to that individual they faced in World War II as a comrade side-by-side in Korea? No, he was not a United States citizen. He held his citizenship in Germany. But he thought that he should stay and become a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He said it would be no different than anybody who fought in World War II that fought under General David Eisenhower, the Commander-in-Chief should help anybody even if they are English or Canadians and they are allies. That is what makes this emotional.

Our allies are our friends who fought on our side. I wonder about this great organization. We come to these national conventions to do the work of the organization in this format that we have. We then constantly change because if you don't change, as you said, Chief, don't stand in the middle of the road.

If we don't change, we are going to fall very far behind. So if we are changing a little piece of paper as my good friend Larry Rivers has already stated about the obligation, I ask you to look on the other side. It says, "I certify that I am a citizen of the United States."

We are going to do away with that now if this passes. What will be next? Will we at another national conference do away with the bulwark of what this organization is about, or do we do away with the one that says that I have subsequently been discharged from the military service under honorable conditions? I further state that I believe in God, does that go next? Commander-in-Chief, I am opposed. I am sorry if I got emotional.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I will go to Microphone No. 1, please.

COMRADE KEN PIKE (Post 4876 - Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I ask every comrade here to go back to their war. Did you ask that man next to you if was he a foreign citizen? I didn't. When I had a bad hit in Vietnam and the helicopter picked me up, I didn't ask if he was a U.S. citizen. I wanted to get the hell out of there.

Comrades, we can sit here and debate all day, all night, and all week on this subject. So in memory of those good comrades, it is time to get off the pot. I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You cannot debate the subject and then call for the question.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RICHARD FRUGE (Post 5153 - Louisiana): I call for the question, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion to call for the question.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RICHARD KENNEDY (Post 9534 - Department of Europe): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. We have a motion and a second. We have debated, I think at this time, to a favorable conclusion, one way or the other. However, it does require a two-thirds vote for the motion to pass. Please understand the way you are going to vote. I hope I can explain it as well.

B-6, if you vote "yes" or "aye", then you are saying we are going to remove the word that says "who is a citizen of the United States." If we say "no", then it stays as is. Does everybody understand that? I will first ask for action on closing debate. All those in favor of closing debate will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. We shall continue.

At this time, all those in favor of leaving the requirement for citizenship in our eligibility requirements signify by saying "aye".

COMRADE EUGENE MANFREY (Post 6827 - Florida): Will you, please, once again clarify the vote? I think there is still some misunderstanding.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: All right. I will try to do that. We have a motion to adopt that has been seconded. The Committee recommended rejection. We had a motion to adopt. If we adopt the motion, then it removes "who is a citizen of the United States" from our eligibility.

Do you understand it that way? It takes two-thirds. I will do it one more time. All those in favor of adoption will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". I don't have two-thirds. We will go to a roll call vote.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3354 - Texas): A point of order. Commander-in-Chief, a point of order. Does the Commander have the right to call for a roll call vote or does it take ten delegates? I would like to ask that of the Parliamentarian.

PARLIAMENTARIAN ED BURNHAM: It requires ten delegates from ten different Departments. However, we have always proceeded with the fact that if the Commander-in-Chief is in doubt and is unable to rule he has the authority to call for a roll call vote as Commander-in-Chief. We have always followed that procedure. The Convention in its wisdom may do as you proceed and have ten Posts call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE LAWRENCE REINHARDT (Post 9976 - Arizona): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 11058 - Department of Europe): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE KEN PIKE (Post 4876 - Oklahoma): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE TIMOTHY COLLIER (Post 295 - Minnesota): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE JAMES LANE (Department of Vermont): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE ARTHUR HARRIS (Post 5179 - California): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE WILLIAM REGAN (Department of Illinois): I call for a roll call vote.

COMRADE JAMES MITCHELL (Department of Colorado): I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: That is ten. That covers us. Is anybody counting with me? That is ten, I think.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Commanders on our sheet this morning gives you those that have registered as of the close of registration yesterday, and those are the only votes that are allowed to vote and give your voting strength for this vote.

COMRADE FRANK RIVALI (Department of New Mexico): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, on the issue of clarity, I believe that the motion can be stated all those in favor of deleting the words "citizenship of the United States." There is a lot of confusion on the floor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will explain it one more time. If we are going to try to explain something I need for you to be quiet in the audience. I need everybody inside. I am going to try it one more time to explain it. I am not being very successful in explaining it. Each year there has been confusion when we vote. That is why I was very strict about what we said.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrades, as you prepare to take the roll call, remember, if you vote "yes", that means you are taking the requirement of citizenship away from our eligibility requirements. If you vote "no", there will be no change to our eligibility requirements as we will require that you must be a citizen to be a member of the organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You need to cast your ballot. Please proceed to Microphone No. 2. As you cast your ballots, line up alphabetically. That will help us up here. We are going to go into the roll call vote at this time.

Comrade Adjutant General, will you please call the roll? Will the delegates please give your attention and try to hold the noise down as much as possible. Thank you again for your courtesies.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Once again, before I begin the roll call, a "yes" means you are changing the eligibility requirements of our organization by removing citizenship requirement. A "no" vote means we leave our eligibility requirements as they are. There will be no change.

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

NAME	YES	NO
Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak		X
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith		X
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk		X
Adjutant General John J. Senk		X
Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley		X
Judge Advocate General Lynn Hall		X
National Chaplain John Leonard		X
National Chief of Staff Richard Branson		X
Inspector General Precilla Wilkewitz		X

STATE	YES	NO
Alabama	100	107
Alaska		63
Arizona	90	105
Arkansas		167
California	126	357
Colorado	69	110
Connecticut	151	2
Delaware		139
District of Columbia	24	5
Department of Europe		57
Florida		396
Georgia	7	190
Hawaii	2	18
Idaho	17	51
Illinois	278	450
Indiana		352
Iowa	23	111
Kansas	5	201
Kentucky	86	70
Latin America/Caribbean		17
Louisiana		118
Maine	6	117
Massachusetts	221	6
Michigan	113	369
Minnesota	316	84
Mississippi	112	
Missouri		153
Montana		51
Nebraska		217
Nevada	26	42
New Hampshire	84	12
New Jersey		252
New Mexico		112
New York	28	268

North Carolina		156
North Dakota	22	67
Ohio	15	634
Oklahoma	61	116
Oregon	40	14
Pacific Areas		70
Pennsylvania		569
Rhode Island	12	62
South Carolina		95
South Dakota	29	105
Tennessee	7	103
Texas	9	357
Utah	8	47
Vermont	81	29
Virginia	209	9
Washington	10	176
West Virginia	45	146
Wisconsin	21	351
Wyoming	31	7

COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS	YES	NO
District No. 2 - William McCarthy	X	
District No. 3 - William Goode		X
District No. 4 - Robert McGowan		X
District No. 5 - Omar Kendall		X
District No. 6 - Robert Kesling		X
District No. 7 - John Furgess		X
District No. 9 - William J. Jolin		X
District No. 10 - Bobby Julian		X
District No. 11 - Curt Taylor		X
District No. 12 - A. L. Ellefson		X
District No. 13 - Billy C. Smith		X
District No. 14 - Donald Riegel		X
District No. 15 - Vincent Mitchell		X
District No. 16 - Marcus Butler		X
District No. 17 - Charles Fuller		X
District No. 18 - Salvatore Capirchio		X
District No. 19 - W. Hugh Long	X	
District C - George Smith		X
District D - George Cox		X
District E - David Adams		X
District F - Ernest Meyers, Sr.		X
District G - Robert Maxwell		X
District H - William Bell		X
Past Commander-in-Chief - John W. Smart		X

PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF	YES	NO
Billy Ray Cameron -		X
John M. Carney -		X
George R. Cramer -		X
James R. Currieo -		X
Art Fellwock -		X
Robert Hansen -		X
Walter Hogan -		X
Cooper T. Holt -		X
Richard W. Homan -		X
Allen "Gunner" Kent -		X
Clyde Lewis -		X
John W. Mahan -		X
John E. Moon -		X
James E. Nier -		X
Clifford G. Olson, Jr. -		X
Thomas Pouliot -		X
Larry W. Rivers -		X
Eric Sandstrom -		X
John W. Smart -		X
R. D. Smith -		X
Ray Soden -		X
Paul A. Spera -		X
John Stang -		X
John Staum -		X
Robert E. Wallace -		X
John Wasylik -		X

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, that completes the roll call, and it will take a few minutes to count them.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Before we get caught up in this, the business session will start at 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning. That is 9:00 o'clock. We will start tomorrow's session and then see how far we can get tomorrow and see if we need to remain here on Sunday. Again, thank you so much for the courtesies and the debate. I think everybody has been most courteous except this one incident. Again, we have acted as comrades in conducting our deliberations. Once we have the count, we will recess this session to be opened again tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock.

I am sorry. If you will hold on just a minute. I have been asked to do one more thing. The Manual of Procedures are in a position where they are all approved and we will handle that before we take our break.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, the following amendments to the Manual of Procedure were recommended by the Committee:

M-1 is disapproved because of By-Law B-1.

M-2 approved.

M-3 approved; M-4 approved.

I will start over. M-1 disapproved because of By-Law B-1 being disappeared.

M-2 approved; M-3 approved; M-4 approved; M-5 approved; M-6 approved; M-7 approved; M-8 approved; M-9 rejected in favor of M-8.

Commander-in-Chief, I hereby move the adoption of the Manual of Procedure changes recommended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion by the chairman to adopt the Manual of Procedure changes as announced.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STANG (Post 3147-Kansas): I second the motion.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am a member of the Committee. To the chairman of the Committee, if you would look at M-2 very quickly, and it says down there about the third sentence from the bottom, it says within 60 days of the date of installation. Should that not be 60 days before the election instead of installation?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY: Installation. It is the same, Allen.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 - Pennsylvania): Okay. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any further discussion on the Manual of Procedure changes? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the results of the vote are 2,674 yes; 7,984 no.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It fails for a lack of two-thirds.

COMRADE GARY STECKELBERG (Post 7419 - Nebraska): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we respectfully request a recall on B-9.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: B-9 was approved.

COMRADE GARY STECKELBERG (Post 7419 - Nebraska): We request that it be recalled.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: There is no such parliamentary procedure.

COMRADE GARY STECKELBERG (Post 7419 - Nebraska): I believe we have ten states that would like to have it recalled for reconsideration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Let me just check my thing up here with the Parliamentarian. You are talking about reconsideration?

Reconsideration of B-9, Section 605 of the National Dues.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: What we have is a motion to reconsider B-9. Do we have a second to that motion?

COMRADE TIMOTHY COLLIER (Post 295 - Minnesota): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time we have a motion on the floor for reconsideration of B-9. We must vote on reconsideration. Is there any discussion on reconsideration of B-9? All those in favor of

reconsideration will signify by saying “aye”; all those opposed “nay”. The chair is not in doubt. There is no reconsideration.

Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for recess of this session, please, sir.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain John Leonard gave the Closing Prayer from the Ritual.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you so much, Sergeant-at-Arms. I appreciate it. We are in recess at this time.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:30 o'clock p.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 2001

(The Second Business Session of the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arm, please prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors and the Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. All rise, please, and uncover.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors, followed by the Opening Prayer by National Chaplain John F. Leonard. The Sergeant-at-Arms then led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Before we begin with our official session on Wednesday, August 22nd, may I again ask for the indulgence of the audience because I have been approached again yesterday evening by a couple of Departments that said they could not hear the proceedings because there was another Department having a family reunion or something, and it was so loud that they couldn't even hear the business.

May I ask you again, please, to show some courtesy. We have some people that have paid their own money and they have taken their vacation time and this is the first time to be at a National Convention. We would hope they would leave with a good impression of how we conduct business. So I guess again, please do what we can for each other.

We will have the report of the Credentials Committee Chairman, Elwood B. Rickards, please.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Department of Delaware): Commander-in-Chief, this will be a temporary report of the Credentials Committee as of 3:30 yesterday afternoon. Total delegates, 11,186; total Department Commanders, 54; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 28; total National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 11,306 as of last evening.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will have the report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization. The Chairman is Cooper T. Holt.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T. HOLT: First of all, Commander-in-Chief, I wish to express to you my sincere appreciation for appointing me as Chairman of your National Committee on Finance and Internal Organization. I have certainly enjoyed that assignment.

I want you to know that we had 100 members on that Committee, representing every state, every Department but two. I also want to thank the staff from the Kansas City headquarters for their cooperation and expertise. I am speaking of Jim Rowoldt, Bob Crow and Ron Browning.

I want to thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for appointing Art Fellwock as the Vice-Chairman of our Committee. Art is a sincere, dedicated worker for our organization, a great motivator, and I was pleased with that appointment.

Now for our report. I hope all of you have copies of the booklet of the resolutions. I only have four and we will take them in chronological order if that is all right with the Commander-in-Chief.

We shall begin with Resolution No. 201. Resolution 201 is entitled "Speak Out in Support of the Boy Scouts of America. Your Committee recommended adoption of Resolution 201, as amended. Your Committee members voted to amend this by striking the first "Be It Resolved".

So if you are looking at it, just take that first "Resolved" out completely, and then in the second "Resolved" remove the word "further". Now, the reason we took out that first "Resolved" is simply because the Supreme Court has already ruled on it and there is nothing Congress could do about it. So we saw no need for that "Resolved".

The will now read: "Be It Resolved, that we call on members of every VFW Post to speak out in their communities against the intolerance, injustice and strong-arm tactics now being used to systematically try to diminish, erode and devalue both the Boy Scouts of America and our nation."

Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of the Committee recommendation on this particular resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion to adopt the resolution.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK (Post 1114 - Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and a second on the resolution. Is there any further discussion? Is there any further discussion? If not, all those in favor of his resolution will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T. HOLT: The next resolution is 202. It is entitled "Dues Increase to Properly Fund the VFW National Service Program." My comrades, as you well know, this was taken up yesterday and it had no business being in our Committee, so we just

declared or voted to recommend out of order for this particular resolution because it did not belong in our Committee.

I move, Commander-in-Chief, that the Committee's recommendation be adopted regarding Resolution 202.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK (Post 1114-Indiana): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The Committee has ruled the resolution not in order for that Committee. Is there any discussion? Is there any discussion? If not, all those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T. HOLT: Now, for 203, entitled "Extend Age Cap for the Sons of the VFW."

Commander-in-Chief and delegates, your Committee recommends rejection of Resolution 203 simply because our Committee members felt it was a moot question, that the Sons of the VFW eligibility had already been extended or the age had already been extended from 16 to 18. We saw no need to act upon this resolution.

Therefore, Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of the Committee's recommendation to reject Resolution 203.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK (Post 1114-Indiana): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Resolution 203 has been recommended by the Committee for rejection. Is there any further discussion on that resolution? Any further discussion on the resolution regarding the age of the Sons of the VFW? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T. HOLT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the next resolution is 204. You do not have it in your booklet because it was not received at the Kansas City Headquarters in time for printing. I will read it, the title.

It is entitled "Hostile Fire and Eminent Danger Pay Eligibility for Membership in the VFW." Commander-in-Chief, I don't know if you want me to read the resolution in its entirety since it was not in the booklet, or just the "Resolved" portion. I can do one or the other. What is the consensus? Do you want me to read the "Resolved" portion?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Read the "Resolved". If we get into any trouble, we can go further.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T. HOLT: I have read you the title. It is one "resolved" clause. "Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we petition Congress to amend the charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to allow any individual who has received hostile fire or eminent danger pay to be eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

Your Committee recommended rejection of that resolution.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK (Post 1114-Indiana): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Resolution 204 has been placed before the membership with a proper motion and second. Is there any discussion on the resolution?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move this motion be set aside for further discussion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: May I do this, please. Microphone No. 1, and the maker, we can discuss the motion right now because there are no other motions within the Committee. If I may, I will accept your moving as approving to accept Resolution 204.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): Absolutely, Commander-in-Chief. May I speak briefly on that?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: When I get a second.

COMRADE JAMES STEVENS (Post 3128 - Alabama): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. We have a proper motion and a second regarding Resolution 204, regarding eminent danger and hostile fire pay.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Glen Gardner, a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I move that we amend this motion to read "To allow members of the armed forces who have received hostile fire or eminent danger pay be eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

Strike the word "any individual" and amend that to say "members of the armed forces of the United States."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Microphone No. 1, Comrade Gardner, are you saying in the actual resolution where it says to "allow any individual", you are amending to strike "any individual" and to insert "members of the armed forces"?

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): That is correct, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much for your motion.

COMRADE RICHARD FRUGE (Post 5153 - Louisiana): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a proper motion and a second to amend the "Resolved" portion to read: "To petition Congress to amend the charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to allow members of the armed forces who have received hostile or eminent danger pay to be eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

That is the amendment that we have. Is there any further discussion on the amendment? Any discussion on the amendment.

Yes, Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as the comrades may remember, this motion was

brought before this august body last year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Excuse me, comrade. I don't mean to interrupt you. We are now dealing with the amendment first. I must deal with the amendment.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): Excuse me, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. Is there any further discussion on the amendment? Remember, the amendment strikes "any individual" and inserts in its place "members of the armed forces." Before we move any more, as far as wording, I am going to ask the chairman of the Committee to read some of the "Whereases" to see if that properly covers what we need to do.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T.HOLT: The "Whereas" clauses, the first one, "Whereas, it has come to the attention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that certain members of the armed forces are currently serving or have served in areas that are considered hostile and are receiving pay for duties subject to hostile fire or eminent danger pay as defined in the DoD Financial Management Regulation 7(a), Chapter 10; and

"Whereas, in some instances the individuals receiving the said hostile fire and eminent danger pay are not authorized to receive a Campaign Medal; and "Whereas, the type of service is the type of service that has traditionally and historically entitled individuals to qualify for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and

"Whereas, the current charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars limits membership eligibility to those individuals who received a Campaign Medal; and

"Whereas, the Veterans of Foreign Wars desires to correct the above situation so that qualified members of the armed forces will be eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States." I have read the "Resolved" and now we have the amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: So at this time, is there any further discussion on the amendment Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): On the amendment, I am merely offering the amendment to clarify the "Resolved" part so there is no misunderstanding that we are not trying to offer the membership to non-veterans or individuals who serve in a capacity other than as members of the armed forces of the United States under the charter.

These individuals would still have to come under section 101 as far as eligibility. The question came up about do they still have to be citizens? That is still under Section 101 of the By-Laws, and that had nothing to do with the charter.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Your comments are well taken. Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I was a member of the Committee and, as I recall,

also it would apply to this particular amendment as well as the motion overall, there really isn't anything in there that says overseas.

So one of the concerns I had is could we have hostile fire within the Continental United States? It would seem at least we should specify in this resolution. Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): To answer the comrade, in the DoD provisions, it clearly states in the policy "while on duty in a foreign area and entitled to such pay." So it is on duty in a foreign area.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEFGWIZDAK: Yes, sir. Thank you for your comments. Is there any further discussion on the amendment concerning Resolution 204? If not, we are going to vote at this time, and what it is to replace the words "any individual" with "members of the armed forces."

All those in favor of replacing the words and adding the new words into the resolution signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved on the amendment. Now, we will go to discussion on the actual resolution itself.

I will now go to Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT (Post 9972-Arizona): I rise to support this resolution. Comrades, every year we ask for more membership and more membership. These are comrades that are in a hostile area receiving hostile pay or eminent danger pay.

I will guarantee you that the Congress of the United States does not give this pay out unless somebody is shooting at somebody. Now, if somebody is shooting at you that's a war.

I don't care how big it is; that's a war. They may not give you a medal, but it is a war. They deserve to belong to this organization.

We buy membership every year with the MIPs. That is a good program. These comrades, I have talked to them, they would like to pay for their membership with their own money. All they want to do is be allowed a combat zone, if they have come under hostile fire, they belong in this organization the same as I do and the same as you do, Commander-in-Chief. Thank you very much,

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments at Microphone No. 3.

Microphone No. 1, I guess you must have turned something wrong, Fred, at Microphone No. 2. Nobody is there.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): I, too stand in favor of this resolution. I had some concerns when the resolution was first brought up last year about how we would determine who these individuals are. I have now read literature and been assured that there is a way to determine who gets this hostile pay.

If you read the guidelines that are put out by the DoD for hostile pay it is more definitive than there are the guidelines for the issuance of some of the combat ribbons that we accept for eligibility in this organization. As our

great Past Commander-in-Chief from Arizona said, if they get shot at they need to be a member of this great organization. I hope the delegates will support this resolution. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Microphone No. 1.
Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JAMES McANAW (Post 8469 - Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I recommend rejection of this resolution. I don't think that many people in this room have had the opportunity to read it, much less digest the DoD Financial Management Regulation, Volume 7(a), Chapter 10, dated February, 2000.

It is very, very detailed, and I think it is unfair to those assembled here to vote on a resolution they don't understand the ramifications of. I think we ought to stick with our — until more information is provided in a timely manner, I think we are best served by sticking with our current requirement of a Campaign Medal as far as determining membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your comments.
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CLAUDIO PEDERY (Post 5471 - Washington, D.C.): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I come from the most powerful city in the whole world, Washington, D.C. I sense an inconsistency in accepting membership in this great organization. Now, you are trying to accept comrades that have just been shot under enemy fire, but you rejected the inclusion or removal of the citizenship test for Section 101.

These are the people that have been recruited, fought for the rights of this country. I am not in favor of this resolution. We should be consistent with Section 101. Thank you, sir, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much.
Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ROBERT MOFF (Post 630 - Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have a question. The speaker a couple of times ago mentioned there is a way of verification. On the 214 there is no verification. If it is, I would like to know what that would be. How can you verify that somebody has? Do we get the pay records, or how will we do it?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: If I may, I will speak to the comrade and also to the audience. Remember, we said any form of verification. Now, a 214 is not the only form of verification that we have in our organization. There are other documentations that do provide it.

Especially now that we have the Korean service, there are orders, personnel records and other things that do come into play, to include financial records.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LARRY MITCHELL (Post 8121 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I stand in support of this resolution. We already have confusion about the Vietnam Service Medal that kept a lot of our members out because they were stationed in Thailand and Laos and Cambodia and

it doesn't show up anywhere on the DD-214 form, but it has the Vietnam Service Medal.

As far as the comrade's comments about needing the DD Form 214, there are 259 sheets of paper that I know about that certifies a member's eligibility for this great organization of ours. If some of us would learn a little more about the paperwork of the Department of Defense, we would know who is eligible and who is not.

In fact, my first trip to Vietnam did not make me eligible. My second one did, because it was not a declared war the time I went the first time. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Microphone No. 2. Is there anyone at the microphones speaking in opposition to acceptance of Resolution 204? If not, then I am going to vote on the issue at this time. You are going to vote on it; I am going to call for the vote. I will get it right.

What we have now is we have the motion on the floor to accept Resolution 204, which has been amended to read "members of the armed forces." That amendment has passed. We now have the motion on the floor and the motion is to accept those into our organization, their eligibility for hostile fire or eminent danger pay.

All those in favor of accepting those who have received eminent danger or hostile fire pay as a portion of eligibility for our organization signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER T. HOLT: That completes the report of our Committee, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Holt and Comrade Art Fellwock, thank you so much. You are dismissed. Thank you for your service.

At this time it would be appropriate, since we have had enough time for discussion and so forth, I also release the By-Laws Committee at this time. Thank you for your service.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS M. BARRETT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Congressman Tom Barrett is currently serving his fifth term representing Wisconsin's Fifth District. A Milwaukee native, he graduated from Marquette University High School and went on to graduate Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with a degree in Economics.

He earned his college tuition by working at Milwaukee's Harley-Davidson plant and on the loading docks at Sears and a local trucking company. Prior to entering law school, Barrett worked as a Federal Bank examiner. He earned his law degree with honors from the University of Wisconsin Law School. While in private practice, he specialized in business law.

Tom Barrett was first elected to the Wisconsin Assembly in 1984. He was elected to the State Senate in 1989 where he gained a reputation as an effective legislator.

In 1992, Congressman Barrett was elected for his first term as U.S. Representative for the Fifth Congressional District. He has served on many important committees and presently serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over a wide range of national policies, including health care, energy, communications and trade. Please provide a warm welcome for Congressman Tom Barrett. (Applause)

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE THOMAS M. BARRETT

CONGRESSMAN BARRETT: Thank you, Commander. Good morning. First, I want to compliment you as I have had the opportunity to sit here and watch your proceedings. It strikes me you are a little more efficient than we sometimes are in the House of Representatives. It would be nice if we could get things done a little quicker as I have seen you do.

It was interesting to see the Commander decide okay, we are going to vote. It sometimes doesn't work that way in the House of Representatives. I am here today on behalf of the Fifth Congressional District. I extend a warm welcome to all the delegates, their families and friends to the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America.

I am pleased and very, very honored that the VFW has again chosen to meet in Milwaukee, my hometown, for the second year in a row. I can tell you the people in Milwaukee and Southeastern Wisconsin and all of Wisconsin are really honored to have you here. This is a big deal here for us to have you here.

We really do appreciate the fact that you have chosen our community for two years in a row. Whether you have traveled a great distance to be here today or you have the good fortune to live in our community or elsewhere in the great State of Wisconsin, it is my hope that you have enjoyed yourselves and that you will return again, be it for business or pleasure.

We again are proud to host the VFW, the nation's oldest major veterans organization, with over two million male and female members. A grateful nation can never say thank you too often for the sacrifices you have endured so that we may enjoy the freedoms and opportunities that we share today.

May your hard work here at the 102nd National Convention serve you well as you guide the VFW into the future. Again, welcome to Milwaukee, welcome to Wisconsin. Please stay as long as you like. Thank you for allowing me to appear before your business session today. Please accept my best wishes for a very successful convention, and I look forward to seeing you again. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I said he immediately earned the respect of the audience with that short commentary, right? It doesn't take a lot of words to say things, it just takes the right ones.

PRESENTATION OF VFW ARMED FORCES GOLD MEDAL
AND CITATION TO CARL BRASHEAR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: This morning, we have the privilege of recognizing a man of unique courage. As the Navy's first African-American master diver, Carl Brashear faced difficulties that would have defeated most people. His spirit and determination resulted not only in overcoming great odds to become a Navy diver, but also in his surviving the loss of a leg in an accident on the USS Hoist in 1966.

Amazingly, through his remarkable force of will, Mr. Brashear was able to continue his Navy career and attain the rank of Master Diver.

In 1998, he became one of only seven enlisted men in history to be enshrined in the naval archives, with a 164-page volume transcribing an oral history of his life and career.

Please join me in welcoming the recipient of the VFW National Armed Forces Award, Mr. Carl Brashear.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads: "National Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and citation awarded to Carl Brashear in recognition of his proud and honorable service in the United States Navy. By overcoming tremendous odds and debilitating injury, he amazed Navy officers with his tenaciousness to serve and his commitment to duty enabling him to become the first African-American Master Diver and one of only seven enlisted men to be enshrined in Naval archives, culminating a notable career that is a standard for valor and inspiration.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 22nd day of August, 2001. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

REMARKS BY MR. CARL BRASHEAR

COMRADE CARL BRASHEAR: I will be brief this morning. I will not take up much of your time. That reminds me of a young bosun mate in the Navy who had six wives, a very young person. He decided he would go out and get number seven. So he said, "I can tell you one thing, I will not keep you long." (Laughter)

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for that introduction and I want to thank the Committee for choosing me to receive this prestigious award this morning. I would like to thank the Commander-in-Chief for his approval. Good morning to everyone. I served in the Navy during the '40s, the '50s, the '60s and '70s, and I would like for you to know that I loved the Navy when I joined it and I loved it when I retired, and I love it today. (Applause)

During that career, I became a deep sea diver. In 1966, I lost my left leg. While I had not reached my goal, I viewed my left leg being missing as

nuisance and inconvenience and never viewed myself as being a handicap. As a result of my accomplishments in the United States Navy, a movie was produced based on my life starring Cuba Goodman, Jr., and Robert DeNiro.

They had a little problem with Cuba Goodman. The makeup people tried to make him look good like me, but they couldn't do it. (Laughter) But I thank them for doing their best. That is all we can ask of anyone is to do their best. I did that in the United States Navy and I had nothing in my mind, you know, that some day a movie would be made. When I left the farm in the rural section of Kentucky, my father said, "Be the best." He used to tell me to be my best even if we were cleaning out a barn. It is a pleasure to be here today with so many veterans. I have been here with the VFW. I told someone this morning I was a member of the VFW, but I made a mistake. That is the American Legion. That is the first mistake I have made in my life. (Laughter) But I am sure before I leave here I will be a member. (Applause)

As a result of the movie, I have been recognized in many different ways, but this is the most prestigious award that I have received. Once again, thank you, Committee members, and thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for the approval of my award. I thank you all.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Carl, on behalf of the VFW, first of all, we want to present you this honorarium for \$5,000. Maybe they will make the next movie look more like you. The last thing I would like to do, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and as Commander-in-Chief, we are going to issue you your new Life Membership. You will be the newest Life Member in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMRADE CARL BRASHEAR: I am speechless. I didn't know that this was going to happen. Thank you, sir. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW JAMES E. VAN ZANDT CITIZENSHIP AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO LOIS POPE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Lois Pope is one of America's leading philanthropists and is founder of the Lois Pope Life Foundation, Inc., an organization dedicated to helping those less fortunate. Among the many Lois Pope Life Foundation's efforts are programs and awards for medical research, college scholarships and summer day camps.

Ms. Pope's work doesn't end there. For many years she has advocated on behalf of the veterans of this nation. She has particular concern for disabled veterans that goes back to more than 40 years when she was an actress and singer on Broadway and performed in a show to benefit veterans.

Her cousin's name is inscribed on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, and it was shortly after visiting the memorial that she became determined to spearhead an effort to build a national monument in Washington honoring the more than two million disabled American veterans living today.

Her generosity has improved the lives of thousands of people and the

world is a better place for her charitable works. Please welcome the recipient of the 2001 VFW James E. Van Zandt National Citizenship Award, Ms. Lois Pope. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation being presented reads: "James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and this citation presented to Lois Pope for founding the Life Foundation, Leaders in Furthering Education, as well as other charitable organizations committed to aiding young Americans who work with the disadvantaged and who are in need of assistance to continue this work. Her foundation's annual awards and scholarships provide inspiration and hope to America's youth, our greatest natural resource, and serve as a shining example for other youth programs.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 22nd day of August, 2001.

Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE BY MS. LOIS POPE

MS. POPE: Thank you so much, Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak. You know, I have a very special place in my heart for veterans who have traveled the globe fighting for freedom and for me. I will always treasure this award and I will also hold it dear. On behalf of my foundations, LIFE, the Lois Pope Life Foundation and the Disabled Veterans Memorial Life Foundation, let me extend greetings to you, Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak and to VFW Adjutant General John Senk, and to Auxiliary National President Patricia Jankowski, to National Secretary-Treasurer Celia Davis, and to all of the sacrifices and members as officers of the VFW and Auxiliary.

When America called you did your duty. Advancing the cause of liberty throughout the world, you set personal interests aside to preserve our ways of life. You risked the loss of your lives and many of you came home wounded or ill, and a life that would never been the same.

Can a grateful nation ever do enough to thank you? As I search for words of appreciation, you search for new ways to serve our country and its people. Your motto says it all:

"To Honor the Dead By Helping the Living."

I once had the honor of serving you as an entertainer in a VA Hospital. I saw firsthand what you sacrificed at your country's call. I was so deeply moved by your sacrifices in defense of freedom. You painted an indelible picture in my mind that day and I realized then as I do now that Veterans of Foreign Wars have written and continue to write the indelible books and the only books, the definitive books on American heroism.

You inspired me to live life in a different way, in a way that I hope reflects your nobility. You taught me that it is better to give than to receive. One need not be religious to understand this profound truth, because it was

this truth that guided me to found three charitable organizations to carry out the goals that govern my life.

Leaders In Furthering Education, or LIFE, the Lois Pope LIFE Foundation and the Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Foundation. When my good friend Christopher Reeve suffered a tragic spinal cord injury, I was devastated. But his courage and his faith inspired me to create the Lois Pope LIFE Foundation at the University of Miami School of Medicine which spearheads the drive for new treatments for paralysis.

When my dear friend, Secretary Jesse Brown, who is my hero and the most noble man I know, wounded in Vietnam and who was just recently diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig disease, I sought out and gave support to the leading researchers in this field at Johns Hopkins University.

Jesse was supposed to be here today to celebrate this occasion with us. Instead, he is undergoing emergency surgery. Please remember him in your prayers. He so desperately needs them now. Secretary Brown is one of the strongest links in the chain of my life, fighting and crusading with me for a memorial that is long overdue, honoring the millions of veterans who throughout our history who have come home bearing the various scars of war and who are disabled for life.

As I journey through my life, I never forgot you. I always remembered you and the sacrifices you made while our nation was engaged in conflict around the globe. I went back to see you, to visit those of you who were receiving treatment in our VA centers.

I want you to know that I will continue to go back as long as there is life left in me. My foundation sends thousands of disadvantaged children to summer camps to develop crucial skills to obtain the American dream fostered and preserved by your sacrifices.

Also, this year LIFE will have awarded \$1 million in college scholarships to economically-deprived students who excel in volunteerism. They, at a tender age, know the profound truth you taught me: "It is better to give than to receive."

In recent years, I have taken on two more crucial projects, both aimed at men and women who come home sick and wounded from military service. Each year through the Presidential Unsung Hero Award, the LIFE Foundation draws attention to the inspirational achievements of one outstanding disabled veteran.

Because of the sacrifices of disabled veterans in defending our freedom, I founded the Disabled Veterans Life Memorial Foundation, and together with Secretary Brown am leading a drive to erect a memorial in a prominent place in Washington, D.C., honoring the millions of veterans whose bodies and spirits have been forever scarred.

The memorial we will construct is essential. We must make sure that the American people understand the actual cost of war, the cost that is paid from the bleakest human terms, that they fully comprehend the risk each veteran in this audience took while serving in our armed forces, that they realize the enormous sacrifice many of you made through the loss of your

blood, your health, your well-being.

I hope that you will join me in the cause of building this memorial. Please travel this road with me. As I expressed my gratitude for receiving the James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, I stand here beholden to you, beholden to you and forever grateful for your sacrifices and service. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: In behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we present you with this honorarium for \$5,000 for the Lois Pope LIFE Foundation. Thank you again for being with us today.

MS. LOIS POPE: Thank you. This check for my foundation will go back to things that are needed for VA Hospitals. I am deeply grateful for this, but the need is in your VA Hospitals for equipment, for televisions, for whatever you need there, and that's where this money, this check for \$5,000, will go. So thank you very much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE STEVE BUYER, CONGRESSMAN FROM INDIANA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We are pleased to have with us this morning a real friend of America's veterans, Congressman Steve Buyer from the great State of Indiana.

As Chairman of the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee during the 105th and 106th Congresses, Congressman Buyer championed the Tri-Care Senior Pharmacy Entitlement Program for Medicare-eligible military retirees. He created a program to address soldiers on food stamps, reformed the military retirement system, improved military pay and benefits, secured medical care for reservists who suffered from Persian Gulf illnesses, and addressed recruitment and retention difficulties.

Steve Buyer, a Desert Storm veteran, believes in doing what is right for members of our armed forces and veterans. He has said, "We must do everything that we can do to provide our military personnel the resources necessary to carry out their missions as they defend our interests around the world. In return, all Americans must ensure the United States Government remains steadfast in its moral, legal and ethical obligation to provide veterans and their families the benefits and services they so surely deserve."

Congressman Steve Buyer, in his fifth term as a U.S. Representative, is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. He also serves as Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, ensuring that VA carries out its congressionally-mandated mission. Please give a warm welcome to the Honorable Steve Buyer. (Applause)

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE STEVE BUYER

CONGRESSMAN BUYER: Thank you. I would like to thank you for inviting me here today to address the conference. Please don't be in shock,

but my staff prepared this 22-page speech. How about that? The best thing I can do to this 22-page speech is to tear it up. I am going to tear it up. What do you think? We have to have a conspiracy. You have to tell my staff it was a great speech.

Now, I am going to take and put on my hat. (Applause) Now, can we just talk? I was proud to read the remarks that President Bush gave to this Convention a few days ago. I was also pleased to read the remarks of Secretary Principi. I believe that both men will carry out with sincerity their obligations to America's veterans and to the national security of our country.

I wish to announce here today that on September 5th in Indianapolis, Secretary Principi will come and I will hold a hearing on the issue of the claims backlog. So, when the President said, "I make this a priority," Secretary Principi leans forward and said, "We are going to make sure that the issue is addressed."

When I was thinking of the introduction, I stopped and paused for a moment and thought about the opportunity that was given to me as one of your comrades. You see, there are not many of us in Congress, there are not many veterans, let alone members of the VFW who serve in Congress.

The responsibility to educate members of Congress relies upon you. The dimensions for which all of us know and share is not understood by all, which means we have a tremendous responsibility.

