104th Congress, 1st Session – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 95TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]

Las Vegas, Nevada : : : August 21–26, 1994

95TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

104th Congress, 1st Session – – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 104–20

P R O C E E D I N G S

of the

95TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]

Las Vegas, Nevada

August 21–26, 1994

MARCH 16, 1994.—Referred to the Committee on National Security and ordered to be printed

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES,
KANSAS CITY, MO,
October 24, 1994.

Hon. THOMAS S. FOLEY,
The Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In conformance with provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 21–26, 1994, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

LARRY W. RIVERS,
Adjutant General.

86–964

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VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1993–94

Commander-in-Chief ..... George R. Cramer
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief ..... Allen F. "Gunner" Kent
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief ..... Paul A. Spera
Adjutant General ..... Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr.
Quartermaster General ..... James D. Bowden
Judge Advocate General ..... James J. Plick
Surgeon General ..... Howard E. Bryant, M.D.
National Chaplain ..... Charles W. Edwards, Jr.
National Chief of Staff ..... Darrel W. Miller
Inspector General ..... Larry G. Ziebarth
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration ..... John J. Senk, Jr.
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs ..... W. Benny Bachand
Assistant Quartermaster General ..... Joe L. Ridgley
Director, Accounting ..... Gary Housknecht
Director, Administrative Services ..... Thomas Kissell
Director, Americanism & Community Activities ..... Michael J. Gormalley
Director, Emblem & Supply Department ..... M.L. "Bud" Cale
Director, General Services ..... David L. Swindler
Director, Insurance Programs ..... Robert Crow
Director, Marketing Services ..... Ronald G. Browning
Director, Membership ..... Lawrence LeFebvre
Director, National Convention ..... Joseph D. Ross
Director, Post Development ..... Robert A. Crider
Director, Post Services & Buddy Poppy ..... James R. Rowoldt
Director, Publications & Public Affairs & Editor,
VFW Magazine ..... Richard K. Kolb
Director, Purchasing & Life Membership ..... Robert B. Greene
Director, VFW Properties, Kansas City ..... William D. Foster
Director, Voice of Democracy & Youth Activities & Safety ..... Gordon R. Thorson
Administrative Assistant to Adjutant General ..... Russell Cutright
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Director,
Washington Office ..... Larry W. Rivers
Director, National Legislative Service ..... James N. Magill
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs ..... Kenneth A. Steadman
Director, Political Action Committee ..... James R. Currieo
Director, Public Affairs, Washington Office ..... Wiliam G. Smith
Director, Veterans Employment ..... Sidney Daniels
Director, VFW Properties, Washington ..... Billy R. Weissend
National Service Officer & Director,
National Veterans Service ..... Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
Administrative Assistant to Washington Office ..... Edward L. Andrew

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS, 1993–94

District 1 (ME, NH, VT) ..... John J. Zuba
District 2 (MA, CT) ..... Michael J. Imbracsio
District 3 (MD, RI) ..... Norman H. Geisel
District 4 (DC, DE, EU) ..... John F. Murphy
District 5 (IN, MO) ..... James D. White
District 6 (VA, WV) ..... Ralph Stump
District 7 (TN, KY) ..... W.J. Cannon
District 8 (GA, AL) ..... Lester E. Kapelka
District 9 (SC, NC) ..... Harlan C. LaBar
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District 11 (WI, IA) ..... Roger D. Schwieso
District 12 (SD, ND, WY) ..... Kent L. Anderson
District 13 (NE, KS) ..... Robert J. Sander
District 14 (MT, WA, ID) ..... Neal Van Wieringen
District 15 (NM, CO, AZ) ..... Ernesto E. Melendez
District 16 (PC, PAC, AK, HI) ..... Leander P. Carr
District 17 (UT, NV, OR) ..... Johnnie A. Baugh
District 19 (LA, MS) ..... Nolan J. Ledet
District A (Pennsylvania) ..... Franklin R. Fisher
District B (Illinois) ..... Maurice H. Kerckhove
District C (New York) ..... Melvin Garrett
District D (Ohio) ..... Joseph P. Seibert
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District F (Michigan) ..... Dale J. Brubaker
District G (California) ..... Judge Brown
District H (Texas) ..... Charles S. Pearson
District I (New Jersey) ..... Edward Fischer
District J (Florida) ..... Peter Puentes
Past Commander-in-Chief ..... John M. Carney

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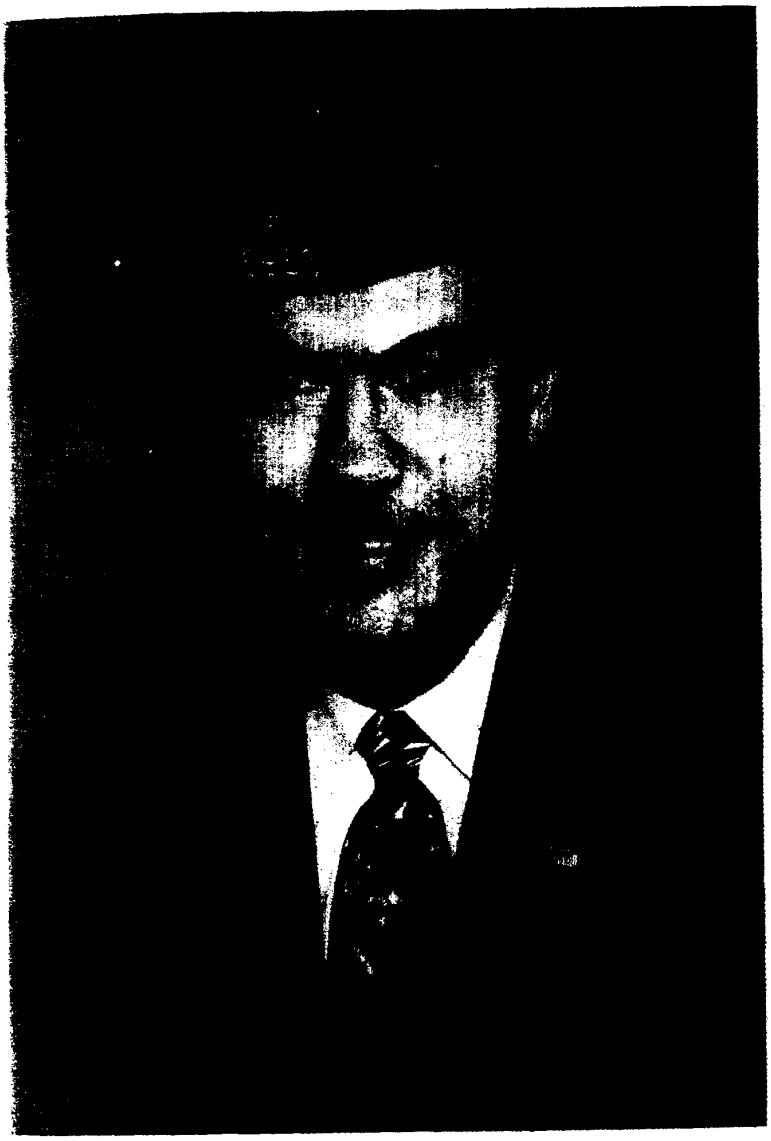
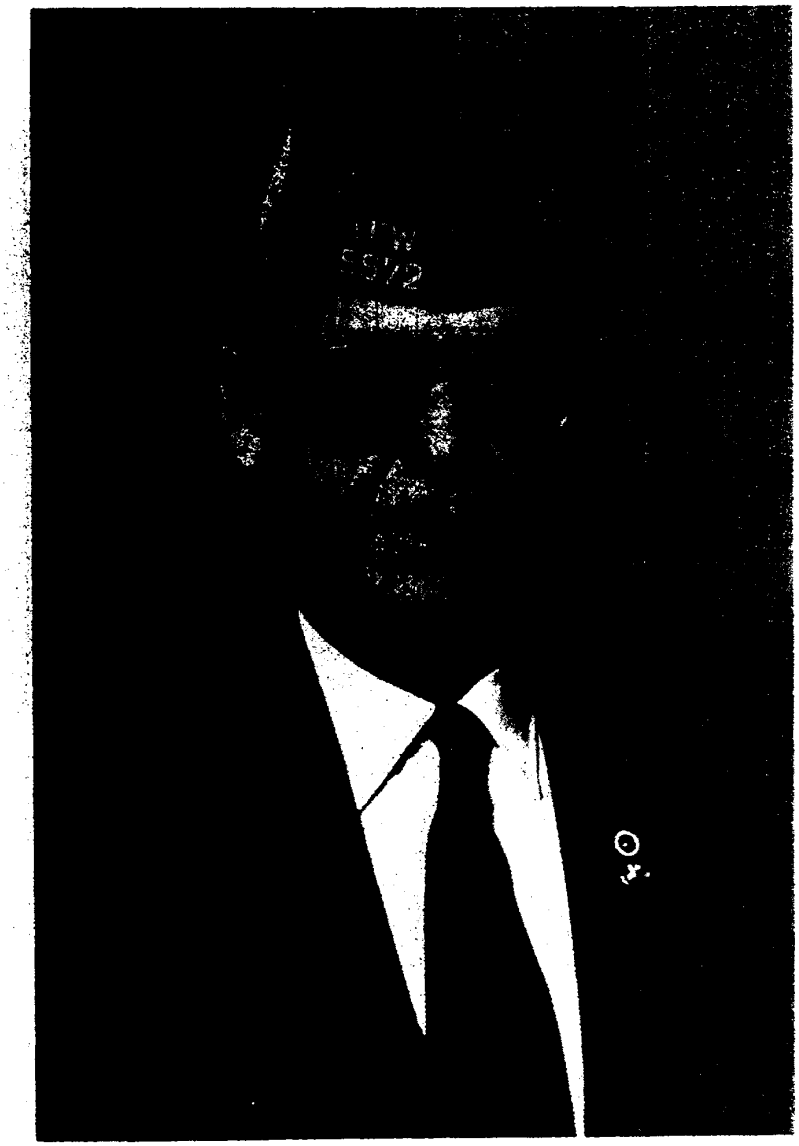
Past Commander-in-Chief—Continued



George R. Cramer
Commander-In-Chief, 1993–94

Past Commander-in-Chief—Continued



Allen F. "Gunner" Kent
Commander-In-Chief, 1994–95

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1994–95

Commander-in-Chief ..... Allen F. "Gunner" Kent
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief ..... Paul A. Spera
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief ..... James E. Nier
Adjutant General ..... Larry W. Rivers
Quartermaster General ..... James D. Bowden
Judge Advocate General ..... Charles A. Whiteacre
Surgeon General ..... Patricia S. Potter
National Chaplain ..... Rev. Thomas W. Neville
National Chief of Staff ..... Tyrone M. Benson
Inspector General ..... Raymond E.Stelmachuk
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration ..... John J. Senk, Jr.
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs ..... W. Benny Bachand
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National Veterans Service ..... Frederico Juarbe, Jr.
Administrative Assistant to Washington Office ..... Edward L. Andrew

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District C (New York) ..... Melvin Garrett
District D (Ohio) ..... Terry A. Roan
District E (Minnesota) ..... Dean E. Means
District F (Michigan) ..... Dale J. Brubaker
District G (California) ..... Judge Brown
District H (Texas) ..... Manuel O. Rivas
District I (New Jersey) ..... Edward Fischer
District J (Florida) ..... Peter Puentes
Past Commander-in-Chief ..... George R. Cramer

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

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

The American Veterans of Foreign Service and the Army of the Philippines amalgamated at Denver, Colorado, 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 charter as granted October 11, 1899.

American Veterans of Foreign Service

The * indicates deceased

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 Jamestown, Virginia.
1908–1909	J. Alfred Judge *	Elected at Lebanon, Pennsylvania.
1909–1910	J. Alfred Judge *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910–1911	Robert G. Woodside *	Elected at Jersey City, New Jersey.
1911–1912	Robert G. Woodside *	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1912–1913	Robert G. Woodside *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

American Veterans of Foreign Service

(Eastern Branch)

The * indicates deceased

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

Army of the Philippines

The * indicates deceased

1900–1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene *	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901–1902	Gen. Irving Hale *	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1902–1903	Gen. Irving Hale *	Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903–1904	Gen. Charles King *	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.

Page

Army of the Philippines—Continued

The * indicates deceased

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

The * indicates deceased

1913–1914	Rice W. Means *	Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1914–1915	Thomas Crago *	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1915–1916	Gus Hartung *	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1916–1917	Albert Rabing *	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, Jr.*	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1929–1930	Hezekiah N. Duff *	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1930–1931	Paul D. 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. Kearney *	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.

Page

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States—Continued

The * indicates deceased

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 Dalls, 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, Washington.
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 Wasylik	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 October 21, 1980.
1981–1982	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, Jr	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.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 95TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, AUGUST 21–26, 1994

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 1994

[The Memorial Service of the 95th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer, 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 CRAMER: Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the hall for the advancement and posting of the Colors.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

[Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard advanced the Colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.]

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, comrades. The Reverend Harland M. Palmer will give the Opening Prayer.

REVEREND HARLAND PALMER: Good morning. Shalom. Peace be unto you. We would like to welcome all the VIPs this morning. Of course, in the sight of God, we all are VIPs. In the book of Isaiah, Chapter 40, "Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Let us bow our heads in prayer, please. Almighty God, we ask a special blessing for this new day. We give thanks knowing that you are guiding and directing our paths. We look to you for our strength and our understanding.

Heavenly Father, bless everyone here and bless all our dearly departed comrades. Bless our country, Lord, and may we help keep it free. And everyone said, "Amen." Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You may be seated. The Trinity Life Center Choir will now sing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

[Whereupon, the Trinity Life Center Choir sang the "Battle Hymn of the Republic".]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Led by the Soloist of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we will join together in singing "Nearer My God To Thee."

IN MEMORIAM

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

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I request the National Chaplain to preside.

[National Chaplain Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr., presided during the Memorial Services performed by the National Officers in accordance with the Ritual.]

[At the conclusion of the Memorial Service the Trinity Life Center Choir led the assembly in singing "America."]

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: It is now a pleasure for me to introduce our special Memorial Service speaker, Brigadier General Arthur S. "Sam" Thomas, Deputy Chief of Air Force Chaplains, Headquartered in the United States Air Force, Washington, D.C.

Chaplain Thomas is a native of Mankato, Minnesota, where he attended high school and college. A former enlisted member of the Minnesota National Guard, he enlisted in the Air Force in January 1955, and served as the Russian Language Specialist in Japan.

After attending St. Procopius Seminary in Lisle, Illinois, Chaplain Thomas was ordained in 1965 as a priest for the diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota, where he served as a parish priest. In November 1968, he was commissioned as a Chaplain, First Lieutenant, and reported to March Air Force Base, California.

As the Deputy Chief of Air Force Chaplains, he assists the Chief of Chaplains in directing and maintaining a trained, equipped and professional chaplain service, including more than 2,300 active duty guard and reserve chaplains, enlisted to support personnel and civilians.

As a member of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, he and the other members serve as Advisors to the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on religion, ethical and quality of life concerns.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in giving a warm welcome to Brigadier General Arthur S. Thomas.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

CHAPLAIN BRIGADIER GENERAL THOMAS: Thank you. A Brigadier General I am, an Air Force Chaplain I am. I am not a pilot for Continental Airlines. This is our new uniform.

Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Honored Guests, Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Gold Star Parents: It is my honor to greet you this morning in the love and mercy of the God of all mercy and constellation. I feel very privileged to share in this meaningful service today, and I bring you greetings from the Chiefs of Chaplains of the Air Force, the Navy and the Army. All three of them greatly appreciate the sacrifices that you have made and the contributions that you continue to make as dedicated citizens and patriots of our great nation.

I wish to begin my reflections this morning with a little story, a true story, and it is inspired by the VFW emblem. As all of you know, the Cross of Malta has a rich history. It has been worn with pride and honor for centuries. The banner on the emblem, as we share it in the VFW, says Pro Deo Patria, for God and country.

This is a powerful sentiment which rightly joins patriotism with the vital spirit of faith. As is well known, this Maltese Cross was the mark of the Knights of Malta, officially known as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, whose primary mission was to care for the injured crusaders and pilgrims in the Holy Land.

The story I wish to share with you is about their finest hour which is, also, coincidentally, the account of their grimmest days. You see, in May 1565, the Knights of St. John were using the small Mediterranean Island of Malta as a base from which to attempt to stem the imperialistic advances of the powerful Turkish Empire.

In May 1565, 40,000 experienced and merciless Turkish troops landed on the island to crush the brave members of this religious order. Facing them during a violent siege, which would last more than five months with more than a mere 8,000 Christian soldiers, of whom about 700 were Knights.

There were also a thousand local men, women and children who were there to help the defenders. With virtually unlimited resources, the Turks made attack after attack on the two small fortresses that sheltered the defenders. The fortress was Fort St. Elmo.

Every day, 6,000 to 7,000 iron, marble cannonballs were hurled at the fort as its soft stone walls were pulverized. Every day, walls of men rushed forward to seize the stronghold. The Turks were certain a small fortress would fall within less than a week, but they had underestimated the courage and the commitment of the Knights. It was more than a month before St. Elmo fell.

Preparing for their deaths, as the Turks massed for the final onslaught, the defenders used the small chaplain bell to signal their friends that they had made peace with God and were prepared for their final battle. The wounded, too injured to stand, were placed in chairs near the walls from which they opposed their foes with their final energies.

The final grim battle for Fort St. Elmo, on the 31st day of the siege, lasted over an hour. At its close, the overwhelming Turkish

force turned its attention to the remaining crusader fortress in Malta.

As we pause today to remember and commemorate the lives and members of the armed forces of the United States who have gone ahead of us, it occurs to me that the members of the VFW have far more in common with the Knights of St. John than simply the shape of our emblem.

Indeed, I would like to suggest this morning that you share at least three priceless characteristics which these soldiers, who so willingly sacrificed their lives in the defense of ours. And what are these qualities to which I refer?

Along with the Knights of St. John, each of you display a generous degree of compassion, courage and commitment. To some of those outside the armed forces, it sounds contradictory to say that members of the profession of arms can be guided by compassion.

But to those of us who are members of this distinctive family, it is so obvious. We know very well the love which reaches out to aid those in need. We take care of our own is more than simply an empty phrase. What is more, we take care of others in need, even when they are not our own.

One needs to look not further than Bosnia or Rwanda, to see who it is who is there to help. When America is helping people around the globe, the Americans carrying food and medicine are almost always wearing a uniform like the one which each of you has brought credit to.

We members of the military community have seen compassion in our midst with such frequency that I am ashamed to admit that most of us have taken it for granted. We have seen people make tremendous sacrifices, such as being separated from their loved ones for months at a time, so that people they have never even met are free to live in peace and security with their families.

American citizens in uniform have willingly gone to foreign shores often at great personal cost, not to serve a selfish purpose, but rather they have journeyed to the fortress, beaches, jungles and deserts of the world to defend the people and defend that precious gift of freedom and liberty.

Yes, compassion has motivated many that we have seen in our midst. Many of those in our number today here in this conference hall have been privileged to witness one of the greatest miracles of compassion and unselfishness that can ever be experienced by a human being.

Though the memory is not without pain, it is all something very, very precious. Although the recollection of such sacrifices reminds us of the deep personal loss, I am convinced that those who have witnessed the death of a fallen comrade, life lives forever transformed and enriched by the sharing of that moment.

For you, without a glimmer of a doubt have beheld ultimate compassion. There is a French proverb, "Gratitude is the heart's memory." The gratitude that you feel today and every day for their sacrifices is the most fitting memorial that we can hope to offer.

The acts of compassion worked by the VFW are as numerous as its members. In communities all over our nation, you are volunteering to work with troubled youth, homeless families, handicapped, and individuals, and virtually everyone who possesses a need.

You are freely and generously contributing your resources and energy to make the United States and the world a better place. Why? Because you profit in some manner? Certainly, you are not only motivated by compassion, but you see the need and you respond.

This willingness to respond, to act upon the compassion you feel when you recognize need is an evidence of the second quality you share with the defenders of Malta, courage. Many people recognize need and they simply immerse themselves more deeply in their selfish pursuits to drown out the cry.