Last night I had the opportunity to be with my comrades from Indiana. Are they here? I think they helped reinforce to me about the shared responsibility that we have. Please never take it for granted that your member of Congress knows or understands what you are even talking about.

I am going to make a very radical charge to this Convention, and I also will charge other veterans service organizations. I am going to give you an insight on lobbying members of Congress. I believe that you should reconfigure your districts in your states.

You should reconfigure your districts to the redistricting of congressional maps that are occurring all across this country. Now, there are many of you who may not agree with that. That dynamic will reinvigorate an organization.

More importantly, if you look at some of those congressional districts today, your districts, you may have three or four members of Congress. The problem is that members of Congress now are not going to district meetings. In my new congressional district, it has parts of five of the VFW districts.

If you multiply that times the number of veterans service organizations, you are not building your relationship with that member of Congress, and that is a bad thing, not a good thing. So our responsibility is to help educate that member of Congress means, I believe as an organization we need to reconfigure.

I also want to share that the list that was read to you of accomplishments was only because I had an opportunity. If we could recruit more veterans to run for Congress, then our jobs would be so much easier when you place an advocate in a position of leadership. So, I urge

you to go out there and recruit more veterans to run for Congress and the United States Senate. (Applause)

I am also pleased to announce as I look back at the eight years I served on the Armed Services Committee, I took that job very seriously. I sought often to also right the wrongs of the past, whether it was making sure that some of our honored veterans received their Medals of Honor from Theodore Roosevelt and others.

This past weekend there was a ceremony in Indianapolis. The ceremony honored the sailors of the USS Indianapolis. You see, a few years ago a Hollywood producer came to see me. They wanted access to the United States Navy to make another movie. I told this producer that I was tired of seeing movies about sailors in the water, focusing on the tragedy of the USS Indianapolis.

I said, "Why don't you make a movie about the contributions that those sailors and that ship made to help end World War II?" Our country had never given them the recognition they so rightly deserve. (Applause) For two years I put in legislation to have the Navy to give them their ribbons and commendation for that ship. It was a pleasurable thing that occurred this past weekend.

The other point I would like to make is I was pleased that when President Bush came and he spoke to you, that we have an individual right now as Commander-in-Chief who had served in the military and understands our dimension. I believe this, and I want to share it with you.

This is from Steve Buyer. In the next few days, you will have the opportunity to listen to our military leaders and you will continue to do that, but never get away from this point. It is the sole responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief as President to lay out the vital interests of the nation.

He then turns to the Pentagon and says, "What is your national military strategy to protect those interests?" Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that as the sole remaining super power we need a policy of restraint in regards to international conflict management.

When you think about what occurred over the last decade, we have taken over 275,000 troops and placed them in 135 nations all around the world, we created an expectancy by our allies and friends that we would become the world's policemen.

Our friends and allies then began to decrease their defense budgets as a percentage of their gross national product. That is wrong. The United States has provided for peace and stability of not only Europe but the Pacific Rim as they have enjoyed the growth of their economies upon our back.

I believe it is time for Europe to carry a greater burden of responsibility in the world. (Applause) What that does not mean, and I will be accused of that here today, of somehow trying to build fences around this country. That is false.

Let me ask you a question. If George Forman were your body guard would you lift weights? No. If George Forman said, "I thought you ought to lift weights because I will not be there Saturday night," are you going to

start lifting? I don't mean Bud Light. You see, it is common sense. So, when we turn to our countries and allies, we need more support and not less.

The other thing I have a charge for all of you, we need to tell the good story. All of us as soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, you are America's recruiters. Don't rely upon the paid recruiters in the military. You are the mentors in your community.

There are young men and women that look and watch what you do, and you have great influence upon their lives more than you will ever know. As we address all of these veterans benefits, please begin to tell the good story and mentor our youth. That is extremely important. You will have a great impact upon the nation's military because you are hand-selecting them. So please do that.

Let me close with these remarks. I wrote this trying to get a good sense of how I feel and I share these words with you. I believe that answering our nation's call to duty is the highest form of patriotism. While the defenders of freedom, we must be vigilant.

We must also be grateful, grateful for our cultural and spiritual heritage. Such a heritage we do not own outright. We are merely true tests for life. Our duty is to improve upon life. It is our endless sacrifice to dedicate our lives to the greater good, to set posts for a more prosperous union.

To me life is very simple. We plant a seed with the hope that it will grow and mature to bear fruit of greater strength and vitality. As I have visited, as you have many forts and Posts and cemeteries throughout this world, I also can feel the pride in our heritage.

But I do submit that the heart of man is able to construct monuments and awards for more significance than the narrow span of our own existence. It is the silent lapse of time that displays our frail and infallible and imperishable we are as a people.

The lyrics of a song heard but not listened to by many, that life is about more than who we are. It is about what we do with the time that we have. So, we must rise with the sun, humble servants of God, properly using these talents given to us for the betterment of others.

I believe that is the path of providence for our nation, our state, to your community and in the end ourselves. Please always join me in a salute to the vigilant. God's speed.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have another guest here shortly.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS E. WHITE, SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Our next speaker is the eighteenth Secretary of the Army this past May. At his confirmation hearing, Secretary White noted that today's Army is once again an Army in transformation, as it must be and it has been throughout its 220-year history to meet our nation's security needs in the new century.

A businessman, military retiree and Vietnam veteran, Mr. White brings to his new role a wealth of experience and a great commitment to more than one million active duty National Guard soldiers and 270,000 civilian employees who make up today's Army.

He has promised to invest in people, attracting the best and the brightest, while contributing to the quality of life of soldiers, civilians and veterans alike. He is committed to assuring readiness in a broadest sense, modernizing equipment and weapons, integrated components to accomplish this great nation.

Secretary White began in public service in 1967 when he was commissioned in the United States Army. His distinguished military career includes two tours of Vietnam, serving as Commander, the Executive Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

He retired from the Army as a Brigadier General in 1990. Mr. White has served in several key executive positions with Enron Corporation, a major energy company. Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for the Honorable Thomas E. White, Secretary of the Army. (Applause)

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE THOMAS E. WHITE,
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

SECRETARY THOMAS WHITE: Thank you, John, for that overly generous introduction, and for your leadership in this great organization. As a fellow veteran of a foreign war, I feel like I have come home this morning. It is great to be with all of you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I am sorry, sir. No one should feel out of place. Thomas E. White, this Life Membership card is presented to you on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This is in my pocket and I am taking this with me. Thank you very much. Thanks to Pat Jankowski, the President of the Ladies Auxiliary, that leads that superb organization. I want to congratulate Diana Stout, the incoming President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, my fellow Veterans of Foreign Wars:

Thank you for allowing me the distinct privilege and honor of addressing this 102nd gathering of the America's finest citizens. I might add thank you for adjusting the schedule for allowing me to speak one day later than planned. Yesterday afternoon in Columbia, South Carolina, we buried a great patriotic fellow veteran, Congressman Floyd Spence. We will miss him and his support of soldiers and sailors, airmen, Marines and their families that he has supported for so many years.

I am glad to be in Milwaukee and very glad to represent our great Army. As we drove over from the airport this morning, I was reminded of a similar drive by a citizen I took last weekend. We pulled into a gas station and the agent came up to the window and asked if he could fill it up.

I usually pump my own. I said, "Sure. Go right ahead." Well, my wife, Susie, gets out of the car and walks to the back and begins talking to the

guy pumping the gas and the wife engages in a conversation and some hugging and even some more conversation.

So it was imperative that I see what was going on. She hugged him once more, and now I am really perturbed. Finally, one more hug and Susie gets back in the car and we drive off. I said, "What was all that about?" Susie said, "The guy pumping the gas was one of my old high school boyfriends." She was just catching up on old times.

While feeling pretty foolish of myself I said, "It looks like you made the right choice. You could have made that choice." Without losing a beat, Susie said, "If I had married him, he would be the Secretary of the Army and you would be pumping the gas." (Laughter) So I am not confused about my role in life or where I stand here today.

In the remarks Monday by the President, he observed that the VFW is a living example of a special kind of patriotism, a love of country, expressed not just in words but in lifetimes of service. It is truly humbling to be here among great patriots like you, those that have made the biggest investment to our national security through your service to our country.

You gave of your youth, your time, your sweat and in many cases your blood to keep our nation free and strong. Indeed, many of you in this audience are members of what has been called America's greatest generation, brave veterans of World War II who risked it all to make a difference.

On behalf of the soldiers in today's Army, I would like to salute you special veterans for your sacrifices, your courage, your lasting accomplishments and service to America. You make us all very proud. God bless you.

I also want to thank both the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary for leading the successful fight to build the National World War II Memorial, a monument long overdue to these extraordinary Americans who fought so valiantly to save western civilization and to make America what it is today. God bless the President for signing that legislation. Now, it is going to become a reality.

You constitute a powerful voice, not only for our veterans but also for everybody that serves in uniform today. You do so by standing up for our troops, their families, their quality of life, by sustaining the ties of friendship that binds and extent families together in sufficient and extraordinary fashion and fundamental principles that in the heart of our democracy are preserved and passed on to future generations. For all of this, I thank you.

You know, our nation's strength comes also from our great sons and daughters who have shouldered the wars, those who have served today and served before on that unbroken chain linking America from generation to generation. Our nation's strength also comes from informed citizens who are aware of the challenges, opportunities and the dangers that we face around the world.

It is here where the VFW can truly make a difference in the halls of Congress and in every city in town in America through your citizen education programs and community service. We can do every day to make a difference, especially for those who will follow in your footsteps.

Today I would like to tell you a little bit about the young men and women who are following in your footsteps, the soldiers of today's Army who carry on your noble work of defending our nation and protecting the Constitution and our way of life.

As far into the future as we can clearly see, the threat of conflict will continue to shape the nature of global politics. Because it does, the Army will be busy. The Army must be ready. Above all, the Army must be ready to uphold its non-negotiable contract with the American people, to fight and win our nation's wars.

Consequently, America's Army must be capable of conducting a wide range of activities around the globe, from international engagement with our allies and friends to stability and support operations to war fighting. Even as we gather here today in this grand conference center in Milwaukee, nearly 125,000 of our great soldiers, some of your sons, daughters and grandchildren are forward stationed in over 100 countries around the world. Think about that, 100 countries.

Last year in addition to them, we deployed another 26,000 soldiers for operations and military exercises in 68 countries, all the way from Indonesia to Nigeria and Africa, and to the Balkans. That is a pretty broad spread. In Bosnia, the Texas Army National Guard's 49th Armored Division assumed the mission for the multi-national division on the north side, the first time since World War II that a reserve component division headquarters has led active component forces in an operational mission.

In the next few weeks, the torch will pass to the 29th Infantry Division with troops from Virginia, Maryland and D.C. This will be the 29th Division largest overseas deployment since World War II when the same Blue and Gray Division landed on Omaha Beach in the invasion of Normandy which we all saw in the movie "Saving Private Ryan" not long ago.

With National Guard and Reserve troops being up about 70 percent of the 2700-member U.S. force to be commanded by the 29th Division, it will be the first time that they outnumber our active Army troops in Bosnia since the mission began way back in 1995.

So the statement that we are one Army, active Reserve and National Guard, has never been truer than it is today. As a Guard, I can tell you if the Guards and Reserves were not in such outstanding shape as they were and as they are in accomplishing these missions, we couldn't get the job done.

If there is anyone out here who has served in the Guard or who has served in the Reserves over the years or currently does, God bless you. You are a critical part of our force. In both Europe and Korea, Army soldiers continue to successfully extend the legacy of a commitment that you made 50 years ago.

In Southwest Asia, the Army continues support of the United Nations sanctions against Iraq, stability operations in the Persian Gulf and peacekeeping efforts in the Sinai. We talk about the commitments of the Army and every time I hear a politician say, "Well, it is only going to be for six months or for a year," we are now in our sixth year in Bosnia. We are in

our eighteenth year in the Sinai commitment.

Once we start them, they don't seem to go away. We are fundamental. The American armed forces are fundamental to peace and stability in the world. Put it all together and you have got one fully deployed Army, and almost a third of it is either stationed overseas or deployed forward.

Here at home, we are busy doing everything from fighting forest fires out West where we have two battalions about to go into the State of Washington and help restore the situation there over the next several days, to the flood recovery on the East Coast, to supporting our enforcement agencies in their drug interdiction efforts.

The bottom line, no other military service works as frequently or as continuously to deter aggression, to operate with allies in coalition partners and support civil authorities and great young soldiers in our Army. I know you are proud of them and I certainly am myself. The VFW is right there with us.

For example, Jim Goldsmith, VFW's Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and Bob Wallace, Executive Director of the VFW Washington office, visited our troops in Bosnia and Kosovo just two weeks ago. While there they donated ten TV and VCR combination units to our troops on your behalf.

We deeply appreciate your contributions. These TV/VCR units will enable our deployed soldiers to enroll in video courses offered by City College of Chicago, right down the road, and the University of Maryland. This is a great contribution towards the continuing education of our soldiers.

Jim and Bob also donated over 2,000 Operation Uplink phone cards to our soldiers so they can call their families and loved ones here in the United States. All of this is much is all about, veterans taking care of veterans.

We certainly can't do enough for our people, because the Army is about people, not things. Technology is merely an enabler. The Army is a magnificent family. It is the sword and shield of the oldest and greatest democracy on earth, the place where Abraham called the last best pope on earth.

Thus people will also be the centerpiece of the Army and the core of our institutional strength there. Consequently, we must attract, develop and retain our fair share of America's best and brightest, which, of course, is more easily said than done in this day and age.

However, I am happy to report to you today that our numbers look very, very good. We anticipate meeting all of our recruiting and retention requirements for this year. Our success in attracting talented people is due in no small part to the organizations that support us, principally the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

By the way, veterans are some of our best recruiters. You have far more influence than you realize, particularly given the fact that our military is one of the most respected institutions in America, reputation you helped create and sustain.

So when you get a chance to talk to young people who are interested, advise them to go to www.goarmy.com for information on how to sign up. We are all recruiters, everybody in this room. We are always looking for motivated young men and women with the desire to serve America just as

all of us have.

Thanks to your consistent support. Along with the backing of the administration and the Congress, we can now offer a very competitive standard of living in that war for talent. For example, this year's five-percent pay increase goes a long way in closing the gap between military and civilian wages.

Likewise, we are increasing allowances to eliminate all out-of-pocket expenses for housing within the next five years. As the President mentioned the other day, we are pursuing full funding of all health-care costs and we are working to honor our obligation to veterans by implementing Tri-Care for life. That is not negotiable, period. It is going to be funded and we are going to do it, and it is the right thing to do. (Applause)

We are also on track to completely eliminate inadequate housing for unaccompanied enlisted soldiers by 2008. Likewise, we intend to fully revitalize, privatize or demolish inadequate family housing by 2010. For soldiers pursuing their education on active duty, we now offer Army University access online.

The Army buys the computer, we buy the Internet hook-up and then offer soldiers a wide range of universities with which to take online courses. I want you to know that we have 6,000 soldiers that are signed up for that. I hope to triple that in the next couple of years.

When you go to Kosovo and go to Camp Bonsteel they have a room where these hook-ups are and when the young people can come off patrol or have some off-duty time, they can go in there and take college courses. What a wonderful thing for the youth of America. We are going to push that.

I am very optimistic about the direction we are headed in terms of attracting, developing and retaining good people. We have accomplished much, but we cannot rest. There is much hard work to be done.

Let me just give you an aside. I know for everybody here when you first saw the Army of One commercials, we had a bit of a non-traditional message, this notion of Army of one. I can tell you that it fits into the broader themes that you and I are comfortable with, of teamwork and esprit de corps in the pride in units.

When you go to that Web site with your grandson or your son or daughter, and watch them go through that Web site, it is all right there and the campaign is working. If you are still uncomfortable with the going forward, just remember one thing. We are not recruiting you.

We did that about 30, 40 or 50 years ago. We are going after your grandsons and your sons and your daughters and granddaughters. We are so far very, very successful. We have got to continue to improve the quality of life for our soldiers, their families, our veterans and retirees.

Sacrifice is part of being in the military, but we cannot and we will not prolong the trend of funding readiness on the backs of our people. Along these same lines, we must establish a reasonable rate, a soldier's deployment to avoid too many days away from home.

We want to average no more than 120 days per year per soldier. Right

now we are at 140 to 150. That is too high. So, if you read the newspapers and you know that we have a our-structure exercise going on right now about what the duty strategy should be and the forces to support it, my position is very clear.

The Army is already over-deployed in its current size, so if somebody wants to think we are going to cut a division, then they have to tell me what do I stop doing? Otherwise, we ought to make the Army bigger. So, that is the debate that is going on in Washington.

We must also modernize and selectively upgrade our aging combat systems. Over 75 percent of the Army's major combat systems exceed their designed life. Excellence in maintenance will take us only so far. In the meanwhile, we must continue to field new combat systems.

This is more than an affordability issue. The Comanche and Crusader will fulfill critical war fighting requirements that cannot be met by current combat systems. As good stewards of our nation's treasure, we must also reform our business practices. This means focusing on core competencies, outsourcing non-core functions like housing. I can tell you the way to modernize family housing in the military is to privatize it and get private capital and private development expertise to do it.

If you want to go see what it looks like, go to Fort Carson, Colorado, where it is going on, or Fort Lewis, Fort Hood. We are going to have the whole place modernized in about the next four to five years, and virtually all of it is going to be with private capital.

The ultimate objectives of this effort will be to improve efficiency and allow dollar savings to be reallocated to higher priority efforts within the Army. We must also maintain the momentum we have achieved in transforming the Army into the 21st Century land force without equal.

We must be able to play a decisive role in joining combined operations across a wide spectrum of the requirements and against an expanding array of potential threats. Transformation is particularly important given that we are now only the ninth largest army in the war.

Six of the eight armies in front of us belong to countries whose strategic interests are not necessarily aligned with those of the United States. When you talk about Iraq and Iran, I have understated it significantly. Interestingly enough, we have the largest Air Force in the world. We are blessed to have the largest Air Force in the world and the largest Navy in the world.

I might add that we also have the fourth largest Air Force in the world, which belongs to the Navy Marine Air team, and the fourth largest Navy in the world, which belongs to the U.S. Coast Guard. The nation is blessed with that as the case. In you are smaller, like we are in the Army, you have got to try harder.

Given the size differential, the obvious implication for us is that if we are not the largest Army in the world, we darn well sure better be the best in the world. That is why the transforming of the Army is so important to our future. (Applause)

None of the concerns I have noted here are insurmountable. The solution

involves aligning our strategies, our resources and our fore structure, all of which have been out of balance for the last eight years. Fix this imbalance and we can accomplish anything. We intend to do that.

The administration and the Congress and the Department of Defense all recognize the pressing need and are fully engaged in the process of determining how to restore the balance. Now like Yogi Berra, I know it is dangerous to make predictions, especially about the future.

But I think we can say with great confidence that this process will ensure America's Army remains the preeminent land force of the 21st Century decisive across the entire spectrum of military operations, just as it has for the entire 226 years of our proud history.

Otherwise, we will arrive again at a military that has too many missions and inadequate forces, and virtually everybody in this room has been a part of that at some point in our life and at some other time in the history of our country. We are not going to let it happen again.

Let me close today with an observation from the great Roman orator, Cicero. He once said, "Gratitude is the greatest of virtues." Those of you who have fought America's wars and the families who supported you from afar deserve the gratitude of our nation, for if we forget our defenders, our nation itself will soon be forgotten.

Yes, there are days set aside to officially honor our soldiers and our veterans. Veterans Day is set aside to honor you, those who have toiled, fought and bled on our nation's battlefields. It is only one day. On Memorial Day we pay respects to those who have given the last full measure of devotion.

Again, Memorial Day is only one day. Armed Forces Day is dedicated to those who currently serve in uniform, one day, and because it is not even a national holiday most people don't even know the day of the Armed Forces Day. I want to know that most Americans, in fact, virtually all Americans, do appreciate you and I.

They don't need a holiday to do it. Although every day should be Veterans Day as far as I am concerned. Let me express my gratitude to you and personally on behalf of the American people thank you for all you have done in terms of service to our country, both in peacetime and in war.

We owe you a debt of gratitude we can never repay. It is not enough, but I just wanted to say on their behalf thanks for the wonderful things you have done for your country and are continuing to do. God bless you and thank you for your service. From the battlefields of Europe, the Pacific, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia and Kosovo, to the Halls of Congress, you have helped bring America to what it is today. In many ways, we are now only starting to realize the profound contributions our veterans have made to our nation. Every one of you helped earn our blessings and created a better world. Every one of you should be proud of the legacy you established for your children and grandchildren. Because of you we have entered a century that promises to be the best America has ever known.

I opened today by saying thank you, and I would like to close today by

saying thank you. Thank you for asking me here today, thank you for your service and sacrifice. May God bless you and all of our young men and women serving around the world to keep America free. Have a great Convention. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will have the report of the General s Committee.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief John. I am Chairman of the General s Committee. We have been charged with Reloutions 301 through 316. I might add 315 and 316 were added after we arrived at this Convention. Each State Commander should have a copy of those two resolutions.

In addition, there are some on the back table. I will first read those resolutions that we recommend for adoption. They are as follows: Resolutions 302, 305, 310 and 315. I will repeat. They are 302, 305, 310 and 315. I would move for adoption.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TOM POULIOT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Delegates to this Convention, you have heard a motion and a proper second to the acceptance of the resolutions by the General s Committee. Is there any discussion on the acceptance of these resolutions? Is there any discussion on these resolutions? Since there is no discussion, I see no one at the microphones, I will call at this time for the vote. All those in favor of all the resolutions for acceptance signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: We then have two that we recommend adoption, as amended. They are Resolutions 301 and 307. On Resolution 301, we will strike after the word "Resolved", "and initiate any necessary changes to ensure proper respect for the flag of the United States of America."

On Resolution 307, it is very simple. We are just deleting the word "all." I would then recommend the approval of Resolutions 301 and 307, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TOM POULIOT: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Delegates, we have a motion properly made and seconded to adopt, as amended, Resolutions 301 and 307. Is there any discussion on these resolutions at this time? Is there any discussion on Resolutions 301 and 307, as amended?

If not, all those in favor of accepting these resolutions, as amended, will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TOM POULIOT: Commander-in-Chief, at this time the Committee recommends rejection of the following Resolutions: Nos. 303, 304, 306, 308, 309, 311, 312, 313, 314, and today we received a new Resolution No. 316, which involved the petition for clemency for Private

Eddie D. Slovik.

Have all of the comrades heard of Resolution 316 at all? I will read Resolution 316. I believe each Commander received one and there are some in the back so I will do a summary here. Private Eddie D. Slovik was the only American soldier to be executed for desertion during World War II.

One of the members of his court-martial stated recently that he was used as an example, that the example is a victim. Private Slovik did not desert the front lines, but instead refused an order to go to the front line. I believe we had a resolution similar to this last year which was also rejected. I will read the Resolved portion.

“Be It Resolved by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States do not condone Private Slovik’s behavior. We do hereby support a posthumous presidential pardon for Eddie D. Slovik.” That was the “Resolved” portion, and the Committee recommended rejection of 316 also.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You have heard the resolutions that were to be rejected. Is there any comment on that?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BILL DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would ask that Resolution 316 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Dobbie, you can move at this time that the resolution be adopted.

COMRADE BILL DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): If I may, I will so move, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You can. That is your desire, you are moving the adoption of Resolution 316.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAVID MILLER (Department of Michigan): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and it is properly seconded for adoption of Resolution 316. I will ask the Chairman of the Committee to read the reason for rejection.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Our reason for rejection is basically as contained. He did refuse a direct order to report to the front lines. I think even if you look at Resolution 316, when you see the “Resolved”, we are saying we don’t condone it, yet we want to give him an award. It just doesn’t make any sense.

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

COMRADE BILL DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. To the Committee, thanks for your consideration. I would just like to say I don’t think we are talking about an award, but enough said there. Private Slovik was one of nearly — well, let me say several thousand that were convicted of desertion during World War II.

Private Slovik was one of nearly 100 that were issued a death sentence by the court-martial. Of those nearly 100, only one comrade was given the death sentence and the sentence carried out. That was Private Slovik.

For many years the family of Private Slovik has tried in vain to secure a pardon. No one is asking anyone to justify and condone desertion. Comrades, I would submit to you that with all of those death sentences and only one being carried out, something smells in Denmark.

If I may, as consideration along with this resolution, of course, everyone has the text that is printed and passed out, and we greatly appreciate that effort. But quite a substantial documentation package was sent along with this resolution, and I would have hoped that we would have had a different resolution by the Committee.

Comrades, I ask your support for this resolution and ask you to support the passing and the acceptance of Resolution No. 316. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. Is there any more discussion on Resolution 316? The Committee has recommended rejection. There is a proper motion and a second on the floor to adopt Resolution 316. Is there any further discussion? All those in favor of adopting Resolution No. 316, please signify by saying "aye"; all those against signify by saying "no". The "nays" have it.

Are there any other reconsiderations or adoptions? If not, this Committee is not released at this time in case we have other resolutions that may come before it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would just like to thank the Vice-Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, and Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden and Joe T. Woo from the great State of Georgia, and all the Committee members for their diligent work on behalf of the General's Committee. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Past Commander-in-Chief Hogan. Thank you, Committee, and thank you to all the Committees as we continue to go through the program.

PRESENTATION OF GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT TO DOUGLAS PETERSON FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Former Ambassador Douglas "Pete" Peterson departed Hanoi for the United States on July 15, 2001, concluding more than four years as America's first post-war ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Former Ambassador Peterson has worked tirelessly toward forging new agreements with Vietnam that have helped to build a new relationship with Vietnam. During the four years he served as Ambassador, there was unprecedented progress made in the effort to determine the fate of Americans missing in action in Southeast Asia.

Immediately prior to his diplomatic posting, Mr. Peterson served three terms as a member of the United States House of Representatives, representing the Second Congressional District of Florida where he was a member of the House Appropriations Committee and deeply engaged in

health, national defense and international relations matters.

His previous service includes 26 years in the United States Air Force having served in worldwide assignments as a fighter pilot and commander. He is a distinguished combat veteran of the Vietnam War and was incarcerated as a POW during that conflict for six and one-half years.

During his incarceration, he endured countless hours of hardship and torture. He drew strength from the faith and trust displayed by his fellow prisoners and was able to resist and survive his ordeal. Pete Peterson crossed the "freedom line" on 4 March, 1973. He completed his military service in 1981. Honorable Pete Peterson. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation being presented reads as follows:

"Gold Medal of Merit and this citation awarded to Douglas 'Pete' Peterson in recognition of a career in public service, evidenced by his 26 years in the United States Air Force, six and a half years as a prisoner of war, three terms in the United States House of Representatives, and culminating with his appointment as America's first post-war Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. His commitment to his family, his country, his community and to his comrades-in-arms, earns him the highest respect and admiration 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 22nd day of August, 2001." This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE DOUGLAS PETERSON

COMRADE DOUGLAS PETERSON: Commander-in-Chief, Distinguished Guests and my Fellow Members of the Great VFW organization:

I could not be more proud than to stand before you today to receive the Gold Medal of Merit. I have been so proud to work with all of the members of the VFW over many, many years, well before I ever entered into my political career in the House of Representatives and well before I ever went to Vietnam as the first Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

But may I say very, very quickly that this Gold Medal of Merit is shared by every one of you, because you were there. It is because of the leadership of this great organization that I was able to do the things that we did in bringing two former enemies together, to work in areas of mutual interest and respect.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to make friends around the world. That is why I went back to Vietnam, not only to make friends but also at the very heart of why I went back was to improve the potential for the fullest possible accounting.

I hope that you are as proud as I on the progress that we have made. No time in history that I know of have two former belligerents gone back to the battlefield to work as hard as we have worked to determine the fate

of those who were lost in the conflict.

We have developed now in Vietnam a partnership, not just cooperation but a partnership, because we are helping the Vietnamese to determine the fate of those 300,000 MIAs that remain on their side.

I want to cite to you a very quick experience that we had when President Clinton visited Vietnam back in November of last year. There were hundreds of thousands of people who came out spontaneously all over Vietnam to see, just to wave at your President and mine.

On the night he arrived and went to his hotel, the area around that hotel was absolutely packed with Vietnamese citizens. Someone went up and asked this one gentleman, an older gentleman there, why he was standing out there. It was midnight and it was hot.

And he simply said, after he identified himself as a former combatant of the North Vietnamese Army, he simply said, "One thousand friends are not enough, one enemy is too many." (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, veterans and those who currently serve in our armed forces are the biggest peacemakers in the world. We are the ones who work for peace, not war. We do that by creating friendships, by finding cooperative engagements throughout the world so that our country not only prospers but is held without harm.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, let me just say it is this organization, the VFW, that has been the one organization that has worked so very, very hard in conjunction with the American political leaders to re-engage Vietnam to create one more friend.

As a result, our servicemen and women are not going to have to lay their lives on the line there ever again. Those of you who have served, my hat is off to you. Of all the things I have done in my life, nothing makes me so proud as to have served my nation in my 26 years in the United States Air Force and the kinds of sacrifices that I made at that time are the kinds of sacrifices that have given me my own spirit.

I know that you, too, have sacrificed so very much in your lives and your families, too, and I give you my deepest thanks for this award. But again, I know that this award is not my award alone. It is your award, too. God bless you. (Applause)

I would be remiss, ladies and gentlemen, if I did not introduce my wife. Some of you may know that I suffered the sacrifice that some of you may have as well. My first wife passed away from cancer. I went to Vietnam as a bachelor and I thought frankly romance was over with me.

I said, "That is it. I am just going to go back to Vietnam and I am going to be the best diplomat I possibly can be." Well, two weeks after I arrived there, at the Israeli Ambassador's house I met this beautiful woman. She was the Australian Senior Trade Commissioner and operated all the trade activities for Australia in Vietnam at that time.

At least I was smart enough to recognize romance when it came my way. So we very quickly struck up a very strong friendship which blossomed into a very deep love and affection and we have been married well over

three years now. I wanted you to get to know her.

She is a very distinguished banker and trade official in her own right. I did what all the other men in this audience has done, I married a woman smarter than I am. So thank you very much. We are proud to be with you and may God bless you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD,
GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO MR. TRAVIS TRITT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Travis Tritt is known the world over because of his immense musical talent. But he is much more than a performer. What many of his fans don't know, is that Mr. Tritt dedicates much of his time and talent to disabled veterans. Mr. Tritt has produced several videos in which he portrays a disabled veteran trying to live in today's society. While working on the "Any More" video, Mr. Tritt had the opportunity to work with a number of veterans at the Alvin C. York Clinic.

Touched emotionally by his experience with veterans, he has since visited countless veterans at VA Hospitals and has taken his concern for veterans directly to politicians in Washington, D.C.

We admire his actions and applaud his strong and powerful voice on behalf of our nation's veterans. Please welcome the recipient of the 2001 VFW Hall of Fame Award, Mr. Travis Tritt. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation being presented today reads: "Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and citation presented to Travis Tritt in recognition of his staunch support and concern for America's disabled veterans, evidenced by his visitations to VA Hospitals, performances at veterans' programs and his development of films demonstrating the plight of disabled veterans in today's society. His compassion for these brave men and women and his willingness to shine his spotlight on their cause truly brightens our nation and all who serve in the armed forces.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 22nd day of August, 2001. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE BY MR. TRAVIS TRITT

MR. TRAVIS TRITT: Thank you. I never had an opportunity to work with veterans prior to 1992, and in 1992 that opportunity came about as a result of a video, a music video, in which I was to portray a disabled American veteran. I took that role with some fear and trepidation, because I was afraid that there would be some who might say who is this young guy? I was young then.

Who is this young guy trying to portray one of us? He has never been in the military. He is not a professional actor. He has never been in a war. I was concerned about that. But I managed to put those fears aside long

enough to agree to do the video anyway, and as was mentioned before, it was to be shot at the Alvin C. York Veterans Medical Center in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

The first morning we start the filming, I drove up and walked in to find that all of my co-stars in this video, with the exception of two other actors, were all either staff members or patients at the Alvin C. York Clinic, all veterans.

I remember thinking to myself, oh, boy, if I am ever going to get an earful from any of these folks about playing this role, today is going to be the day.

So we finished the first scene later that morning and I got my courage up and walked over and introduced myself to some of these folks that I was going to be working with for the next two days and was pleasantly surprised and relieved to find that these folks held no animosity toward me whatsoever.

As a matter of fact, it was just exactly the opposite. These folks seemed genuinely thrilled and very appreciative of the fact that someone like myself in some small way was bringing attention to veterans, veterans' issues and veterans' lives.

For the next two days in the process of making that video, I couldn't wait for each break in filming so I could get a chance to go back over and sit down and talk with these individuals, because I heard some amazing stories, some very personal stories that moved me and touched me. I really got to know these folks during that period of time.

The next day when we wrapped up filming, we said our goodbyes and we left. Over the course of the next few weeks, we made the decision that we should go back to the Alvin C. York Medical Center and debut that video there. After all, my co-stars were there at the clinic. They deserved to be the first ones to see the video, we thought. So we did that.

The night that we debuted the video, I remember as the lights went down and the video began to play, I didn't watch the video on screen. Instead, I looked at the faces of the people that I had worked with that had helped me make that video.

The emotions and the feelings that I saw on the faces of those men and women touched me. I am not talking about superficially, I am talking about I got touched deep. It was shortly thereafter that I volunteered my service to the Disabled Veterans Association to be used in whatever capacity they felt I would be best suited for.

As a result, I had the opportunity to visit a lot of the veterans' clinics, medical centers, hospitals across the country, and in every one of those places that I walked into I got the overwhelming sense of emotion, of pride in the relationship that I was established, and a feeling of sincere appreciation and gratitude from each one of those people that I had the opportunity to meet and to get to know.

As we left, I left with the feeling of pride unlike I have ever had before or since. I said all that to say this.

While this award today is a wonderful thing and something that I truly appreciate, I have already been rewarded many, many times over in the last nine years from the relationships that I have been so privileged to be a part

of with some of the most courageous, wonderful, miraculous human beings on this planet, humans known as American veterans. For that, as well as this award, I thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Travis, along with your award goes an honorarium of \$5,000 on behalf of the VFW. Will you please accept it, sir?

MR. TRAVIS TRITT: Thank you. I would like to accept this check and then turn it right back over to the Disabled American Veterans Association and thank them for all their work.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN W. SMART

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: His theme was a "New Century of Service." He knew that our organization was at the threshold of a new age. He also realized the new era would bring new problems and new challenges. He embraced the thought of a "New Century of Service" because he believed there is an abundance of opportunity that still awaits the Veterans of Foreign Wars. John W. Smart of Nashua, New Hampshire, was the VFW Commander-in-Chief for the 1999-2000 year. It was a year that was pivotal in bridging the old with the new. John Smart achieved that goal, and today we recognize his many years as an outspoken advocate on behalf of his fellow veterans and their families.

Here to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and citation, my friend, my brother, Past Commander-in-Chief John W. Smart. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation being presented reads as follows: "Distinguished Service Medal and this citation awarded to John W. Smart, Commander-in-Chief, 1999-2000, in sincere appreciation and special recognition of his total commitment and dedication 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 1999-2000 administrative year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars strengthened their commitment and embarked on a 'New Century of Service' to our nation and veterans.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 22nd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN SMART

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you-all very much. And to you, Commander-in-Chief, this award means a great deal to me for all those veterans that we serve across this great country, but especially it means so much to me because it comes from a friend.

I don't think I have to remind you how many miles we have traveled

together and how many briefings we sat down to discuss the issues of veterans or our men and women in the military, and probably many times we have probably shed a tear or two.

Let me be one of the first to say to you, Chief, I am so proud of your year as Commander-in-Chief. You have been an outstanding spokesperson for the veterans of this great country, and I salute you, Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

I also want to give a special thanks to the Department of New Hampshire VFW. I know they are in the back of the room. I mean, there are some great leaders in that Department that probably have put up with me as an Adjutant Quartermaster for some 18 years, and like all State Quartermasters we are a little tight with that money once in a while. They understood and they are doing an outstanding job in the Department of New Hampshire. Thank you for your many years of support.

To a special lady, to all my Commanders-in-Chief in this audience, when you make a commitment to run for this position, it comes with a partnership. I have had a partner like many of our other Commanders-in-Chief to allow me to attain a goal and a dream that came true. I wish you-all would thank my wife, Mary, as I thank her for allowing me that opportunity. (Applause)

Commander-in-Chief, believe it or not, I am probably lost for words. No, not really. Commander-in-Chief, you know we tried to make many changes that we thought right for this organization. It is good to see yesterday the debate on the floor as comrades so we can go to these mikes, talk on the issues and hopefully leave this auditorium as friends.

For four years, I had the opportunity to sit up on this stage with all the chair officers. On Monday, as I sat in the second row, and I looked at your video, and I looked at the things we do as an organization, and I know many times we are asked what is the National Organization going to do for us? What are we going to do to address the issues of membership in our organization?