Others see the troubled state of the world about them and they flee for refuge to the false security of drugs or alcohol. But these are the paths of cowards. You, on the contrary, see the need, but instead of running away you face the fear and confront the darkness. Only a fool is never afraid or intimidated by the challenges facing them.

George Patton said that in the heat of battle courage is fear, holding on a minute longer. And in a similar vein, Eddie Rickenbacker noted that courage is doing what you are afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you are scared. So, if you sometimes feel that the obstacles are too great to surmount, that is a test in some particular endeavors and will be impossible to attain, then take heart.

Your courage can still prevail. Don't surrender when you know you are right. I will just share one example. As important as the issue is to many, in the current political climate, there are those who despair about ever gaining a full accounting of American POWs and MIAs from World War II, Korea and particular Vietnam.

Most Americans, in fact, do not know how many thousands of sons, sisters, brothers and fathers these numbers represent. Yet, despite the times when calling for the fullest possible accounting appears a futile appeal, the VFW boldly continues to make this one of its primary goals. I commend you. I commend you for your concern, I commend you for your constancy, I commend you for your courage.

The third quality you possess is commitment. In our day of instant gratification, it is anything but popular to say that something takes time; but it does. You the members of the VFW have proven that you are committed to what is right for the long haul. You don't leave the plow when the tilling gets rough.

You understand what Adlai Stevenson meant when he said, "Patriotism is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime." Yes, we all have been particularly moved when we have recited the Pledge of Allegiance or sung the National Anthem. Of course, we have had to catch our breath when we stood at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier or the Vietnam War Memorial.

Who wouldn't become emotional as they stroll through Arlington Cemetery? But we know all too well that such emotions don't last. They are simply precious moments. It is in the daily grind, the ongoing commitment to doing what is right that things get done.

It perplexes me that the unbounded enthusiasm and patriotism which treated American veterans in the aftermath of the Gulf War

evaporated so quickly. I don't doubt that it was sincere, yet it was based not on thoughtful commitment to principles involved, but simply on the emotions and the relief of the moment.

That, and I believe, unfortunately a degree of national penitence for the mistreatment of the returning Vietnam veterans two decades earlier caused this sudden evaporation. By contrast, you as members of the VFW possess a profound and deep commitment to your beliefs, a commitment that you have in common with the defenders of the Malta more than four centuries ago, which reminds me I didn't finish the story about the Knights of Malta.

You see, that siege of the island after the fall of St. Elmo continued during 1565. The crusader casualties were horrible as the months passed, conditions in their remaining strongholds deteriorated to the point where their hope was nearly gone.

Yet, the Knights of Malta and their comrades remained steadfast. Strengthened by compassion, courage and commitment, they defied the overwhelming odds and refused to spare their lives by denying their God and embracing a new faith.

Finally, on the verge of defeat, but not surrender, a small relief force of 16,000 did arrive with reinforcements. The mighty Turkish army already battered by the much smaller crusaders and defenders fled after one final battle in which they were utterly brutal as they boarded their enormous fleet to return to Constantinople.

Hardly a man, woman or child on Malta was unscarred by this siege. By the close of the conflict, only 600 defenders of Malta were capable of fighting. Seven thousand have died and the remainder were severely wounded. However, the ships returning to Constantinople carried 25,000 fewer soldiers than they had arrived with in May 1565.

The Knights of Malta had stood with courage in the face of incomprehensible odds and they had emerged victorious. Likewise, no matter how intimidating the challenges which seem to face you or the prestigious organization, I have confidence that the VFW will always emerge triumphant. Is there any wonder that you have chosen for your theme this coming year "Anchored in Pride"?

One closing thought, which is also inspired by the Pro Deo Patria portion of the VFW emblem. We recently commemorated the 50th Anniversary of D-Day, the day that sounded the death knell for fascism in Europe. Some of you were there.

Without its section, the allied leaders on that day were convinced that their cause was not only right but holy. It was only appropriate that they sought divine blessing for the invasion of Normandy. In rereading the words of General Eisenhower's Order of the Day to the allied troops invading France, I was struck by the degree to which they affirmed the ongoing vision and mission of the VFW.

I quote General Dwight Eisenhower. "The tide has turned, the free men of the world are marching together in victory. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory. Let us all beseech the blessings of almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this special occasion. May God continue to richly bless and comfort you and to also

fill you with overflowing compassion, courage and commitment as you continue to pursue this great and noble undertaking.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, General, for the very fine memorial message. We will now be led once again by the Trinity Life Center Choir in singing America the Beautiful.

[Whereupon, the Trinity Life Center Choir led the assembly in singing "America the Beautiful."]

INTRODUCTION OF COLONEL ARCHIE T. ROBERTS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: The names of four chaplains, Lieutenants George L. Fox, Clark V. Poling, John P. Washington and Alexander D. Goode, will never be forgotten. Chaplains Fox and Poling were Protestant Ministers. Chaplain Washington was a Roman Catholic Priest. Chaplain Goode was a Jewish Rabbi. Although their religious traditions differed, they were united in the spirit of sacrifice that was their foundation.

When the Army Transport, the *Dorchester*, was torpedoed and sunk in the North Atlantic off Greenland in February 1943, they gave their life jackets to others in hopes those lives would be saved. The four chaplains perished in those icy waters. A postage stamp was issued in their honor.

In Philadelphia, the Chapel of the Four Chaplains preserves their memory for all posterity. I wish to bring to the podium now Chaplain Archie T. Roberts for his remarks from the Chapel of Four Chaplains. Past National Chaplain, Archie T. Roberts.

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

COLONEL ARCHIE ROBERTS: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Cramer. As he related the incident that we are all so very familiar with, and as we have celebrated the days of World War II the past couple of years, and look forward to that, we certainly know that this stands as a true and eternal message, not only of that day but for all of the future generations, as well as the importance of mankind working together.

So, it is a privilege for me to represent the Chapel of Four Chaplains here this morning to present an award to one who symbolizes that kind of giving of himself in the service of others, one who was recognized by the Chapel some years ago for the giving of himself in his local community, and certainly now for the past few years at the National level.

So, Commander-in-Chief Cramer, it is an honor and privilege for me to present to you the Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion.

If you would come forward, please. This is awarded to George R. Cramer, Commander-in-Chief of the VFW. And on the reverse Pro Deo Patria, which is, as the General said, For God and Country, which you truly symbolize.

The award for the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion is presented to George R. Cramer by the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Valley Force, Pennsylvania, in recognition of outstanding service to all people regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans and for all time the unity of this nation founded upon

the fatherhood of one God. Congratulations, Comrade Commander-in-Chief Cramer.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Archie, I just certainly want to thank the Chapel of Four Chaplains for the prestigious award and recognition. It is even more important, Archie, because you gave it to me.

We will now join the Trinity Life Center Choir in singing "God Bless America."

[Whereupon, the Trinity Life Center Choir led the assembly in "America the Beautiful."]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: We will have the Benediction by Reverend Immanuel Wasson, Holy Trinity AME Church.

BENEDICTION

REVEREND IMMANUEL WASSON: Let us bow our heads. Lord let us all leave this service with a prayer in our hearts for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their families. Help us to appreciate those who have given their lives for our safety, and now to the congregation when you return to your homes tell your friends and your relatives that Las Vegas is not only a city of bright lights and glitter but we love the Lord and we serve him with all of our heart.

Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling and unto the presence and to present you faultlessly for his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, the glory and mighty dominion and power both now and forever. Amen.

RETIRING OF COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I would like to express my appreciation to the Trinity Life Center Choir for being with us today. We certainly appreciate your presence.

[Whereupon, the Retiring of the Colors was performed by the VFW National Honor Guard.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Will you all remain standing while the Sergeants-at-Arms escort the Gold Star Parents and Gold Star Wives out, please.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS GEORGE SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I would like to thank you all for attending this Memorial Service of the 95th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I look forward to seeing you this afternoon at the Awards Luncheon. Please note the doors will open at 11:30 a.m. Thank you again for attending.

32D ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON HONORING ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS AND NATIONAL PROGRAM WINNERS

HILTON CONVENTION CENTER

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 1993

George R. Cramer, Commander-in-Chief and Mrs. Juanita Crowe, National President, Ladies Auxiliary, were Host and Hostess of the Thirty-second Annual Awards Luncheon, 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Invocation was given by Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr., National Chaplain.

The menu for the luncheon was Chilled Melon in season, Beef Tenderloin Tips in a La Deutsch with Pearl Onions, Normandie Vegetables and Rice Pilaf, Apple Pie, Rolls and Butter, Coffee, Brewed Decaffeinated and Tea.

Toastmaster for the event was Paul A. Spera, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

After the presentation of awards for the All American Commanders and National Program Winners, Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr. Chaplain, gave the Benediction.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

ALL AMERICAN DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS

Donald Kilmer, Alaska; Leslie Thone, Arkansas; Raymond Sisk, California; James Boyt, Europe; Niel Ramsdell, Florida; Glenn Mitchell, Georgia; Norbert Enos, Hawaii; Alvin Mason, Idaho; Eddie Akers, Kentucky; Alan Winter, Maine; Joseph Nassar, Maryland; Leslie Blanchard, Mississippi; Herbert Tellkamp, Nevada; James Ferguson, New Mexico; William Penn, Pacific Areas; F.E. "Gene" Warden, Texas; Frederick Peyton, Utah; William Myette, Vermont; George Berthiaume, Washington.

ALL AMERICAN DISTRICT COMMANDERS

Alabama—James H. Brewer, 4; Arkansas—Jerry Cloud, 9; William Walden, 13. California—Leonard Herrst 4; Dennis R. Atwood, 13; Stephen C. Highnight 17; Fred V. Vogler, 22. Europe—Myron H. Murley, 4. Florida—Robert M. Sprute, 7; Sidney R. Holm, 10; Rocky E. Albert, 13. Georgia—Ben Clay, 5. Illinois—Vincent J. Medina, 6. Kansas—Leon Shaw, 3. Kentucky—Jack N. Moore, 13. Maryland—Gregory J. Abbott, 17. Michigan—Barry J. Estill, 6. Minnesota—Clarence R. Fyhrlund, 6. Mississippi—Leonard Slade, 3; Glenn O. Patterson, 5. New Jersey—Walter R. James, 9; Donnie C. Wine, 11; Brune W. Schlueter, 12. New York—William J.

Stackman, 3. Ohio—Raymond R. Burrows, 1; George M. Householder, 7; John R. Johnson, 12. Pacific Areas—John F. Welsh, 3; Rhett O. Webber, 7. Rhode Island—Ernest Frappier, 1. Texas—Doyle W. Sloan, 1; Richard L. Johnson, 9; Richard J. Crissman, 10; Gary L. Kinson, 21.

ALL AMERICAN COUNTY COUNCIL COMMANDERS

Montgomery, Ohio—Robert Legault. Lake Geauga, Ohio—Guy Speakman.

ALL AMERICAN POST COMMANDERS

Alabama—Charles Gavin, 3550; James Green, 4388; Phyllis Crowden, 5140; Fred Wynn, 5818. Alaska—Horace Johnson, 9978; Arkansas—Samuel Walters, 2278; James Randazzo 4507; Raz Munholland 4548; Donald Nelson, 7769; Mark Cybulski, 9095; Odell Stricklin, 10442. California—Kenneth Robbins, 85; Alexander Brown, 1512; James Sehrt, 1934; Leslie Mahler, 3255; William McDonald, 3982; Roy Springer, 4084; Manfred Poole, 4647; Hugh Hartfield, 5394; Lyman Indermuehle, 8547; Dale Samuelson, 10165; Donald Roberts, 11133. Connecticut—Dominic Romano, 7330. Delaware—William Wailes, 475. Europe—Austin Mansfield, 89; James Landreth, 8862; Martin Mieras, 10436; Jaudon Davis, 11281. Florida—William Taylor, 2811; James Walden, 4781; John Logan, 8463; Donald Pierce, 8696; Norman Auger, 10097; Thomas McDole, 10137; Thomas Koulan, 10209; Carlo LaPollo, 10757. Georgia—Hubert Swecker, 665; Ben Clay, 1100; Leonard Ott, 6330. Illinois—Roy Russell, 99; Joe Dannels, 2223; Junior Murray, 4549; Terry Wright, 9759. Indiana—Ivan Dimmett, 1114; Leo Farnsley, 3281. Kansas—Larry Salzman, 7479. Louisiana—Milton Foster, 7286. Maine—Joseph Gallant, 832; Larry Smith, 11363. Maryland—Claude Groom, 482; Noble Sutphin, 6506; William Berry, 6694; Kenneth Britter, 9862. Michigan—Raymond Kolka, 485; Gerald Hawkins, 3243. Minnesota—Roger C. Fahrenkrug, 5555. Mississippi—J.L. Beeson, 4889; James Teeters, 6473; Willie Lindsey, 9832. Missouri—James Farmer, 3777; Leonard McGee, 5896; Richard Palmer, 7147. Nebraska—Richard Doty, 247; James Brown, 2503; John Lossi, 3704. Nevada—James Martin, 3819; Alfred Staff, 10053. New Jersey—Juan LaBoy, 157; Joseph Fortunato, 453; Edward Damiano, 6805; Daniel Firus, 9112; James Felton, 9503. New Mexico—Donald Brown, 11384. North Carolina—Sherrill Brawley, 6480; David Brooks, 7383. Ohio—John Wasilko, 1500; Craig Swartz, 2947; Charles Smith, 4736; Talmadge Bailey, 7201; Nathan Sternberger, 8437; Mark Caniff, 8850. Oklahoma—Ronald Slowick, 2270; Donald Connelly, 3669. Pacific Areas—James Luther, 10215; Sammy Skipper, 10269; Victor Ferrer, 11435; Jerry Bristle, 11447. South Carolina—Arthur Mann, 10420. South Dakota—Sid Walter, 628; Daniel Sigmund, 1273. Texas—Richard Crissman, 812; Roy Paulk, 1475; Henry Salisbury, 2772; Danny Henry, 4372; Jack Meadows, 4380; James Nordyke, 6873; Harvey Henderson, 6899; James Zimmerman, 7211; Hubert Brast, 8577; Bobby Cook, 8790; Albert Poste, 8919; Louis McCellan, 8923; Alonzo Bryant, 9181; Edward Rodriquez, 9186; John Dread, 9191; David Dickens, 9286. Vermont—Robert Dean, 2571. Virginia—John Dodge, 1503. Washington—James Van Slyke, 2995; Niel Lavin, 4760. West Virginia—

Eugene Patrick, 3856; Alvin Johnson, 8365. Wyoming—James Little, 2316.

NATIONAL PROGRAM WINNERS

Americanism—Post 7472 and Ladies Auxiliary, Ellicot City, Maryland; District 2 and Ladies Auxiliary, Department of Minnesota.

Community Activities—Division I: Post 5812 and Ladies Auxiliary, Pueblo West, Colorado; Division II: Post 2681 and Ladies Auxiliary, Marietta, Georgia; Division III: Post 9969 and Ladies Auxiliary, Del City, Oklahoma; Division IV: Post 4876 and Ladies Auxiliary, Altus, Oklahoma.

Loyalty Day—Post 5290 and Ladies Auxiliary, Conyers, Georgia; District 9 and Ladies Auxiliary, Department of Washington; Allegheny County Council and Ladies Auxiliary, Department of Pennsylvania; Department of Texas and Ladies Auxiliary.

Youth Activities—Post 302 and Ladies Auxiliary, Kansas City, Missouri; District 14 and Ladies Auxiliary, Department of Maryland; Department of Washington and Ladies Auxiliary.

PARADE LEADERS AWARD

First Place—Department of Europe. Second Place—Department of Pacific Areas. Third Place—Department of Utah.

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT DIVISION WINNERS

Division I—Department of California.
Division II—Department of Florida.
Division III—Department of Missouri.
Division IV—Department of Washington.
Division V—Department of Iowa.
Division VI—Department of Kentucky.
Division VII—Department of Mississippi.
Division VIII—Department of Maine.
Division IX—Department of Vermont.
Division X—Department of Pacific Areas.
Division XI—Department of Europe.

CONFERENCE WINNER

Western Conference—100.58% + 2,181

DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE WINNER

Western Conference—Department of Pacific Areas.
Southern Conference—Department of Mississippi.
Big Ten Conference—Department of Missouri.
Eastern Conference—Department of Europe.

JOINT OPENING SESSION

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 1994

[The Joint Opening Session of the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 81st National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary was called to order on Monday, August 22, 1994, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., in the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, by Comrade Albert J. McMindes, Chairman of the VFW 95th National Convention Committee.]

COMRADE ALBERT MCMINDES: Good morning. Welcome. Please clear the center aisle and please take your seats. Sergeants-at-Arms, please retire to the rear of the hall to prepare the National Honor Guard for the presentation of the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS GEORGE SARVER: Yes, sir.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

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

COMRADE ALBERT MCMINDES: We will have the Invocation by the National Chaplain, Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr.

INVOCATION

[Whereupon, National Chaplain Edwards gave the Invocation.]

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: The Opening Ceremonies have been performed.

COMRADE ALBERT MCMINDES: We have put together for you a review of the 1993–94 year. Please watch your video screens and enjoy the presentation.

[Whereupon, a video presentation on the 1993–94 "Commitment to Service" year was presented at this time.]

WELCOME

COMRADE ALBERT MCMINDES: On behalf of the VFW Department of Nevada, I would like to welcome all of you to our state, the City of Las Vegas and to the VFW 95th National Convention. We are proud to be the host for this National Convention. It took a lot of hard work to arrive at this moment, and we still have some work ahead of us this week.

But the hard work is worth it, because each of these Conventions is a milestone in the field of veterans affairs. On a personal note, I am very proud to stand here this morning where Past Commander-in-Chief Les Frye stood five years ago to welcome you to our 90th National Convention.

We sounded taps for Chief Frye this year, and in his passing the VFW lost one of its great leaders and the Department of Nevada

lost a dedicated and a dear comrade and friend. In the days ahead, we will carry on the work of Les Frye as well as the work of those dedicated comrades who founded our organization 95 years ago.

If only those founders could see us today. We are over two million strong, with over 10,000 Posts serving all of America's 27 million veterans and their families. I think they would be proud of what they have founded and proud of us and all that we have done to carry on their work and make their dreams come true.

Our work is not yet completed. As you meet this week, you will have 222 Resolutions to discuss, vote on and then put into action. In addition, we will give awards to two dozen people who have served our veterans and our communities. Speakers from the U.S. Government and many other organizations will appear before us to present their views on veterans affairs and what we must do to approve those affairs.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, comrades and sisters, and before I hand this Convention over to Commander-in-Chief Cramer, I would like to thank my National Convention Committee who have done so much his year to being us to this moment. I cannot thank them enough.

If you enjoy this Convention, tell them. If there is something you did not enjoy, tell me. Welcome to Nevada, welcome to Las Vegas, and welcome to the 95th National Convention.

INTRODUCTION—THE HONORABLE JAN JONES, MAYOR, CITY OF LAS VEGAS

COMRADE McMINDES: Our next guest became the 15th Mayor of Las Vegas in May 1991. She has presided over the city's change from a small town to a major metropolitan area.

A champion of public and private partnerships, her Mayor's Committee for a Better Community has succeeded in renovating a shelter for homeless women, children and establishing a neighborhood community center offering social, recreational and educational programs.

She recently raised $150,000 from the business community to fund a city and county government consolidation study which realized a savings of more than $35 million in city and county services.

She serves on a variety of influential Boards affecting the Las Vegas Visitors and Conventions, transportation, housing, flood control, clean air, senior citizen concerns, and she also serves on the Nevada State Commission on Nuclear Projects, and is Chair for the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Communications and Transportation Committees.

A mother of five children, she maintains an active involvement in the community. She was recently recognized by the Nevada Conference of Police and Sheriffs for her community service and was the 1992 Woman of the Year for the National Conference of Christians and Jews. She is listed among the 2,000 Notable Women in America and was recently recognized as a member of the Distinguished Women of Nevada.

The Chief Executive Officer of a restaurant and catering company, a Director of Research and Development for another company, President of the Fletcher Jones Management Group, please welcome the Mayor of Las Vegas, Jan Laverty Jones.