As I sat there with each and every one of you, and I looked at that video and I saw our Commander-in-Chief at the Golden Age Games in which our organization spends \$150,000 of your money, and you saw the tears and smiles on the faces of all those veterans when that Commander-in-Chief went and put that winning medal around their neck and he hugged them, that's the right thing we should be doing for the veterans of this country.

When we talk about and debate the money we spend on the Army-Navy game, I sat in that stadium and you saw that Cross of Malta of ours on the big screen, but what got me the most is when our Commander-in-Chief took the opportunity to go down in that stadium and greet all of the Korean War veterans in that audience.

You saw what I saw, the hugs, the tears of appreciation service to a grateful nation. That was the right thing to do for the right reason for our veterans who served in Korea. That was your funds that were spent. When we talk about the World War II Memorial, not John Smart's words, you have heard them from each of the distinguished guests that were here praising

the VFW in its commitment of the second endowment of the \$2.5 million in which Jim will finalize that program at the next Convention. We were the second largest contributor to the World War II Memorial.

What does that say about the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States? We did the right thing for the right reasons. Yes, Commander-in-Chief, I have to admit when I watched that Rose Bowl Parade and I saw that float as we honored a great American in Bob Hope, I have to admit I shed a tear to my eyes because it gave flashbacks to Vietnam when Bob Hope entertained the troops.

When you think for a moment that that parade was stopped for the first time in the history so these boys could jump and bring the American flag with the VFW colors in honor of that great American, somebody tell me we didn't do the right thing for the right reasons in honoring that great American. That was your VFW money. (Applause)

Like many of the Past Commanders-in-Chief in the audience, our chair officers who have had the opportunity to be briefed by the Joint Task Force of Full Accounting, and then when you have the opportunity to go back to Vietnam, many for the first time since our service, and you go out into the jungles and the fields and the mountaintops with these great American soldiers, airmen, Marines and sailors working to bring full accounting back to all our servicemen who lost their lives in Vietnam.

When you see the things they do, but I was really disturbed this time around because some of these great Americans they have had the opportunity to pay the supreme sacrifice. Is it wrong to send our chair officers overseas to visit those young men and women and say thank you, thank you from our organization for the things that you do to bring full accounting to all missing in action? That is money well spent for the right reasons. I say thank you, Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

If we are going to address the issue of membership, and as we prepare ourselves for our year of leadership by James Goldsmith, I am tired of hearing people say how are we going to sell the VFW? If you just mention a few things that we have said here today, you bring back the message of all those military leaders, whether it be the Joint Chiefs of Staff Shelton, Wesley Clark, whether it be General Tillelli or the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Time and time again today and yesterday, and the day before, they praised the VFW for caring, for your concerns and making sure our message is heard loud and clear in the Halls of Congress so we address and give the men and women who serve our country today the very best equipment so they can perform their missions in a timely fashion and that we address the quality of life. Those are the things that you sow to make this organization great.

As a Past Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, one who has served across this great land and breaking bread many times in the VFW Posts across this country, I will always say thank you. Thank you to each and every one of you for what you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, but I will also thank you for what you do for our fellow comrades, our

buddies, our pals, our fellow veterans to make sure that they receive the finest health care that this country can provide and that we care and make sure that we never have to ever again address the issue of POWs and MIAs.

May God bless each and every one of you and may God continue to bless the United States of America. I salute you comrades, for everything that you do for our heroes.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time I will call to the podium for the report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Past Commander-in-Chief Allen F. "Gunner" Kent.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to the 102nd Convention. The National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee met at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, August 19, 2001. Your instructions were read. Roll call was taken and procedures were discussed.

As you know, Commander-in-Chief, this year the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee was one Committee. The POW/MIA Committee met on a separate day. The reason for this is the Commander-in-Chief and the members of the Committee felt that it was important that they sit in on both meetings, not split it off.

So the delegates were given an opportunity to sit through the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee meeting and then to sit through and listen to the resolutions on the POW/MIA Committee. The Committee and the Subcommittee carefully deliberated each of the 74 resolutions that were assigned to it.

Comrades, please note that Resolutions Nos. 464 through 474 are new resolutions that were submitted after the Department conventions were convened or concluded and, therefore, are not listed in your book of scheduled resolutions.

The Committee is recommending action on each resolution submitted to them. Those are Resolutions 401 through 474. Five copies of each National Security and Foreign Affairs resolution, that was either amended by the Committee or is being recommended for approval as written and was submitted after your schedule of resolutions was printed, are available in the front of the auditorium for each Department from the Sergeants-at-Arms. That is five copies per Department. So South Carolina, don't run up and take fifty copies. We only have got five copies for each Department. Everybody has got them I was just informed.

The Vice-Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee was John W. Smart, Post 483 of New Hampshire, and the Staff Advisor was Rocky R. Harder, Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs. In addition, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we had two guest

speakers, General Wu from the Republic of China and Mr. Ritter from the Department of Defense.

Former Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron from North Carolina chaired the Subcommittee on the POW/MIA Committee, and the Vice-Chairman was James R. Currieo of Post 9972, Sierra, Arizona. The Staff Advisor was Rocky Harder, Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs. That Committee met Monday at 1:00 p.m. in Room 202, C and D.

I would like to now have all of the members of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee to stand and I would like to thank each and every one of you for your participation in the meeting. (Applause) Everybody, please look at these members.

If you have got any discussions or want to throw any knives afterwards, don't throw them all at Gunner Kent, they are the guys that helped me, too. Throw the knives equally.

Commander, with your permission, I will begin the Committee's report by presenting those resolutions the Committee recommends for approval as written Then I will report those resolutions that were approved, as amended, and finally the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, John W. Smart, will conclude the report by presenting the resolutions the Committee recommended for rejection.

If you or any of the delegates at the convention would like a resolution set aside for discussion, please indicate after I have completed each segment of the report. When I have completed the report, with the help of Past Commander-in-Chief John Smart on the National Security resolutions, Past Commander Billy Ray Cameron and Past Commander Bob Currieo will report on the resolutions considered by the POW/MIA Subcommittee.

I will now proceed by reading the resolution numbers that the Committee recommends for approval as written. They are Nos. 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 419, 422, 423, 424, 426, 427, 429, 430, 431, 432, 434, 436, 437, 438, 442, 443, 444, 446, 447, 448, 449, 451, 452, 454, 455, 457, 458, 474. No. 474 is the last one.

Commander-in-Chief, I move that these be accepted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN SMART (Post 483 - New Hampshire): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and properly seconded for approval of the resolutions recommended by the National Security Committee. Are there any set asides? If not, all those in favor of accepting these resolutions as presented for approval by the Chairman, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I will now read the resolutions there were approved, as amended. Comrades, you should have the amended copies with you. I am not going to read the amended copy or how we amended it because you have it in front of you.

The resolutions recommended for approval as amended, are as

follows: Nos. 412, 420. If I go too fast just throw something at me, but do it this way (indicating). Nos. 428, 40, 459, 465, 466, 470, and 472.

Commander-in-Chief, I move we accept these resolutions, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN SMART: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have before you the amended resolutions. Is there any set asides on those resolutions? We have a proper motion and a second to accept the amended resolutions presented by the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN SMART: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I will read the resolutions rejected by the Committee. In all instances they were rejected for other resolutions that had been adopted by you here today. They are No. 441; No. 462; No. 463; No. 464; No. 467; No. 468; No. 469; No. 471; and No. 473.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You have heard the report of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and the resolutions that have been rejected. If there is no one at a microphone at the present time to adopt one of those rejections, then we will go forward with the Committee report because they stand as rejected. They will stand as rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. Again, I would like to thank the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and at this time I would like to call on Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron to the podium for his report on the POW/MIA Subcommittee. Thank you, comrades.

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Thank you very much, Gunner. Commander-in-Chief, I want to thank you for the opportunity to once again serve as Chairman of the POW/MIA Subcommittee. I would like to report to you that we did meet separate from the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. We met on Monday afternoon at 1:00 o'clock and we had a full house.

I would like to thank the Committee members who served on the POW/MIA Subcommittee. A special thank you to Bob Currie who served as my Vice-Chairman and to Rocky who answered a lot of questions that were asked during the briefing. During the POW/MIA Committee meeting, we had one speaker, Joe Harvey, who was the Chief of Staff of Missing Personnel, Department of the Defense.

At this time I will read the resolution numbers that the Committee recommended for approval as written. The first resolution approved, as written, was 401. The second resolution was 403. The third resolution was 418. The next one is 421. The next one is 425. The next one is 433. The next one is 435. The next one is 439. The next one is 445. The next one is 450. The next one is 453. The last one is 456.

Commander-in-Chief, I move that we adopt these resolution as approved by the Committee.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES CURRIEO: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Delegates to this convention, you have heard the motion and a proper second on the resolutions that have been recommended by the Subcommittee on POW/MIA. Is there anyone who needs to set aside any resolutions?

I see no one, so at this time I call for the vote. At this time all those in favor of accepting the recommendations of the Committee, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: We had two resolutions that were amended because of changes in numbers on those missing and prisoners of war. There were some different figures. We had to go back and change some language. The two resolutions approved, as amended, were 402 and 460.

Commander-in-Chief, I would make a motion that we adopt these resolutions, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES CURRIEO: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and a proper second to accept two resolutions that have been amended. Is there anyone who stands in opposition to this? If not, all those in favor of accepting the amended motions as recommended by the Committee, signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON: Commander-in-Chief, we had one resolution that we rejected, and that one was rejected because we had a similar resolution. No. 461 was rejected in favor of 453.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You have heard the report of the Committee rejecting Resolution 461 for another resolution that seemed to be better in effect. Is there anyone who stands to ask for approval of this resolution? Resolution 461 stands rejected as recommended by the Committee.

At this time I release the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and the POW/MIA Subcommittee. Thank you very much, both of you, for your service.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO FREDERICO JUARBE, JR.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: During his career as a professional veterans advocate for over 30 years, Fred Juarbe has worked closely with federal and state agencies in formulating policy beneficial to veterans, their dependents and their survivors.

He had a direct hand in the development of legislative measures enacted during the past three decades that have expanded benefits to the veterans community in the areas of education and training, rehabilitation and employment, disability benefits and health care.

Fred has served on numerous Federal Task Forces and Advisory Committees including his most current role on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Claim Processing Task Force and the Veterans Health Administration National Health Ethics Committee.

Some of the major veterans policy developments that he contributed during the past thirty years includes: the establishment of Vet Centers; Agent Orange disabilities presumptions; judicial review (Court of Appeals for veterans' claims); the report on the future of veterans long-term care; VA Claims Processing Task Force; development of a comprehensive service officer training curriculum; and the National Veterans Service Strategic Plan.

There is no doubt Fred has made a dramatic impact and touched the lives of countless people. No doubt, he will continue to serve his nation well in his new position as Under Secretary.

Here to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and citation, former Director, National Veterans Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Frederico Juarbe, Jr.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads, "Distinguished Service Medal this citation awarded to Frederico Juarbe, Jr., in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over three decades of distinguished and loyal service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a dedicated employee, extraordinary professional and able administrator, fulfilling the positions of Department of New Mexico Service Officer, National Service Officer and Director of National Veterans Service.

"His commitment to veterans was always first and foremost, and his duties and responsibilities were performed with unparalleled expertise and integrity in support of the highest ideals and objectives 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 22nd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE BY COMRADE FREDERICO JUARBE, JR.

COMRADE JUARBE: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk, Adjutant General John Senk and Quartermaster General Joe Ridgley, National Officers, Guests, my dearest former Staff of the National Veterans Service, and VFW Comrades:

What a tremendous privilege it has been to have served you, America's veterans. I often thank God for his mercy and grace in my life. I thank him for the loving companion that he has provided to me for over 33 years, my dear wife Nana.

I thank him for my exceptional children and my even more exceptional grandchildren. I also thank God often for the wonderful career that he

enabled me to have in service to veterans for the past 30 years. The privilege of serving our nation's warriors often made me poignantly aware that there but for the grace of God go I.

It gave me the opportunity to personally meet and work with and assist many dough boys of World War I. In coming face-to-face with the G.I.s of World War II, I had the unique privilege of serving the men and women who literally represented the very best of the generations that saved the world.

I served many of the forgotten warriors of the Korean War. I served multitudes of Vietnam veterans and Persian Gulf War veterans who experienced unprecedented difficulties and heretofore unheard of conditions and causes, and more recently I had the opportunity to serve veterans of the Balkan Peacekeeping Mission. For 30 years, I had the opportunity to do this, and never once failed.

The knowledge that I worked for an organization that represents the most deserving class of citizens was sparked by enthusiasm and my zeal for advocating a truly noble cause. There are many of you here and some who have answered the final roll call to who I am indeed grateful for the influence you have had in my career and towards the professional guidance which you provided.

At the risk of leaving some noteworthy individuals unmentioned, I must recognize some special comrades. The late Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Kimery, whom you honored with your Memorial Service dedication to him, hired me when he was State Commander for New Mexico.

He gave me the opportunity to enter into this wonderful and unique career as a Department Service Officer of New Mexico. My two predecessors, as Directors of the National Veterans Service, Norman Jone and Bob Ashworth, gave me every opportunity to excel and grow in my early years with the VFW.

For 18 years I proudly served under the leadership of a gentleman known in Washington power and influence circles as Mr. VFW, Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt. Cooper, I thank you. Past Commander-in-Chief Larry Rivers challenged me to increase the caliber of my professionalism, and Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Currieo showed me how to lead and how to manage with compassion and decency. Thank you both.

Past Commander-in-Chief and now the Executive Director of the Washington office, Bob Wallace, totally immersed himself in the work that we did in providing service. He blasted me right out of my comfort zone. Most especially, he shared my passion for excellence in championing a veterans cause. He taught me how to meet the challenge. Thank you, Bob.

An old friend who had once walked in my shoes as a service officer and has risen to the high office of Adjutant General, John Senk, gave me his vote of confidence. Thank you, John. To these comrades who played such a major part in my thirty-year career with the VFW, I will be forever especially grateful.

But more importantly, I am grateful for the special brotherhood, sister veterans included, that we represent. We are men and women who refuse to leave our wounded behind or to forget those who paid the ultimate or made the ultimate sacrifice with their lives.

The service you provide to America and to America's veterans enobles us all. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this great and noble cause. Again, I want to thank the dedicated staff of the National Veterans Service and all the Department Service Officers throughout the states and at every Post who work tirelessly every day to make sure that an injustice is corrected and that veterans receive what they are entitled to and that their widows and orphans are provided the care that they need, and in that way the VFW will continue to honor the dead by helping the living.

Now, with God's continued grace and the advice and consent of the Senate, I will go on serving veterans. God bless the VFW, God bless you all, and God bless America.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time we will call for the report of the Committee on Veterans Services, Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to the Convention:

Your Convention Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions convened at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, August 19, 2001. It was a pleasure and is a pleasure to work with Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer from Illinois who is serving as Vice-Chairman of this Committee.

The Committee was divided into three subcommittees to carefully deliberate each of the 107 resolutions that were assigned. Three new resolutions were submitted for consideration, 705, 706 and 707. They have been provided to all of the Department Commanders by the Sergeants-at-Arms, along with resolutions that were amended by your National Committee members for consideration at this convention.

These proposed changes were made after the Department Conventions and are provided for your information. The subcommittees were established as follows:

Subcommittee 1, Medical Programs and Benefits and entitlements, chaired by Barry Walters from Michigan and Vice-Chairman Kenneth Tee from Florida.

The Subcommittee 2, Employment, chaired by Don Porter from Illinois and Vice-Chairman Charlie Barstadt from North Dakota.

The Subcommittee 3, Other Benefits, chaired by Tom Hansen from Minnesota, and Vice-Chairman Art Cook from New York.

Before proceeding with the report, Commander-in-Chief, I wish to express the Committee's appreciation to Bill Bradshaw, Acting Director of National Veterans Service, and to Bill Dozier, VA Field Rep, National Veterans Service, who served as our Committee Secretary and coordinated the results of our deliberations, and to all of the staff members for the valuable technical guidance they provided the Committee.

As Gunner did, I would ask all the members of the National Veterans Service Committee to please rise. I thank all of you for your participation in the deliberations. Thank you very much.

Commander-in-Chief, I will begin the Committee report by presenting those resolutions that the Committee recommends for adoption as written. Past Commander-in-Chief Cramer will report those resolutions that were approved as amended. I will conclude the report by presenting the resolutions the Committee recommends for rejection.

I would ask that if you would like a resolution set aside, please so indicate after we have completed each segment of the report. The following resolutions are recommended for adoption as written: Nos. 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 640, 641, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 681, 692, 697, 703.

Now, 704, 705 and 706 are new resolutions and they have been provided to the Department Commanders by the Sergeants-at-Arms. They will not be in your packet. The three new ones, 704, 705 and 706, are recommended for approval. I am sorry. 704 is in the book; is that correct? Nos, 705 and 706 are new and the Department Commanders have those. I apologize for that error. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the resolutions recommended for approval as written by the Committee be adopted by the delegates to this convention.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You have heard the recommendation of the Committee. We have a motion and a second on the floor to adopt the resolutions as recommended by the Committee.

I will go to Microphone No. 3 first.

COMRADE DON LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I guess I really need clarification on 622, which basically says to force them to let Medicare go to the VA. My problem is, I don't know if you realize it, I found this just in the last couple of months, and I also can answer the question when someone says why didn't I go to the VA? Well, I am sorry.

As an eligible veteran with a CAR, I have to pay to go to the Veterans Hospital. So Medicare doesn't pay if you are not service-connected. I thought that we settled this in New Orleans some 12 years ago. That was the fight to be sure that Social Security went into the VA and the money was retained by the VA.

I just really don't understand Resolution 622, because it doesn't address the issue. They will not pay for us veterans that are not service connected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are you asking that 622 be set aside?

COMRADE DON LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Yes, set it aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: No. 622 is set aside.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am requesting Resolutions 617 and 631 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Resolutions 617 and 631, is that correct?

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: They will be set aside.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN McANAW (Post 8469 - Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to have Resolutions 607 and 633 set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Nos. 607 and 633 are set aside. Thank you. Are there any other set asides? Hearing the motion and the second to accept the recommendations of the Committee, on the adoption of the resolutions, other than those that have been set aside, is there any further discussion?

If not, I ask all those in favor of accepting the resolutions recommended for approval by the Committee signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

At this time, then what we will do is take 622 first. Is that the one you suggested?

COMRADE DON LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): On No. 622, my only question is the combat veteran. If I go to my VA Hospital, which is 38 miles from my home, which I started doing because I was encouraged by the Veterans Service Committee to get every veteran registered with the VA, and then I found out if you don't go to the VA after that year the registration doesn't mean anything.

Then after going for two or three visits, I suddenly found out I am going to get billed \$52.50 for each one of those visits, when I could stay at home, go to my own physician right in Auburn, Maine, and I don't pay a penny because Medicare and my other insurance covers everything.

But they have told me and I know that we have been working on it since New Orleans, I think it is. I think this ought to be a priority. This ought to be a push. I am certainly going to my Senators and Representatives. They are not paying it now. Why do we care if they give it to us?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I will go ahead and ask the Subcommittee Chairman, or one of the staff members, to enlighten us on the reasoning for the recommendation for approval.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Barry Walters, who chaired the Subcommittee for this resolution, will share with you the deliberations of the Committee.

COMRADE BARRY WALTERS (Department of Michigan): Thank you, Chairman Nier. Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, in response, the point is well taken that Medicare subvention would possibly not have a direct impact on those veterans that are in Priority 7, and who must pay a co-pay.

However, those veterans who are in other categories where they do not

have to pay a co-pay, the VA still would have the ability to bill Medicare and at the present time they do not. So the whole intent is to allow the VA to bill Medicare, recover those funds and use those funds within the VA for those patients that they do treat who are covered by Medicare and who choose to use the VA system. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Will you read the "Resolved", please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: The "Resolved" on No. 622 is, "Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the swift enactment of legislation authorizing VA to collect and retain all Medicare dollars." That is the "Resolved".

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: What we are going to do now, the Committee has recommended approval. Where is Comrade Linscott? Did you make a motion to not approve this resolution?

COMRADE DON LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): No, I didn't.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is just a point of clarification. So what I will do is all those in favor of 622, please signify by saying "aye". Wait a minute. Is there someone at Microphone No. 1 that wants to speak on this issue, on No. 622?

COMRADE BILL HAGAN (Post 2544 - Texas): Yes. I am Bill Hagan, Commander of Post 2544, Fort Worth, Texas. I just have a question. Does this mean that retirees who are going to go Tri-Care cannot use the VA?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: No.

COMRADE BILL HAGAN (Post 2544 - Texas): Because their Medicare is going to go to Tri-Care.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: No, no that is not true. That is not the intent. Would anyone else like to speak on Resolution 622? So what we have before us, again we had a recommendation of the Committee that we accept Resolution 622. We will vote now on 622. All those in favor of accepting Resolution No. 622, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". No. 622 is approved.

Now, we will move over to Microphone No. 1, and you asked that 617 and 632 be set aside. Which one are you going to address first?

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): All I am asking there is the word "repeal" be added to the title at the beginning. It is misleading.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: In the "Resolved", are you speaking, comrade?

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): No, the title of the resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: "Funding Fee for VA Home Loans"?

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Put the word "Repeal" at the beginning of that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is in the "Resolved". "Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge Congress to repeal VA Home Loan funding fees."

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Okay. It is misleading.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: That should take care of it. Now, 632. We will vote on that one that was set aside. Any other discussion on 617? Any other discussion on 617? We have the recommendation of the Committee to accept, although it has been set aside at this time.

All those in favor of accepting Resolution 617, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". No. 617 has been approved. Resolution 632 was next.

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): No. 631, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are you speaking about No. 631?

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Yes, 631.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: "Licensure and Certification", is that the one you are speaking on?

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Exactly.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: All right. Go ahead.

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): I am standing against this one unless there is a better explanation in the "Resolved" I have worked for the Coast Guard Licensing Office for over five years recently, and there are certain requirements for various licensing, including recencies.

We have even denied a Navy Admiral license because he had been working in Washington, D.C., for too long. I think that unless that does not apply to that kind of license that would be improper.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Mr. Chairman, do you want to address that?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: I will ask Jim Magill to come forward and make a comment on this resolution, please.

COMRADE JAMES MAGILL: The intent of this resolution is to assist recently released members so that they can take their skills they have learned from their four years, ten years, twenty years, and transfer them over to the private sector without having to go through extensive and expensive training and retraining for an occupation that they have received probably the world's best. That is the intent of the resolution.

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Thank you, comrade. That is what I was addressing is, for example, Coast Guard regulations, they would not appreciate that, I am sure.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: All right. I don't think I understand your reasoning or your information there. Please clarify it some more for the audience.

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Sure. Various licenses have licensing requirements, meaning, for example, a captain of a large ship has to be sailing within the last five years. That is why I referred to the admiralty. It has to be.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much. Now, this is for those immediately released from the military.

COMRADE WILLIAM MANLEY (Post 51 - Washington): Exactly. But that would still apply if they had not had that kind of recency time, for example.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: They still have to go through the test. If they can pass the test, they can be licensed. Is that what we are speaking of?

COMRADE JIM MANLEY (Post 4765 - Alabama): But they could anyway if they had the recency.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Read the whole thing and we will start again.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: "Licensure and Certification.

"WHEREAS, every year over 200,000 members of the armed forces leave the military; and

"WHEREAS, skilled service members leave the armed forces miss out on the opportunity to quickly move into good, high-paying, career-building jobs because they must undergo lengthy and expensive retraining in order to meet civilian licensure and certification requirements; and

"WHEREAS, many of those individuals clearly possess the skills and knowledge to meet licensing and certification requirements due to their military occupations;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge a standardized licensure and certification requirement be adopted by the appropriate federal and state agencies; 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."

The intent of the resolution is to expedite the transition period for recently released armed forces' members entering the civilian work force in jobs related to skills acquired in the military.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Microphone No. 2, please.

COMRADE JIM McKINNON (Post 1631 - New Hampshire): I spent 24 years in the Coast Guard and, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, there is no way that you can standardize certification for licensing. Every license when issued is for restricted areas of the sea, whether what they call the six-passenger license, which is a license that a civilian can take and buy a six-passenger boat.

When you take the exam, there are restrictions put on how many miles you can go out to sea, from what point to what point you can carry these passengers for hire. Civilian procedures will not work in the Merchant Marine exams. Civilian procedure on a Merchant Marine vessel, whether it be an ocean liner or a tanker, are 110 percent different than what we use in the military.

They do allow, speaking of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard exam, they do allow credibility for exact sea time. In other words, if a Navy person gets attached for an aircraft carrier and he is on there for three years, and he is underway for nine months or a year of that three-year tour of duty, he

gets credit for that one-year sea time, not the other two years that he was tied up to the dock.

These are already in there. But the standardize require a standard certification for all areas of the country, whether it be open waters, inland waters or coastal waters is physically impossible. You cannot take a West Coast sailor who knows the West Coast and is going to get out of the service and go to the East Coast and expect to get a license. It is impossible, Comrade Commander. Thank you.

COMRADE FRED WOLSING (Post 2163 - Virginia) I believe the problem we are having with this is that although the intent of the resolution is a wonderful thing, the wording or the way it is structured is flawed. What I think was the intent that service-related training should be considered by the licensing agencies when they come time to certify or license a recently-separated veteran. That is not the way it comes across in the wording.

I would suggest that since it was submitted by the Commander-in-Chief, the Commander-in-Chief might want to withdraw it and have it worked in a more suitable form for this assembly.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Your words are well taken.
Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE EUGENE MANFREY (Post 6827 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I think the discussion is all out of order. I don't think the motion was made to disapprove it so, therefore, I would like to make a motion for approval.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Microphone No. 1.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SISK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Ray Sisk, Post 9791, California, and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I think the intent of this resolution was not particularly involved with the Coast Guard.

I honestly believe that it was for the people that have to come out of service, for example, a truck driver, who has spent five or ten years in the military as a driver of one of our large vehicles.

In order to come out and take the CDL, he is required to have to operate commercially in the United States, and without this, then he would probably have to go to a truck driving school where it would cost him several thousand dollars in order to be able to get a commercial driver's license.

I think this is the intent of this resolution. I think that is what we need to be voting on, not just some captain sailing up and down the ocean. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you. I have been advised by the Committee and the chairman that the intent of the resolution was someone that came out as a welder, as a truck driver, as a plumber, that those times they worked would be considered during the licensure. That is the intent of this resolution. I will go to one more microphone and then we are voting.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON GASCON (Post 792 - Vermont): I second the motion to reject just to get it going.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Fine. There is no motion required, because the motion on the floor is to approve. When you set aside, that does not change what originally happened. You don't have to vote to reject. When we vote, you can accept or reject the motion as it is on the floor.

Here is what we will do now. All those in favor of adopting Resolution No. 631, which says to expedite the transition period for the recently released armed forces members entering the civilian force in job-related skills acquired in the military, to expedite the transition.

It didn't say to go through without taking an exam, it didn't say anything about we are just going to give you a license. It says to expedite the transition period for recently-released armed forces. That is the resolution. The intent is to help folks when they come out of the military.

All those in favor of Resolution No. 631, signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It is passed. Next is No. 607.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN McANAW (Post 8469 - Virginia): I withdraw my request for a set aside on 607 and move to 633.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: So we have a set aside which has now been withdrawn. All those in favor of Resolution 607 signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It is so ordered.

Please go to the microphone.

COMRADE JOHN McANAW (Post 8469 - Virginia): Sir, a point of clarification. We discussed this at length at our Department Convention. No. 663 is the use of the "Battlefield Cross" and national cemeteries. We talked to representatives from the National Cemetery Administration and they really didn't know what this was all about.

To this day, we don't know what this is all about, this Battlefield Cross. So I would like to get an explanation as to what we are talking about, because everybody I talk to doesn't know what it is about.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: If I may address it from the chair as a person having been around it, I was recently at a National Cemetery where the Battlefield Cross, the inverted rifle with helmet and boots is on a placard probably three feet high.

Many of the National Cemetery regulations say there shall be no forms of weapons or war making machinery within the National Cemetery. If you would place that combat cross in the cemetery, then you would have to have a rifle that extended with the helmet on top of it. That is probably the reason for this motion.

I was in Michigan at the cemetery. It is sitting inside the hallway. It is a beautiful memorial. However, it does have a weapon on that memorial.

COMRADE JOHN McANAW (Post 8469 - Virginia): Sir, we are only talking about one battle cross for the cemetery?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I guess, or none. It is just the

idea that it cannot be used because of the regulation that says a weapon cannot be a part of a memorial.

COMRADE JOHN McANAW (Post 8469 - Virginia): Thank you for the clarification.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Can we move forward?

COMRADE JOHN McANAW (Post 8469 - Virginia): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you very much. We will ask, now that we have clarification, to move forward on 663. Let me read the "Resolved" so we are comfortable with it.

It reads, "BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the policy regarding the use of weapons of war to exclude the 'Battlefield Cross' from this definition and allow its use in a proper and dignified manner as a memorial on the grounds of a national cemetery under their control."

All those in favor of us petitioning the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It is so approved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I will now ask Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer to present the report for the resolutions the Committee recommends for approval as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The following resolutions were approved as amended: Nos. 625, 639, 642, 669, 677, 678, 679, 682, 684, 687, 693, 694 and 695. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the resolutions recommended for approval as amended be approved by the delegation to this convention.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion properly seconded before the audience to accept, as recommended by the Committee, those resolutions that were amended. Is there anyone at the microphone now that wishes to set aside? Is there anyone at the microphone that wishes to set aside? We will vote on the resolutions. All those in favor of accepting the resolutions of the Committee on Resolutions as amended, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It is so moved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Commander-in-Chief and delegates, the following resolutions were rejected by the Committee: Nos. 655, 676, 680, 683, 685, 686, 688, 689, 690, 691, 696, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702 and 707.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You have heard the resolutions that have been recommended for rejection. Is there anyone that is on the floor at this time that would like to recommend that one of the resolutions or any of the resolutions for approval?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 10436 - Department of Europe): Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, I request that 680 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You can move for adoption at this time. We need a motion that it be approved.

The Committee recommends rejection. You now make a motion for approval.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 10436 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to recommend that Resolution 680 be approved.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The resolution number again?

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 10436 - Department of Europe): No. 680, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: On Resolution 680, we have a motion for approval. Do we have a second?

COMRADE CHARLES SHORT (Post 2465 - Department of Europe): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Is that a second?

COMRADE CHARLES SHORT (Post 2465 - Department of Europe): That is a second.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and properly seconded on the floor for approval of Resolution 680. Is there any discussion?

COMRADE CHARLES SHORT (Post 2465 - Department of Europe): Commander-in-Chief, this motion is similar to motions made in the past, but it is now more specific. The current situation is that the VA has leased this property to a concern by the name of L. A. Partners.

In the lease they provide that veterans service organizations can use it for only four days per year. The intent of this resolution is to broaden that usage and to use it when the veterans need it. For example, one of the days that is in the lease is Memorial Day.

All the veterans that I know of in the area are out at U.S. veterans cemeteries performing ceremonies; similar on the other days. So the intent of our resolution was to specifically ask, and the wording is that a room be available for the veterans service organizations when needed. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Any other discussion?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Commander-in-Chief and delegates, the resolution was rejected because that has been accomplished. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has gone on record as asking for what is the intent of this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and a second. However, the intent has already been granted. Do you wish to withdraw your motion?

COMRADE CHARLES SHORT (Post 2465 - Department of Europe): We will withdraw our motion. We did not understand that. It is not our intent to carry this on any longer, but we feel that those four dates are inappropriate. We only found out about these four dates since the last convention. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I will withdraw my second.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 10436 - Department of Europe): I withdraw my first only if the VFW goes on record as requesting that we can have that room whenever we need it. That is the intent.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Bruce, I think that is

exactly what they are telling me. I have no other way of telling you. That is the intent. It has been done that way.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Post 10436 - Department of Europe): What we were told in Committee, Commander-in-Chief, is that this has already been done. I have this comrade here who knows that the contract says that it can only be available four days a year. That is not what we want. We want it when we need it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: My thought would be this, before we finalize your withdrawal is that we go to the staff and say why can't this lease be renegotiated. It has already been done, Tom?

COMRADE TOM HANSEN (Post 1639 - Michigan): The intent of the resolution is to use this when you need it. There is, in fact, a lease in place. The question then would be you need to renegotiate with the individuals that are holding the lease on that building. A resolution through the organization would not accomplish getting those dates for you.

COMRADE CHARLES SHORT (Post 2465 - Department of Europe): If I might, Commander-in-Chief, the lease for this building is from the Veterans Administration. They are the ones who hold the management in the name of the people of the United States.

We cannot go in as an organization and renegotiate. The party who needs to renegotiate this is the Veterans Administration. All our intent was to ask them to do this in the name of all the veterans service organizations.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Let me do this if you would, please. Will you, please, second that motion again?

COMRADE CHARLES SHORT (Post 2465 - Department of Europe): Yes, I will second the motion again.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Here is what I would like for the audience to do. In anticipation of what the comrades have asked us, perhaps a letter coming from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and a resolution may have some impact on the negotiations of the lease. So perhaps our approval on something like this would help the negotiations.

Is there any other discussion at this time?

COMRADE CHARLES SHORT (Post 2465 - Department of Europe): Commander, we would really appreciate that. We thank you for your input.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Resolution 680 was originally recommended for rejection. However, it has been brought up on the floor with a motion and properly seconded that perhaps a letter or this resolution would assist in the negotiations of the lease.

All those in favor of accepting Resolution 680, please signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". You have a paper to negotiate with at this time. Anything else? Are there any other motions to accept those resolutions that were recommended for rejection?

You must remember that those recommended for rejection that are not brought up for approval will remain rejected as recommended by the Committee. At this time I thank the Committee for everything that you have done and thank you all on the subcommittees and the staff. You have

done a tremendous job on 107 resolutions. That is just great. Thank you all.

INTRODUCTION OF SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE KENNETH COLE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: A trip to almost any VA Hospital will reveal the importance of the work of the Military Order of the Cootie. Each year the cooties spend thousands of hours bringing a moment of pleasure to our hospitalized veterans. Their commitment to “keep them smiling in beds of white” is a grand tribute to the service and sacrifice of all veterans.

Our next guest was elected Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie at that organization’s 81st Supreme Scratch in Milwaukee in August of 2000.

He has the distinction of achieving 100 percent in both membership and in all programs during the 2000-2001 year.

Please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States of America, Kenneth Cole. (Applause)

RESPONSE - MOC SUPREME COMMANDER KENNETH COLE

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER COLE: Good morning. Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Sisk, all the National Officers, Comrades and Guests:

It is my pleasure to be standing here addressing this fine convention as the Supreme Commander representing the 27,732 VFW members who choose to be a member of the Military Order of the Cootie. We have had a successful year, thanks to the hard work of the comrades and members out there that go to the hospitals to keep them smiling in beds of white.

I want to thank Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak for his leadership this year, for his help that he has provided throughout the year for us. I would like to make one request to all of you out there. If you have time in your hometowns or anywhere you are near and you can go visit a veterans home, or a veterans nursing facility, do so and see how those veterans smile and their eyes light up. They will appreciate it very much.

To Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, best success for you and your team with Mr. Sisk. We wish you nothing but the best. I know you will have the support of the cooties as we did when the MOC went out and recruited 11,780 members for the Commander-in-Chief and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We also provided \$11 million in hospital credits for the volunteer time. I thank you very much. God bless you, God bless the United States. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF RECORDER JOHN BOWEN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Prior to concluding, may I do this, please. I think I must have to go to the VA Hospital myself after last

night. I think my bladder has moved much closer to my eyes, because I sure had a hard time last night doing — how many enjoyed the Patriotic Rally last night? (Applause)

Now, that is a Patriotic Rally when you can feel good and the goose bumps run down your back. We have probably never done this before, but I am going to do it today as a point of privilege. A person that sits up here, he is constantly moving his fingers and he submits every word that is said to the Congress of the United States. John Bowen, will you please take a bow. (Applause) I will tell you, he must have a pretty good strong bladder, too, because he never seems to leave either.

At this time I would like to turn it over to the Adjutant General for his remarks followed by Larry LeFebvre, and at that time Sergeant-at-Arms, without instructions from me, you will recess this meeting for the day and we will start at 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

...Convention Announcements by Adjutant General Senk. ...

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: We will now have the Assistant Quartermaster General do some drawings.

COMRADE LARRY MAHER (Department of Missouri): I am Larry Maher and not Larry LeFebvre. I have two significant announcements. One is the winner of the insurance drawing for today. The \$1,000 winner is Norman M. Henchin, Post 7384-Oregon. He needs to see me or Bob Crow over in the exhibit area, and we can fix you up.