GREETINGS—THE HONORABLE JAN JONES, MAYOR, CITY OF LAS VEGAS

MAYOR JONES: Thank you. It is both an honor and pleasure to be here this morning to welcome the Veterans of Foreign Wars on the occasion of their 95th Convention. It is also a great pleasure for me to welcome you to one of the world's finest resort destinations but also one of the most livable cities in the country.

One of the little known facts about Las Vegas is per capita we have more churches, schools, Little League, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Frontier Girls, Pop Warner Football Teams than any city of our size in the country. I invite you, if you have the time, not only to visit our resort area but take a little time and go out and see what a wonderful city we are really to live in.

Your presence here today reinforces your commitment to ensuring that our country continues to remain a leader and dominant power in accepting responsibility in the world. The 2.2 million dedicated men and women of the VFW, have our deep devotion and heartfelt thanks for your unselfishly answering the call of our country in our hour of need. That is what your presence here today means.

The great personal commitment and sacrifice of each of you so the hopes and future of those of us behind and all our children can be realized, as well as to promise all of our future generations that we will live in a country that is free of war and free of the threat of war.

It is that simple hope and common vision that has united our country. We owe a great deal to all of those who have fought and died on foreign soils for the cause of freedom and for the foundation of peace we enjoy today.

My sincere thanks to all the Veterans of Foreign Wars for selecting Las Vegas as the site to host their National Convention. I am very pleased to offer my personal, best wishes and also those of the city's residents. One of the things, even though I know this is a very serious occasion, I noticed that earlier they said if there were any problems, call your Commander. You can also call me.

One other thing we attempted to do, and I know most of you won't be spending time in the casinos, but as mayor I want you to know one of the things we try to do for our special conventions is make sure all our slot machines are set at a rate that the return will be very favorable in your interest.

That is just a little something we offer. I can't promise anything on roulette or the crap tables. For those of you who may lose, I want you to know that 56 percent of those revenues go to educate our children. School started this morning, so you are not losing money, you are helping to educate the children of Nevada. Enjoy yourselves and please all come back and visit with us again.

INTRODUCTION—THE HONORABLE BOB MILLER—GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

COMRADE McMINDES: Whether you fly into the Las Vegas area or drive, it is hard to ignore the beauty of Nevada. Our next guest, who is committed to preserving the natural beauty of this great state, was elected Governor in 1989. He is Chairman of the

Western Governors' Conference and serves as Chairman of that group's Committee on Natural Resources.

He is active in the National Governors' Association, serving as lead Governor of the Infrastructure Committee, the Transportation Committee, and is Chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee.

In 1993, he was appointed by President Clinton to the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or as we know it FEMA. A strong advocate for justice and public service and safety, he formerly served on President Ronald Reagan's nine-member President's Task Force on Victims of Crime.

Entering Nevada politics shortly after receiving his law degree from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, he has served as Clark County District Attorney and Deputy District Attorney, Las Vegas Township, Justice of the Peace, and as a uniformed officer in the Sheriffs' Departments of both Los Angeles and Clark County. He was the first Legal Advisor of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

He served his country as a member of both the U.S. Army Reserve and the U.S. Air Force Reserve, receiving his discharge at the rank of E–6 in 1973. He is the father of a boy, two girls and the husband of a former teacher of the hearing handicapped.

Please give a warm welcome to the Governor of the beautiful State of Nevada, Bob Miller.

RESPONSE—THE HONORABLE BOB MILLER

GOVERNOR MILLER: It is exciting to stand here and look out at so many attendees, and it is truly an honor to welcome all of you to the Silver State for your 95th Annual Convention. I know that every veteran believes in hard work and in playing hard, and I know that you will be working hard, and now having seen your ambitious opportunity for the play of every sort, you certainly will be able to combine both of those while you are here in the Las Vegas area.

In Nevada, our state slogan is "The Battle Born." It is a slogan that dates back to the beginning of the Civil War when Nevada was the first to achieve statehood in those times. But it is a slogan that Nevada veterans have carried into battle in every conflict since right up to modern conflicts like Desert Storm.

All Nevadans embrace their slogan in support of our veterans. I am proud to be the Governor of a state that has more veterans per capita than any other state. Those Nevada veterans, like all of you, are the people who have been part of a long history of this country's commitment to defending freedom and liberty around the globe.

Without the contributions and sacrifices of veterans of all of our previous wars, this country might not now have the opportunity or ability to defend freedom around the world. Your accomplishments and sacrifices have not only resulted in victorious individual awards, but have also laid the foundation for a legacy of peace and democracy for generations to come in this country and on foreign shores.

Every American needs to remember the contributions made by our veterans. It was just a few months ago that the world was re-

minded of the significance of long-range impact of those contributions during the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. It was an opportunity for the whole world to be reminded that America's military forces aren't employed purely out of self-interest but also in the interest of peace and freedom for all people.

When General Dwight Eisenhower announced to the world the D-Day landing on the coast of France, he said, "I call upon all who love freedom to stand with us. Now together we shall achieve victory." Nevada veterans, all the veterans of this country, stood together on battlegrounds around the world and here on our home front in support of our combat troops. To this day, our veterans stand together. They stand together in support of each other and in support of their communities, and as the case with comrades in arms, our veterans will continue to be victorious in their efforts to make their lives and the lives of their fellow citizens better.

I look forward to standing with you together in that effort. I thank you for returning to Nevada. I am sure you will have not only a productive but a pleasurable conference. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SETS

COMRADE MCMINDES: At this time I would like to call on Mickey Scherer, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, to the podium, please.

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR MICKEY SCHERER: Thank you very much. I would just like to take a moment to reflect back to two memorable occasions, one being December 7, 1941, the 1991 anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Going back to June 6, 1944, to 1995, the 50th Anniversary of the invasion of Normandy.

On these anniversaries, how many memories have been stirred up, friendships renewed, tears shed? These two flags being presented today are being dedicated to those men and women who served in the armed forces of the United States and to the many who gave their lives for the cause of our freedom. I would just like to quote a few lines from a poem written by Herb Lee Watkins.

It states, "What was inside of them that overcame their fear, what made them leave the homes they loved and families held so dear? What made these men lay down their lives to stem the tide of war, for now they must rest beyond the blue, upon the golden shores.

"I am much more than just a flag that decorates a pole, I am faith, the hope and the love within the G.I.'s soul. And if a flag could really talk, here is what this flag would say, to every soldier laid to rest, 'Come fly with me today'."

Honorable Bob Miller, Governor of Nevada, and Honorable Jan Jones, Mayor of Las Vegas, we of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are proud to present to each of you this piece of cloth. It is our symbol of liberty. The red represents the sacrifices of our brave defenders; the white, our desire for liberty; and the blue represents the loyalty and human dignity of all our people.

May these flags presented to you today always be displayed proudly. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER

COMRADE McMINDES: It is now my sincere pleasure to introduce the gentleman who will lead this 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

When the VFW looks for leaders, we seek men of integrity and strength of character. We seek men with the ability to motivate and encourage us to greater accomplishments for America's veterans. Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer has proven himself to be just such a man.

A U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War, George earned an Air Medal and the Bronze Star as an artillery surveyor with the 6/14 Artillery, 1st Field Forces. He served in Vietnam from October 1967, through December 1968.

He joined the VFW in 1969. He was quickly recognized for his leadership abilities and ultimately served as an All-State Post Commander in 1972–'94, an All-American District Commander in 1976–'77, a 100 percent State Commander in 1982–'83, and an All-State Post Quartermaster from 1976 through 1985.

George's commitment and service are also recognized outside the VFW in organizations like the American Legion, the Dibrovsky Club and the Scottish Rite.

He is a Life Member of VFW Post 6869 in North Riverside, Illinois. George and his wife, Linda, son Scott and daughter Cheryl reside in Woodridge, Illinois.

For the past year, George has led the VFW in speaking out against full diplomatic relations with Vietnam until the POW/MIA issue is fully resolved. He has spoken boldly against military intervention in Haiti and has worked hard to protect veterans entitlements and ensure the VA Health Care System remains intact and exclusively for veterans.

Please join me in welcoming the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, George R. Cramer, from the great State of Illinois.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Commander-in-Chief Cramer.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Jack, for the kind introduction. Good morning. You know, what a better way to start the 95th National Convention than by having the house lights dimmed and our great looking National Honor Guard walking down the aisle with a spotlight on the American Flag.

I want you to know that two nights ago I had the opportunity to be with our National Honor Guard at the football stadium where the native football league, Las Vegas Posse plays and they did a great job on the field representing you as well. I think they deserve a hand for what they do for this Association. [Applause]

Unfortunately, the Mayor and the Governor have already left. I was going to tell the Mayor that we were there representing our organization and doing our moral support for the City of Las Vegas. The Posse showed up, I guess, but didn't do well. They came out on the short end of a 10 to 39 score.

You know, I have always learned when I got out of school, I entered the military, business and now for the last three years I was very confused on coming out to the Silver State. I thought by com-

ing out here that was perhaps a token of their appreciation for us coming out here, but like many of you I guess instead of getting some type of a souvenir to take home we are making the Silver State while we are here this week.

No year truly comes to an end in the VFW. Instead, each is a building block and that adds strength to our organization. Throughout my travels this year, I saw the work, the dreams and the progress of those that preceded me as VFW Commanders-in-Chief.

It can be said of them that in their time they built for the future. I feel the same can be said of our year. The work that each of you did this year will have an impact today, tomorrow and for many tomorrows to come. Because of you, the POW/MIA issue is closer to being resolved.

You held the line on the cuts to the VA budget, and you asked that the future budgets address the needs that have been neglected for so long. You took the joy and happiness to hospitalized veterans around the country, and you set the VFW on a new course of veterans service in co-sponsoring the Golden Age Games.

I must tell you this is the third year I have had the opportunity to attend the games, and one of the individuals, a very proud individual that is partially handicapped, and in both of these games, in a wheelchair, is a competitive guy. I have been talking to this guy for three years.

This year I had the opportunity to present him with one of his medals. As I was presenting his medal and saying something to him, he said, "You know, Chief, I have got to tell you something." I said, "What is it?" He held up a little card. It said, "I am deaf."

But the whole thing, I am getting the point across is what these games do for those guys in the hospital. They look forward each and every year meeting each other and competing each other against the VA Hospital system, the guys in the VA Hospital system.

It is because of people like yourselves that are making this all possible. Through programs and projects, you continue to serve our country and make it better than ever. You honor those who served in World War II through hundreds of commemorative events, and on D-Day, 1994, you walked the cold, windswept beaches of Normandy where so many fought and died for freedom over 50 years ago.

You maintain our tradition of serving veterans, a tradition that goes back over 95 years, and through your work and dedication you have assured that this tradition will go on as long as there are veterans. You have set a new record in our Voice of Democracy program by contributing over $2 million in scholarships.

At that Washington Conference, you awarded more scholarships than ever before. Even since our Washington Conference, two more scholarships have already been awarded for next year, and the day is very close where each student will have at least $1,000 when they go out.

You kept the pressure on our government to maintain a military of defending our country against any enemy. Strengthening the peace time is the best defense that a nation can have. We know too

well what can happen when a country is weak at home and has no foreign policy abroad.

We don't want anyone to forget about Pearl Harbor and the history of America, and we don't want the cost of another D-Day. Everything that you did this year, you met the challenges of the day and set the course for the future.

I enjoyed representing you and carrying your message around the world. Sometimes it seemed like the day just blew by real quickly and, then, of course, other times it seemed like the day would never end. But in my case, it is the best year I have had, the best experience in my life.

I have only you to thank for it. Because of people like yourselves, this organization will continue to honor the dead by helping the living through your commitment to service.

As I told the Council of Administration a couple of days ago, it took us about nine months to have the opportunity to go in to see the President of the United States. At the Washington Conference, I made a decision, perhaps a decision that wasn't received well by many of you out there, but in respect to the office of the presidency of the United States, I, along with Larry Rivers, on May 20th went in to visit President Clinton in the Oval Office with several other veterans service organizations. One at a time, of course.

While Larry and I were there, we presented the VFW priority goals to the President. I personally asked him verbally and with a typewritten letter to attend this Convention. I want you to know that it wasn't until two weeks ago that he and/or his staff refused to attend this Convention. In addition to that, with the exception of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown, also told us that no other cabinet member was available for our Convention or any other Convention.

I want you to know last Monday Vice-President Al Gore attended a union convention in Chicago and, of course, he met with the Chicago Police Department for some unknown reason.

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JUANITA CROWE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: It is a singular pleasure to introduce our next honoree. An outstanding leader, she represents the more than 770,000 women of the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW. She and they have contributed greatly to the VFW's success over the past year.

She was elected National President at the 80th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary in Dallas, Texas, last year at this time. Her theme, "Volunteers for a Better World," set the tone for a year of outstanding achievement.

During the past year, a Ladies Auxiliary Museum was established at National Headquarters in Kansas City with more than $22,000 donated by the members. In keeping with her theme, the Ladies Auxiliary volunteers contributed an all-time high $46 million conducting community service and patriotic programs during the '93–'94 year. The ladies volunteered more than 3.7 million hours at VA Medical Centers, nursing homes and other hospitals across the nation.

Another highlight of the past year was a total of $3,088,173 raised for cancer victims and research. This is the sixth consecutive year the Auxiliary has raised more than $3 million.

Without question, the Ladies Auxiliary experienced a banner year under our next guest's leadership. Please honor the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars with a warm welcome for their National President, Juanita Crowe, from the great volunteer State of Tennessee.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to Juanita Crowe, National President, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 1993–'94.

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

"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, 1994." It is signed by myself and, of course, by Howard Vander Clute, our Adjutant General.

Juanita, I publicly want everyone to know that it has been a real pleasure for me to have the opportunity to serve with you these last three years.

RESPONSE—LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JUANITA CROWE

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT CROWE: Commander-in-Chief Cramer, National VFW and Auxiliary Officers, Comrades, Sisters and Guests:

I am deeply honored to receive this special award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and I thank you very much. This Convention marks the completion of the 80th year that the Ladies Auxiliary has served as a partner with the VFW towards our joint goals of serving American's veterans and our communities.

I am proud to have been able to play a role in that caring legacy. I am pleased to have been able to join our Commander-in-Chief Cramer in his dedicated "Commitment to Service."

I thank each of you here today for your continued dedication to our organization and for the tremendous efforts you have put forth conducting our programs. You truly are volunteers for a better world. It is a better world because of you and your "Commitment to Service."

Commander-in-Chief Cramer, thank you for the leadership you have provided and for the tremendous feeling of cooperation that you have fostered during your term of office. May you have a very successful year and I, too, have certainly enjoyed serving with you and for you for the last three years. Thank you so very much.

INTRODUCTION—HELEN PUTNAM BLACKWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Seated in the audience this morning is the daughter of our founder, James Putnam, the first

Commander-in-Chief of our original organization, the American Veterans of Foreign Service.

This lady has continued in the family tradition of service, recently completing a term as President of the Department of Arkansas Ladies Auxiliary. Please give appropriate recognition to Mrs. Helen Blackwell.

INTRODUCTION—GENERAL RAY DAVIS, USMC (RET.), CHAIRMAN OF THE KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Next, being a Korean veteran himself, I would like to call on Past Commander-in-Chief John Staum to introduce our next guest.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Cramer. Madam President, Distinguished Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Distinguished Guests, my Fellow Comrades and Sisters:

It is a pleasure to stand before you this morning as a member of the Korean War Memorial Veterans Advisory Board and to present to you and introduce to you the Chairman of that Board. I asked the Commander-in-Chief for this special privilege and he graciously consented to let me do this.

I am introducing to you this morning a great American fighting man, and I am sure once you listen to his speech this morning you will agree with me that he is a great, great person.

For the past eight years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary have generously contributed to the building of a monument in our nation's capital to honor those who fought and died in freedom's cause during the Korean War.

To date, the VFW's contribution has exceeded our original $500,000 commitment to the Korean War Memorial by more than $100,000.

Next July 27th marks the 42nd anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice and the dedication of that Memorial to those who served and sacrificed in the Korean War.

For an update on this Memorial, we are most honored to have with us this morning the Chairman of the Korean War Memorial Veterans Advisory Board, General Raymond G. Davis.

During the Korean War, Lieutenant Colonel Davis commanded the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division from August to December, 1950. Besides receiving the Medal of Honor for action during that period, he also earned two Silver Star medals, the Legion of Merit with Combat "V," and later, as Executive Office of the 7th Marines, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V".

Prior to his retirement, he served as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. A World War II veteran, Korean War veteran and Vietnam veteran, my friends, in all my private life, my business life and my affiliation with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I have had the honor of meeting many great and distinguished people in this United States and throughout the world, but this man rates right at the top.

So, I ask you to please give a great welcome to the Chairman of the President's Korean War Memorial Advisory Board, General

Raymond G. Davis, United States Marine Corps, (Ret.) General Davis.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to General Davis.]

RESPONSE—GENERAL RAYMOND DAVIS

GENERAL DAVIS: Thank you, John. That was most generous. In fact, somewhat overpowering. I would like today initially to reflect on what happened in this hall yesterday, which was my first great privilege to attend your Memorial Service, and I must say it was totally outstanding.

I was indeed moved to tears. I swelled with pride, I was thrilled to the depths of my spirit, challenged to ever moving forward in support of those great causes which we all serve. I congratulate you, I commend you and I certainly salute you.

I am here today to talk about those eight years that John referred to in bringing forth the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington. It is now being constructed. I was there last week at the site near the Lincoln Memorial. As some of you may know, the water table in that area is just two feet below the surface.

We have repaired that and we have compacted the soil. We have driven the piles, and last week we poured the foundation for the 19 figures which will be soon in place. On a recent visit to the foundry, we observed the 19 figures in full size, seven to eight feet, being readied for casting.

A side statement about that visit. Five out of the first seven we disapproved of the facial features. Somehow sculptors and artists know only people who have pointed ears and long noses and sunken eyes and terrified looks on their face. We have corrected that.

We have now approved 11 out of the 19. I have just been told that the rest are ready for our approval. I think that the sculptor is now convinced, because we told him time and time again, that these are young gallant warriors embarked on a mission where they are dedicated and determined to have victory.

That is what you will see on the faces of those figures in our Memorial. The wall, 180 feet long, will depict all those who supported this formation of foot troopers. Huge boulders from the desert near San Jose, California, are hauled to Minnesota—it is black granite—sawed into slabs eight inches thick, ten feet by four feet in size, highly polished, and etched with a computerized system.

We have approved most of that and, of course, we have our friend John there in the vicinity to carefully oversee that part of the operation. The list of those being lost is being researched, being sorted out and will soon be ready for display in a manner which many of you have seen at the Naval Memorial, an upgraded automatic process where all will be seen with their activities and possibly their photographs. All of this will be at the site of our Memorial.

The Memorial is to be finished in May or June of next year and will be dedicated on the 27th day of July, the date of the Armistice in Korea. It is a three-day event. You will find in the registration area here in Las Vegas copies of the details of the three-day schedule.

Generally, the dedication is on the 27th, and all past presidents, the President of South Korea, representatives from all the nations that participated in the war will be present.

On the second day, the assembly of flags of all units that participated in the war. Those who have been deactivated will be symbolically reactivated for this event. Then on the third day, of course, the parade. In anticipation of maybe up to 500,000 veterans, families and their friends, we plan continuous activity and entertainment throughout this period.

The Memorial, we have arranged to be open 24 hours a day for several days before and certainly after the event. No more than 2,000 per hour can view it carefully and, therefore, we have arranged to maximize its availability. Entertainment at the Kennedy Center, on the mall, major events near the Washington Memorial, fireworks, an exhibition in the Smithsonian Institute, art displays in the National Gallery, war movies, a major symposium on the war, the causes, the effects, the lessons, and open house in all the embassies with a bus fleet that will shuttle from embassy to embassy.

A contract is being completed this week with World Travel Partners, a billion-dollar enterprise, will run the details of these activities. We now have more than 8,000 rooms reserved, the schedules, the travel, the communications, the local buses, the control headquarters, the conduct of the details of all the activities.

An international flavor will be obvious. In the last four or five months I visited Korea three times. I briefed the President of South Korea. They are fully organized and they have committed a million dollars to recruit the best talent in Korea to perform at the Kennedy Center is one example.