More importantly, I don't know if any of you noticed, but down on the first floor of the Convention Center there is a brand new Chevy Impala. General Motors has given that Impala to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We are having a drawing for that Impala. It will actually be conducted in October, but you may enter yourself in that drawing by going to the member benefit booth which is actually where that group of computers is set up over in this corner over here of the exhibit area and fill out a slip and put it into the pot for a drawing for a 2001 Chevy Impala. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was given at this time, followed by the Benediction by National Chaplain John F. Leonard.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: The Salute to the Colors and Closing Prayer for this business session have been performed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for your fine work, Sergeants-at-Arms. We are in recess at this time.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:45 o'clock p.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 23, 2001

(The Third Business Session of the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith, presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors.

(Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman led the convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.)

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Monsignor John Leonard gave the Opening Prayer.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed, sir.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. We will have the report of the Credentials Committee by Chairman Elwood B. Rickards.

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Department of Delaware): Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, this will be a temporary report from the Credentials Committee.

As of 3:30 last night, the total delegates were 11,467. Total Department Commanders, 54. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 28. Total National Officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 11,587.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. A brief announcement here on the VFW Charity Auction to be presented tonight by the Commander-in-Chief to the Milwaukee Veterans Issues, Incorporated, \$5,265. We thank you.

The Commander-in-Chief is visiting the Ladies Auxiliary and he will be back as soon as he gets done over there. If you would please direct your attention to the video on the screen for a special message from Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. We apologize for the mistake that was made yesterday, so if you would pay attention there.
(Whereupon, the video is played at this time.)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
AND CITATION TO VERN PALL

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: An earmark of the VFW has always been the support and assistance provided by National

Headquarters to the various Departments and Posts. The entire organization takes pride in the ability we have to successfully deliver the VFW message wherever and whenever needed.

Through the years one person has played an integral part in delivering the VFW message of service. He has a deep understanding of what our organization is supposed to be about. He is also possessed with a keen perception of the military and phenomenal knowledge of our nation's history. A prolific writer, he has produced a variety of speeches on an outstanding number of subjects.

Vern Pall's many years of active duty service in the United States Air Force and his subsequent years as an employee of the VFW is testimony to his commitment and dedication.

Please join me in honoring Vern Pall. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads, "Distinguished Service Medal and this citation awarded to Vernon J. Pall, in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over 15 years of dedicated service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a valued employee, fulfilling the position of field representative and service officer in the VFW Washington, D.C. office, and Assistant Director of Public Affairs at the VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City. Since his retirement as a Major in the United States Air Force, he has continued serving his country and veterans through his support of traditions and ideals 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 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - COMRADE VERN PALL

COMRADE VERN PALL: Jane wants to come up here for a few minutes. This is my wife. I would like to thank Jerry Newberry from the Public Affairs Office for the kind words written about me this morning. I hope you give Jerry the support you gave me over the years. It really helps.

I understand there has been a small amount of time allotted, so I will necessarily be very short. But I have to say when I hear remarks, the humble part of me says gosh, Vern, you don't deserve it. The Italian life says did they pay you enough?

We know that serving on the VFW national staff is like back in the military. We didn't do it for the money, it is doing it for a worthwhile noble purpose, and I enjoyed it all these years. I do have some special thanks here this morning. To Cooper Holt, who brought me on board in 1984, and he was a good friend and confidante throughout the years and gave me a lot of good advice. I took all of it except one thing, and that is why Cooper is back there laughing.

Also, I would like to thank Larry Rivers, who was the Adjutant General

for a while while I was in Kansas City and was a very good supporter of mine. Most recently, Tom Kissell, the guy who is known as the go-to man at National Headquarters, I appreciate working with him over the years. Also, he made my last two years very enjoyable and certainly very challenging.

I also would like to thank my Department of Arkansas for their support and VFW Post 4048 in Jacksonville. Jane and I have certainly enjoyed your company and we look forward to enjoying it for many years to come. That takes up the final amount of retirement time for this week. Thank you again very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO WILLIAM C. COX

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Our organization depends on a certain type of individual; someone who sees what needs to be done, figures out the best way to do it, and then accomplishes it. Perhaps no one else in our organization reflects that type of “can-do” spirit better than the next person we are about to honor.

William “Cleve” Cox served for over 36 years working as State Adjutant and Quartermaster of the Department of North Carolina. He has left an indelible mark upon his Department and the entire VFW organization. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to him. Please join me in honoring William “Cleve” Cox. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Distinguished Service Medal and this citation awarded to William “Cleve” Cox in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over 36 years of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a dedicated worker, able administrator and distinguished leader in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the office of State Adjutant and Quartermaster of the Department of North Carolina, testifying to his exceptional commitment to the programs and purpose 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 23rd day of August, 2001.”

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Before Cleve comes up here, I guess 36 years wasn’t enough. He turned around and ran for National Council of Administration and it is going to be my pleasure to work with him as a National Council of Administration member. (Applause)

RESPONSE - COMRADE WILLIAM “CLEVE” COX

COMRADE WILLIAM COX: Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I appreciate this honor, but it should go to the Department of North Carolina. If anything at all, it was based on my support back in my home

state of North Carolina.

Back in February of this year, we had the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief in our state at the Council of Administration meeting. I sent a message to the Commander-in-Chief by the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief to tell the Chief I was retiring in June and I wanted to go along.

He was very prompt and sent back a short, concise note stating, "You don't work for the damn railroad." (Laughter) I earned my eligibility for this organization in November and December, 1944, in the Hurricane Forest in Germany. I was a machine gunner, Company M, 27th Infantry, 4th Division. At the time I was 19 years old.

I wonder now if someone had said, "Do you want to join the VFW", I probably would have said, "What in the hell is the VFW?" Being a rural, country boy from North Carolina, I had never heard of the VFW. But I did join in February, 1946. I became a Charter Member of 608 in Washington, North Carolina, and then went on to be the Post Commander. I am a very modest person, so please bear with me.

I became Post Commander and I ran unopposed. In 1956, I became a District Commander and I ran unopposed. In 1962, I ran for State Junior Vice Commander and I ran unopposed. Senior Vice Commander, the same thing, and in 1964-65 I was State Commander and ran unopposed. Then for 36 years I was selected Quartermaster and I ran unopposed. Just six weeks ago, I ran as a National Council member and you guessed it, I ran unopposed. So I want you to meet my wife, Maude. She worked for the VFW for 21 years, and she and I both have retired. I know she is not old enough to retire, but she and I left the employ of the VFW with 60 years of service between us. I owe much of this to her and particularly to my state of North Carolina. I salute North Carolina. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF MR. ARDELL LADD, PROGRAM SPECIALIST, UNITED STATES BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Every ten years, the United States Government faces the monumental task of gathering census information. The information that is collected is in turn used to provide timely and relevant data about the people and the economy of the nation. Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars helped to assure the most accurate information was collected during the last United States census. Here to recognize the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization for donating a significant amount of volunteer hours during the last United States census is Ardell Ladd, Program Specialist, United States Census Bureau. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATION OF APPRECIATION BY MR. ARDELL LADD

MR. ARDELL LADD: Thank you. I appreciate you giving me the time to represent Kenneth Pruitt, Director of the United States Census Bureau and

to thank you for your efforts in joining with us in promoting the census and educating the people as to why it is important that they do respond to the census. I have a letter I would like to read from Mr. Pruitt to you and thank you for your partnership.

“Dear Census 2000 Partner: I would like to thank you and your organization for the outstanding effort in making Census 2000 a success. In many ways, Census 2000 was unlike any previous census. There were new uses of technology, new and greatly-expanded operations, more customized regional programs and more outreach through an unprecedented partnership program.

“For Census 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau has the distinct pleasure and challenge of working with more than 140,000 partners, partners whose creative efforts were only surpassed by their commitment and dedications for local community and constituents. Thanks to the hard work of all of our census partners, we reversed the trend of the declining participation in recent censuses and increased the mail response rate over what we had achieved in 1990.

“The scope of this census was vast, at times insurmountable, and the challenge overwhelming, but with the help of the Government, businesses and organizations we are proud to have been a part of the good census.

“Again, I extend a heartfelt thanks to you and your organization for a job well done. Your role in Census 2000 had a significant impact on the successful data collection, which will in turn help your community and this country move more confidently into the 21st century.

“Please accept this Certificate of Appreciation for your service and cooperation as a token of the Census Bureau’s recognition that we could not have done without your help.” This has been signed by Kenneth Pruitt, Director.

The Certificate of Appreciation reads: “United States Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, in recognition presented to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in appreciation for your valuable contribution to the success of Census 2000.” This has been signed by Kenneth Pruitt, Director. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like now to direct your attention to the big screen for a short video presentation.

(Whereupon, the video “VFW/Diabetes” was played at this time.)

INTRODUCTION OF WILLIAM E. PELTON, PFIZER, INC.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMIT: As you know, for many years, Pfizer, Inc., has been active in researching and developing treatment for a host of illnesses and disease. Pfizer mass-produced penicillin during World War II, no doubt helping to spare the lives of tens of thousands of allied service personnel involved in combat operations.

As your next Commander-in-Chief, I understand that diabetes is a legacy passed on to many who served in Vietnam as a result of their exposure to Agent Orange. have vowed to make the war against diabetes a

high priority.

Pfizer, Inc., has pledged many of its resources to finding a cure for diabetes and has recognized the Veterans of Foreign Wars determination to do what it can to eradicate this illness. As a result, Pfizer has pledged to help the Veterans of Foreign Wars establish an educational fund and research program that will help target a cure for diabetes.

William Pelton is Senior Vice-President of Sales, Health Care Cluster, U.S. Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer, Incorporated. He spent six years as an officer in the United States Army and is a Vietnam veteran.

Here the check on behalf of Pfizer Corporation to help in our cause, Mr. William Pelton.

PRESENTATION OF \$10,000 FOR THE VFW DIABETES EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BY MR. WILLIAM PELTON

MR. WILLIAM PELTON: Well, good morning, and thank you for having us here. It is a pleasure to represent Pfizer. We appreciate your kind recognition for our involvement with the VFW in the area of diabetes. This is not the first time that Pfizer has been recognized by the VFW, so we feel that working with you is part of our ongoing commitment.

Some of you may know that the first time we worked together was in June, 1944. Pfizer was responsible for over 90 percent of the penicillin that went ashore with our boys in Normandy. Today, Pfizer has emerged and has become the largest pharmaceutical company in the world with a research budget this year alone of almost \$5 billion.

Diabetes is one of the disease areas where we have been very active in our research. It is estimated that almost 16 million people in America, almost six percent of our population, have diabetes. Of those there are still one-third that are undiagnosed.

Each year nearly 800,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes. The American Diabetes Association estimates the cost of diabetes to be almost \$100 million a year. The costs go far, far beyond the money associated with the treating of diabetes. For example, diabetes is the leading cause of blindness and lower limb amputations in the United States that is not war related. You know something about that.

It should also be noted that diabetes rarely strikes alone. It is most often accompanied by other conditions, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol and erectile dysfunction. These are areas in which Pfizer has also conducted significant research.

In fact, we are very proud to say that Pfizer has discovered and distributes the number one product in the world for each of these diseases. For those of you who have diabetes, there is good short-term news on the horizon. Some of you may be taking daily insulin shots.

Well, Pfizer's research, along with several other companies, is in the final clinical research on developing an insulin product that can be inhaled and thus bypassing the needle.

I conclude my remarks by pledging our ongoing support for better health-care products and programs for our veterans. You can aid in this effort by voicing your concern whenever you are denied access to the latest advances in medicine that result from pharmaceutical research.

Finally, once again, thank you for this recognition. As Pfizer moves from being the largest pharmaceutical company in the world to the most valued company in the world, this type of recognition validates that we are going in the right direction by helping folks like you.

For me personally, although it might seem to be somewhat delayed, it remains important to say welcome home.

Thank you for your sacrifices. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Bill, for the \$10,000. That will kick us off, won't it, folks? Let me say this, Bill. Working with the Pfizer Corporation, I can assure you that our 1.9 million veterans of this organization will do all that we can possibly do to educate and find a cure for this horrible disease I thank you again.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO LARRY DANIELSON

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The next individual to be honored today is someone who has lent much to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Aside from his successful transition from Post level to Department Adjutant Quartermaster, it was his total commitment and love for the Veterans of Foreign Wars that makes him stand out among his peers.

He more often than not went above and beyond, often working Saturdays and Sundays on behalf of the people in his great Department. Frequently, he went out of his way to assist and advise other Departments of our organization.

Whenever he was called upon, he answered the call. He is dearly loved and respected not only by the comrades and sisters within the great State of Wisconsin, but throughout the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is my great pleasure to present the Veterans of Foreign Wars Distinguished Service Medal to a very dear friend of mine and a very dear friend to all of us, Larry Danielson. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "The Distinguished Medal and this citation awarded to Lawrence Danielson in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over 13 years of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a committed worker, competent administrator and distinguished leader in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the office of State Adjutant and Quartermaster of the Department of Wisconsin, evidencing his exceptional dedication to the programs and ideals 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 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE BY MR. LARRY DANIELSON

COMRADE LARRY DANIELSON: This citation belongs to the 13 Past State Commanders that I served and their constituents that we have worked together with. I must back up a little bit and say you have heard from my friend, "Cleve" Cox, that reminded me that 13 years ago after I was elected, I gave "Cleve" a call. He wasn't in, but he called me back.

We sat and talked for 45 minutes about what the VFW is all about and what the Adjutants/Quartermasters should do and what they shouldn't do. "Cleve" and I had a good talk and he hasn't charged me a doggone cent for it yet. We have been friends ever since.

Another dedicated friend that helped me out throughout the years was a past National Chaplain, A. G. Parker. I hope, Reverend Parker, you are in the audience, because I must thank you for your extended friendship over the years.

A couple of years ago when I was experiencing some serious physical problems, our friendship became even stronger. Reverend Parker became a valued spiritual support system to me. Reverend Parker, I thank you.

To my favorite Trish, my wife Trish, I want to thank her for the love and support through the years you have put up with me during the Adjutant/Quartermaster. What is next for me? I will be spending a lot of time as I travel as a companion and chauffeur, as Trish advances through the chairs of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Wisconsin. When Trish becomes the State Auxiliary President next year, I will be there to help in whatever I can do in whatever State Presidents do. Thank you. I will be doing this for Trish, because it is the right thing to do. (Applause) I am proud that I went to Korea fifty-some years ago. It was the right thing to do. I shall continue to be a part of the VFW in some way because, ladies, comrades and sisters, it is the right thing to do. Thank you. God bless you all. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: While we are recognizing Larry Danielson from Wisconsin, I would ask that you keep in your thoughts and prayers a fine, great leader from the Department of Wisconsin, your past Council member, Curt Taylor, who was just diagnosed yesterday with leukemia. So, if you would keep him in your prayers and thoughts we would certainly appreciate it.

PRESENTATION OF VFW CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION TO DONALD W. MAGNUS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The success of the organization has always been based on the hard work and dedication of our members. They are the ones who make things happen and get things done. The Veterans of Foreign Wars' entry in the Rose Bowl Parade in

January, 2001, was a tribute to an American icon, Mr. Bob Hope.

As you know, the award-winning VFW float inspired millions of people around the world. It took the work of many volunteers to make that event a success. Mr. Donald Magnus is largely responsible for keeping the efforts of the volunteers focused on the construction of the Veterans of Foreign Wars entry into the Rose Bowl Parade.

Please join me in welcoming the recipient of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Certificate of Appreciation, Mr. Donald Magnus.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Certificate of Appreciation presented to Donald W. Magnus in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition for his outstanding contributions in the VFW's participation of the 2001 Tournament of Rose Parade in Pasadena, California.

"His expertise in float building, coupled with his skillful coordination and supervision of numerous volunteers, was evidenced by the awarding of the Judges Special Trophy to the VFW entry, 'The Road to Freedom.' His countless volunteer hours and commitment to the successful completion of the project is in the finest tradition 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 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. DONALD MAGNUS

MR. DONALD MAGNUS: Thank you very much, but I cannot and I will not accept this certificate, but I will accept it on behalf of all the veterans, their spouses, their families, their friends, that spent many hours putting leaves to pedals to flowers on this float for many hours and for many days. I accept it on their behalf. Thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We are going to see you back in Pasadena next year, are we not?

MR. DONALD MAGNUS: Yes.

PRESENTATION OF VFW CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION TO THE BRAEGER COMPANY OF WISCONSIN

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Coming to Milwaukee has been a great experience for all of us in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We have met many wonderful people, and each has contributed to the success of the VFW National Convention both last year and this year.

One person who stands out among all the great people of Milwaukee is Todd Reardon, President of Braeger Company of Wisconsin. He generously donated the vehicles used to transport our distinguished guests

to the convention. Todd couldn't be with us today, but here to accept the citation on his behalf is his father-in-law, a World War II veteran and a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Chief Executive Officer of the Braeger Company of Wisconsin, Mr. Bob Braeger.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "The Certificate of Appreciation presented to Todd Reardon, President of Braeger Company in Wisconsin, in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition for his generous contributions to the 101st and 102nd National Conventions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Milwaukee. His charitable donation of vehicle support contributed to the overall success of the conventions and made it possible for the distinguished guests attending the conventions to ride in 'Style and Class', trademarks of the Braeger Company of Wisconsin.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - MR. BOB BRAEGER

COMRADE BOB BRAEGER: Thank you. Of course, I am honored, but above all I want to thank you for being in Milwaukee. I have lived here all my life and I do love living here. I am also a member of the VFW and it is just wonderful to have so many of you brothers with us. That is how you are. Thank you for being here. Thank you very much. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Just be patient. We have run out of people. John is going to sing for you.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: That will clear this hall quick. Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 102nd National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 2, 1968, Title 44, United States Code, Section 1332.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: I second that motion.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion that has been duly made and seconded. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion passed. It is so ordered.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATIONS OF NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, the nominations for National Home Trustees received at the National Headquarters are as follows:

First National Home District, comprised of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, Salvatore J. Capirchio, VFW Post 2396, Cranston, Rhode Island, and Dana E. Hussey, VFW Post 1772, Somersworth, New Hampshire.

The Second National Home District, comprised of New York, New Jersey and Europe, Ross R. Henry, VFW Post 125, Plattsburgh, New York.

The Seventh National Home District, comprised of Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, Patricia Jankowski, Auxiliary to VFW Post 4012, Northville, Michigan, and Ronald L. Van Dorpe, VFW Post 2406, Charlotte, Michigan.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief has asked that I make a formal introduction of those who have served this organization and given so much of themselves, our Past Commanders-in-Chief.

1949-50, Clyde A. Lewis, Post 125, New York.

1956-57, Cooper T. Holt, Post 1289, Tennessee.

The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief has invited all Past Commanders-in-Chief to join us here at the podium.

1958-59, John J. Mahan, Post 1116, Montana.

1961-62, Robert E. Hansen, Post 295, Minnesota.

1973-74, Ray R. Soden, Post 2149, Illinois.

1974-75, John J. Stang, Post 3167, Kansas.

1975-76, Thomas C. Walker, Post 5849, Connecticut.

1976-77, R. D. "Bulldog" Smith, Jr., Post 4346, Georgia.

1977-78, Dr. John Wasylik, 2329, Ohio.

1978-79, Eric Sandstrom, Post 969, Washington.

October of 1980 to 1982, Arthur J. Fellwock, Post 1114, Indiana.

1982-83, James R. Currieo, Post 9972, Arizona.

1983-84, Clifford G. Olson, Post 6699, Massachusetts.

1984-85, Billy Ray Cameron, Post 5631, North Carolina.

1985-86, John S. Staum, Post 9625, Minnesota.

1986-87, Norman G. Staab, Post 6240, Kansas.

1988-89, Larry W. Rivers, Post 1736, Louisiana.

1989-90, Wally G. Hogan, Post 6498, Wisconsin.

1991-92, Robert E. Wallace, Post 1851, New Jersey.

1992-93, John M. "Jack" Carney, Post 4643, Florida.

1993-94, George R. Cramer, Post 6869, Illinois.

1994-95, Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Post 9972, Arizona.

1995-96, Paul A. Spera, Post 144, Massachusetts.

1996-97, James E. Nier, Post 8919, Texas.

1997-98, John E. Moon, Post 2873, Ohio.

1998-99, Thomas A. Pouliot, Post 1116, Montana.

1999-2000, John W. Smart, Post 483, New Hampshire.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE AWARD
TO ALABAMA STATE EMPLOYMENT SECURITY OFFICE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We are honored to recognize the Alabama State Employment Security Office, Phenix City, Alabama, as the recipient of this year's National Employment Service Award.

Through their hard work, dedication, quality care and service towards veterans, they have achieved a 53.6 percent successful employment rate. The Phenix City office has assisted 144 of 259 Vietnam-era veterans and 75 of 106 disabled veterans find meaningful employment.

Their advocacy in providing pro-active assistance aids veterans in discovering opportunities and re-establishing themselves within the work force.

Here to accept the award is the Manager of the Alabama State Employment Security Office, Phenix City, Robert M. Guy, Jr. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "National Employment Service Office Award presented to Alabama State Employment Security Office, Phenix City, Alabama, in recognition and appreciation of meritorious professional employment service rendered to veterans."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, and Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.

RESPONSE - MR. ROBERT GUY, JR.

COMRADE ROBERT GUY: I thank you very much. I have tried to think of a few words to say to let you know, or something interesting to let you know how thankful I am, but I couldn't think of those words. I know that God puts people in places sometimes and he puts me with the Employment Office.

I get paid to help veterans. That is something I do anyway. I am thankful to you here, very, very thankful. In behalf of the Phenix City office and the Employment Service in Alabama, thank you. I thank all of you very, very much from the bottom of my heart. Thank you very much for this award. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Mr. Guy, here is an honorarium of \$1,000.

COMRADE ROBERT GUY: And my wife gets this.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I am here to welcome our Commander-in-Chief back into the auditorium. Chief, it is all yours. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak assumed the chair.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We were just sharing a thought, is that an applause that I am back or you are gone. (Laughter)

PRESENTATION OF THE JAMES C. GATES
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
TO LOCAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE,
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION, NORTH CAROLINA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is now my distinct honor to present the prestigious James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Mr. Charles L. Miller.

Charles L. Miller is a local veterans employment representative with the Employment Security Commission in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He also functions as a transition assistance program facilitator for Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base by assisting newly discharged veterans and preparing them for re-entry into the civilian work force.

During the past year, he registered and referred hundreds of veterans to various supportive services and agencies and assisted 83 veterans in finding gainful employment.

In addition, he is a Life Member of Post 9103 where he has faithfully served as District Commander, Post Commander and as an Employment Committee member for the Department of North Carolina.

Charles Miller is a professional truly dedicated to assisting his fellow veteran through his example of leadership, caring and commitment.

Comrades, I now present to you an individual whose efforts have had a direct impact on improving veterans' lives, Charles Miller. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award presented to Charles L. Miller, Local Veterans Employment Representative, Employment Security Commission, North Carolina, 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.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Mr. Miller, prior to presenting you to our audience here, may I present you this check for \$1,000 that goes along with the James C. Gates Award. Mr. Miller, the microphone is yours, sir.

RESPONSE - MR. CHARLES L. MILLER

COMRADE CHARLES MILLER: Good morning. How does everyone feel this morning? I hope you feel as good as I do. If I had felt any better I couldn't stand it. I think there ought to be a law against it, so, therefore, it probably is.

Comrades and Sisters, it is a great honor to receive this award. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever believe that I would qualify for such a distinguished award. I appreciate the folks that nominated me and I appreciate the folks that made the selection. God bless the greatest organization in the world. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT PATRICIA JANKOWSKI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: My comrades and delegates to this National Convention, we have in the back of our convention hall a very gracious lady. Accompanying her are two others. So let us, please, Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, escort President Jankowski to this room.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I just came from visiting the Ladies Auxiliary, and it was apparen how successful their convention has been. I am extremely pleased that here to visit our convention today is a lady that I was proud to serve with for the past year.

She has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary for many years and has left a successful legacy for others to follow for years to come. I admire her deeply. Please welcome a great lady and a person that I have come to know that she is not a middle-of-the-road person, either.

She can definitely stand up and tell it like it is. She has been praised for her eloquence in being able to deliver what she believes to be right. I know she is going to be an asset to this organization for many, many years.

Please welcome a great lady and President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Patricia Jankowski.

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

REMARKS - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT PATRICIA JANKOWSKI

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JANKOWSKI: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak, National Officers and the VFW Members:

It has been a privilege for me to serve as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars this last year. I have a written script, and John and I are known, I think, for not keeping to them. I am not going to this morning.

So if there are more things I may not mention to you to praise you for, that is because I want to speak to you from my heart. Many years ago, God set forth to give me many challenges in my life. As all of you know, from losing a father to gaining one who was one of the greatest fathers because as a small child he came to me and told me there was a man I should never forget and that was my father.

My stepfather said, as he handed me a picture of my father in uniform, framed, "Always put this in a special place upon a mantel, because he deserves the respect of you and the family you will have in the future." I

have always remembered those words, even though the man in the picture I have no memory of.

As the years went on, I gained many more families as I went into the VFW because of my stepfather. As I told you at the banquet, he told me there would be many roads and those roads included many, many families, from the one I married into and the one my husband has helped me work so diligently for, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I thank you as Americans, but mostly because you are veterans. I thank you for every piece of freedom that you have given me. I thank you for everything you do for every veteran, for his family, for the community in which you live. Most of all, I want to thank you for your friendship. It will be a year I will never forget.

It will be a lifelong dream come true, but the future holds much more for Patty and that is in the next road that leads me to my next veterans' family. I thank you from the bottom of my heart and in behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for sharing and supporting and jointly working with us on all the programs this year. We have done an outstanding job together. (Applause)

So from Patty, the Ladies Auxiliary, our love and our best wishes to those that will follow in John and my footsteps and become the next officers in both the Ladies Auxiliary and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

To Jim, from the Department of Michigan, Michigan has had their hands full for the last couple of years. They will continue, Jim, I know to support you. You will always have my love and my support You know that. Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for a wonderful, wonderful year.

John, my National Chief of Staff, Edna Mikolajczyk, has a presentation at this time.

LADIES AUXILIARY CHIEF OF STAFF MIKOLAJCZYK: Commander-in-Chief, on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars we proudly present to you our nation's emblem and our banner. Please accept this as a gift for all of your hard work, your courage, your support. We thank you very, very much. We love you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Patricia, before you leave, if I may.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JANKOWSKI: I was kissing somebody else.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: How soon they forget you. (Laughter)

Patricia, on behalf of our organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we present you with this monetary token, so perhaps you can get that big rocking chair you were talking about or that easy recliner. We don't want to be commercializing and be blamed for one product over the other, but whatever that recliner is that you want may you put this towards that so you can sit back and relax. Thank you so much for being our President. (Applause)

You should have seen it over there. This about got out of hand over there. At this time may I introduce to you a very special lady, Betty Gwizdak.

(Applause)

MRS. BETTY GWIZDAK: Thank you. There is no way I can do that (indicating). It is so nice to be able to say to each and every one of you that are here, again the Department Commanders and the people within your Department, thank you for the love and concern you have shown to me the past two years when I have been — I didn't know who I was sometimes. I really didn't care the other times.

Let me say to each of you, I do love you and I appreciate you and you will continue to be a part of my family, each and every one of you. We are only as far as your telephone. Trust me, there is no end to the telephone lines.

I have been there. Thank you. I love you all. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you all so very much. Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please escort Madam President and her guests from the room. Thank you again for the flags and thank you for your service. (Applause) I thank you all so much for that courtesy and kindness extended to our ladies.

PRESENTATION OF THE
NATIONAL LARGE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO
STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION AT SOMERSET, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The Veterans of Foreign Wars is now honored to bestow its "Large Employer of the Year" award to the State Correctional Institution at Somerset, Pennsylvania.

Since 1993, Somerset has been the county's second largest employer of veterans, employing 589 persons with 398 being veterans. This year alone, 50 of the 65 approved new hires have been veterans. They have demonstrated a firm commitment to employing veterans. They realize that veterans possess essential qualities that are needed to maintain the high standards this institution demands.

I guess I take a point of personal privilege in telling you that I was born in Revloc. That is between here and nowhere else. Accepting the "Large Employer of the Year Award" is Raymond Sobina, Superintendent of the Correctional Institution at Somerset.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "National Large Employer of the Year Award presented to the State Correctional Institution at Somerset, Pennsylvania, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy towards the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Sir, before presenting you to our audience, may I present this check for \$1,000 from the Veterans of Foreign

Wars. (Applause)

RESPONSE - MR. RAYMOND SOBINA

COMRADE SOBINA: Thank you, sir. Good morning, everyone. On behalf of the staff at the State Correctional Institution at Somerset and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, it is truly indeed a privilege to stand before the Veterans of Foreign Wars to accept this prestigious award.

As it was indicated earlier, Somerset is one of the newest prisons in the Pennsylvania State System. We are one of 24 prisons. We are holding approximately 2,000 inmates in a system that is currently holding 36,000. Somerset is a medium security institution, employing approximately 590 staff, and we take pride in employing 400 of those 590 as veterans.

The veteran brings with him or her very many benefits for our operation and I will list five just off the top of my head. First of all, Somerset, the prison, the Department of Corrections, is a para-military operation. It is extremely easy for the veteran to make the transition into our rank, order, scheme of things in our institution, and the transition is very smooth for the veteran.

Secondly, we find the veterans to be well-trained and ready to hit the ground running. This level of training is very important, because they are seasoned and they are ready to respond to the challenges that we have in modern corrections.

Thirdly, they are mature. The veterans are mature and disciplined. Fourthly, they possess proper values, God, country, family, which is extremely important in assembling a multi-disciplinary staff dealing with the challenges of a multi-cultural inmate population.

Finally, employing veterans is the right thing to do. It is what we should be doing based on the veterans' sacrifice for our continued freedom in this good country of the United States. I am very grateful for this award and I am very humbled by this award.

I had the opportunity during the past two days to walk through the various receptions and get to know some people, and I would be remiss if I didn't take a second to extend some special thanks.

First of all, to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for presenting us with this award. We are truly humble and very grateful. Secondly, to Merritt Nord from Somerset for submitting our nomination. He wrote a very eloquent justification, and we are very grateful to Merritt for his nomination of the State Correctional Institution of Somerset.

Next, George Mullen of Harrisburg, who was a very gracious host, extended a considerable degree of hospitality to me and was very accommodating when I came off the plane from Pittsburgh and my luggage didn't come with me. He had to chauffeur me around town and get me some essentials, and his hospitality is deeply appreciated. If you are out there, George, thank you very much.

Also Dan Pestinger and Jackie Conner, who were gracious enough to chaperone me and escort me around last night and show me a lot of the hospitality rooms and introduced me to some people. I appreciate their

taking the time to spend time with me. They are very nice people.

I have also met some great people, Jim from Michigan. Last night it was great to talk to you. Also Don from Oklahoma was a bartender the first night I was in town and he fed me and took me under his wing. Don, if you are in the audience, I certainly appreciated that.

Joe, from Illinois, I found to be a true gentleman. The hospitality rooms in Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, Oklahoma, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, Pennsylvania, I mean I can go on. Everybody was just fantastic.

We appreciate the award. We thank you from the bottom of our heart in Pennsylvania. God bless America and God bless the VFW. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you for all that you do for veterans.

PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SMALL EMPLOYER OF YEAR AWARD TO PRC. INC.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It is now my honor to present the VFW "National Small Employer of the Year" Award to PRC, Inc., located in Fort Hood, Texas.

PRC, Inc., has distinguished themselves as an example to their peers by using the local employment office as its sole means of hiring new employees and, as a result, has achieved remarkable success. This year alone, they have had 144 new hires with 47 being Vietnam-era veterans and 37 disabled veterans.

PRC, Inc., currently has a total of 223 employees of which 178 employees, which equals 80 percent of their work force, are veterans.

Their example proves veterans are successful and important members of the workforce. This clearly identifies them as leaders in the small business community by recognizing the value veterans offer. Accepting the Small Employer of the Year Award is Mr. Ted Scribner, Project Manager for PRC, Inc. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The citation reads "National Small Employer of the Year Award presented to PRC, Inc., Fort Hood, Texas, in recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Mr. Scribner, before I present you to our audience, may I present you this check for \$1,000 from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We appreciate your service, sir. (Applause)

RESPONSE - MR. TED SCRIBNER

MR. SCRIBNER: Thank you. Well, good morning, folks. On behalf of PRC, Inc., I would like to take this opportunity to give you our sincere thanks for this award. It is a real honor. For myself, I am particularly glad that I got to come up here. I don't normally get to come to Wisconsin all that often from Texas. This has been interesting and I have enjoyed it. The weather here is great.

PRC and I are not strangers to the VFW. In 1997, we got the award in Texas. Our contract was much smaller and we got the Texas award and we got nosed out at National. We got second place. This time around we got the whole smear. A little over a year ago, I was faced with the challenge of increasing my workforce from about 70 total folks up to about 225 total folks because of a change in Fort Hood where we took over all of the 68 firing ranges at Fort Hood as opposed to the five that we had for the previous six or eight years.

The Texas Work Force Commission and a fellow named Jerry Fitzgerald, were instrumental in helping me. We didn't really have a place to work out of, or anything for that magnitude of operations, and they opened to us, they gave us a place to work.

They did all the paperwork, screening the folks. All we had to do was come down, interview and hire. That made it great. Jerry culminated this by writing the nomination for us for this award. He has been really instrumental in helping us get where we are today.

The gentleman ahead of me listed those attributes for veterans. Most of those and, in fact, to some degree all of those applied to my operation. We are twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, operating the ranges. Who better knows how to serve the needs of the active military trying to train better than veterans who have been there and done that? So that is what we do.

Once again, I will cut my remarks at this point and I will tell you I can stand up here all day and applaud your organization. I think it is a great one. I will just echo my predecessor by saying God bless America and God bless the VFW. Thank you. (Applause)

RECOGNITION OF DEPARTMENTS WITH OVER ONE MILLION BUDDY POPPY SALES AND WINNERS OF THE NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CONTEST

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time we are going to go into the Awards Contest, awarding for the Buddy Poppies and so forth. I ask Tom Kissell to please come forward and conduct that portion.

COMRADE TOM KISSELL: At this time, ladies and gentlemen, we will announce the annual divisional contest winners. This is the National Award issued to those Department Commanders and Presidents who led their respective divisions, each of the nine divisions, at the end of the Memorial

Day campaign, May 31st, 2001, and it's automatically awarded each year and presented at the National Convention.

At this time I would like to read the recipients of those awards.

First Place, Division 1, the Department of Minnesota and its Ladies Auxiliary. I would ask that the Department Commander and/or representative present themselves to the Sergeants for their award.

Department of North Dakota, First Place in Division 2, and its Ladies Auxiliary. Is there a representative from the Department of North Dakota?

First Place in Division 3, the Department of Missouri and its Ladies Auxiliary.

First Place in Division 4, the Department of Oregon and its Ladies Auxiliary.

First Place in Division 5 is the Department of Rhode Island and its Ladies Auxiliary.

First Place in Division 6 is the Department of Pennsylvania and its Ladies Auxiliary.

Division 7, First Place, the Department of California and its Ladies Auxiliary.

First Place in Division No. 8, the Department of Hawaii and its Ladies Auxiliary.

The First Place in Division 9, the Department of Pacific and its Ladies Auxiliary.

At this time I would also like for the purposes of recognition to honor the Over One Million Club. That is those Departments that exceeded their total distribution of over one million poppies. The Over One Million Club was established a few years ago to pay special recognition to the Departments whose poppy distribution equaled or exceeded one million.

This year's recipient is once again the Department of California, who led the nation in total distribution of more than 1.2 million poppies. Once again, welcome back to the club, who was a long-time member, the great Department of Minnesota, distributing over one million poppies.

I would ask that those 2000-2001 Department Commanders and Presidents, if they are available or in the audience, of the Department of California and the Department of Minnesota to join Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak for the Buddy Poppy Award Presentation.

Commander-in-Chief, if I may, I would like to conclude my report by announcing the Buddy Poppy Contest winners for the 102nd National Convention here in Milwaukee.

Category 1, First Place to Topaz Post and Auxiliary No. 3630, Topaz Ranch, Nevada.

Category 2, First Place, John M. Bliss Post and Auxiliary No. 728, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Category 3, First Place, White Mountain Area Post and Auxiliary No. 9907, Show Low, Arizona.

Category No. 4, First Place, the Ozark Junior Girls Unit No. 3246, Mountain Home, Arkansas. Congratulations to each of you.

Commander-in-Chief, that concludes my announcements and report. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Adjutant General Senk, come to the podium for introductions, sir.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for this privilege. My comrades, at this time you see standing behind me our Sergeants-at-Arms. Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to a group of comrades we see annually at our National Convention. They come to this convention and they are up early in the morning and the first ones in the hall.