Their government will provide honor guards, flag carriers, banners. Their veterans will come, and I met here a few minutes ago the President of the Korean Veterans Association who is here. I have seen him many, many times. We are prepared for a major participation by Korean veterans.

The tourists industry, some of us don't realize how many tourists from South Korea and other nations come to this country, but many of those will be diverted to Washington to join in this event. One thousand five hundred British veterans are already committed, for example.

None of the construction money can go to this dedication event, and you will soon hear from us. We are now moving out smartly. The Battle Monument Commission has new leadership. General Joe Roffstodder is here. He is really building the fires for us in Washington.

In the defense, General Kicklighter is here who is running the 50th Anniversary event. Will you stand, please. In a priority mailout, in our initial lists are the 200,000 contributors to the construction of the Memorial, and they will be asked to commit themselves to attending, to the purchase of a souvenir passport which will mark them as full participants.

In addition to the passports, it will be an opportunity for contributors to receive books, prints and artifacts of other kinds. We anticipate a major participation by veterans and their families. Any surplus we raise, and this includes surplus which might have gone

to World Travel Partners, is being put into a foundation to support needy veterans and their families.

We have a prototype of a newspaper which will be mailed to those who indicate their participation. We will give you an up-to-date view of exactly what is to happen in July, 1995. I have hundreds of copies of the three-day schedule, so when you have a chance go by the registration area and pick up one of those. After July of next year, our nation will never again forget Korean War veterans. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: General, certainly it is my pleasure, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to present to you this check for $4,000 towards the Korean Memorial Fund. That check brings the VFW total to well over $600,000 and makes the VFW the largest contributor to the Korean Memorial.

INTRODUCTION—LIEUTENANT GENERAL CLAUDE KICKLIGHTER, USA (RET.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: With 50 percent of our membership being World War II veterans, plans, programs and tributes on the 50th Anniversary of World War II have special significance.

With us today is Lieutenant General Claude Kicklighter, Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army and Executive Director of the 50th Anniversary of World War II Commemorative Committee.

During the Vietnam War, General Kicklighter served with the 101st Airborne Division. Prior to his retirement, he served as Commanding General, United States Army Pacific.

The VFW has an excellent working relationship with the committee in developing plans and programs that provide communities across America with a greater understanding of the lessons and history of World War II.

Please join me in giving a VFW welcome to a VFW Life Member and the Executive Director of the 50th Anniversary of World War II Commemorative Committee, Lieutenant General Claude M. Kicklighter.

RESPONSE—LIEUTENANT GENERAL CLAUDE M. KICKLIGHTER, CHAIRMAN OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD WAR II COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE

GENERAL KICKLIGHTER: Thank you, sir, for those very kind introductory remarks.

Commander-in-Chief, Madam President, other Distinguished Guests, especially General Davis, Fellow Veterans, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor and privilege for me to be here in Las Vegas and to attend our 95th National Convention and also to provide you an update brief on the Commemorative Program for commemorating the 50th Anniversary of World War II.

It is also great for me to celebrate my sixty-first birthday with you this morning. What a birthday party. I have never had a group like this. From the very start of this program, the VFW has been a leader in helping our nation remember and commemorate the 50th Anniversary of World War II.

It has been an honor and privilege for me to work with our past three National Commanders. Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace helped get this program off to a great start, and then he was followed by Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney, who helped move this program across the nation by getting involved our Departments, Districts, our Posts, and the Ladies Auxiliaries who moved this program into many of our communities across America.

During this past year, it has been indeed a privilege to work with our Commander-in-Chief George Cramer. He has always been there when I needed advice and counsel and support. Starting right after our Convention last year, we initiated a program to issue the 75th Commemorative Medal to the World War I veterans. Commander-in-Chief Cramer was there to help kick that program off.

I will tell you that we still have many World War I veterans out there, unfortunately, who are disappearing rapidly that have not received that medal. I would ask you to help us find those World War I veterans and make sure they get their 75th Commemorative Medal.

Commander-in-Chief Cramer also participated and was very active in the recent D-Day activities in both England and Normandy, France. In July, we were together as we commemorated a very moving commemoration in Guam, as we commemorated the liberation of Guam with 1,200 other veterans of that battle.

I look forward to this next year working with our Commander-in-Chief-Elect "Gunner" Kent. I look forward to that opportunity. Although Commander-in-Chief Cramer has already mentioned the purpose of the program, I will briefly review it for you.

It is to help a grateful nation, and I underline "grateful nation", to remember and to thank and honor our World War II veterans and their families, and especially the families of those who lost loved ones in that war, who know the price of freedom.

Also, we want to remember those who served on the home front and we want to remember to tell the story of the women who served both on the home front and in the war, and we want to complete the story of the minorities that served on the home front and the war.

A second part of that purpose is to encourage the study of history of this period. When we began this program, three out of five Americans could tell you almost nothing about World War II. We want to make sure that we learn and we prepare and we use this knowledge to ensure our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren never have to go through what this generation went through.

So, a big part of this program is to support the local schools. You know, the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary are very active in the school program. I would like to give you now just a brief update of several of the programs that are helping us.

First, I will talk about the World War II Commemorative Community Program. This is a grass roots program where we are trying to reach more than eight million World War II veterans, where they live, whether that is in a community, a retirement home, a nursing home or a veterans hospital.

We are recognizing and we are asking our states, our communities, our veterans and civic organizations across America to join

in this program and volunteer to participate and to sponsor at least three events each year to thank and honor our veterans.

As we come to the final year of this program, we need more than ever the help of our VFW Posts and Auxiliaries across the nation. We also want to emphasize not only thanking the veterans but we use them to get in the local schoolhouses. Once a community and organization volunteers to become a commemorative community, they are officially designated with a plaque signed personally by the Secretary of Defense, as authorized by Congress, and they become a Commemorative Community.

They receive a Commemorative Community plaque, and along with that plaque they receive many very professional products to go into local schoolhouses. To date, I am happy to report that there are more than 4,000 World War II commemorative communities across America today.

That includes every state and every territory, and it includes colleges and universities, the Supreme Court, also television channels, and many, many other organizations that are a part of this. We are continuing to grow, thanks to your help, more than 200 new commemoratives each month are joining our ranks.

Our National VFW Headquarters became a World War II commemorative community about two years ago, as you recall, when General Colin Powell made a surprise visit to our winter conference and presented a Commemorative plaque to our Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney.

Since that time, hundreds of our VFW Posts and Ladies Auxiliaries have become World War II commemorative communities. They are doing wondrous and great things across America and around the world. I wish I had time this morning to share some of the contributions that are being made through our Posts and Auxiliaries, but time doesn't allow it.

I would say that District No. 3, in Arizona, all of the VFW Posts and the Ladies Auxiliaries are all World War II commemorative communities and working extremely hard throughout their District. I thank you for that.

As we come to the final year of this commemoration, we need all of our Posts and Ladies Auxiliaries and your communities to become more involved. We need to make sure that all of our World War II veterans are properly thanked and honored as they must be.

The next area I will give you a brief update on is education. I don't have to talk to this group about education. The VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary and our committees have produced some superb educational materials that are available to all of our schools across America at no cost.

We need you to assist in getting these materials and our veterans into the classroom to assist our teachers. If we study, learn and prepare, just maybe World War II will become known as the last world war.

Howard Vander Clute and Mike Gormally have been a driving force in the commemorative program and our educational program. I want to thank both Mike and Howard for the very great work and support you have done for this program. If you need more information about either the educational or the commemorative program,

I will ask you to check at our booth, and also the VFW has products out there to assist you in this as well.

A quick update on the media. As you know, as well as I do, if we are going to reach young America we must keep the media involved in telling the story. We are working hand in hand with the VFW and with your Posts around the country to get our local stations involved.

I would like to share with you just a couple of things that we are doing. One is that we have prepared some 30-second spots about World War II for our television stations. I am happy to report to you that many of the stations across America now are playing those spots and will continue to produce those throughout this next year.

So, any assistance that you can do to encourage your local stations will be appreciated. There already have been more than 50 major television programs and movies in the past three years that have honored and thanked our veterans of World War II. There are many, many more that are planned for this final year. So, with the VFW we will keep the pressure on the media to tell your story.

The last item that I will give you is an update on this morning is the commemorative events. As you know, we began this program on December 7th, 1991, with the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, in Honolulu and the VFW was again very much involved in helping make that happen.

We have had many events that we have done since then, but due to time this morning I will just hit a few. I would also point out that at the commemorations that we do around the world, they are normally done on the site where the battle takes place, and it is also done in many sites across America. That will be the model that we will use throughout the rest of this program.

In June 1994, we commemorated the battles in Italy, the D-Day landings in Normandy and the liberation of Saipan, and Tinian in the Pacific. In June '94, we had the liberation of Guam, a very moving ceremony in the Island of Guam.

In August, we commemorated the landings in Southern France, and the 25th of August we will commemorate the liberation of Paris. In September '94, we will commemorate the liberation of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Then we will be back in the Pacific to commemorate the Battle of Peleliu and Palau, one of the toughest and bloodiest battles of the war.

In October, we will commemorate the great naval battle of Leyte Gulf and General McArthur's return to the Philippines. In December '94, the Battle of the Bulge, both in Belgium and in St. Louis, Missouri. Then we come to the final year, 1995.

In February-March '95, we will commemorate the Battle of Iwo Jima. We will do this initially in Washington, and then we will have three separate ceremonies during the period of February and March on the Island of Iwo Jima. In March '95, we commemorate the crossing of the Rhine River at the Remagen Bridge in Germany. That is the first time we have had a commemoration in Germany.

In April through June, we will commemorate one of the most significant and the toughest battles of war when we commemorate the Battle of Okinawa. We will initially commemorate this in Washing-

ton, but we will finish the commemorations and the last commemoration before "V-J" Day will be on the Island of Okinawa.

Also, we will commemorate in Russia on April 25th, we will commemorate the U.S./Russian link up on the Elder River both in Germany, Washington and Moscow. May 8, 1995, is the end of the war in Europe and VE Day will be commemorated throughout Europe and all across America, remembering the end of the war and tyranny comes to an end in Europe.