They arrange for the seating on special occasions, and they keep order in the hall. They try to seat everybody and maintain order that is necessary during the meeting itself. These folks don't get a lot of money to do this. It is obviously a labor of love for them. I am sure that everyone recognizes that they do an outstanding job.

It is my privilege to introduce the National Sergeant-at-Arms from Post 6240, the Department of Kansas, Barry Hoffman. Barry has been a Sergeant for 13 years and when he is not issuing orders at our VFW meetings, he serves as the Counter Drug Coordinator for the Kansas National Guard. Barry Hoffman. (Applause)

Keith McDonald has been a Sergeant for seven years and is a member of Post 2275 in California. He is retired from the United States Navy and is a Past All-American Post Commander. Keith McDonald. (Applause)

Dan "Sarge" Brown, Post 1911 in Ohio, is a Vietnam veteran and retired from the United States Army after 20 years of service. He has been a Sergeant for six years and is a Past All-American District Commander. (Applause)

Gary Barringer, Post 9134, has been a Sergeant for six years. He is a Past Department Commander of North Carolina. He works as a technician for the North Carolina National Guard. Gary Barringer. (Applause)

One of the newcomers to the team, Joe Schirmers has been a Sergeant for 39 years and is a member of Post 4847 in Minnesota. He has retired from the Great Northern Railroad, and listen to this, he has over 45,000 hours of volunteer service at VA Hospitals. (Applause)

Truly one of the newest members on the team is a Vietnam veteran who served with the United States Navy. He is from the Department of Florida where he retired from the St. Petersburg Police Department after 25 years. That is Ed Villiaume. (Applause)

Another new member of the Sergeants is an Air Force veteran from Massachusetts, a Past District Commander and five-time All-State Post Quartermaster, Bryan O'Brien.

And Fred Von Hinken is a member of Post 4159, where he has served as Quartermaster for 35 years. He retired from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and has been a Sergeant for 24 years. Fred Von Hinken. (Applause)

I think the prettiest Sergeant-at-Arms that we have could not be with us because of her work schedule, Joy Collins-Baxter from the great State of Minnesota.

These are the comrades that every time something goes wrong, we start screaming at them. If something goes right, sometimes forget to say "thank you." At this time I want to publicly say "thank you" to each and every one of you. Each member of this team does a great job.

I am so proud of each and every one of them. And, comrades, you handle yourselves as professionals. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with each and every one of you. Thanks so much on behalf of all of us for what you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Let's show them our appreciation. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO COMRADE FRED VON HINKEN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Our next honoree served the VFW for many years, and served it well. As Assistant National Sergeant-at-Arms, he, along with all the VFW know and respect, Fred Von Hinken.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: "Distinguished Service Medal and this citation awarded to Fred Von Hinken in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over two decades of distinguished and unselfish service to the officers and delegates at 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 office of the Assistant 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 23rd day of August, 2001."

This has been signed by John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Fred, the podium is yours.

RESPONSE - COMRADE FRED VON HINKEN

COMRADE FRED VON HINKEN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak. It is a great honor to receive this award. Twenty-four years, that is two years longer than I served on active duty in military service. Now, my knees are worn out, my back hurts and 76 years have taken their toll.

I have enjoyed serving all of the Commanders-in-Chief from John Wasyluk, who gave me my first appointment, to John Gwizdak. I want to thank all of them for this opportunity. It has been great working under Adjutant General Julian Dickinson, Howard Vander Clute, Larry Rivers and John Senk.

When I started as an Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms, Paul Malisco was the Sergeant-at-Arms. George Sarver relieved him.

Long time assistants that I remember are Barge Rich from North Carolina, Faye Baker, who was from West Virginia, I believe, Billy McMagnus from California, and later Carl Aiello, who answered the final call while still serving. And, of course, Joe Schirmers who was already serving when I started and who is still serving with us today.

I want to thank all of you, my brothers and sisters in arms, who served our great country in the military services. I want to thank my wife, Stella, for all her support and help over the years. My final thanks goes to all of my comrades on the Sergeants-at-Arms team who have just been introduced to you. God bless you all, my brothers and sisters in arms, and God bless America.

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

INTRODUCTION OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL NELS RUNNING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Lieutenant General Nels Running, United States Air Force, Retired, assumed duties as the Executive Director of the Department of Defense 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee on April 7, 2000.

He directs and coordinates efforts, events and activities at the national level to fulfill the mission mandated by Congress to recognize and honor the 1.8 million veterans who served in the Korean War.

Please welcome General Running as he recognizes the Department of Arizona for its 100-percent participation in the 50th Anniversary of the Korea War Commemoration Partnership Program.

REMARKS - LIEUTENANT GENERAL RUNNING

LIEUTENANT GENERAL NELS RUNNING: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak. Ladies and gentlemen, fellow veterans, thank you so much for the opportunity to be here today and thank you right up front for your tremendous support of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration.

When the veterans who served in th Korean War returned to the United States there were no ticker tape parades down Main Street USA. The veterans returned individually. There were no unit return commemorations or celebrations. In some cases, veterans found perhaps benign rejection in society in a number of ways.

One veteran wrote me when we first out our Web page on, he saw that, and he couldn't believe something was going to happen. He said, "You know, when I came back from Korea I went to a local diner and I wore my uniform and I had my combat decorations and awards. These two older buddies of mine, World War II veterans, asked me what that was about, what are you doing?"

He explained that he had been in combat in Korea. They said, "What

are you talking about?" They laughed until they almost fell on the floor. They said, "That wasn't combat. We were in combat. You were in a police action. You had to have your billy clubs and whistles."

Well, what is the reaction one could expect from that? Of course, he went home, tucked his uniform away in the attic and set about joining the rest of America in rebuilding the economy so devastated by World War II. Congress asked the Department of Defense to take the lead in America's commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Korea War.

This is not a Defense Department initiative, this is not any branch of the Government's sole initiative. This is the United States of America's commemoration. After 50 years, it is time to recognize Korean War veterans and the war they won as a victory for freedom and democracy around the world. (Applause)

Now, we, the 50th Anniversary Committee, comprised of I think today at least 22 individuals and office across from the Pentagon in Crystal City, and there is no way that 22 of us working 24-7 could possibly devise a way to identify, recognize and honor those 1.8 million veterans who served in Korea.

So we have a program we call Commemoration Partners. Some of you may have heard of it initially as Commemorative Communities, but it sounded too benign and it did not describe in its title what we need. We need a partnership with folks like you in the various Posts of this great veterans service organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to take on a partnership with us to reach out and find those 1.8 million veterans or the immediate next of kin of those who have not survived.

Commemoration Partners received their commemoration flag, the official flag of these three and a half years of commemoration, a number of materials informative, educational to support their efforts to get America at its very grassroots, to remember this important period of our history and the tremendous sacrifices of the 37,000 American lives that were taken by that war, the more than 100,000 wounded casualties as well. Indeed, the remainder of the 1.8 million veterans and their families who all suffered for that effort.

Korea today, the Republic of Korea, south of the 38th parallel, is a shining example of what individual humans given the dignity and respect they deserve, the opportunity that freedom brings, has built an economy that is the tenth largest in the world.

They are our United States fourth largest trading we have 37,000 troops on duty there today as there have been since 1953, preserving that fragile democracy. As you know, the war is not over. It is a cease fire.

Commemoration Partners are doing magnificent things for us and it is this opportunity today that I am especially proud to be here and present to the Department of Arizona a special recognition award for having achieved first 100 percent participation of all Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts throughout Arizona.

The entire Department is 100 percent signed up and active as Commemoration Partners. You can't do any better than that. That is getting it all, and we appreciate it. I would ask Past Commander Rigo and current

Commander Reinhardt to accept this award.

Thank you again, Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak. You have been a great support to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: One of the proud icons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Ladies Auxiliary is the VFW National Home at Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The National Home is a profound example of veterans helping veterans.

Today the home provides comfortable housing and a caring staff designed to give the children a safe, nurturing environment. Today we welcome the Immediate Past President of the National Home, Benjamin Pernol, and the Executive Director Michael Kessler, as well as the 2001 Buddy Poppy child. Please welcome them. (Applause)

REMARKS BY IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL HOME

COMRADE BEN PERNOL: Ladies and gentlemen of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it is a great honor for me and the other Trustees that serve you at your National Home for Children. I am here today to thank you for your long support over the last 75 years for the home.

It is a really a great veterans monument, it is a physical place but also a place where you can see living results, children coming out believing in America, believing in the generosity and believing in working to help others.

Also, I would like to thank you for electing our National Officers. They have given us tremendous support since I have been on the Board, the outgoing Commander. Jim Goldsmith, who we are honored to be in his home state, I know has given us all the support possible and will continue.

It is a great privilege and honor to have on our Board of Directors these gentlemen, your Ladies Auxiliary President and so forth, your Adjutant General, your Quartermaster General, and the great experience they bring to us. It is just fantastic the work that they do and the work that they make easier for us.

So, I am here to commend you for your efforts on behalf of the National Home. I would like to present a gift to the Commander-in-Chief. This gift is on behalf of the children of the National Home. That is a jewelry box for all the jewelry he has collected over the years.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KESSLER: And it holds many years from the National Home. This is presented to the Commander-in-Chief for 2000-2001, John F. Gwizdak, with sincere appreciation from the VFW National Home for Children.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you so much. I love you all.

COMRADE BEN PERNOL: I would like to introduce the Director of the National Home, Mike Kessler. He has done a fantastic job over the last two or three years now that he has been there. He will bring you up-to-date on what is happening at our Home.

REMARKS BY NATIONAL HOME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KESSLER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KESSLER: Thank you, Ben. Well, the Buddy Poppy girl was holding my hand so I wasn't so nervous, and she gave me a thumbs up as I stepped up on stage here. Thank you, Margie. Well, good morning.

Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, line officers and other members of this honorable VFW organization, it is my pleasure to bring greetings and thanks to you from the 86 children, the 26 mothers, the one father, and the many college students at your VFW National Home for Children, one of the greatest living memorials in America. (Applause)

As I prepared this report, I thought how I would be standing in front of many hard-working men and women of this honorable organization. I thought how can I honor you? I came to the conclusion that one of the best ways I can honor you is to show you how well your National Home is doing and to show you that the sacrifice of your own personal time, money and talent has not gone in vain.

I want to create first a backdrop for you. Picture this screen completely white and on this backdrop I would like you to see some of the statistics of what is happening in America in terms of our youth culture. Then I want to contrast that to what is happening at the National Home.

On that white screen, first, you will see a scene of what happens every 30 minutes in America. Put up on that screen 57 adolescents running away from home every 30 minutes; 14 teenagers giving birth to children with no fathers to help them; 22 girls and their aborted children up there; 686 kids trying one drug of many kinds; and 188 abusing alcohol. Now, put up on that screen 29 children trying to attempt suicide every 30 minutes in America.

Next is an overview. Put up there the 3.5 million children who are attacked in their schools in America every year. Next, put up on that screen, and I know we are getting close to lunch, put up on that screen a huge red, delicious, tasty, luscious apple. Can you see it up there and can you see it in your mind?

Now, put on some glasses and look right into the core of that apple. In that apple you are going to find many worms, but no one knows they are there. Now, on that apple put the map of the United States. America, just like that big luscious apple, has some worms in it. There is a war going on in America on the inside and this war is against our youth.

In contrast to those statistics I shared with you and those worms eating up that apple and eating at the core of America, I want to create a stage in front of that white, and now not a white screen, it is a bloody screen and it doesn't look very beneficial, does it?

Now, put up there the National Home for Children sitting on its 629 acres and 36 homes. Think about what happens at your National Home. You can be very proud of the fact that the National Home staff work extremely hard to make the National Home a safe place. This is hard work given that backdrop, isn't it?

You can also be proud of the fact that many of the troubled youth who come to the National Home, and not all of them are troubled, many have just fallen on hard times, but any of the troubled youth become much better within six months to a year living at the National Home.

You know, you might wonder why is that? I have the privilege of seeing why that happens day after day, and here is my conclusion. The children learn what it means to be safe, protected, cared for, and most importantly to love. They learn to serve God through regular church or synagogue attendance.

They start serving their country by serving one another first in their family, then in their community, and then, as you saw, many of the kids serving even at this rally. Did you enjoy those girls singing at the Patriotic Rally? (Applause)

They are taught and mentored by many members of the VFW, the Ladies Auxiliary, the MOC, the MOCA and the Dad's Program, and many other programs. They get involved in the Voice of Democracy, the Youth Essay, Boy Scouts, et cetera. They learn what it means to be a patriotic citizen.

They are watched over carefully at your National Home by many members. I pause and I want to bring this letter or comment to your attention. Perhaps the most important thing is that these youth learn what it means to cope. They learn that they don't need to resort to the drugs, the violence, the attempted suicide to cope with their problems.

Rather, we teach them to cope, to work hard, and when I say "we", I mean all of us, including you, to cope, work hard and achieve and to excel. Then we teach them to go out and to teach others to do the same, just like you have done. Well, Commander-in-Chief and other members, we have followed you this year and I want to give you a report on what has happened very quickly as we have followed you and your membership.

We have served over 140 VFW Ladies Auxiliary members, children and families who have been in need. All of the houses are open and most are renovated. We have expanded the Young Citizens for Patriotism Program which trains children in citizenship and patriotism.

Through this program five students went to the World War II Memorial. They were so touched that they came back, had a car wash and sent \$405 to the World War II Memorial. (Applause) Yes, we are following in your steps. We are also following in the steps of Retired General Colin Powell.

We have expanded our involvement in America's promise, the Alliance for Youth. We have increased our involvement in the National Points of Life organization. The children and the others and the one father at the home provided over 4,000 hours of community service this last year. That is commendable.

I challenge anyone to go to a community of this size and find that much community service. They also expanded their borders beyond the VFW community through going on mission trips. They made a ten-day trip to Hudson Falls, New York, where they helped rebuild a church, a trip to Mississippi, where the children helped to complete the demolition of an old house so they could start to build a retreat center.

They took a trip to Baltimore and Washington, D.C., where the children helped to repaint a homeless shelter. We also obtained a grant through Americorp. Many of you have asked to come to the National Home and volunteer. We are setting the stage through what we are calling the Mentor More Project, where between 40 and 100 volunteers this year alone will come to the National Home and help the children and their families.

This grant is worth over \$140,000 per year to the Home. The new water treatment plant is almost finished. I would like to invite all of you to go to the Ladies Auxiliary and thank them for following. The Health and Education Building is being renovated and through that renovation we will be able to expand our services to include a support unit, an expanded work and job placement unit, and a parent training center. The ladies contributed \$1 million this year to the National Home. That is for the H&E Building alone. (Applause)

Well, Commander and members, that completes my report. It is my pleasure now to present to you Margie, who is the 2001-2002 Buddy Poppy Child. Margie's mother served in the Gulf War as a nurse. She came to live at the National Home. She visits us often and we just love Margie and her mom and her brother, Josh. (Applause)

REMARKS BY BUDDY POPPY GIRL MARGIE LOWRY

BUDDY POPPY GIRL LOWRY: Hi. My name is Margie Lowry. I live at the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. I am eight years old. I live in the Indiana Two house with my house mothers, Michael, Lionel, Dominic and Justin, and my house sisters Kiowa and Christine.

I am in the fourth grade at Rockwood Elementary School and my favorite subject is art. School starts in five days. My favorite subject is I first like to do art, ride my bike, go swimming and play with my Barbie. The good reason about living at the National Home is because we do a lot of fun things like movies and lots and lots of other fun things. We also try to do good things for people, too. Thank you for loving us kids. We love all of you, too. (Applause)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHAEL KESSLER: Margie has a gift to present to Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak. You-all need to come and buy one of these.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you so much.

COMRADE BEN PERNOL: The Commander-in-Chief has generously allowed a gentleman to come up here and present a little gift to the National Home. I am glad to accept it. This is from the Department of Europe.

COMRADE BRUCE WITHERS (Department of Europe): This is from our Beer Busters Program that is run by the Grand of Europe, and the Department of Europe Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is people like you out there in the audience, females, Auxiliaries, you can become a Beer Buster. It costs you \$20. You are a lifetime member.

We advertise and we need your support. This year we are presenting

\$1,000 to the National Home to be used any way that they see fit.

COMRADE BEN PERNOL: We thank the Department of Europe. As you realize, this is an annual thing for them. They do it every year and we really do appreciate it. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: If anyone is scheduled to make nominations for National Officers, please move to the stage at this time and be seated so that we don't have to search for you and wait for you to get to the podium. We can eliminate a lot of wasted time here.

Do you have any announcements before we start this?

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: No.

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time it gives me great pleasure to open the nominations for officers for the next year of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. At this time are there any nominations for Commander-in-Chief?

I recognize George Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief from Illinois.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am George Cramer, Post 6869, North Riverside, Illinois, Past Commander-in-Chief. It is my honor to nominate to the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, a gentleman, a comrade and a friend for many years, James N. Goldsmith of the great state of Michigan.

Jim served in the U.S. Army from November, 1965, to August, 1967. He had duty in Vietnam as an engineer from April, 1966, to August, 1967. He is the recipient of the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal and a Rifle Sharp Shooter Badge.

Jim joined the VFW at Post 5666 in 1967 and was an All-State Post Commander in 1974. In 1977, he earned recognition as an All-State and All-American District Commander.

In 1978, Jim was selected as Michigan's "Young Veteran of the Year," and was the first Vietnam veteran to be elected Department Junior Vice Commander. He earned All-American status as a Department Commander in 1982-1983.

Jim has served on several National Committees which include Americanism, Youth Activities and Community Activities. He was Chairman of the Legislative Committee in 1993-94. He served as Vice-Chairman of the POW/MIA Committee and the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee.

While serving as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Jim was selected to travel to Vietnam as part of a presidential fact-finding committee. On an earlier trip to Vietnam and Laos as VFW Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, he participated in field efforts to recover the remains of missing U.S. service personnel.

Deeply concerned for the welfare of our active duty and reserve military forces, Jim has traveled extensively to visit our forward deployed troops. Jim's travels have taken him to the ever-tense DMZ in Korea. He has lived with our troops helping to stabilize life in Bosnia and Kosovo. Listening to the needs of our servicemen and women, he lists quality of life and defense readiness as issues of top priority.

While employed in the AC Spark Plug Division of General Motors, Jim was instrumental in establishing a Veterans Committee in the United Auto Workers Local 651, and served as the Committee Chairman for 17 years. Jim retired from General Motors in 1997 after 35 years of service.

Jim is a member of the American Legion, Moose Lodge, Lapeer Eagles and a Life Member of the Military Order of the Cootie. He is a Life Member of VFW Post 4139 in Lapeer, Michigan. Jim has one son, one stepson and three grandchildren.

It is my distinct privilege to submit to the delegation of the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, my friend, James N. Goldsmith for Commander-in-Chief 2001-2001. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I recognize for a second Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock from Indiana.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK: Thank you, Chief. My name is Art Fellwock, a member of VFW Post 1114 in Evansville, Indiana. I would like to second the nomination of a man who is not only tall in height but he is also tall in service and dedication. He is tall in enthusiasm and excitement.

He is tall in knowledge and wisdom. He is tall in sincerity and integrity. Yes, he is tall in the love of God, the love of country and love of our organization. He has all the ingredients to be an outstanding Commander and he will be an outstanding leader for our organization.

Therefore, as a Past Commander-in-Chief and speaking for all the other Past Commanders-in-Chief, I would like to second the nomination of James Goldsmith for Commander-in-Chief of the greatest organization on the face of the earth, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Recognizing for a second, John Harrow, Past Department Commander from the Department of Michigan.

COMRADE JOHN HARROW (Post 3724 - Michigan): It is my pleasure to stand before you to second the nomination of Jim Goldsmith for the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Jim for over 20 years.

The thing about Jim is he doesn't only lead by his words, he leads by his actions. He has done an outstanding job serving this organization under John Smart and John Gwizdak, and I know his unique leadership abilities will make him an outstanding Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I truly second the nomination of Jim Goldsmith for National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief?

I recognize Microphone — (laughter). Nominations for Commander-in-Chief shall remain open until tomorrow's session.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time are there any nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

The chair recognizes for a nomination Eric Sandstrom, Past Commander-in-Chief, Department of Washington.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ERIC SANDSTROM: Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, Delegates to the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars:

One year ago today on this very stage in front of this podium, I had the honor to nominate Ray Sisk as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We in the Western Conference believe he has held this office admirably.

I believe now is the time to give Ray Sisk a chance to take one more step up the ladder to be our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I believe very strongly he has earned it. I will not read all of his credentials for it would take too much time for my allotted time to nominate Ray Sisk as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

We know he is well qualified for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. We know he is a born leader. He has proven it in California many years before. We know he will take the time to speak to anybody who needs his help and assistance.

He was born in Marshall, Arkansas, and grew up in Oklahoma and California, and now resides in Bakersfield, California. He is a Navy veteran. It gives this old, old, very old Marine, an honor to nominate a swabbie, a very good swabbie, Ray Sisk of Bakersville, California, to be your new Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The chair at this time recognizes for seconding, Norman Staab, Past Commander-in-Chief, from Kansas.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NORMAN STAAB: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am Norman Staab, from Russell, Kansas, Post 6240, Past Commander-in-Chief. I have the distinct honor of seconding the nomination of Ray Sisk from the State of California for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

No one in my memory has brought forth a candidate of a more prestigious background and with a knowledge of the VFW as our candidate for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. With the experience he has from the Post level, as an All-American, all the way through the Department of California, and last year's Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief where he has again distinguished himself and has proven that with his leadership we will

have a great Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief because of the services he has provided us this last year. It is a distinct honor to second the nomination of a truly great American, Ray Sisk.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Norm. Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations shall remain open until tomorrow.

At this time are there any nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

The chair recognizes Ron Rusakiewicz from Stamford, Connecticut, for a nomination.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ: (Department of Connecticut): Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. As he would say, good morning all of you-all. To all of the National Officers, the great State Commanders, to the Officers, Members and Delegates of this, our great 102nd National Convention, I want to tell you how pleased I am to have been chosen to come before you this morning and to present to you our endorsed candidate from the Eastern States Conference for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

He sent me with a message for each and every one of you sitting in this room, and his message is "thank you." To all of the three other conferences and the Eastern States Conference that supported him and chose to unanimously endorse him in the Western Conference, in the Big Ten and in the Southern Conference, he thanks you from the bottom of his heart for that.

It is no secret that the election in the Eastern States Conference was long and hard fought and very close, just like many of yours were. But that election is over, that part of it is over. It was done in Fishkill, New York, in July. The votes were cast, the ballots were counted, and the man was elected.

Our candidate was elected to be the designee for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of this great organization for this convention. But there are some who think that that system is broke, that the system that has served all of our conferences for over 40 years is now not working properly.

I do not believe that. If that system is broke, then we need and we can fix it. But what we should not be doing at this great convention is taking the key and putting it into the lock of Pandora's box and opening that box up, because it will not serve our political process and it will not enhance the comradeship of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

We have reciprocally over the years worked very well in accepting your candidates and you ours, because you trust our wisdom and our members in their voting and we trust yours. If I might, just let me say a few words that so many of you who are in this room have heard over and over again from a great Past Commander-in-Chief Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr.

He has said to you many times, "Now that I have said that, please let me say this." I am extremely privileged to stand before you today and place

in nomination a man from the Eastern States Conference for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

He is a former police officer, father of five, a decorated Vietnam veteran and for 35 years a great member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In those 35 years of service, he held numerous elected and appointed positions on every level of this organization.

But I believe that it was his tenure as a Post Commander, District Commander, State Commander, and Chairman of the Eastern States Conference, his two years of great service on the National Council of Administration, two years on our Budget and Finance Committee on the national level, and two years as Vice-Chairman of our very prestigious Legislative Committee, and serving one year as its Chairman, that absolutely gave him and provided him with the knowledge, the experience and the insight to be an absolute asset to the Goldsmith-Sisk team and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

If elected, his proven leadership will undoubtedly inspire those whom he comes in contact with each and every day of his travels, to encourage them to continue the hard work that they do on a day-to-day basis for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, our families, our communities, those who still guard the gates of freedom in our military and, most of all, our nation.

He will also serve to have them expand and continue to expand our program and the services that we provide to our valued veterans. His qualifications are impeccable; his dedication is unquestionable; his commitment is complete, and his sincerity is real. As he has said to you before, his love of this organization is no stronger nor is it any greater than yours. It is also no less.

My fellow comrades of this 102 National Convention, I am proud to place in nomination for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief the endorsed candidate from all four conferences, from the great State of Connecticut, Mr. Edward S. Banas.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: For the purpose of a second, the chair recognizes Dominic Romano, Department Adjutant/Quartermaster, Department of Connecticut.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Department of Connecticut): My comrades, as an Adjutant/Quartermaster for the last 21 years, I have had the pleasure to serve under 21 Commanders. Of those 21 Commanders one stood head and shoulders over all the rest. He not only was a great State Commander but he was also very loyal to our staff. He treated us with dignity and respect. He was always a gentleman.

He was loyal to us then and he is loyal to us today. It is a privilege, my comrades, to second the nomination of Edward Banas for the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: For the purpose of a second, the chair recognizes Richard Sear from the Department of Connecticut.

COMRADE RICHARD SEAR (Department of Connecticut): Comrade

Commander-in-Chief, Members and Delegates to the 102nd VFW Convention:

My name is Richard Sear. I am a Past Post Commander of Post 1004 in the great State of Connecticut. It is an honor and a pleasure for me to second the nomination of a person we call in the Department of Connecticut pure VFW, Ed Banas, for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations shall remain open until tomorrow.

COMRADE ROBERT ALLEN (Post 127 - District of Columbia): National Officers, Delegates and Comrades:

My name is Robert Allen. I am the Commander of VFW Post No.127 in the Department of the District of Columbia, and a delegate to this convention. I stand before you today honored to place the name of the District of Columbia's endorsed candidate, G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

You all know him. He has been active in the VFW since 1967. For the past three years, he has traveled throughout the nation, visiting each conference, sharing his beliefs that all candidates interested in running for national office should be presented and elected on the convention floor.

He has totally been honest letting you know it was his intent to run on the convention floor. This should come to no surprise to anyone who knows how strongly Jerry feels about the VFW. Comrades, when certain members work so hard to keep a candidate from getting votes or winning an election through threats of the Department losing national appointments if they vote for that candidate or by suggestion that national appointments, if they vote for that candidate, or by suggesting that the Department sustain from voting at all, does it make you ask yourself why?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Excuse me. I will permit you to nominate, but you will not chastise anybody in this audience.

COMRADE ROBERT ALLEN (Post 127 - District of Columbia): All right. I will not chastise anyone in the audience. Therefore, I will speak on behalf of Jerry. Jerry believes that he can build a better future if we share the knowledge that is evidenced by his hand-outs to better benefits for the veterans and dependents.

Jerry's accomplishments are many. His qualifications are without question. Like the other candidates, his brochures and qualifications are available for all to see and read. They have been distributed for the past three years. Comrade Miserandino knows how to work with the grassroots and will always continue to do so.

He continuously works within the Department always striving for a better method of the Department of the District of Columbia and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He treats everyone the same, whether a National Officer or a local Post member. He also has and always will put veterans first.

Are there skeletons in his closet? Only the ones put there by others. Jerry is a 100-percent service disabled veteran who was honorably retired after four years of service from the U.S. Army at the rank of Staff Sergeant due to wounds received in combat.

Has his membership in the VFW ever been revoked or suspended? No. According to a certain book it was, but, in fact, Jerry was elected and served as the Department Commander and elected and served as the National Council member, two things impossible to accomplish if his membership was revoked. So you must be the judge what is true.

Jerry truly believes that true leadership must be for the benefit of the following and not for the enrichment of the leaders. The veterans and their families will always come first if he is elected. He further believes appointments should go to those who truly do the work.

You have met our candidate, you have heard him speak. You know his beliefs and you have the opportunity to see and read this qualifications. We believe that Jerry is by far the best qualified candidate from the Eastern Conference based on his years of experience, work and accomplishments.

There is always an easy choice, but the easy choice is not always the right choice. We are asking you to make what we believe is the right choice. We proudly nominate and ask you to cast your individual delegate vote for our candidate, G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino, Jr. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Do you have a nomination?

COMRADE JOHN GREEN (Post 2979 - District of Columbia): I have a second.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Go to the microphone, please, or you may come up here. I don't understand what you-all didn't understand when I asked for those who were nominating candidates to be on the stage. If you would like to second it, then get up here.

Comrade Miserandino, do you have anybody else to second your nomination? If so, will they please get up here. This is unfair to the audience.

COMRADE JOHN GREEN (Post 2979 - District of Columbia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates, my name is John Green. I am a member of Post 2979, District of Columbia, and a delegate to this convention. I rise to second the nomination of Comrade Jerry Miserandino for the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other seconding speeches? At this time are there any seconding speeches? Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations shall remain open until tomorrow. I apologize to the audience if I have stepped in any way over my bounds.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time nominations are open for Quartermaster General. Are there any nominations for Quartermaster General?

The chair recognizes Billy McCarthy who has a nomination.

COMRADE BILLY MCCARTHY (Post 864 - Massachusetts): My name is William L. "Billy" McCarthy, a delegate from Post 864, Past State Quartermaster, Quartermaster of my Post for 45 years, and they keep on electing me hoping I get it right. This is a joint nomination.

I have the distinguished Quartermasters from four conferences. They are Precilla Wilkewitz from Louisiana; Joe Salas from New Mexico; Stanley King, Past State Commander and Quartermaster from Massachusetts; and in the Big Ten Dave Havelly.

Joe Ridgley was elected Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in March of 1995. Prior to assuming that position, he had served as Assistant Quartermaster General since April of 1991. Joe began his employment at the VFW National Headquarters in 1976.

In his 25 years he has served in Life Membership, Purchasing and Per Capital Tax, and the VFW Emblem & Supply Department. Joe served on active duty with the United States Navy from 1970 until 1975, with two deployments to Vietnam. Following the end of the Vietnam War, he attended the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens, Georgia. He subsequently served two years as supply and disbursing officer aboard the USS Schenectady LST 1185, receiving a Letter of Commendation during his service.

Joe earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri in 1970. He attended the Graduate School of Business at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Joe is a Life Member of VFW Post 8220, Belton, Missouri.

It is my honor and pleasure to nominate for the election of Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley. We thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The chair will recognize for a second Precilla Wilkewitz, Adjutant/Quartermaster for Louisiana.

COMRADE PRECILLA WILKEWITZ (Post 4224 - Louisiana): Commander-in-Chief, I am Precilla Wilkewitz, Post 4224, Louisiana. I am pleased to stand with my peers, Past State Quartermaster and State Quartermasters representing the four conferences to second the nomination of Joe Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

During my 17 years as the Adjutant/Quartermaster of the Department of Louisiana, I have seen firsthand the dedication and concern that Joe Ridgley has had for the organization and the many tasks of the office of the Quartermaster General.

His 25 years of service to our organization is to be commended. As Quartermaster General, he has had the job of maintaining a balanced budget and sometimes he has had to say no to expenditures. For the times that Joe has had to say no, I thank you, Joe, because I know that Joe was

taking care of the funds of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Again, I am proud to stand before the delegates of the 102nd National Convention to second the nomination of Joe Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General for the 2001-2002 "Reach Out" year of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other nominations for Quartermaster General? Are there any other nominations for Quartermaster General? The nominations shall remain open until tomorrow.

The nominations are now open for Judge Advocate General. Are there any nominations for Judge Advocate General?

The chair will recognize Thomas Bunting, Past Commander-in-Chief of Maryland.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMRADE THOMAS BUNTING (Department of Maryland): Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk, from my home state originally, California:

Good morning to all of you comrades. It is indeed a great honor for me to be here today to make this nomination. The by-laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars state that the Judge Advocate General shall give the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration such legal assistance and counsel as they may request and perform such other duties as may be incidental to his office or as may from time to time be required of him by the By-Laws of the organization or local orders from the proper authority.

The candidate whose name I will place in nomination for that office is well qualified to fulfill the duties. Not only is he experienced in the by-laws, policies and practices of the VFW, having served in various offices, including District Commander and three terms as Commander of Parkville Memorial Post 9866. He is a full-time practicing attorney, admitted to practice in all of the courts of the State of Maryland and the Supreme Court of the United States. He has served as legal advisor and parliamentarian to the Department Commander for the past five years. He is currently serving as Judge Advocate General for the Department of Maryland.

He is a Life Member of Parkville Memorial Post and an officer of Pup Tent 23, Military Order of the Cootie, Judge Advocate of Chapter 577, Military Order of the Purple Heart and a Life Member of the DAV, and a member of the American Legion and the 84th Infantry Division Society.

Comrades, it is my honor and privilege to place in nomination a dear friend, a comrade I know will give it his all. He is honest, he is sincere, he is straightforward and he is loyal. I now place in nomination for the office of Judge Advocate General the name of Victor W. Fuentealba. Commander-in-Chief, that is the end of my nomination, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The chair at this time recognizes

Frank Birchill, Commander of the Department of Maryland, for a second.

COMRADE FRANK BIRCHILL (Department of Maryland): National Officers, Fellow Delegates, it is with great pride and pleasure I stand before you to second the nomination of Victor W. Fuentealba for the office of Judge Advocate General. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other nominations for Judge Advocate General? Are there any other nominations for Judge Advocate General? The nominations shall remain open until tomorrow.

At this time the nominations are open for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Are there any nominations for Surgeon General?

The chair will recognize at this time Past Commander-in-Chief Allen F. "Gunner" Kent from Arizona.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates to the 102nd National Convention:

My name is Allen "Gunner" Kent, a delegate from Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona, and a Past Commander-in-Chief. It is with a great deal of pride that I get up and submit the name of Walter "Doc" Dybeck from VFW Post 10047, Las Vegas, Nevada, for the high office of Surgeon General

Doc served in the United States Navy from 1967 to 1972. He was serving with the Second Battalion, Third Marine Division in Vietnam in 1969. While serving in Vietnam, Doc received the Purple Heart, the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V, the Combat Action Ribbon, the National Defense Ribbon, the Navy Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnamese Service Medal with Fleet Marine Device, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon.

Upon getting out of the Navy in 1972, Doc went to school and became a Registered Nurse in 1974. He has served in that position in the State of New York and Nevada ever since. For the last nine years, Doc has served on the kidney transplant team at Sunrise Hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada.

His VFW experience includes three years as Post Commander of Post 1017, Dunkirk, New York, and making All-State Commander in 1976-77. He also served the county and district in New York. When transferring to Las Vegas, Nevada, Doc joined Post 10047 in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he served as an All-American Post Commander, a District Commander and a Department Commander.

He has also served on the National Committees for POW/MIA, Americanism, Youth, and Hospitals. Doc is also a Life Member of VFW Post 10047, a Life Member of the Military Order of the Cootie, a Life Member of the National Home for Children, a Life Member of the Third Marine Division Association and a Life Member of the Purple Heart.

It is with a great deal of honor and pleasure that I put before the delegates at the 102nd National Convention the name of Doc Dybeck for the high office of Surgeon General for the year 2001-2002. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The chair at this time will recognize for a second Commander Jim Parsons, Department of Nevada.

COMRADE JIM PARSONS (Department of Nevada): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, I am proud to stand here today to place a name in nomination, a very good friend, who has made health-care his life's work. Past Commander-in-Chief Kent has said it all, so at this time I second the nomination for my friend, Walter Dybeck, from Post 10047, Las Vegas, Nevada. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other nominations for Surgeon General? Are there any other nominations for Surgeon General? The nominations shall remain open until tomorrow's session.

At this time I open the nominations for National Chaplain. Are there any nominations for Chaplain?

For purposes of a nomination I recognize Glen Gardner, Quartermaster from the Department of Texas.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates to the 102nd National Convention:

My name is Glen M. Gardner, Jr. I am a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. It is with a great deal of pleasure I stand before you and nominate for the office of National Chaplain William B. "Chap" Moody, a Life Member of Post 2034, Waco, Texas.

Chaplain Moody joined the United States Marine Corps in 1943, serving in Saipan, Guam, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and North China. After leaving the Marine Corps, he joined the United States Navy as a Chaplain and served five tours with the Marines, three in South Vietnam. Chaplain Moody retired from the United States Navy after 26 years of active and inactive duty at the rank of Commander. His tours in Vietnam, he became a legend among the Marines. Of course, I am not sure about the story of him leaning out the helicopter having a prayer service during a fire fight was 100 percent true. But for the rest of the stories seemed to be accurate.

During his career with the VFW, he has started a new Post, the Post he belongs to, 2034, Waco, Texas. He has recruited over 1,100 members to this great organization and over 2,000 MIP members to this great organization. Chaplain Moody has served the Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars for nine years as our Department Chaplain.

During that time he has brought a renewed enthusiasm to the Memorial Service and an increased attendance. He also has served the Southern Conference for five years as our Chaplain. Chaplain Moody and his wife, Bobbye, live in Waco, Texas. They have one son, one daughter and five grandchildren.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I present for the nomination of National Chaplain for the year 2001-2001 of this great organization

William B. Moody.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The chair at this time will recognize for a second Past Commander-in-Chief James E. Nier from Texas.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to the Convention, I am Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, Post 8919, El Paso, Texas. Chaplain Bill Moody loves veterans. He loves the VFW and he loves the young men and women serving in the armed forces today.

His dedication and devotion to their cause is unparalleled. He is truly qualified to fill this position and it is with a great deal of pleasure that I proudly second his nomination to be the next National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Are there any other nominations for Chaplain? Are there any other nominations for National Chaplain? The nominations shall remain open until tomorrow's session.

Are there any announcements to be made?

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: No.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room at this time for the Closing Ceremonies.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was had followed by the Prayer by National Chaplain John F. Leonard.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for today's Business Session have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. We will be in recess until tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock a.m.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:55 o'clock a.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 24, 2001

(The Fourth Business Session of the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Midwest Express Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Will you, please, move forward and take your seats so we can go ahead and finalize this convention.

Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, will you present the room for the Salute to the Colors, Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

SALUTE TO COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrades, will you-all please rise and facing the flag of our Nation stand at attention and salute.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given at this time.)

OPENING PRAYER

(Whereupon, National Chaplain John F. Leonard gave the Opening Prayer from the Ritual.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies for today's session have been performed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. You may assume your duties in the Convention Center.

At this time I call for a Final Report of the Credentials Committee, Elwood B. Rickards.

FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Department of Delaware): Commander-in-Chief, this will be the Final Report of the Credentials Committee. I am Elwood B. Rickards from the Department of Delaware, and a Life Member of Mason Dixon Post 7234, Ocean View, Delaware.

Our total delegates as of now is 11,591. The total Department Commanders, 54; the Past Commanders-in-Chief, 28; and the total National Officers, 38, for a grand total of 11,711.

Commander-in-Chief, that concludes our report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will give a great big hand to the ladies and Elwood that took care of all of this. (Applause)

I bring before the convention something I need to discuss with you.

Under Section 603, Convention Quorum Authorized Attendees, it goes on to say who make up the convention and who can attend. Unless the attendance of other persons is authorized by the Commander-in-Chief or by a vote of the convention only members of the National Organization, Veterans of Foreign Wars, may attend the National Convention which means that our guests will have to leave the room.

So, at this time as Commander-in-Chief I authorize the guests to remain as we conduct the final business unless there is an objection from the audience. If that objection is needed, please go to a microphone so that we can vote on it by the convention rules.

At this time we will permit our guests to remain in the room as we conduct the final business. Thank you again, comrades.

COMPLETION OF CONVENTION BUSINESS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time, I ask the convention, is there any other business to come before this convention prior to our assuming the responsibility of electing officers for the ensuing year? Is there any other business to come before the convention?

If not, then Comrade Senior Vice Commander, I would entertain a motion at this time that we make sure that it goes into our proceedings of this convention that the Sergeants-at-Arms be recognized for their efficient duties at this convention.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES GOLDSMITH: I so move.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SISK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: You have heard the motion that has been properly made and seconded before the body. Is there any discussion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye" all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time we will now go into the most important business, and that is to select our leadership for the next year. Nominated for the office of Commander-in-Chief is James N. Goldsmith of Post 4139, Michigan.

The nominations are open for Commander-in-Chief. Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief? The nominations are closed. I need a motion from the floor so we can cast a unanimous ballot.

COMRADE EDWARD BURNHAM (Post 1724 - Connecticut): I move that the convention authorize the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of James Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Comrade Burnham.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE HARRY LASCOLE (Post 6756 - Michigan): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, sir. We have a motion and properly seconded that the Adjutant General be permitted to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of James N. Goldsmith to the office of Commander-in-Chief.

Is there any other nomination? Is there any other nomination? All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed.

Comrade Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It is indeed my pleasure as the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of James N. Goldsmith to the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Do you accept?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GOLDSMITH: Yes, sir, I do accept, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Goldsmith, do you have any comments you would like to make, sir?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GOLDSMITH: At this time, if I may, Commander-in-Chief, defer my remarks to my acceptance speech. I want to say just one short thank you, thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is again open. Nominated for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief is Raymond C. Sisk of Post 9791, California. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? The nominations are closed.

COMRADE EDWARD BURNHAM (Post 1724 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Ray Sisk of California as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion before the body. Is there a second?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion and a second. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved.

Comrade Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It is my extreme pleasure to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Raymond C. Sisk to the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SISK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I proudly accept this

nomination. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect Raymond Sisk, I present you the podium for your remarks, sir.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ELECT SISK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, thank you so very much. I thank you, my comrades, and I certainly will make my remarks brief because Jim tells me he has a 30-minute speech. I just want you to know how proud and honored I am to have the opportunity to serve you as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of this great organization.

I have a lot of people to thank in my life for the many things that have happened to me. I have been blessed by our good Lord above. I am so thankful for them. Number one in my life, my wife, Joan, what a wonderful lady she has been for me. To my comrades in Post 9791, my old Post 97 in California, to the California delegation that is here, thank you for all their very hard work to see me get to this level in the organization.

To the Western Conference, whom I owe so very much to for their prayers and all of their guidance that I have had from the Chiefs there, and from all of the comrades whom I have had the opportunity to visit with this past year as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Gosh, I have made so many friends and how wonderful it has been to get out in this great nation and meet the comrades that do the work of our organization. To all of you, I want to say thank you. I want you to know I promise my support to Jim Goldsmith, and let me assure you Goldsmith, Sisk and Banas is going to have a banner year.

Again, comrades, thank you all, not just for this honor that you have bestowed upon me, but thank you so much for what you do for our veteran population each and every day of your life. I salute you, I love you and thanks so much for just being VFW members. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The nominations are open for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Nominated for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief is Edward S. Banas of Post 10004, Connecticut, and also nominated for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief is G. P. "Jerry" Miserandino of Post 2979, District of Columbia.

Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? If not, the nominations are closed and we will go to a roll-call vote.

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

NAME	BANAS	MISERANDINO
Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak	X	
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith	X	

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk	X
Adjutant General John J. Senk	X
Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley	X
Judge Advocate General Lynn Hall	X
National Chaplain John Leonard	X
National Chief of Staff Richard Branson	X
Inspector General Precilla Wilkewitz	X

STATE	BANAS	MISERANDINO
Alabama	218	
Alaska	63	
Arizona	159	
Arkansas	169	
California	535	
Colorado	108	
Connecticut	155	
Delaware	139	
District of Columbia	11	17
Department of Europe	600	
Florida	450	
Georgia	197	
Hawaii	24	
Idaho	68	
Illinois	829	
Indiana	352	
Iowa	147	
Kansas	206	
Kentucky	154	
Latin America/Caribbean	17	
Louisiana	140	
Maine	124	
Maryland	285	
Massachusetts	262	
Michigan	585	
Minnesota	456	
Mississippi	112	
Missouri	139	
Montana	51	
Nebraska	230	
Nevada	69	
New Hampshire	96	
New Jersey	242	
New Mexico	115	
New York	316	
North Carolina	156	
North Dakota	126	

Ohio	687	
Oklahoma	192	
Oregon	57	
Pacific Areas	70	
Pennsylvania	652	
Rhode Island	74	
South Carolina	128	
South Dakota	149	
Tennessee	110	
Texas	392	1
Utah	56	
Vermont	121	
Virginia	271	
Washington	214	
West Virginia	216	
Wisconsin	461	
Wyoming	38	

COMRADE G. P. "JERRY" MISERANDINO (Post 2979-District of Columbia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, this is all about the vote. The Departments have voted and I am proud of you. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, at this time I would like to withdraw my name of consideration for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the Department of Columbia and out of the Eastern Conference, and I move the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot electing Edward Banas as the new Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I am Jerry Miserandino, a delegate from Post 2979, District of Columbia.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion on the floor to cast one unanimous ballot by the Adjutant General for Ed Banas as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES GOLDSMITH: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion before the body and a proper second. All those in favor signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved. Comrade Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It is my pleasure to cast one unanimous vote for the election of Ed Banas as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Elected to the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief is Edward S. Banas of Connecticut.

At this time, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect, I offer you the podium.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT BANAS: Thank you very much. Commander-in-Chief, all the officers up here, National Council Members and more so than that, the people that make up the rank and the file of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, you and I and all of us together:

I am very short on words today, but I have a very pounding heart. I look forward to serving you, I look forward to coming to all of your Departments and I would just like to end this with this is probably the happiest day of my life. To each and every one of you, may your joys be as deep as the ocean, your sorrows as light as its foam, and for the honor that has been bestowed upon me I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I would like to take one minutes to introduce my fiancée, not my “significant other”, Sandra Robishad who has helped me along the way in all the trials and tribulations. We have just finished a wonderful year with Commander-in-Chief Gwizdak. I know Goldsmith, Sisk and Banas, with the three of us and all of you will share in the joys that we look forward to in the coming years. Thank you very, very much. I have no more words. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The nominations are open for Quartermaster General. Nominated for the office of Quartermaster General is Joe L. Ridgley of Post 8220, Missouri. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? The nominations are closed at this time.

COMRADE PAUL JONES (Post 2866 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that the nominations for the office of Quartermaster General be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Joe L. Ridgley for the high office of Quartermaster General.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Mueller, Post 5077, Department of Missouri. I proudly second the motion that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion before the body and properly seconded that the nominations be closed and that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Joe L. Ridgley for Quartermaster General. Is there any discussion? All those in favor will signify by saying “aye”; all those opposed “nay”. It is so moved.

Comrade Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Adjutant General is extremely proud to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Joe L. Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Nominated for the office of Quartermaster General is Joe Ridgley. At this time he has been elected to this position. May I offer you the podium, sir.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT JOE RIDGLEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I humbly stand before all of you again and thank you for electing me to the Quartermaster General’s position. It is a great honor for me to serve all of you. There has probably been no honor greater than to be able to work for this organization for the last 25 years, and the last six years as Quartermaster General.

You don’t realize how much of an honor it is to go to work every day

and do the job for you members all across the country. I appreciate all of you and I do thank my Department of Missouri, my Post 8220, and I do want you all to know that I serve each and every one of you every day. I humbly appreciate everything that you do. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Nominations are now open for the office of Judge Advocate General. Nominated for the office of Judge Advocate General is Victor Fuentealba of Post 9083, Maryland. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? The nominations are closed.

COMRADE EDWARD BURNHAM (Post 1724 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ed Burnham, Post 1724, Connecticut, moves that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Victor Fuentealba of Post 9083, Maryland, for the office of Judge Advocate General.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES GOLDSMITH: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We have a motion before the body properly seconded to have the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for the office of Judge Advocate General for Victor Fuentealba. Is there any discussion? Is there any discussion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". It is so moved, Comrade Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as instructed by this convention I am proud to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Victor Fuentealba for the position of Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Nominated and elected for the office of Judge Advocate General is Victor Fuentealba. I will give you the podium.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT FUENTEALBA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, to say this is an honor that I am having is a gross understatement. As you heard yesterday, I belong to all the major veterans organizations, but I want you to know that the very first one that I joined while I was still recuperating from my wounds at the Army Hospital in Staten Island, New York, was the Veterans of Foreign Wars because I had been told by my colleagues, those that knew, that if you wanted the best service for the disability compensation you should join the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

That is why I joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the information they gave me proved to be true. Service to the veterans, provided by the Veterans of Foreign Wars is the greatest organization in my opinion. I am proud to be able to be in a position to work with the administration of Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith for this coming year.

I want to say thanks to all of you, but I want to say thanks particularly to the members of the Maryland Department and to all of the delegates from the Eastern Conference, who have supported my candidacy from the very beginning. I will do my best to serve you well. I will be at your beckon

call. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The nominations are now open for Surgeon General. The nomination for the office of National Surgeon General is Walter Dybeck, Jr., Post 10047, Nevada. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Nominations are closed.

COMRADE EDWARD BURNHAM (Post 1724 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move at this time that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Walter J. Dybeck, Post 10047, Nevada, for the office of National Surgeon.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAYMOND SISK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Delegates to this convention, there is a motion properly made and seconded before the body at this time to have the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Walter Dybeck as Surgeon General. Is there any discussion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no".

We will move to Comrade Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, it is my pleasure to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Walter J. Dybeck, Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Nominated and elected for the office of National Surgeon is Walter J. Dybeck, Post 10047, Nevada. Sir, I offer you the podium.

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT DYBECK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades to this 102nd National Convention, I stand before you today very proud of the fact that you had the confidence to elect me as your Surgeon General. I thank my Department of Nevada for their support, the Western Conference for their support, and most importantly I thank my wife for her support and her continued support in every endeavor I took on in this organization.

I am very proud to say I am a member of the "Reach Out" team for 2001-2002. Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, I am at your service. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Nominations are now open for the office of Chaplain. The name of William B. Moody of Post 2034, Texas, has been placed in nomination for National Chaplain. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Glen Gardner, a delegate from Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I move, Commander-in-Chief, that you instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for William B. Moody for Chaplain for the year 2001-2001 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, sir.

Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER (Post 8919-Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am James Nier, a delegate from Post 8919,

Texas. I second the motion, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: The nominations are closed, but we also have before us a motion on the floor that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for William Moody as National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Is there any other discussion? Any other discussion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay".

Comrade Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: It is my pleasure to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of William Moody as National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the ensuing year. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Nominated and elected to the office of National Chaplain is William B. Moody of Post 2034, Texas. I offer you the podium, sir.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT WILLIAM MOODY: This is not only a great honor for me, but I feel a great obligation. I want to thank my Department of Texas and the Southern Conference and all of you who have inspired me in so many ways that you don't even know about.

I want to tell you that I have told over 25,000 soldiers in the last five years that I am proud of them, and occasionally I tell them they are my heroes. And they say, referring to all of us, "You are our heroes." I say, "No, I am your cheerleader." I am your cheerleader today.

I look forward to working with our Commander-in-Chief and his staff, his Chair Officers. I pray God's blessings on each one of us as you go back to your Posts and that we will determine now to make this the greatest year of the VFW's history.

I also want to take a moment just to say I was very proud this morning in the absence of my wife who is ill to be escorted by my adopted daughter, Kimmie Nier. Thank you so much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: We will now have the capping ceremonies and exchange of badges by wives or significant others. Commander-in-Chief-Elect Goldsmith will have his cap placed by his grandchildren, Maggie and Christian.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GOLDSMITH: This ought to be good. They did better than I expected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I think we need to do this at this time. I would like to present you, Jim, with the Commander-in-Chief's pin. This is the original pin I received and nothing has been hocked out of the middle of it, so here it is.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GOLDSMITH: Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Placing the cap on Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect Sisk is his wife, Joan.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Ray, it gives me great pleasure and pride to present to you your Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief's pin. It is not the original one, because I lost it. That is what John was referring to. It is not down at a pawn shop, either.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Placing the cap on Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas is his friend, Sandy Robishad.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SISK: Comrade Ed, it is my honor to pin upon you, and you will note that post is bent a little bit, but that is the way I got it from Jim Goldsmith. I didn't have to do that. He had already done it. Ed, it is an honor to have you on the team. Welcome aboard.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT BANAS: I will wear this hat for all of you. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Placing the cap on Quartermaster General-Elect Joe Ridgley is the wife of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect Joan Sisk.

Placing the cap on Judge Advocate General-Elect Victor Fuentealba is his wife, Vi. Placing the cap on Surgeon General-Elect Walter Dybeck is his wife, Elva.

Placing the cap on National Chaplain-Elect Moody is Kimmie Nier, wife of Past Commander-in-Chief Nier, and Chaplain Moody's adopted daughter.

Comrade Adjutant General, I call you to the podium to announce the National Council Members-Elect, sir.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please escort the Commander-in-Chief-Elect to the floor. At this time the Commander-in-Chief-Elect will present the incoming Council members with their caps.

Representing District No. 1, Maine and New Hampshire, Paul J. Chevalier, Post 168.

Representing District No. 3, Maryland and New Jersey, Joseph F. Rosetta, Post 9691.

Representing Council District No. 5, Indiana and Missouri, Charles F. Thrower, Jr., Post 3838.

Representing Council District No. 7, Tennessee and Kentucky, Jeff A. Phillips, Post 1170.

Representing Council District No. 9, South Carolina and North Carolina, William C. "Cleve" Cox, Post 7383.

Representing Council District No. 11, Wisconsin and Iowa, Robert C. Peters, Post 9581.

Representing Council District No. 13, Nebraska and Kansas, Richard N. Weston, Post 6882.

Representing Council District No.15, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona, Tyrone M. Benson, Post 7686.

Representing Council District No. 17, Utah, Nevada and Oregon, Johnnie B. Janes, Post 9083.

Representing Council District No. 19, Louisiana and Mississippi, Landry Saucier, Post 1738.

Representing Council District No. A, Pennsylvania, Neale H. Deibler, Post 6493.

Representing Council District No. B, Illinois, Donald L. Porter, Post 2055.

Representing Council District C, New York, Jack I. Simons, Post 9217.

Representing Council District F, Michigan, James A. Van Hauter, Post 4552.

Representing Council District G, California, Steven D. Jacobs, Post 5944.

Representing Council District J, Florida, Richard J. Fitzgerald, Post 7721.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I call to the podium at this time Commander-in-Chief-Elect Goldsmith to announce his appointments.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GOLDSMITH: At this time I am pleased to announce my appointment of John J. Senk, Jr., as Adjutant General for the year 2001-2002. I will ask the Council to confirm that appointment. The following appointments are hereby announced:

National Chief of Staff, John J. Harrow Jr. from Post 3724, Michigan. For Inspector General, Thomas J. Tradewell, Post 6498, Wisconsin.

The National Sergeant-at-Arms will be Barry Hoffman from Post 6240, Kansas. Please give them a round of applause. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Placing the cap on Adjutant General John Senk is his friend, Madeline Peters.

Placing the cap on National Chief of Staff John Harrow is his wife, Sandy.

Placing the cap on Inspector General Thomas Tradewell is his wife, Sharon.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: At this time we will go into the Installation of Officers. We will now proceed with the Installation of Officers.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the Installing Officer to a position on my right.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have the pleasure of escorting Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer, who has been duly appointed as the Installing Officer.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: Good morning. Before I begin, you know one year ago all of us took an obligation for this Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak. I want to say, John, I think you did an outstanding job of leading this organization. You took us out of the middle of the road, and we wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. (Applause)

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 GWIZDAK: Comrade Installing Officer, they have.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: Have the books of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Installing Officer, they have.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Installing Officer, he has.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: I will remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and now being installed at this time, that the by-laws prescribe that within sixty days of your election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his files a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General and ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Installing Officer, they are.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: Do you have the charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: I do.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: You will now surrender the gavel to me. Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, 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 you may have gained during your term of office. You will now station yourself at my right.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, as the Adjutant General reads the roll of officers, will you, and place them at the alter, saving the Commander-in-Chief to last.

Comrade Adjutant General John Senk.

ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, as I read the role of the officers for 2001-2002, please place them in position to receive their obligation.

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-	Raymond C. Sisk
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	-	Edward S. Banas, Sr.
Quartermaster General	-	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	-	Victor W. Fuentealba
Surgeon General	-	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr.
National Chaplain	-	William B. Moody

National Chief of Staff	-	John J. Harrow, Jr.
Inspector General	-	Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.
Council District No. 1	-	Paul J. Chevalier
Council District No. 2	-	William L. McCarthy
Council District No. 3	-	Joseph F. Rosetta
Council District No. 4	-	Robert A. McGowan
Council District No. 5	-	Charles F. Thrower, Jr.
Council District No. 6	-	Robert B. Kesling
Council District No. 7	-	Jeff A. Phillips
Council District No. 8	-	Charles R. Stephens
Council District No. 9	-	William C. Cox
Council District No. 10	-	Bobby G. Julian
Council District No. 11	-	Robert C. Peters
Council District No. 12	-	A. L. Ellefson
Council District No. 13	-	Richard N. Weston
Council District No. 14	-	Donald G. Riegel
Council District No. 15	-	Tyrone M. Benson
Council District No. 16	-	Marcus S. Butler
Council District No. 17	-	Johnnie B. Janes
Council District No. 18	-	Salvatore J. Capirchio
Council District No. 19	-	Landry E. Saucier
District No. A, Pennsylvania,		Neale H. Deibler
District No. B, Illinois,		Donald L. Porter
District No. C, New York,		Jack I. Simons
District No. D, Ohio,		George H. Cox
District No. E, Minnesota,		David L. Adams
District No. F, Michigan,		James A. Van Hauter
District No. G, California,		Steven D. Jacobs
District No. H, Texas,		William D. Bell
District No. J, Florida,		Richard J. Fitzgerald
Past Commander-in-Chief,		John F. Gwizdak
Adjutant General,		John J. Senk, Jr.
And Commander-in-Chief 2001-2002,		James N. Goldsmith

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Installing Officer for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the officers have been placed at the alter, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. National Officers-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will now administer to you your Officers' Obligation. You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand or the shoulder of a comrade in front of you 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, monies, 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 CRAMER: Comrade Monsignor Leonard.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LEONARD: Dear Heavenly Father, we ask the blessings upon our comrades in assuming their duties. Give them the wisdom and understanding that they need to fulfill their office. Please be with them as they strive to honor the dead by remembering the living.

Keep them in your hearts. Keep them in your hand and may your peace be upon them and our country and our organization. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, you now occupy the positions of honor to which your comrades have elected you. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so you may intelligently discharge the duties you are about 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 thoroughly with your duties.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, kindly escort our Commander-in-Chief to my station and get another Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms to bring the flag of our country here, please.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect, 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. At the end of your term of office, you will deliver it to the officer appointed to install your successor.

It is your duty as Commander-in-Chief 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 Constitution, 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 Foreign Wars of the United States. May all of your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT GOLDSMITH: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: You will raise your right hand and touch the flag of our country with your left hand, and give your name and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Goldsmith received the following Obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, James N. Goldsmith, 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, 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 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 the 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 CRAMER: I now place in your possession our Charter and I present you with the gavel, which is the emblem of your authority. Use it firmly but with discretion.

Will all National Officers please stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me: "Comrade Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith, to you I pledge my sincere allegiance."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Officers and Delegates to this convention, I proclaim the Officers duly installed for the ensuing year in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and this organization in working order. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you.

INSTALLING OFFICER CRAMER: Thank you. Congratulations and may you bring great leadership to this organization.

Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms, kindly escort the officers to their respective stations and bring the chair officers up here. It is all yours, Jim.

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: At this time, Past Commander-in-Chief John Francis Gwizdak, please approach my station. Does that sound strange? John, it gives me great pleasure to present you with your Past Commander-in-Chief's pin. You are not only a Past Commander-in-Chief but a great loyal fellow. On behalf of the National Organization and the many comrades out here, I present to you your Gold Life Membership Card.

REMARKS BY PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Comrade

Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith. To each of you, again thank you to the Southern Conference, the Department of Georgia, the Sixteenth District and Post 5880, Georgia. Thank you for making this opportunity available to me. It has been great, it has been wonderful, and I can only hope that as we have done the things that we have done them right.

Ed Burnham, thank you, sir, for serving as my Parliamentarian. To the Sergeants-at-Arms, to you, and most of all to the audience, you have been most gracious and courteous. I think that is what makes it all right. I notice that you have made a difference in my life.

My life is a whole lot different because of folks like you. I can only hope as I pass through your life I have made some difference, also. God loves you, I love you all. Thank you very much.

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

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Am I nervous? You are darn right I am nervous. Today I come before you to accept what, to my mind, is the greatest single honor and most profound responsibility that may be provided to an individual. I stand before you not as Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but rather as Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I am deeply grateful to you, the delegates to the 102nd National Convention for this very special honor, for the supreme confidence that you hereby express in me.

I am deeply appreciative of the entire membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and particularly the Big Ten Conference and the Department of Michigan. As I embark upon my year as the leader of this great organization, I will never fail to hold you in my thoughts and reach out to you, the men and women who have made this day possible.

Special thanks are also due to my fellow members of District 10 as well as my Post, 4139, and all of those very special individuals who have given me so much support and guidance. Your counsel was at times stern, but also loving, and I now thank you for it.

To Madam President, Diana Stout, and all the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary, I thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do in the service of our great organization and for the veterans we are privileged to serve.

I would now like to share a little story with you. Only a few weeks ago, as I prepared to travel to meet with the men and women serving our national defense overseas, it came to my attention that a young sergeant serving in Kosovo had been attempting to secure an American flag that had been flown over our nation's capitol. It was a matter of great importance to young soldier Sergeant Mann and his comrades to obtain this flag, and despite Sergeant Mann's best efforts, he had been unable to acquire one.

Working with your staff in Washington, D.C., I was able to obtain such

a flag. Once in Kosovo, we were privileged to present this symbol of our nation to Sergeant Mann and his fellow troopers. At that moment I realized what we delivered was more than just a symbol. It was much more than just a piece of cloth. It was something very real and very powerful.

That flag represented our shared obligation to ensure those who serve in uniform receive all that they need and deserve, both now and later. Nothing less will do.

Another instance where we were able to demonstrate this organization's commitment to those guarding our freedom is in presenting a Certificate of Recognition to Sergeant Christine Roberts, a young medic assigned to the 50th Medical Company. Without regard for her own safety, and at great risk to her own life, she was lowered into a mine field where she treated a soldier who had been injured there and then helped lift him to safety.

America is in need of more heroes like Sergeant Roberts. Her selfless courage in the face of extreme danger has earned her the undying respect and admiration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We should also feel great satisfaction in the fact that while visiting our troops in Kosovo and Bosnia, the Veterans of Foreign Wars was able to distribute more than 2,000 prepaid phone cards to our troops. When we first approached them with the Operation Uplink Phone Cards, they were hesitant and concerned about the motive behind receiving a free gift from us.

Once they understood there were no strings attached, they quickly changed their attitudes and became enthusiastic and thankful. Providing our young men and women family and friends back home was truly heart-warming. You should all take great pride in our Operation Uplink Phone Card Program and I urge you to support this important initiative - it is the right thing to do.

This trip proved to be striking in that it provided many examples of opportunity for the Veterans of Foreign Wars to serve those who serve. While visiting with soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division, we learned that although tasked with dangerous duty, there was still an opportunity for them in college video courses offered by several universities.

Unfortunately, there weren't enough VCR/TV combination units available to meet the needs of all of the prospective students. The Veterans of Foreign Wars was able to immediately fill the need by providing ten of the units to the troops. That simple gesture will make a huge difference in improving the quality of life for those soldiers who were looking for prospects to further their education, and once again, it was the right thing to do.

Remembering our obligation to honor and aid those who serve, and realizing that the future of our organization rests with the members of the active duty forces, National Guard, Reserves and our military retirees, I have directed the VFW's acting and ongoing participation in the newly-established VA Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program.

This important initiative is intended to make sure that separating and retiring active duty personnel receive all necessary assistance in obtaining VA benefits and health care. The objective here is to complete all segments

of the veterans' claims development and conduct physical examinations prior to separation from active duty.

A key element in the success of this ambitious program is the participation of veterans' service organizations, most significantly the Veterans of Foreign Wars. VFW National Service Officers will assist individual service members with all aspects of the claims process and will provide advice regarding the eventual rating decision.

This year the VA plans to have a veterans' claims processing branch at the "Top Twenty" discharge points on military installations in the United States and at three overseas locations to include Germany, Korea and Japan. This year, the VFW initially provided key assistance at five of these sites — it's the right thing to do — and that's why we have an ultimate goal to establish twenty sites in the near future. We also plan this year to have one of these representatives stationed in Korea.

We appreciate the efforts of President George W. Bush and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Principi for their efforts to clear the enormous backlog of VA claims. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has played a critical role in the focused strategy developed by the Administration to clear the more than 600,000 VA claims that are currently backlogged. We will continue to share our concerns and work with them until this situation is cleared up.

Under my leadership, the VFW will continue to be in the forefront in veteran's advocacy. I am convinced this is the best way to let our fellow veterans know who we are and what we truly stand for — it's the right thing to do.

We need to encourage excellence in service work and recognize those very special VFW members who volunteer daily to assist veterans in need. Knowing that, I have called for the initiation of a VFW "Outstanding Post Service Officer of the Year Award."

Each Department will be called upon to nominate one Post Service Officer to contend for this high award. The National Organization will then select the year's Outstanding Post Service Officer. The winner will receive round trip travel and accommodations to the National Convention where I, as the Commander-in-Chief, will honor him or her on the Convention floor.

As members of the nation's premier veterans service organization, we must always look to the well-being of all VFW and Auxiliary members because it is the right thing to do.

Our membership and, in fact, all of our citizens are now threatened by a silent yet deadly enemy, diabetes. The war against this insidious killer has taken on increased urgency since we now know that in-country Vietnam Vets are suffering from this dreaded disease in alarmingly high numbers due to their service there. We must set the example by demonstrating the resolve of the Veterans of Foreign Wars by leading the way in the crusade against this disease.

Comrades and sisters, we need to do this not by choice, but challenge. We possess the will and the heart to do this for the sake of others. Because it is the right thing to do, I will immediately initiate a program that will

“reach out” and help defeat diabetes.

The immediate goal is to establish four research grants, one for each conference. These grants will further serve to advance the science that is so close to finding a cure.

Under the banner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, programs have been developed to serve our veterans and the communities in which we live. As we endeavor to provide service to those who are with us today, we must never lose sight of those whose fates remain unresolved.

Accounting for our missing comrades from past wars is one of the highest priorities of the VFW. That’s why I am announcing a new VFW initiative called “The VFW Reach Out For DNA Initiative” to help contact eligible donors of blood DNA. The number of suitable donors for this purpose continues to decline. Collecting these blood samples is essential to future identifications.

All maternal relatives of World War II, the Korean War, Cold War and Vietnam War casualties whose remains have not been recovered or identified need to contact the appropriate military service casualty office and arrange a blood donation.

I urge each of you to help accomplish this important mission by encouraging prospective donors to call in and have a blood sample drawn.

This may be our last hope to account for our missing comrades. As larger numbers of World War II and Korean War remains are uncovered and sent to the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, your personal involvement could well make the critical difference in allowing just one family to finally gain closure after years of suffering and disappointment. Again, it’s the right thing to do.

As we seek to resolve burning issues of the past, we must be mindful of the forces that would seek to diminish and destroy the traditions and values that are unique to us, that clearly define us as Americans.

Even as we speak, cherished memorials and monuments erected in memory of patriots past, are threatened by those who would choose to rewrite history rather than value it.

For the sake of convenience, there has been an effort afoot to detract from the significance of Veterans Day by attaching Election Day to it. I would offer a word of advice from the Veterans of Foreign Wars to any politician considering such action. Don’t! It isn’t the right thing to do!

The final battle that I will mention today that we must all join in for the good of veterans in the nation is the fight to keep our organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States vital and strong.

There is no doubt we need to grow as an organization. If we are to preserve and continue our tradition of leading the way in service to veterans and if we expect to maintain our leadership position as this nation’s top-veteran lobby on Capitol Hill, we must keep an eye to the future.

As leaders of this great organization, we must provide the driving force for change. As well, it’s imperative to direct our energies toward those special individuals who have earned the right to join our ranks.

We must reach out to every military base, Reserve and National Guard unit and find out how we can assist our military personnel and their families.

We must reach out and improve the quality of life for these men and women and their families. We can accomplish this by expanding our youth activities programs, helping spouses gain employment, and being there for their families when they are deployed. We can also achieve this by redoubling our legislative effort to ensure better pay, housing and Medicare. It is the right thing to do.

I believe the best years for the Veterans of Foreign Wars are still ahead of us. We must reach out to ensure this great organization, an organization that has already accomplished so much, is fully prepared to do even more in the future.

Although we should be mindful of past accomplishments and proud of where we stand today, we need to rededicate ourselves to realizing an even more spirited and effective future.

Daily, we are afforded a new beginning. Together, we will make this new beginning stronger and more powerful than yesterday. How strong and powerful we remain to be, depends on the time and energy we are willing to devote to our cause. The future of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is in our hands.

I can assure all of you that as we continue to reach out in the service of veterans, the nation and this great organization, I will always seek to serve you well and to do what is right. Inspired by your unselfish actions, I will remain ever faithful to my oath as I serve as National Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I recognize Microphone No. 2. Before I recognize you at No. 2, I want to compliment this delegation for what I feel was a great convention, a great convention. I think Milwaukee was, the second time, and we are looking forward to Nashville next year.

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LAWRENCE LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, there being no further business to come before this convention and the officers having been duly elected and installed for the ensuing year, I move that the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBBIE (Post 4659 - Michigan): I rise to second the motion to close this convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion is carried and is so ordered.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We will now have our Closing

Ceremonies. The Council of Administration will start at 12:00 noon in Ballroom A and B. Sergeant-at-Arms, will you prepare to Retire the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

(Whereupon, the Honor Guard retired the Colors at this time.)

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Moody gave the Closing Prayer from the Ritual.)

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is hereby closed.

(Whereupon, the convention was duly adjourned at 11:30 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

**PROPOSED 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 111 – LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph of subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(b) **LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEES:** Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan E fee schedule effective January 1, 2002 for persons aged 70 and under.

ATTAINED AGE	PLAN E LIFE MEMBER FEE
Under 31	\$380.00
31 – 40	370.00
41 – 50	350.00
51 – 60	335.00
61 – 70	285.00

For persons aged 71 and older, Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan D fee.

ATTAINED AGE	PLAN D LIFE MEMBER FEE
71 – 80	125.00
81 and over	85.00”

Amend Section 111 further by inserting the following at the beginning of subsection (d):

“(1) **Plan E:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons aged 70 and under, who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50) to the Department Headquarters, and eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.

Two dollars (\$2.00) of the National portion will be distributed as provided in Section 111 of the Manual of Procedure.”

Amend Section 111 further by replacing subsection (d) (1) with the following:

“(2) **Plan D:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons aged 71 and over, who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) to the Department Headquarters, and five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.”

Renumber subsection (d) (2) as subsection (d) (3). (Disapproved)

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 inserting the following after the fourth paragraph:

“Any elective officer whose membership is not in good standing by reason of failure to pay current dues to December 31 shall forfeit his eligibility to hold office and said office shall be held to be vacated.”

Amend Section 220 further by inserting the following words after “Department Commander” in the last paragraph:

“, by reason of failure to pay current dues” (Approved)

B-3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Committee. Proposed by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 609 – NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 609, National By-Laws, by deleting the second paragraph in its entirety. (Approved)

B-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 615 - - NATIONAL COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 615, National By-Laws, by redesignating the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the first paragraph as “a, b, c, d and e”.

Amend Section 615 further by substituting the number “nine (9)” for the number “seven (7)” in the first two sentences of subsection (d) (1) and substituting the words “four-year” for the words “three-year” in the third sentence thereof.

Amend Section 615 further by deleting the second sentence of subsection (e) (1) in its entirety and the first word and comma in the third sentence thereof. (Approved)

B-5 (Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 1301 - - AMENDMENTS.

Amend Section 1301, National By-Laws, by deleting the words “members present” in the first paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the words:

“registered delegates” (Disapproved)

B-6 (Proposed by Department of Minnesota)

SECTION 101—ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, National By-Laws, by deleting in the first paragraph the words “and (2) who is a citizen of the United States,” (Disapproved)

B-7 (Proposed by Department of Texas)

SECTION 102 – APPLICATIONS –AFFILIATION OF NEW MEMBERS.

Amend Section 102, National By-Laws, by deleting in its entirety the third paragraph entitled “Members At Large.” (Disapproved)

B-8 (Proposed by various Departments)

SECTION 111 – LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph of subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(b) **LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEES:** Life Membership fees shall be charged in accordance with the following Plan E fee schedule effective January 1, 2002.

ATTAINED AGE	PLAN E LIFE MEMBER FEE
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Under 31	\$380.00
31 - 40	370.00
41 - 50	350.00
51 - 60	325.00
61 - 70	285.00
71 - 80	240.00
81 and over	190.00"

Amend Section 111 further by inserting the following at the beginning of subsection (d):

“(1) **Plan E:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year and, in addition, the same amount shall be paid in January of the following year for persons who have become life members during the period September 1 to December 31, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50) to the Department Headquarters, and eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs. Two dollars (\$2.00) of the National portion will be distributed as provided in Section 111 of the Manual of Procedure.”

Amend Section 111 further by replacing subsection (d) (1) with the following:

“(2) **Plan D:** An amount, as determined by the Life Membership Committee after consultation with professionals licensed in actuarial science, shall be paid in September of the current year for the following calendar year to Posts, Departments and National Headquarters on all life members recorded as of August 31 of the then current calendar year, provided, however, that to the extent funds are available in the Life Membership Fund, payments shall never be less than five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) per capita tax to National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) to the Department Headquarters, and five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) to the Post to which each life member belongs.”

Amend Section 111 further by renumbering subsection (d) (2) as subsection (d) (3). (Disapproved)

B-9 (Proposed by various Departments)

SECTION 605 – NATIONAL DUES.

Amend Section 605, National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph in its

entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Effective January 1, 2002, the National Organization dues shall be \$8.50 per annum payable by every member in good standing, except Life Members, which shall include a year’s subscription to the *VFW Magazine*.

Beginning January 1, 2002, \$5.50 of the National Dues, when collected from the member, will be retained by the National Organization and \$1.00, when collected from the member, will be rebated back to the Department to which the member belongs. The remaining \$2.00 will be distributed as outlined in Section 605 of the Manual of Procedure.”
(Approved)

B-10 (Proposed by Departments of Florida and Texas)

SECTION 606 - - SOLICITATION OF FUNDS.

Amend Section 606, National By-Laws by adding the following paragraph at the end of the section:

“If approval is given by the Council of Administration or the National Convention to solicit funds from non-members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, proceeds from such solicitation shall be shared with the Department where the funds are solicited in the amount of thirty (30) percent.” (Disapproved)

B-11 (Proposed by Department of Ohio)

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:

“**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 consideration after closing of the books following 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 a detailed copy of the national budget adopted

by the National Council of Administration for their information.”
(Disapproved)

B-12 (Proposed by Department of Ohio)

ARTICLE XIII—AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, National By-Laws, by redesignating it as Article XIV and renumbering sections accordingly.

Amend the National By-Laws further by inserting the following as Article XIII:

ARTICLE XIII—MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries.

A Post, if the By-Laws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide, may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit. The Department in which the Post is located shall charter such unit. Within two (2) months of receiving their charter such unit must complete and file an application for exemption under 501 C (19) of the Internal Revenue Code. Should said unit not obtain such exemption within one year of their charter date the unit would automatically and without formality surrender their charter. Such auxiliary shall be governed by and subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, Department Convention, Department Commander and Post.

Departments are not authorized to issue charters to units other than those sponsored by a Post and the Mens Auxiliary authorized in these By-Laws may not establish superior units to those at the Post level. Formation, control and disbandment of these auxiliaries as well as suspension or cancellation of charters shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1302 – Eligibility.

Membership in the Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons, brothers and half brothers of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be not less than sixteen (16) years old and must be citizens of the United States.

Men eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Mens Auxiliary unless they are a member in good standing in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 1303 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business.

The Mens Auxiliary may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting adopt By-Laws governing the auxiliary as are deemed necessary, provided that each member has been notified and provided a copy of the proposed By-Laws at least seven (7) days in advance by first class mail and such By-Laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws of the Post or Department having jurisdiction. Unless otherwise provided for in the auxiliary By-Laws, auxiliary By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a stated meeting thereof provided, however, such amendments have been read at the preceding stated meeting and each member notified at least seven (7) days in advance by first class mail of the contents of the amendments and date on which proposed amendments are to be presented for adoption.

Such proposed By-Laws or amendments shall be submitted to the Department Commander, who shall review them for compliance with the Department By-Laws and shall forward them, with a recommendation, to the Commander-in-Chief within thirty (30) days, certifying there is no conflict in the proposed By-Laws with the Department By-Laws. No By-Laws or amendments adopted by the auxiliary shall become effective until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or his designee.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall use the Rules of Order provided for in Section 1001 of the Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Order of Business shall be as follows:

Opening in due form (prayer and pledge of allegiance to the flag)
Roll call of Officers (President, Sr. Vice President, Jr. Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Trustees)
Read, refer membership applications
Report of investigating committee
Ballot on candidates
Read minutes
Treasurer's report (receipts and disbursements)
Read bills
Report of Chaplain
Report of all committees
Unfinished business (read communications associated with unfinished business and vote)
New business (read communications associated with new business and vote)
Closing in due form (closing prayer)" (Disapproved)

B-13 (Proposed by Department of Illinois)

ARTICLE XIII - - AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, National By-Laws by redesignating it as Article XIV and renumbering sections accordingly.

Amend the National By-Laws further by inserting the following as Article XIV:

“ARTICLE XIII - - MENS AUXILIARY.

Sec. 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliary

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a subordinate unit of eligible members heretofore chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be governed by such By-Laws, Rules and Regulations and Ritual as may be adopted by it provided such By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, Ritual and orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of the lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may issue charters to Post Auxiliaries, provided that the establishment of such Auxiliary shall have been approved by the respective Department and Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control. Formation, control and disbandment of auxiliaries as well as suspension or cancellation of charters shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Auxiliary officers shall make such reports as may be required in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1302 – Eligibility.

Membership in the Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, stepfathers (who have performed the duties of parent), grandfathers, sons, grandsons, foster and stepsons (who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) and for whom the duties of parent were performed), brothers, half brothers, and foster and step brothers (who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be not less than nineteen

(19) years old.

Men eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be eligible for membership in the Men's Auxiliary.

Sec. 1303 – Ritual, By-Laws and Regulations.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may adopt By-Laws, a Ritual and such Rules and Regulations as are deemed necessary and may authorize Post Auxiliaries to adopt By-Laws. In the event any part of the By-Laws, Ritual and Rules and Regulations so adopted are inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the respective Department or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

Sec. 1304 – Incorporation.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is authorized to incorporate under the appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws, provided such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may by duly approved amendments to its By-Laws, authorize Post Mens Auxiliaries to incorporate under appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws and may adopt such Rules and Regulations as are appropriate concerning such incorporation, provided that the respective Department or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States approves of such incorporation, which approval shall be given in the same manner as for initial formation of a Mens Auxiliary, and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Should any state laws prohibit the provision specified in the Manual of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the provision sufficiently to conform to the state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purpose of the Manual of Procedure provisions. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter." (Disapproved)

B-14 (Proposed by Department of Maryland)

ARTICLE XIII - - AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, National By-Laws, by redesignating it as Article XIV

and renumbering sections accordingly.

Amend the National By-Laws further by inserting the following as Article XIII:

“ARTICLE XIII — MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries.

A Post may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit and to be named as a “Mens Auxiliary” of said Post. Such Auxiliary shall be governed by and be subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, Department

Convention, Department Commander and Post.

No Mens Auxiliary to a Post shall be formed unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the Post membership present at a regular or special meeting, due notice of the proposed formation of said auxiliary having been given to the entire membership in writing at least one week prior to the meeting.

Formation, control, and disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries as well as suspension or cancellation of charters shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1302 – Eligibility.

Membership in the Mens Auxiliary shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, sons, and step-sons of persons who are or were eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be at least sixteen (16) years of age and citizens of the United States.

Men eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Mens Auxiliary.

Sec. 1303 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business

Mens Auxiliaries may adopt By-Laws, provided such by-laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual and or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws of the Department. Copies of By-Laws, including amendments, adopted by an auxiliary shall be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief through channels in accordance with Section 202 of the Manual of Procedure.” (Disapproved)

B-15 (Proposed by Department of Florida)

ARTICLE XIII - - AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, National By-Laws, by redesignating it as Article XIV and renumbering sections accordingly.

Amend the National By-Laws further by inserting the following:

“ARTICLE XIII — MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1301 – Formation.

A Post, if the By-Laws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide, may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit. The Department in which the Post is located shall charter such unit. Such association shall be governed by and subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, Department Convention, Department Commander and Post.

Departments are not authorized to issue charters to units other than those sponsored by a Post and the Mens Auxiliary authorized in these By-Laws may not establish superior units to those at the Post level. Formation, control and disbandment of these associations, as well as suspension or cancellation of charters, shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1302 – Eligibility.

Membership in the Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons, brothers and half brothers (who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be not less than sixteen (16) years old.

Men eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Mens Auxiliary.

Sec. 1303 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business

The Mens Auxiliary may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting adopt By-Laws governing the Association as are deemed necessary, provided each member had been notified and provided a copy of the proposed By-Laws at least seven (7) days in advance by first class mail, such By-Laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or laws and usage of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws of the Post or Department having jurisdiction.

Such proposed By-Laws or amendments shall be submitted to the Post Commander who shall review them for compliance with Post By-Laws and shall forward them, with a recommendation, to the Department

Commander within fifteen (15) days, certifying that there is no conflict in the proposed By-Laws with Post By-Laws. The Department Commander or his designee shall review them for compliance with the Department By-Laws and shall forward them, with a recommendation, to the Commander-in-Chief within thirty (30) days, certifying there is no conflict in the proposed By-Laws with the Department By-Laws. No By-Laws or amendments adopted by the Association shall become effective until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or his designee.

The Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall use the Rules of Order provided for in Section 1001 of the Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Order of Business shall be as follows:

Opening in due form (prayer and pledge of allegiance to the flag),
Roll call of Officers (President, Sr. Vice President, Jr. Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Trustees)
Read, refer membership applications
Report of investigating committee
Ballot on candidates
Read minutes
Treasurer's report (receipts and disbursements)
Read bills
Report of Chaplain
Report of all committees
Unfinished business (read communications associated with unfinished business and vote)
New business (read communications associated with new business and vote)
Closing in due form (closing prayer)" (Approved)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

M-1 (Proposed by Commander-in-Chief and various Departments)

SECTION 111—LIFE MEMBERS.

Amend Section 111, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following paragraphs:

"Effective January 1, 2002, two dollars (\$2.00) of the National Headquarters portion of all Plan E Life Membership per capita tax will be distributed as follows:

One dollar (\$1.00) will be set aside into an Endowment Fund for Veterans Service Officer Training and one dollar (\$1.00) will be set aside

into the Veterans Service Grant Fund for Department Service Grants.

Effective January 1, 2002, persons having attained age 71 and over will pay Life Member fees applicable under Plan D and the per capita tax will be paid at the Plan D rates set forth in Section 111 (d) (2).” (Disapproved)

M-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 317—NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 317, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following two sentences after the first sentence in paragraph four.

“An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization, within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.” (Approved)

M-3 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 415 - - NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 415, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the words “take the officers obligation” from the first sentence in paragraph five and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

“be installed”

Amend Section 415 further by adding the following two sentences after the third sentence in paragraph five.

“An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization, within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.” (Approved)

M-4 (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 adding the following two sentences at the end of the section:

“An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization, within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.” (Approved)

M-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee. Proposed by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief)

SECTION 609 - - NOMINATION, ELECTION, INSTALLATION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

Amend Section 609, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following at the end of the section:

“Officers elected shall be installed before the adjournment of the convention and shall assume their duties immediately upon the close of the convention.

An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization, within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant.” (Approved)

M-6 (Proposed by various Departments)

SECTION 605—NATIONAL DUES.

Amend Section 605, Manual of Procedure, by inserting the following:

“Effective January 1, 2002, \$6.50 of the National dues will be distributed as set forth in Section 605 of the National By-Laws. The additional \$2.00 will be distributed as follows: \$1.00 to be set aside into an Endowment Fund for Veterans Service Officer Training, and \$1.00 to be set aside into the Veterans Service Grant Fund for Department Veterans Service Grants.” (Approved)

M-7 (Proposed by Department of Texas)

SECTION 1201 - - FORMATION.

Amend Section 1201 (b) (4) by renumbering paragraph (4) to (5) and replacing paragraph (4) with the following:

“(4) **Change of Post Affiliation.** For a Pup Tent to change affiliation, it must first receive consent from two-thirds vote of the members of the Post to which it is now affiliated present at a regular or special meeting, providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

The new Post to which the Pup Tent will be affiliated must provide consent by two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting, providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least

ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

The change of affiliation then must be approved by the Grand Commander, as well as the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie.

Once approval has been given, all records and properties of the Pup Tent will then be transferred with the Pup Tent to the new Post of affiliation.”
(Approved)

M-8 (Proposed by Department of Florida)

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, Manual of Procedure, by redesignating it as Article XIV and numbering sections accordingly

Amend further the Manual of Procedure, by inserting the following as Article XIII:

“Article XIII – Mens Auxiliary

Section 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries

Formation. Mens Auxiliaries shall be hereafter formed and approved in accordance with the following provisions:

No Mens Auxiliary of a Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed, unless approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Post membership present at a regular or special meeting, due notice of the proposed formation of an association having been given the entire membership in writing at least one week prior to a regular meeting, or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose. Each Mens Auxiliary shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Post under which it is affiliated. It shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of the Department Convention, Council of Administration and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with respect to matters of authority.

Each Mens Auxiliary shall function in accordance with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the By-Laws of the Department issuing the charter and the Post with which it is affiliated or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National or Department Council of Administration or Department Commander.

Suspension and Discontinuance. The Commander-in-Chief or the Department Commander may direct the suspension, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or cancellation of the charter of any Mens Auxiliary, upon the recommendation of the Post commander under which such unit

is affiliated, when it is shown the conduct of officers or members thereof may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Post may, by vote of eighty (80%) percent of its members present at a meeting following a written notice mailed or delivered to each member of the Post in good standing at least ten (10) days before said meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Mens Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and reason therefore. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Mens Auxiliary, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander, who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with his recommendations. If, upon review of the matter, he believes that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the Commander of the Department having jurisdiction to cancel the charter of the Mens Auxiliary.

While the Charter of a Mens Auxiliary is suspended, said unit shall not be permitted to function and officers thereof shall be without authority; provided, however, it or its officers shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief to lift the suspension.

Disposition of Property. In the event of a surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a Charter of a Mens Auxiliary, all official records, money and other property shall immediately become property of the Post.

Reports. The President of the Mens Auxiliary shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Post Commander an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the association over which he is presiding officer. Such reports shall be acknowledged by the Post Commander during the next regular meeting and may be read to the members assembled. (Approved)

M-9 (Proposed by Department of Maryland)

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS.

Amend Article XIII, Manual of Procedure, by redesignating it as Article XIV and renumbering sections accordingly.

Amend further the Manual of Procedure, by inserting the following as Article XIII:

“Article XIII – Mens Auxiliary

Sec. 1301 – Organization, By-Laws, Rules of Order and Disbandment

Organization. A Post may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit and to be named as a “Mens Auxiliary” of said Post. Such auxiliary shall be governed by and be subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States,

the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, Department Convention, Department Commander and Post.

No Mens Auxiliary to a Post shall be formed unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the Post membership present at a regular or special meeting, due notice of the proposed formation of said auxiliary having been given to the entire membership in writing at least one week prior to the meeting.

Eligibility. Membership in a Mens Auxiliary shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, sons, and step-sons of persons who are or were eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be at least sixteen (16) years of age and citizens of the United States.

Men eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in a Mens Auxiliary.

By-Laws. Mens Auxiliaries may adopt By-Laws, provided such By-Laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws of the Department. Copies of By-Laws, including amendments, adopted by an auxiliary shall be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief through channels in accordance with Section 202 of the Manual of Procedure.

Officers. The officers of a Mens Auxiliary shall consist of at least a President, Senior Vice President, Junior Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain and three Trustees.

Rules of Order. The Rules of Order governing all meetings of a mens auxiliary shall be as specified in Section 1001 of the Manual of Procedure.

Order of Business. The Order of Business of a Mens Auxiliary shall be as specified in Section 1004 of the Manual of Procedure excluding those items that are inappropriate.

Bond. Each officer accountable for funds of a Mens Auxiliary shall be bonded with an indemnity company as surety in a sum at least equal to the amount of the liquid assets for which, so far as can be anticipated, he may be accountable. The bond premium shall be paid from the funds of the Mens Auxiliary.

Suspension and Revocation of Charter. The Commander-in-Chief, upon his own initiative or upon the recommendation of the Department Commander, may suspend or revoke the charter of a Mens Auxiliary for actions inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, for refusal to comply with the lawful orders of the Commander-in-Chief, National Convention, National Council of Administration, Department Commander, Department Convention or Department Council of Administration, or such other conduct by the Auxiliary or its officers acting on behalf of the Auxiliary, as the Commander-in-Chief, in his sole discretion, believes inimical to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Before the Commander-in-Chief may suspend or revoke the charter of

a Mens Auxiliary, the President of the Auxiliary shall be notified in writing of the proposed suspension or revocation and the grounds therefore. The Auxiliary or its representative shall be permitted to respond to the grounds for suspension or revocation within thirty (30) days following receipt of the notice of the proposed suspension or revocation. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief rendered after review of the Auxiliary's response shall be final.

Surrender or Forfeiture of Charter. A Mens Auxiliary may voluntarily surrender its charter upon a vote of its members conducted in accordance with the procedures herein set forth. A proposal to submit surrender of the charter to a vote of the membership of the auxiliary shall be made at a regular meeting of the auxiliary at least four (4) weeks before the time of the vote, and due notice of the proposal and the time and place of the vote shall be given in writing to every member of the Auxiliary, the Post Commander, District Commander, and Department Commander at least one week prior to the date of the vote. A vote of seventy-five (75) percent of the members present and voting shall be necessary to approve the proposal.

Disposition of Property. In the event of the surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of the charter of a Mens Auxiliary to a Post, all monies, official records and all other property shall immediately become the property of the Post." (Disapproved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

No. 201 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SPEAK OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call on members of every VFW Post to speak out in their communities against the intolerance, injustice and strong-arm tactics now being used to systematically try to diminish, erode and devalue both the Boy Scouts of America and our nation. (Approved as Amended)

No. 202 (Submitted by Department of Idaho)

DUES INCREASE TO PROPERLY FUND THE VFW NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

(Disapproved)

No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

EXTEND AGE CAP FOR THE SONS OF THE VFW

(Disapproved)

No. 204 (Submitted by Department of Alabama)

PETITION CONGRESS TO AMEND THE CHARTER OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO HAVE RECEIVED HOSTILE FIRE OR IMMINENT DANGER PAY TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to amend the charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to allow members of the armed forces who have received hostile fire or imminent danger pay to be eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Approved as Amended)

**CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL RESOLUTIONS**

No. 301 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUEST FOR CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF THE FEDERAL FLAG
CODE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon our representatives in the Congress of the United States to have a complete review of the existing Federal Flag Code so that we secure consistent respect for the flag of the United States of America. (Approved as Amended)

No. 302 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IN SUPPORT OF PACIFIC WING DEDICATION –
THE NATIONAL D-DAY MUSEUM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we promote the mission of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, which seeks to preserve the memories and oral histories of the veterans involved in all of the amphibious landings both in the Pacific and European theaters of operation of the Allied forces in World War II, without any financial obligation on behalf of the organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters with agreement from the National D-Day Museum is hereby authorized to promote the mission of the museum and in particular the events surrounding the dedication of the Pacific Wing of the museum, December 6-9, 2001. (Approved)

No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY AND YOUTH ESSAY

(Disapproved)

No. 304 (Submitted by New York)

LEGAL HOLIDAY

(Disapproved)

No. 305 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

NOTCH YEAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would provide an increase to their lifestyle comparable to fellow citizens at the beginning of Social Security. (Approved)

No. 306 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF THE NATIONAL WWII MEMORIAL

(Disapproved)

No. 307 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

MILITARY ABSENTEE VOTE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that election officials be made aware that by an act of the U.S. government not all military service personnel will have affixed postage or cancellation date stamp; also, the military will make all reasonable effort to expedite service personnel's ballots in a timely manner; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this information be distributed to all election officials and military chain of command. (Approved as Amended)

No. 308 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

IN SUPPORT OF ADDING NAMES OF U.S. SERVICEMEN, WHO DIED
IN CRASH IN VIETNAM TO THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

(Disapproved)

No. 309 (Submitted by Department of California)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PROCEDURE FOR VOTING

(Disapproved)

No. 310 (Submitted by Department of California)

OBSERVATION OF VETERANS DAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose H.R. 62; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the U.S. Congress to reject H.R. 62 and any other measure that diminishes the significance of Veterans Day as it is now observed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW National contact all Departments and request their members to contact their members of Congress to continue the current observation of Veterans Day on November 11 of each year. (Approved)

No. 311 (Submitted by Department of California)

PROPER RESPECT FOR THE FLAG

(Disapproved)

No. 312 (Submitted by Department of California)

RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS

(Disapproved)

No. 313 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR MUSEUM

(Disapproved)

No. 314 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

“LET THE BELLS OF FREEDOM RING”

(Disapproved)

No. 315 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

AMEND CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER TO INCLUDE "CHARITABLE" AS
ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF OUR ORGANIZATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be requested to ask that the Congressional Charter for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Section 3, be changed to include the word "charitable" as one of the purposes of this organization.
(Approved)

No. 316 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

PETITION FOR CLEMENCY OF PVT. EDDIE D. SLOVIK

(Disapproved)

**CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND POW/MIA**

No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we 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) The 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 we support the annual POW/MIA

Recognition Day and the annual former POW 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 we urge North Korea to honor the current year's agreement to resume joint recovery activities in North Korea and continue the process of accounting for Americans still missing from the Korean War; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that with renewed vigor, we urge the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments in coordination with the United Nations Command (UNC) Korea to increase their contact with the North Korea 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 in coordination with the U.N. Command Korea and the Government of the Republic of Korea, we urge the U.S. government to conduct U.N. Command repatriation ceremonies for remains recovered in North Korea at Osan Air Force Base or other suitable location in the Republic of Korea in lieu of conducting repatriation ceremonies at Yakota Air Base, Japan. (Approved as Amended)

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 that will force Iraq to fully account for those Kuwaiti citizens still missing from the Gulf War.
(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 by maintaining a national defense in combination with our allies and friends, is equal to those continuing 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 security 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 ILLEGAL 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 solving the illegal 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 illegal aliens from entering the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, when required, that well trained and supervised military resources be employed to assist other government agencies in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country. (Approved)

No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT NEW INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize and fully fund, as soon as possible, a new Department of Defense institute that will be an important instrument in training and educating Latin American military personnel and thereby serve as an instrument for strengthening democracy in the Americas. (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 to serve as a warning to all terrorists that - no matter what country gives them refuge - they 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 we urge Congress to authorize and urge the Administration to take strong and decisive action against "outlaw" countries and states that are found to sponsor, support and harbor terrorists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge our civilian leaders and military commanders to 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)

BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE IS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the deployment of both a deployable theater ballistic missile defense and a strategic ballistic missile defense system as soon as possible 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 we call 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 we further call on our elected and appointed officials to 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 serve and sacrifice; 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 USC 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, we urge 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 service member, 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 modernization and recapitalization, and parity of the Coast Guard to carry out its mission and enable the Service take full advantage of modern information technology, including but not limited to, drug interdiction and enforcement, pollution control, maritime safety, search and rescue missions, and maintaining military readiness as well as its many other duties and responsibilities. (Approve as Amended)

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 military 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.

(f) Employing the leadership necessary to inspire, focus and unite the national will and international unity to further our goal of peace and freedom.

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 we urge the United States government,

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 South and North Korea. (Approved)

No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT WITHDRAWAL FROM BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

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 Forge should be gradually withdrawn from Bosnia-Herzegovina while transferring remaining responsibilities to other NATO members. (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 200,000 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 veterans for any information or material that could be used to determine the fate of Vietnamese MIAs and possible burial sites. Such information and material include battlefield souvenirs, especially if they contain names or other identifying information; personal effects such as photos, letters or 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 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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration to reverse

its departure from longtime U.S. policy and remove Taiwan from the FBI's list of hostile intelligence threats under the national security list. (Approved as Amended)

No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE DOWNSIZING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT POW/MISSING PERSONNEL OFFICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to refrain from downsizing the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office because we believe such action 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 of North Korea, where the search has only recently begun and the effort is expanding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we go on record as being adamantly opposed to any Department of Defense downsizing of the resources put into the effort to reach the fullest possible accounting of our personnel missing from past wars. (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 supports the ongoing existence of the Selective Service System and its necessary programs in its stand-by status and urges the United States Congress to provide the funds necessary to retain the Selective Service System; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress to shift appropriations oversight for the Selective Service System from the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittees of the House and Senate at the start of the Fiscal Year 2002 budget process. (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, and be prepared to take the steps necessary to protect the Panama Canal and to ensure continued safe and efficient freedom of passage, and to continuously evaluate the conditions of Panama and the region with a view toward balancing the 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 we urge the Congress of the United States and the Administration to 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)

SUPPORT FORMER POW SLAVE LABOR CLAIMS AGAINST JAPANESE FIRMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans Of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support fair and just compensation for the injuries suffered by all American POWs at the hands of their Japanese captors, and the slave labor they were forced to perform by private Japanese companies during World War II. (Approved)

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, we urge that the integration of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO 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, we urge 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)

OPPOSE LIFTING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose the lifting of economic sanctions against North Korea until such action is adequately justified by meaningful changes in North Korean policy and actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to closely review North Korean activities and behavior, and closely consult with the Republic of Korea and our other allies in the region before considering any future policy changes with North Korea. (Approved)

No. 428 (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 stop 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 we strongly urge the Administration to stop any U.S. commercial activity that 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 as Amended)

No. 429 (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. 430 (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 whatever steps are necessary to increase defense spending to a realistic level that will begin to 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 of national resources to the defense budget, and to sustain a period of real growth in defense spending. (Approved)

No. 431 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT INCREASED SHIPBUILDING FOR THE U.S. NAVY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to immediately increase Navy shipbuilding to the point where the U.S. can at least sustain and possibly increase the current number of ships in the fleet; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to closely review the results of the latest studies and restore the U.S. Navy fleet to the level that is required to support our national military strategy, achieve our national objectives, and adequately protect the United States without an unnecessary level of risk. (Approved)

No. 432 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass a bill to support self-determination for Puerto Rico. (Approve)

No. 433 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INTERMENT OF AN UNKNOWN FROM VIETNAM

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 come 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 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 servicemen and women, that the Congress and the Administration take action to stop the erosion of military entitlements and benefits. (Approved)

No. 435 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY CAPABILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to conduct a comprehensive

review of the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii to include its mission, tasks, work load, operational requirements, and resources to determine if any additional changes in structure and resources are required. (Approved)

No. 436 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE KOSOVO PEACE AGREEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we support the terms of the NATO/Yugoslavian Peace Agreement and Implementation Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge NATO and the United States to use the NATO Kosovo peace keeping force (KFOR) to guarantee the Kosovar people freedom from oppression and the right to self determination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Administration to develop a plan for the replacement of all U.S. troops serving in the International/NATO Kosovo peacekeeping force or Kosovo Force (KFOR) with troops from other NATO countries as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Administration to develop an exit strategy for the eventual withdrawal of all U.S. troops from the Balkan region. (Approved)

No. 437 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

STRENGTHEN SECURITY AT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) LABORATORIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to require mandatory FBI background checks of employees at the Department of Energy weapons laboratories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to implement stronger security measures at Department of Energy nuclear laboratories, and enact legislation necessary to preserve our national security against all foreign nations. (Approved)

No. 438 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE MILITARY BASE PAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support all congressional efforts to immediately initiate and then continue annual pay raises for all grades and ranks that are higher than inflation until the 10 percent pay gap is closed. (Approved)

No. 439 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

A FULL ACCOUNTING FOR COMMANDER SPEICHER

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to continue an aggressive investigation into Commander Speicher's fate until either he is recovered alive, his remains are recovered and identified, or until a full accounting of his fate can be determined; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the government of Iraq to cooperate with the United States in the effort to account for Commander Speicher. (Approved)

No. 440 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

U.S. RESPONSE TO CHINESE THREAT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans Of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the administration to maintain a policy that demonstrates resolve and leadership in responding to the challenge of China's proliferation of weapons and ballistic missile technology, increased military spending and modernization including increased ballistic missile forces, and its anti-missile defense campaign aimed at the United States and its allies in Asia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the administration to offer a full assessment of China's future missile development plans to Congress and the American people; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we urge the administration to encourage the Chinese government to respect the laws of international air space and abide by the 1998 U.S. – China Agreement aimed at preventing incidents at sea. (Approved as Amended)

No. 441 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AWARD A CAMPAIGN, SERVICE, OR EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL
FOR SERVICE IN KOREA

(Disapproved)

No. 442 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AUTHORIZATION TO WEAR THE BUNDEWEHR AND THE
LAND BERLIN UNIT CITATIONS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition U.S. Congress to authorize these two awards and the wear-

ing of these two unit citations to U.S. veterans of Berlin from May 1945 to September 1994. (Approved)

No. 443 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE NATION'S WAR ON DRUGS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to follow the *National Drug Control Strategy* and apply increased emphasis, energy, and resources towards winning the war on drugs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to closely review the results of the latest studies and focus the effort on educating the youth of America on the dangers and pitfalls of illegal drug use and other chemical dependency problems. (Approved)

No. 444 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT F-22 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to provide full funding to the U.S. Air Force F-22 fighter aircraft program to ensure that the United States armed forces always achieves air superiority in any future incident, conflict, or war. (Approved)

No. 445 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DISPLAY THE POW/MIA FLAG

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge the government of the United States to strictly enforce the existing public law and require all government agencies to fly the POW/MIA flag on the required occasions as well as everyday the American flag is displayed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Secretary General of the United Nations to request that the POW/MIA flag be flown at the U.N. Headquarters in New York City as a reminder to all member nations that many persons are still missing from past wars; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this POW/MIA flag be flown by federal agencies, state and local governments to serve as a reminder to all U.S. citizens and nations worldwide that accounting for missing Americans from past wars is our highest priority. (Approved)

No. 446 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RETENTION OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE
HEALTH SCIENCES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States of America to guarantee continuation of the USUHS in perpetuity. (Approved)

No. 447 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ELIMINATE THE ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE TREATY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans Of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the administration to review its position on the ABM Treaty and drop any plans to renegotiate the ABM Treaty with Russia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the administration and Congress of the United States to take action as required to eliminate the ABM Treaty as a binding agreement because the Soviet Union no longer exists as a country and continued adherence to the terms of the treaty restricts the development, testing, and deployment of both the national and theater defense missile systems that are needed to protect deployed U.S. military forces and the United States and its citizens against emerging threats to our national security. (Approved)

No. 448 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

IMPROVE THEATER BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE

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 work together to field the best, most capable theater missile defense system to protect deployed U.S military forces and their families as soon as possible. (Approve)

No. 449 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE DEATH PENALTY FOR ACTS OF TREASON, IN WAR AND
PEACE, AGAINST THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that when justified by the nature of the crime, we support capital punishment for those who commit acts of espionage or treason against this nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support federal laws that allow the courts to sentence those convicted of treason or espionage against the United States in accordance with the nature of the crime. (Approved)

No. 450 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMERICAN FLAGS ONLY FOR FALLEN WARRIORS OF THE
UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we are firm and united in our demand for legislation establishing the right of every fallen member of the armed forces of the United States to have his casket draped with the flag of the United States immediately upon departure from a foreign country, and that the law restrict the use of flags or symbols of other nations or international organizations upon their caskets. (Approved)

No. 451 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AWARD THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION SERVICE MEDAL FOR
SERVICE IN TRIESTE, ITALY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the United States Congress to rectify this injustice by awarding the Army of Occupation Service Medal to those who served in Trieste, Italy with the U.S. Army from 8 May 1945 – 26 October 1954. (Approved)

No. 452 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESTORE VIEQUES NAVAL RANGES TO FULL USE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call for restoring the U.S. Naval ranges at VIEQUES to full use with the goal of returning our Atlantic Fleet forward deployed Naval forces to acceptable levels of combat readiness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition the Administration and the Congress of the United States to never again permit a peremptory action, such as the decision to suspend the training at VIEQUES, to be taken that jeopardizes the combat readiness of the nation's armed forces. (Approved)

No. 453 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ACCOUNTING AND RELEASE OF POW/MIA INFORMATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge our United States government to release all pertinent information about missing American servicemen to family members and to the public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we vigorously pursue all possible avenues on POW/MIA accounting and remain focused on our goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing from our entire nation's past wars. (Approved)

No. 454 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON 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 isolate and maintain pressure on Castro to hasten the time until Castro's dictatorship is overthrown and the Cuban people can regain its freedom. (Approved)

No. 455 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by the Senate of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support arms control that is pursued according to strict standards and with the recognition of its inherent limitations, and we encourage the Administration and Congress to closely review the history of America's arms control agreements before endorsing any future arms control treaties. (Approved)

No. 456 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States of America, senior government officials, and every member of the U.S. 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. 457 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby oppose ratification of the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) by the Senate of the United States, and we oppose the United States becoming a party to the ICC in any fashion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the administration and Members of Congress to support legislation that contains a number of provisions and authorizations to protect U.S. citizens, particularly U.S. service members, from the International Criminal Court. (Approved)

No. 458 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TRANSFORM THE ARMY TO FACE SECURITY CHALLENGES OF 21st CENTURY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we concur with the U.S. Army's vision statement and support the Army's transformation process with the objective of changing the Army into a more strategically responsive and dominant force at every point on the spectrum of military operations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the administration and members of Congress to support a defense budget and appropriate legislation that helps the Army accomplish its selective modernization and recapitalization of the legacy force (the current force), and comprehensive transformation into an "objective force" Army. (Approved)

No. 459 (Submitted by New Jersey)

CREATE AND AWARD THE KOREA DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL FOR SERVICE IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition for the creation and the award of the proposed U.S. Korea Defense Service Medal (KDSM) for service in Korea from 28 July 1954 through 30 September 1966 and from 01 July 1974 to a date to be determined. (Approved as Amended)

No. 460 (Submitted by Department of Delaware)

NO TIME RESTRAINTS FOR POW/MIA ACCOUNTING

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that on "National POW/MIA Recognition Day" every year, all members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars be encouraged to send letters to their Senators,

Representatives and the President of the United States to request the fullest possible accounting of all Prisoners of War (POWs) and Missing in Action (MIAs), especially noting those from their home state if possible, until the fullest possible accounting is complete.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that no time constraints be attached to the full accounting process. (Approved as Amended)

No. 461 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

ACCOUNTING AND RELEASE OF POW/MIA INFORMATION

(Disapproved)

No. 462 (Department of Minnesota)

CAMPAIGN MEDAL (AFEM) AWARDED TO ALL KOREAN VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 463 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

AMERICAN DEFENSE MEDAL FOR COLD WAR VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 464 (Submitted by Department of California)

CREATE AND AWARD THE KOREA DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL
FOR SERVICE IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

(Disapproved)

No. 465 (Submitted by Department of Hawaii)

SUPPORT CONTINUED LIVE FIRE TRAINING AT PFC HERBERT K.
PILILAAU RANGE AT MAKUA VALLEY, OAHU, HAWAII

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we support the sovereign rights of the United States government to conduct this essential training at the Pililaau Range on Oahu, Hawaii. (Approved as Amended)

No. 466 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR THE V-22 OSPREY TILT-ROTOR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge that adequate funds be included in the Department of Defense fiscal year 2002 and 2003 budgets thereby assuring that the V-22 will reach full operational capability in the least amount of time, thereby paving the way for using this important technology as a key strategic weapon for our armed forces. (Approved as Amended)

No. 467 (Department of California)

CAMPAIGN MEDAL (AFEM) AWARDED TO ALL KOREAN VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 468 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

PETITION FOR CLEMENCY OF PVT. EDDIE D. SLOVIK

(Disapproved)

No. 469 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

CREATE AND AWARD A KOREA DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL FOR THE
MILLIONS OF U.S. TROOPS WHO HAVE SERVED IN KOREA

(Disapproved)

No. 470 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

CREATE AND AWARD A COLD WAR CAMPAIGN MEDAL FOR THE
MILLIONS OF U.S. TROOPS WHO HAVE SERVED OVERSEAS IN
MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN DECLARED WAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the creation and awarding of the Cold War Campaign Medal to all eligible U.S. service personnel who served overseas in military operations during the Cold War. (Approved as Amended)

No. 471 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

AWARD THE COMBAT ACTION RIBBON TO
U.S. NAVAL MILITARY ADVISORS IN EL SALVADOR

(Disapproved)

No. 472 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

AMERICAN SERVICEMEMBERS PROTECTION ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Congress to expedite passage of this vital legislation as soon as possible. (Approved as Amended)

No. 473 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

COMMUNIST CHINA SHOWS ITS COLORS

(Disapproved)

No. 474 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH CHINA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose Permanent Normal Trade Relations with the People's Republic of China until such time that China changes its policies, improves its human rights record, and demonstrates that it is willing to an "equal trading partner" with the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Administration and the Congress of the United States to review our overall relationship with China and reinstate the annual process of reviewing normal trade relations with China. (Approved)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE 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 authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of and enhance the benefits programs and health care system. (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 Congress to provide adequate appropriations to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs to facilitate a program of modernization and replacement of aging facilities (which would include a system for setting construction priorities) and which in combination will ensure the provisions of quality health care to our nation's veterans. (Approved)

No. 603 (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 established permanent VA programs for all veterans who need sexual trauma treatment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars insists there be absolutely no limitations or restrictions to access of VA sexual trauma treatment services thereby making such treatment available to all veterans regardless of their length of service or reserve status. (Approved)

No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND THE UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER SPOUSES' PROTECTION ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW seeks to amend P.L. 97-252 to allow for the termination of court-ordered payments to ex-military spouses upon their remarriage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars seeks legislation that would prohibit the forcing of 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, shall become 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 permit the concurrent receipt of

entire longevity military retirement pay and disability compensation without offset from either Department. (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 we strongly urge Congress to 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 year limitation. (Approved)

No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXCLUDE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE INCOME WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY 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 National Guard and Reserve income will be excluded for purposes of determining eligibility for Unemployment Insurance. (Approved)

No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT 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 services. (Approved)

No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM (FEHBP) AS AN OPTION 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 all military retirees the full range of FEHBP as another life time health care option under the same terms as do all other federal departments, agencies and the Postal Service. (Approved)

No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THIRD-PARTY REIMBURSEMENT WITHOUT OFFSET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to collect and retain all third-party reimbursements without offset from, or regard to, its appropriations. (Approved)

No. 611 (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 mandate and provide funding for the provision of nursing home care for all veterans. (Approved)

No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RECEIPT OF COMPENSATION OR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION BASED ON PERSONAL INCOME

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to categorically reject any proposal to base the receipt of compensation or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation on personal income considerations (“means-testing”), or even to support any potential study on the prospects of means-testing these entitlements. (Approved)

No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR RADIATION RELATED DISABILITIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation which provides for a statutory presumption of service connection of the radiation-related disabilities to include lung cancer, bone cancer, skin cancer, colon cancer, posterior sub-capsular cataracts, nonmalignant thyroid nodular disease, ovarian cancer, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the brain and central nervous system, and rectal cancer. (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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans Employment and Training Service be held accountable that veterans receive priority of service in all federally funded job training programs. (Approved)

No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE TERMINATION DATE FOR THE GULF WAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW opposes any legislation or executive order to establish a termination date for the Persian Gulf War until there is an end to the current hostilities. (Approved)

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 we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 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)

FUNDING FEE FOR VA HOME LOANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal VA Home Loan funding fees. (Approved)

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 Congress to appropriate sufficient funds to support the number of LVERs and DVOPs positions necessary to fulfill the mandated missions in 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 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)

REPEAL SECTION 8005 OF PUBLIC LAW 101-508

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal section 8005 of Public Law 101-508, which requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to round down to the next lower dollar, veterans' compensation and DIC. (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 of legislation authorizing VA to collect and retain all 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 subcommittees in both the House and Senate exclusive to the Department of Veterans

Affairs. (Approved)

No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FUNDING OF SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION VETERANS PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the strengthening and sufficient funding of an effective veterans entrepreneurship program in the United States Small Business Administration. (Approved)

No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a open-ended presumptive period until medical and scientific research can be adequately utilized to help determine 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 active duty military and veterans and, as appropriately determined, their dependents and survivors, 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, that we urge Congress to adequately fund appropriate medical and scientific research, and the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs to implement all relevant laws that support all research efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we shall petition the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense to define the Persian Gulf War region (also known as the Kuwait Theater of Operation and Southwest Asia Theater of Operations) under 38 USC § 1117 and 10 USC § 101. The Gulf War should be defined as the period "Beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending thereafter on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law, and including the following geographic locations: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Neutral Zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Suez, Suez Canal, Gulf of Aqaba, and Red Sea." (Approved as Amended)

No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXEMPT DISABILITY COMPENSATION IN DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ASSISTED SENIOR HOUSING PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Department of Housing and Urban Development not consider VA disability compensation as income when determining eligibility for their Assisted Senior Housing Program. (Approved)

No. 627 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DISABILITY RATING SCHEDULE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to reject any suggestion that it should direct economic validation studies to intrude on the discretion exercised by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in adopting or revising the Schedule for Rating Disabilities. (Approved)

No. 628 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the provisions of the Uniformed Service Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act be strictly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we support the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve in its efforts to educate employers on the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserves and their responsibilities as mandated by USERRA. (Approved)

No. 629 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SPECIALY ADAPTED HOUSING ALLOWANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. § 2102 to allow a second grant to cover the costs of home adaptations for veterans who are forced to replace their original specially adapted home with new housing. (Approved)

No. 630 (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 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. 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 a standardized licensure and certification requirement be adopted by the appropriate federal and state agencies; 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)

TEMPORARY TOTAL COMPENSATION AWARDS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the law to authorize increased compensation on the basis of temporary total rating for hospitalization or convalescence to be effective, for payment purposes, on the date of admission to the hospital or the date of treatment, surgery, or other circumstances necessitating convalescence. (Approved)

No. 633 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH ON THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF DEPLETED URANIUM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the federal government to continue adequate funding to support ongoing and, as determined necessary, expand research regarding the health effects of Depleted Uranium. (Approved)

No. 634 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE STAFFING FOR THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (VBA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to include sufficient funding in future VA appropriations to increase FTE in compensation and Pension Service by 830 in Fiscal

Year 2002. (Approved)

No. 635 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EQUITY IN VA HEALTH CARE CO-PAYMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs immediately address this issue of fair, just, and equitable co-payments for category 7 veterans. (Approved)

No. 636 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND INTERNAL REVENUE CODE FOR STATE FINANCIAL VETERANS HOME MORTGAGES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to allow veterans who served on or after January 1, 1977, and participated in a military operation with an associated military campaign medal, to qualify for the state veterans home mortgage bond program. (Approved)

No. 637 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

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 enact law 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; and, adaptive housing and transportation assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to also authorize 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 assistance, 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)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ELIGIBILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to change Title 38 United States Code section 3102 to include veterans who are rated ten percent or more in the eligibility criteria for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment. (Approved)

No. 639 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA ALZHEIMER'S FACILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the need for Alzheimer's facilities for veterans and urge VA to maintain an open Alzheimer's unit within each Veterans Integrated Service Network; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that these facilities be uniquely designed for veterans with Alzheimer's disease using other than the routine medical or psychiatric care models. The program should include Alzheimer's research as an integral part of the veteran's treatment program. (Approved as Amended)

No. 640 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

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 the State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program, giving priority to projects from Fiscal Year 2000. (Approved)

No. 641 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RESTORE GRANT-IN-AID HOSPITAL PROGRAM TO 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 United States hospital standards and procedures. (Approved)

No. 642 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

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 urge Congress to amend Title 38 United States Code to include chronic peripheral neuropathy as a presumption for service connection as a result of exposure to Agent Orange. (Approved as Amended)

No. 643 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VA NET WORTH DETERMINATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to grant authority to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to adjust the \$50,000 net worth limitation by the same percentage used to increase the annual income threshold. (Approved)

No. 644 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENSURING TIMELY ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE AND SERVICES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the VA to consider, as a top priority, the reduction of waiting times for access to patient care and services. (Approved)

No. 645 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all attempts to reduce or circumvent veterans' preference. (Approved)

No. 646 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that at least one veterans' advocate be placed on the State and Local Workforce Development Boards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we request all “one-stop” centers created by the Workforce Investment Act provide priority of service to veterans. (Approved)

No. 647 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (LOU GEHRIG’S DISEASE)
HIGH AMONG GULF WAR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call for intensified medical and scientific research to determine the cause of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis among Gulf War veterans and, in the interim, we urge Congress to grant a temporary presumption of service connection for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis for Persian Gulf War veterans until such time as the research is complete. (Approved)

No. 648 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISHING A PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION
FOR VETERANS SUFFERING FROM HEPATITIS “C”

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to authorize an open-ended presumption of service connection for veterans with Hepatitis C. (Approved)

No. 649 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO INCREASE THE MONTHLY DEDUCTION
TO \$1.00 FOR THE ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge DoD to immediately exercise their authority to increase the monthly deduction to \$1.00 to ensure solvency for both the United States Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home and the United States Naval Home. (Approved)

No. 650 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

A GI BILL FOR THE 21st CENTURY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact a new GI Bill for the 21st Century which would provide an educational benefit that covers the cost of tuition, fees, books and related expenses along with a stipend to cover housing expenses, at the university or college of the veteran’s choice. (Approved)

No. 651 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HOMELESS VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to fully fund all veterans' homeless programs that are administered at the Federal level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage VFW Posts to join community-based organizations in addressing the problem of veterans' homelessness. (Approved)

No. 652 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COMPENSABLE DISABILITY FOR HEARING LOSS
FOR VETERANS REQUIRING HEARING AIDS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum ten percent disability compensation evaluation for any service-connected hearing loss (unilateral or bilateral) requiring the use of a hearing aid. (Approved)

No. 653 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REMOVAL OF THE LIMITATION ON PAYMENT OF ACCRUED BENEFITS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to remove the inequitable two-year limitation on payment of accrued benefits and instead make it open-ended. (Approved)

No. 654 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCLUDE DENTAL CARE AS PART OF
THE VETERANS UNIFORM BENEFITS PACKAGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize and fund VA to provide dental care to all enrolled veterans as a part of their Veterans Uniform Benefits Package. (Approved)

No. 655 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ESTABLISH A VA ASSISTANCE OFFICE IN THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

(Disapproved)

No. 656 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE WITH
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Departments of State and Defense to ensure the protection of veterans' employment benefits in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature. (Approved)

No. 657 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF THE CEMETERY AT
FORMER CLARK AIR FORCE BASE

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 AFB Cemetery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that until a long-term solution is reached, the Veterans of Foreign Wars seek support from all available sources to assist the VFW Posts in the Philippines with the annual cost of the repair and upkeep of the Clark AFB Cemetery. (Approved)

No. 658 (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 active service of the armed forces of the United States during WWII, as having been active service for purposes of equal benefits under programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support additional legislation that directs the Secretary of the 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 WWII. (Approved)

No. 659 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT A PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the creation of a Persian Gulf War memorial commission to make recommendations regarding the creation, at the appropriate place and time, of such a memorial recognizing the service of Persian Gulf War veterans. (Approved)

No. 660 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CHANGE DISABILITY PENSION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request Congress to change the eligibility requirements for disability pension to include veterans who have received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Navy/Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Combat Medical Badge or the Combat Action Ribbon for operations not falling within an officially designated period of war. (Approved)

No. 661 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REPEAL OF THE MONTGOMERY GI BILL PAY REDUCTION
PROVISION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby petition Congress to repeal the pay reduction provision of the Montgomery GI Bill. (Approved)

No. 662 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PLACE WORLD WAR II VETERANS IN ENROLLMENT PRIORITY
CATEGORY SIX FOR VA HEALTH PURPOSES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to include all World War II veterans in at least enrollment priority category six for health care purposes. (Approved)

No. 663 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

THE USE OF THE "BATTLEFIELD CROSS" IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States,

that we petition the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the policy regarding the use of weapons of war to exclude the "Battlefield Cross" from this definition and allow its use in a proper and dignified manner as a memorial on the grounds of a national cemetery under their control. (Approved)

No. 664 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

FURNISH HEADSTONES OR MARKERS FOR THE
MARKED GRAVES OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support and endorse the pursuit of legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. section 2306(a) by removing the word "unmarked." (Approved)

No. 665 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

WORLD WAR ONE ERA FEDERAL WAR BONUS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States to adopt a provision honoring surviving World War One Era veterans or their surviving spouses by paying a Federal war bonus of an amount to be determined by Congress. (Approved)

No. 666 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS TRAVEL PAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal section 111(c)(1)(2) Title 38 U.S.C. that authorizes deductibles from portions of travel pay made to VA patients. (Approved)

No. 667 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REINSTATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY TO DEATH PENSION
FOR REMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSE
UPON TERMINATION OF REMARRIAGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to immediately enact legislation to restore eligibility to death pension for a remarried surviving spouse upon the termination of a subsequent remarriage. (Approved)

No. 668 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASED BURIAL ALLOWANCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to increase the burial plot allowances for veterans. (Approved)

No. 669 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXPAND BURIAL BENEFITS FOR ALL VETERANS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we request a regulatory change that will permit meritorious waivers to the “exclusively” mandate in Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 39.3 for federal funding as part of the State cemetery grants program. (Approved as Amended)

No. 670 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NURSING SHORTAGES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and VA to direct resources to find long-term solutions to the problems of the nursing shortage. (Approved)

No. 671 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENHANCED DISABILITY PENSION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to allow veterans on DISABILITY pension who have attained the age of 65 or have been in receipt of pension benefits for ten consecutive years to receive an enhanced payment in their monthly pension. (Approved)

No. 672 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF VA HOME LOAN GUARANTY

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that in order to keep pace with the rising cost of housing and to make VA-guaranteed home loans available for average priced homes in high-cost areas, we urge Congress to enact legislation to raise the maximum home loan guaranty amount to at least \$63,175. (Approved)

No. 673 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ATTORNEY FEE-BASED REPRESENTATION AT VA REGIONAL OFFICES

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we inform Congress of our strong opposition to allowing private attorney fee-based representation of veterans during the regional office claims process and appellate proceedings to the Board of Veterans' Appeals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to pass legislation that will prohibit the VA from collecting fees directly from veterans' disability compensation awards in fulfillment of any fee-based arrangement by the veteran with a private attorney, including those cases involving attorney representation before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. (Approved)

No. 674 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MONTGOMERY GI BILL ACCELERATED PAYMENT PROVISION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby urge Congress to enact legislation that would allow accelerated GI Bill payments as a means to offset higher tuition costs. (Approved)

No. 675 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REFUND OF MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL CONTRIBUTIONS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress change the law to permit a refund of an individual's contribution to the Montgomery G.I. Bill when the service member receives a "general" or "under honorable conditions" type discharge as a result of minor infractions or inefficiency. (Approved)

No. 676 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

CHANGE THE VA HEALTHCARE DELIVERY SYSTEM

(Disapproved)

No. 677 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

SPACE AVAILABLE TRAVEL FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to amend the applicable United States Code to allow the travel of unaccompanied family member(s) on a space available basis for the purpose of visiting an incapacitated retired member of the

armed forces institutionalized by competent medical authority in a medical facility distant from the normal place of residence of the retired member.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 678 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

EXCHANGE AND COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES FOR
MILITARY RETIREES RESIDING OR TRAVELING OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the departments of State and Defense to ensure full exchange and commissary benefits for retirees of the U.S. Armed Forces in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature. (Approved as Amended)

No. 679 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE WITH
OVERSEAS FEDERAL CONTRACTORS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of State and the Department of Defense to ensure "Veterans Preference" in overseas positions involving firms under federal contracts which would benefit veterans residing overseas.
(Approved as Amended)

No. 680 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

THE FUTURE OF PERSHING HALL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record for keeping this building as a memorial to WW I comrades and request that the Department of Veterans Affairs ensure that this is done, that the VA require a memorial display in the building, and that a room be available for veterans service organizations when needed.
(Approved)

No. 681 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

POSTAL PRIVILEGES FOR RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Department of Defense to restore full postal privileges to Box R patrons, to include removal of the present weight restriction.
(Approved)

No. 682 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

TIMELY SURVIVORS BENEFIT PROGRAM ENTITLEMENT
PAYMENT TO SURVIVORS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure the initial survivors entitlement check is immediately released upon receipt of the SBP claim. (Approved as Amended)

No. 683 (Submitted by Department of Georgia)

ONE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

(Disapproved)

No. 684 (Submitted by Department of Idaho)

SUPPORT COLLOCATION OF THE BOISE, IDAHO
VA REGIONAL OFFICE AND VA MEDICAL CENTER

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose renewing the lease for the current VA Regional Office located in Boise, Idaho and urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make funds available for design development, architectural planning, and construction for a new VA Regional Office in concert with the overall VA plan for collocation of regional offices on VA medical center campuses. (Approved as Amended)

No. 685 (Submitted by Department of Massachusetts)

SUPPORT FOR VA PAYING ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE COST OF CARING
FOR VETERANS RESIDING IN STATE VETERANS HOMES PROGRAMS

(Disapproved)

No. 686 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

IN SUPPORT OF A SPECIAL OUTREACH AND SERVICE
COORDINATION INITIATIVE TO IDENTIFY VIETNAM VETERANS'
CHILDREN WHO HAVE CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH AGENT
ORANGE AND MAKE THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES AWARE OF THEIR
ELIGIBILITY FOR VA ASSISTANCE

(Disapproved)

No. 687 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

SUPPORT TRANSFERABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS TO A
DEPENDENT FAMILY MEMBER

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we recommend that Chapter 30 Title 38 United States Code be amended to allow active duty military personnel to transfer or assign their educational benefits to dependent spouses or children. (Approved as Amended)

No. 688 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO VIETNAM VETERANS'
CHILDREN WITH SPINA BIFIDA

(Disapproved)

No. 689 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

LONG TERM CARE FOR VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 690 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

ELIGIBILITY FOR ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOMES

(Disapproved)

No. 691 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

PROPER RESPONSIBILITY TO AMERICA'S HOMELESS VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 692 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

AMEND THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT INSURANCE ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, that the United States Congress amend the Railroad Retirement Insurance Act to allow railroad employees who are Military Retirees to also be allowed to be eligible for railroad unemployment and sickness benefits if they otherwise meet the qualifications of such benefits programs. (Approved)

No. 693 (Submitted by Department of California)

AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend Title 38, United States Code, Section 1116 to allow a presumption of service connection for any veteran in an area of operation associated with spraying and who develops or has developed one of the presumptive diseases associated with exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange who served in Korea during the specific period of 1968 and 1969. (Approved as Amended)

No. 694 (Submitted by Department of California)

EXTEND PRESUMPTIVE PERIOD FOR AGENT ORANGE DISABILITIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend repeal the portion of Title 38 United States Code section 1116 that established a 30-year delimitating date for applying a presumption of possible service connection for cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx and trachea. (Approved as Amended)

No. 695 (Submitted by Department of California)

EXTEND DATES OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE FOR GRAVE REGISTRATION TEAM MEMBERS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek a change to Title 38 United States Code to allow any Grave Registration Team members who are exposed to Agent Orange and affected by a presumptive disease, to be granted service connection for that disability. (Approved as Amended)

No. 696 (Submitted by Department of California)

TO AMEND FEDERAL TAX CODE PERTAINING TO VETERANS MORTGAGE BONDS

(Disapproved)

No. 697 (Submitted by Department of California)

VA HOTLINE PHONE FOR S/C VETERANS NEEDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WHEN VAOPC HOSPITALS ARE CLOSED

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we approach the Veterans Administration seeking a national hotline center or alternate solution to assist veterans in need of emergency fee basis

assistance. (Approved)

No. 698 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

RETAIN NATIONWIDE PROGRAMS OF EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE
FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS AS THE RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

(Disapproved)

No. 699 (Submitted by Department of New York)

AUTHORITY TO USE THE VA HOME LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM TO
PURCHASE A HOME IN A HOUSING COOPERATIVE

(Disapproved)

No. 700 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

EXTEND THE IRS DELIMITING DATE FOR USE OF HOME MORT-
GAGE BONDS BY VETERANS

(Disapproved)

No. 701 (Submitted by Department of Oregon)

OPPOSE JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION
"TAX SIMPLIFICATION STUDY"

(Disapproved)

No. 702 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXPAND THE DATES FOR THE VIETNAM ERA

(Disapproved)

No. 703 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE FUNDING FOR PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to increase federal funding for prostate cancer research, treatment, and therapies at NIH, DoD, and VA in efforts to find a cure for prostate cancer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans Health Administration

increases its investment in prostate cancer clinical research by improving and accelerating clinical trials at VA hospitals and affiliated university medical centers and research programs. (Approved)

No. 704 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CENTRALIZE FUNDING FOR ALL CARE ASSOCIATED WITH
VA ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to centralize VA transplant funds to include pre and post transplant care so all veterans with transplant needs would have equal access to these services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the Secretary to change the VERA allocation rate for pre and post transplant care to the rate of complex care, which is \$42,765 in FY-2001. (Approved)

No. 705 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MILITARY RETIREE SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN REDUCTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend subsection 1451(a)1(B)(i) of Title 10 United States Code that requires the beneficiaries annuity to be reduced to 35% of the base amount and restoring it to 55%, notwithstanding the beneficiary's entitlement to Social Security. (Approved)

No. 706 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROTECT COMPENSATION FOR UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESS FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to ensure that Persian Gulf War veterans in receipt of compensation for undiagnosed illness that participate in medical research projects may not have any medical information derived directly or indirectly from their participation used by the Department of Veterans Affairs in adjudicating a possible reduction or elimination of such compensation. (Approved)

No. 707 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

SURVIVOR BENEFITS

(Disapproved)

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

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

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California	Leonard R. Herrst	1961
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Florida	Robert M. Sprute	5625
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Idaho	William E. Rhoads	9831
Illinois	James F. Davis	177
Illinois	John H. Farr	367
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Kentucky.....	Ronald M. Myers	1096
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Louisiana	Al Courville.....	8971
Louisiana	Larry B. Minton	1736
Maine.....	Philip M. Farrell	11299
Maryland.....	Elwood S. Knight, Jr.....	5118
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Massachusetts.....	William L. Mc Carthy.....	864
Massachusetts.....	Peter P. Rondeau	7556
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Michigan	Lawrence Le Febvre	552
Michigan	Donald Mrdjenovic.....	7573
Michigan	James R. Pintar	6165
Michigan	James A. Van Hauter	4553
Michigan	James L. Warner	1888
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Minnesota.....	Donald L. Gates, Jr.....	141
Minnesota.....	Dean E. Means.....	1642
Minnesota.....	Lester G. Orton	363
Mississippi.....	Fred W. Scarborough, Jr.....	5931
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Missouri.....	John C. Krug	2210
Missouri.....	Lawrence M. Maher.....	7356
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Rhode Island	Carmino M. Calvitto.....	45
South Carolina.....	Eugene Johnson.....	4262
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Tennessee	Ernie L. Price.....	5146
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Texas	Glen M. Gardner, Jr.....	3359
Texas	Anthony W. Graf	1815
Texas	Thomas R. Howard	3359
Texas	R. Earl Lord.....	10351
Texas	Manuel O. Rivas	8782
Utah	Jack A. Mack.....	3586
Vermont.....	Thomas E. Frechette	1034
Virginia.....	Joseph O. Longstreet	3219
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Washington	James W. King, Jr.	3067
West Virginia	Randall L. Bare	6669
West Virginia	James M. Burkhart.....	1212
West Virginia	Robert B. Kesling.....	573
Wisconsin.....	Peter J. Breed.....	10331
Wisconsin.....	Howard A. Futrell	8337

Wisconsin.....	Walter E. Hahn	721
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Kansas	Buddy J. Haney	56
Kansas	Tommy L. Huff	846
Kentucky.....	Ronnie Dickerson	5478
Latin Amer/Carib	Dannie Cooper	3822
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Louisiana	Precilla Wilkewitz	4224
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Maine	Donald R. Libby, Jr.....	832
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Minnesota.....	Thomas G. Tweet	1296
Minnesota.....	Larry G. Ziebarth	6843
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Texas	George B. Sparkman	9181
Utah	Benito G. Russo	3586
Vermont.....	James H. Lane	6689
Virginia.....	Gerald E. Jonas.....	1811
Virginia.....	Robert J. Klausung.....	2216
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Wyoming.....	Frederick W. Ess	4343

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Kansas	Robert B. Greene	846
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Kentucky.....	Paul A. Nixon.....	1084
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Maine.....	Arthur J. Roy	1603
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Montana	Thomas A. Pouliot.....	1116
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New Hampshire	Katrina A. St. Onge	8214
New Jersey	Patrick J. Botbyl.....	1593
New Jersey	Warren W. Hague	133
New Jersey	Andrew Henkel, Jr.....	2290
New Mexico.....	Archie F. Bassham	10124
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New York.....	Clyde A. Lewis	125
New York.....	Raymond Nowak	2940
New York.....	Harry C. Wurth	5253
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North Carolina	Jack W. Kerns	9488
North Dakota	Duaine D. Dockter.....	6831
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Ohio.....	Ronald D. Smith.....	7340
Ohio.....	John Wasylik	2529
Oklahoma	William C. Bender	4446
Oregon.....	Manuel J. Huerta.....	4248
Pacific Areas	William T. Brandon	11435
Pacific Areas	Richard A. Lane	11575
Pennsylvania.....	Russell R. Canevari	5544
Pennsylvania.....	Roland J. Gallagher.....	6704
Pennsylvania.....	Norman F. Rettig, Jr.	249
Pennsylvania.....	Ronald G. Tyler, Sr.	1462
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Rhode Island	Salvatore J. Capirchio	2396
Rhode Island	Frank E. Lightowler	6342
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South Dakota.....	Walter F. Joynt.....	1273
South Dakota.....	Dick L. Pickering.....	4726
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Texas	Donald L. Harwood	6794
Texas	William W. Howell, Jr.	4010
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Virginia.....	Paul T. Moore	4491
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Washington	Phillip L. Ottinger	6268
Washington	Eric G. Sandstrom	969
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COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona

Vice Chairman: John W. Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Hampshire

(Ballroom B, Midwest Express Center)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: Billy Ray Cameron, Past Commander-in-Chief, North Carolina

Vice Chairman: James R. Currieo, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Robert L. Littrell	1701
Alaska.....	Leander P. Carr	9978
Alaska.....	Gerald J. Dorsher	5559
Arizona.....	Robert M. Jarvey	2364
Arizona.....	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent	9972
Arkansas	Harold F. Belote	2259
Arkansas	Aurbury B. Secrest.....	9095
California.....	Ralph E. Gibbs, Jr.	7041

California.....	Virgil L. Griffin	3795
California.....	William G. Kelley	5985
California.....	Arthur A. Napiwocki	1614
California.....	David B. Norris	52
Colorado	Darrell L. Anderson.....	2551
Colorado	James E. Mauck.....	2601
Colorado	Charles G. Watkins	4265
Connecticut.....	Richard A. Cyr	10004
Connecticut.....	Thomas C. Walker.....	5849
Delaware.....	Wilbur D. Kirkwood.....	3792
Europe.....	Billy D. Barber	10436
Florida.....	Richard Fitzgerald	7721
Florida.....	J. Douglas Morris, Jr.	3559
Florida.....	Ernest R. Sandman	2500
Florida.....	Laurence Schatz.....	3559
Florida.....	John Uhrich, Jr	10068
Florida.....	Alan A. Wallace	10068
Georgia	Richard A. Dunlop	6602
Georgia	Gerald J. Piper	4583
Hawaii.....	Francis X. Roddin.....	2875
Idaho.....	Walter W. Jackson	63
Illinois	Walter C. Luksta.....	9115
Illinois	Curtis E. Martyn	9773
Indiana	Harley D. Andrews.....	6606
Indiana	James J. Thiel.....	717
Iowa	Richard E. Goebel.....	9663
Iowa	A. Arthur Weber	788
Kansas	David W. Jones.....	56
Kansas	Leon Shaw, Jr.	704
Kansas	Mildon L. Yeager	7271
Kentucky.....	Jeff A. Phillips.....	1170
Louisiana.....	Timothy S. Green	3106
Louisiana.....	Joseph H. Richardson.....	1736
Maine.....	Kevin G. Woodward	1737
Maryland.....	Joseph F. Rosetta	9619
Massachusetts.....	Joseph E. Caouette	1105
Massachusetts.....	Kenneth J. Hebert.....	1105
Massachusetts.....	Michael J. Imbracio	639
Massachusetts.....	John F. Leonard	639
Michigan	Garry J. Goff	2406
Michigan	Edmund R. Gucwa	6896
Michigan	Gerald K. Hawkins.....	3243
Michigan	Richard E. La Fave.....	5670
Minnesota.....	Gordon W. Kirk.....	8854
Mississippi.....	Johnny J. Raney.....	10567
Missouri.....	Charles C. Clifton.....	4347

Missouri.....	Eugene L. Hoeltge.....	5077
Missouri.....	Jerry L. Turk.....	2426
Montana.....	Maurice J. Mills.....	2986
Nebraska.....	Earl L. Jones.....	2503
Nebraska.....	Billy C. Smith.....	7028
Nevada.....	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr.....	10047
New Hampshire.....	Dana E. Hussey.....	1772
New Hampshire.....	John A. Knapper.....	1772
New Hampshire.....	John W. Smart.....	483
New Jersey.....	William A. Goode.....	809
New Mexico.....	Tyrone M. Benson.....	7686
New Mexico.....	C. H. Thornton.....	7686
New York.....	Robert E. Barnhart.....	686
New York.....	Melvin Garrett.....	6396
New York.....	James F. Mc Nally.....	53
North Carolina.....	William J. Hendren.....	2031
North Carolina.....	Arthur A. Shull.....	2843
North Dakota.....	Robert L. Volk.....	1868
Ohio.....	Robert F. Brenot.....	606
Ohio.....	George H. Cox.....	6772
Ohio.....	John E. Moon.....	2873
Ohio.....	Larry D. Mooney.....	3343
Ohio.....	Gerald J. Ward.....	5713
Oklahoma.....	Elwin W. Doyle.....	577
Oklahoma.....	Donald A. Firkins.....	9969
Oregon.....	Thomas G. Laing.....	9448
Pacific Areas.....	Thomas I. Elliott.....	2485
Pacific Areas.....	Clifton W. Wilsey.....	2485
Pennsylvania.....	Howard L. Adler, Jr.....	456
Pennsylvania.....	John M. Gunn, Sr.....	2506
Pennsylvania.....	Peter Krenitsky.....	6082
Rhode Island.....	Harry W. Smith.....	4651
South Carolina.....	Richard A. Acosta.....	8760
South Carolina.....	William L. Dickey.....	7735
South Dakota.....	James E. Fortin.....	750
South Dakota.....	Gary Knudson.....	2038
Tennessee.....	David Everett.....	4349
Tennessee.....	Otha M Jack Kerr.....	5266
Tennessee.....	Hugh G. Ogle.....	1893
Texas.....	John R. Arnold.....	6111
Texas.....	Robert L. Doumecq.....	3359
Texas.....	Manuel O. Navarrete.....	10354
Texas.....	Ferrell E. Warden.....	8552
Utah.....	Sanford Rosenthal.....	3586
Vermont.....	Raymond G. Snow.....	793
Virginia.....	Daniel D. Boyer.....	7726

Virginia.....	Bruce R. Harder	1503
Virginia.....	Earl E. Harris, Jr.	2216
Washington	Blaine E. Teachman	9301
West Virginia	Ernest E. Imboden	9926
West Virginia	Scottie E. King.....	1064
Wisconsin.....	Ronald J. Hinkhouse	9677
Wisconsin.....	Kenneth M. Puls.....	9202
Wisconsin.....	Joel P. Walker	1904
Wyoming.....	Robert J. De Bernardo.....	9439

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: James E. Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas
Vice Chairman: George R. Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

(102DE, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Charles D. Davis	2760
Alabama	Charles R. Stephens	3128
Alaska.....	Melvin R. Sheppard	3836
Arizona.....	Forrest E. Barker	9829
Arizona.....	Kenneth A. Buckley.....	9400
Arkansas	Charles O. Wright	4513
California.....	Gordon L. Bailey.....	10859
California.....	George D. Branch	9791
California.....	Judge Brown	7792
California.....	Kenneth N. Niemi	1679
California.....	Leslie I. Raper	8254
Colorado	John J. Holland.....	1
Colorado	Warren E. Wellensiek.....	4171
Connecticut.....	William H. Woodbury.....	1724
Delaware	Charles E. Price.....	3792
Dist. of Col.	William L. Bradshaw	284
Europe	John C. Neilson.....	2566
Florida	Elizabeth L. Case.....	8108
Florida	Henry G. Diehl, Jr.	8058
Florida	Donald S. Pender	3559
Florida	Samuel D. Sweetman	4287
Florida	Kenneth A. Thie.....	9272
Georgia	Richard Branson.....	5080
Georgia	Danny L. Gardner	2681
Georgia	Roy L. Jordan, Jr.	6686
Georgia	Robert K. Nelson.....	3200
Hawaii.....	William W. Daves	970

Idaho	Donald G. Riegel	889
Idaho	Leonard L. Rogers	10323
Illinois	Paul J. Bezazian	8322
Illinois	George R. Cramer	6869
Illinois	Julius C. Grantham.....	4183
Illinois	Lee D. Miller.....	3847
Illinois	Donald L. Porter.....	2055
Indiana	David R. Cole	1832
Indiana	Paul D. Curtice.....	1257
Indiana	David Lantz	1130
Iowa	Larry J. Bender	788
Iowa	Donald F. Dickerson	1655
Kansas	A Lynn Hall.....	6240
Kansas	Gerald D. Mangold.....	7521
Kansas	Norman G. Staab	6240
Kansas	Roy L. Taylor	6438
Kansas	Richard N. Weston.....	6882
Latin Amer/Carib	Thomas D. Graham.....	6565
Louisiana	Elton J. Landry.....	3700
Louisiana	Larry W. Rivers.....	1736
Maine	Paul S. Colburn	1761
Maine	Raymond R. Lupo	1761
Maryland.....	Carolyn L. Amos	9619
Maryland.....	Fredrick W. Burns.....	2562
Maryland.....	Donald H. Cunningham, Jr.....	8185
Maryland.....	William C. Dozier.....	9619
Massachusetts.....	Jere L. Hill.....	2425
Massachusetts.....	George P. Magrath	6712
Michigan	Martha M. Abdelsalam.....	7546
Michigan	Kenneth J. Aune	6756
Michigan	Arthur C. Bates.....	6165
Michigan	Gary E. Brown	2406
Michigan	Dale J. Brubaker.....	3941
Michigan	Daniel J. Crocker	796
Michigan	Lowell E. Elston.....	3243
Michigan	Daniel H. Fettes	796
Michigan	David J. Gay	3243
Michigan	Eric L. Halvorsen.....	5065
Michigan	Jay E. Johnson	5666
Michigan	Rollin G. Johnson.....	3165
Michigan	Raymond G. O Neill.....	147
Michigan	David W. Patrick	3651
Michigan	Gary L. Putinsky.....	5666
Michigan	Barry F. Walter	4005
Michigan	Ian B. Welch	5666
Minnesota.....	Thomas L. Hanson	1639

Minnesota.....	Richard A. Zierdt.....	6587
Mississippi.....	Charles Garrett.....	4877
Missouri.....	Jerry F. Jones.....	1829
Missouri.....	Charles F. Thrower, Jr.....	3838
Montana.....	Leslie E. Eskildsen.....	4067
Nebraska.....	John J. Brehm.....	1681
Nebraska.....	Dick Mc Michael.....	1652
Nevada.....	John W. Stroud.....	10047
New Jersey.....	Lawrence F. Berman.....	133
New Jersey.....	John F. Kane, Jr.....	493
New Jersey.....	James A. Nelson.....	493
New Mexico.....	Walter P. Diegnau.....	7686
New York.....	Neil T. Connolly.....	7227
New York.....	Arthur E. Koch, III.....	6780
New York.....	George S. Smith.....	53
North Carolina.....	William C. Dohl.....	4309
North Carolina.....	Paul G. Yeager.....	7315
North Dakota.....	Charles D. Barstad.....	762
North Dakota.....	Frank Egan.....	9050
Ohio.....	Clifford E. Bauer.....	3360
Ohio.....	Steven W. Mardis.....	693
Ohio.....	William K. Seagraves.....	9582
Oklahoma.....	Mark C. Richardson.....	4876
Oregon.....	Edward L. Williams.....	4060
Pacific Areas.....	Jerome J. Karwacki.....	9951
Pennsylvania.....	Jack D. Frank.....	92
Pennsylvania.....	Almon J. Long.....	283
Pennsylvania.....	Franklin E. Lopes.....	92
Pennsylvania.....	Albert S. Thomas, Jr.....	974
Rhode Island.....	Leonard M. Harris.....	272
Rhode Island.....	Michael J. O'Rourke.....	4487
South Carolina.....	George M. Pullie.....	6091
South Dakota.....	Dale L. Jensen.....	628
South Dakota.....	Donald D. Nelson.....	628
South Dakota.....	Cheryl M. Stahlecker.....	791
Tennessee.....	Ronald N. Cameron.....	11160
Tennessee.....	Billie L. Davis.....	2372
Tennessee.....	John Furgess.....	1970
Texas.....	William D. Bell.....	6873
Texas.....	Oscar G. Gonzalez.....	7475
Texas.....	James E. Nier.....	8919
Utah.....	Donald B. Myers.....	8307
Vermont.....	John J. Zuba.....	1034
Virginia.....	Clifton G. Bryant.....	3103
Virginia.....	Tommy W. Hines.....	7166
Virginia.....	John J. McNeill, Jr.....	5412

Washington	Harry L. Blevins	1585
Washington	Richard A. Whipple.....	2886
West Virginia	Joseph G. Allesio	573
West Virginia	Ralph W. Honaker	1064
Wisconsin.....	Arlene G. Banks.....	9403
Wisconsin.....	Jeffrey L. Budzis	8337
Wisconsin.....	Walter F. Wohlbiel	1038
Wyoming.....	Ed Wilkerson.....	10056

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COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: R.D. Smith, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia
 Vice Chairman: Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief,
 Massachusetts