Then in July '95, we will all be in Washington, D.C., to help General Davis unveil the Korean Monument that we are so excited about. Then September 2nd is the end of the war in the Pacific. This will be our last event during the celebration, and we will close the World War II commemoration with an international event, with many heads of state participating in Honolulu.

We will have major end of the war ceremonies all across America in major cities across America. We will be glad to provide a list for you on that. Then the program officially closes November 11, 1995, Veterans Day. Throughout America that morning we will remember the price of freedom that we had to pay 50 years ago.

No generation has ever been given a tougher job than the World War II generation. You have fought the most destructive war in history, a war that we were not prepared for, and we had to buy time to get prepared with lives of young Americans.

You literally saved the world as we know it, and it is appropriate that we remember and that we thank you. No matter what we do to honor this very special generation, it will not be enough. Every day, when we wake up and look around at this strong and free and beautiful America, we must always remember that this nation didn't just happen, it happened because brave men and women answered our nation's call 50 years ago as they always have done and as they will always do.

It has been said that any nation that forgets its veterans ceases to be a great nation. America will never forget its veterans. A grateful nation does remember. God bless America. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, General. In appreciation of not only what you are doing for World War II activities, but also in appreciation for your service to the country that we all live in, and on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is my pleasure to present to you your Life Membership in the VFW.

GENERAL KICKLIGHTER: Wow. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Working very closely with General Kicklighter is Colonel Kevin Hanretta. Certainly, Kevin, in addition to what I said to the General, we are most appreciative of your efforts as well and on behalf of the VFW I would like to present to you your Life Membership in the VFW.

Yesterday, our Annual Memorial Service was dedicated to the memory of two distinguished Past Commanders-in-Chief, Lewis G. Feldmann of Pennsylvania, and Leslie M. Frye of Nevada.

Witnessing that Memorial Service and with us this morning is Thomas Fagan, a Feldmann, a nephew of Past Commander-in-Chief Lewis, with a message from the family. Mr. Fagan.

MR. THOMAS FAGAN: The Veterans of Foreign Wars meant a great deal to Lewis Feldmann. On behalf of Lewis' widow and the

rest of the family, I would like to present this memorial to the VFW in honor of him.

INTRODUCTION OF ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The purpose of this next introduction is to honor a gentleman who is no stranger to these proceedings. He has given 36 years of service to our great organization. He has made significant contributions to the VFW and to America's veterans.

Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr., was appointed Adjutant General in 1981, after serving as Commander-in-Chief of this organization during 1979–80. Born in Hackensack, New Jersey, he served with the Army Corps in Germany through 1951 and '53. He later joined and remained a Life Member of VFW Post 6467 in Bergenfield, New Jersey.

Howard Vander Clute was elected Post Commander in 1958 and ultimately served as an elected officer of the Post, County Council and the Department at all levels. He is a past All-American District Commander. He was an All-American Department Commander of New Jersey in 1974–75, and has served as the Chairman of the National Security Committee, on the National Council of Administration, General Resolutions Committee, and the National Budget and Finance Committee.

In 1972, former Governor William Cahill of New Jersey appointed Vander Clute State Veterans Day Chairman. In later years, New Jersey's Governor Brendan Byrne appointed him to two successful four-year terms as the Chairman of the State Veterans Service Council.

During his years as Junior and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Vander Clute made fact-finding trips to Europe, the Far East, the Middle East and Central America. He also appeared on Good Morning, America, Today and Tomorrow Shows representing the VFW on major issues of interest to all members.

Vander Clute is married to the former Susan Stamm and resides in Kansas City, Missouri, where he has served the VFW for the past 13 years as its Adjutant General.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you present our guest to this podium. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming a man who has become an institution in our organization, Howard E. Vander Clute.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Adjutant General Vander Clute.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The citation reads, "Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr.

"In special recognition of his extraordinary service as an articulate spokesman and exceptional advocate for our nation's veterans and for the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that is more than 36 years of leadership rendered in every elected office at the Post, County Council and District and on the National levels for which he received All-American honors as the District and Department Commander of New Jersey, followed by his election to serve on the National Council of Administration, representing New Jersey and Maryland.

"In his election and advancement through the Chairs to the highest office of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in 79–80, at which time his single achievement and brilliant leadership as National Commander-in-Chief propelled the organization and its membership in front of the rest, and in its sincere appreciation for continuing to serve the organization with great dignity, high esteem and unparalleled expertise, and innovation for another 13 years as the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

Howard, it is a pleasure for me to sign that citation and for John Senk to sign for you. Thank you, for all your efforts on behalf of the VFW.

I thought it was important at the employees party the other night that the employees were a part of this first, because they were the people that purchased the pin. At the party, I showed Howard the pin. I said I have got to take it back because they bought it at Sears and it is broken, so we have got to return it and get it fixed.

It was not broken, but I wanted to keep it for this special occasion. So, it is a proud moment for me to present to you the only Past Adjutant General's pin.

RESPONSE—ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: Commander-in-Chief, I always prided myself in the fact that I knew everything that goes on at a National Convention. I am a hands-on sort of a manager, and much to the irritation of my staff at times. Every day of this Convention, we review carefully the daily agenda before we come here in the morning, and everybody has a copy. Obviously, there was one copy that got by me this morning.

Also the daily business of the organization almost always passes by my office. I don't know how they were able to prepare a citation, because I am always in on everything to be absolutely certain that we have all of the things that we need to make this convention a success.

So, you can imagine this morning my surprise when the Commander-in-Chief was not reading from the same script that I was monitoring. Please let me say if you have set aside this moment this morning to pay tribute to me, let me reverse that, because you have given me an opportunity to serve this organization that has produced for me a great deal of excitement, a great deal of self-satisfaction and a great deal of pride in having the position of Adjutant General for the almost 14 years I have served.

It is I who owe you a debt for which I will continue to work to pay off by paying attention to the policy, by subscribing to the policy of this organization and working in its best behalf as long as I can take a breath.

Secondly, I want to thank, and I am trying to do this and not leave anything out, the 13 Commanders-in-Chief that I served during that time, beginning with Art Fellwock, who had to serve two terms because of the untimely death of T.C. Selman just a month after he had been installed as Commander-in-Chief.

It was decided that I would have a training period in Kansas City under the tutelage and counsel of then Adjutant General Ju-

lian Dickenson. Circumstances prevented that from happening, because only a few days after I arrived at headquarters, Julian Dickenson died in the St. Mary's Hospital in Kansas City.

So I was thrust into the position almost immediately. Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock flew to Kansas City to install me in front of all of the employees. Frankly, it was an awesome responsibility, one that took a great deal of time to adjust to.

After that initial adjustment, it was the most rewarding position that any member of this organization could ever hope to have to deal with the membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, deal with the Commanders-in-Chief who served it so well, and to work with the professional staff that all of you have helped to assemble.

I say that to this audience because every member of that staff came from the ranks of this organization having been tested in the field as a volunteer before he came to the headquarters. I am proud of the staff that serves this organization, I am proud to have worked with it.

If there have been accomplishments in that 14 years, the credit belongs to the staff who has focused upon the responsibilities that were given to them and to perform in the best interest of their country and of this organization.

Before I sit down and attempt to regain my composure and get on with the agenda of this Convention, which is so important to me these few days, I want to share this moment with my wife, Susan, who has been there all the way. My wife is known to talk a lot, and it is not a very secure secret if she has one, but that one was well kept. Thank you everybody for all this great experience. Thanks again.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Howard, it was easy to keep Susan from telling you anything. We didn't tell her until yesterday.

INTRODUCTION OF NATHANIEL BENNETT—1994 NATIONAL VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For 47 years, the VFW's Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program has encouraged high school students to think, write and speak out on freedom and democracy.

For each student, competition begins at his or her school. They move through the VFW Post, District and State levels, finally to the VFW National Competition where more than $100,000 in scholarship monies are given.

All told, more than $2 million in scholarships and awards are provided each year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The 1994 First Place National Winner of the Voice of Democracy Program is Nathaniel Bennett of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Nathaniel just finished his junior year at Minneapolis South High School. He is sponsored by VFW Post 1149 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Minneapolis.

As First Place Winner, he is the recipient of the $20,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship and he plans to use his scholarship to attend the University of California.

Here to present his award-winning essay on "My Commitment to America" is the 1994 Voice of Democracy Scholarship First Place Winner, Nathaniel Bennett.

It is a pleasure for us to present you with your medal and this plaque to Nathaniel Bennett, First Place National Winner of the Voice of Democracy Winner 1994. Young man, you did an excellent job.

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER—NATHANIEL BENNETT

MR. NATHANIEL BENNETT: Before I begin, thank you's are in order. This is great. I will have to speak to my parents to build another wing for all the awards and medals that you have given me. It is amazing. It is beautiful. If I named people specifically, I would take up much more of your Convention than I think is appropriate, because all the people I have met have treated me so kindly and warmly, and it has been a pleasure to meet you all.

So, just quickly I would like to thank my Stars Spangled Banner Post 49 in Minneapolis and the 7th District, the Department of Minnesota, and, of course, all of the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary, not only for the scholarship and for your service in the war conflicts and in the ladies' case keeping the country, the jobs and the families together when the men were gone, but also for your sharing yourselves with me and the American community.

Every time I come to one of these events, it becomes more obvious how dedicated service you truly are. So, without further ado, "My Commitment to America."

All of us can think of a commitment that we've made to someone else; in marriages, in families and with friends. Commitment means people pledging themselves, often to each other. My commitment to America is no different. It involves America and I pledging ourselves to each other. For America's part, I have been welcomed by my family, my community, a government that is of, by and for the people, and by a society that has made this country great. To make the relationship between my nation and myself work, I must make my own commitment.

I have always felt a commitment to America, but only recently thought about what that commitment really is. I have pledged allegiance to the flag and to the republic for which it stands, but never fully understood the meaning of allegiance. I studied the Constitution, and discovered that it explains what the government can and cannot do, and gives the people certain rights, but nowhere in the Constitution does it mention a legal commitment. To understand my commitment to this country, I had to look deeper than the letter of the law. I had to look at the moral principles that America is based on, such as freedom of expression, toleration of differences, and belief in peaceful compromise. I had to realize that I, and every other American, must make a moral commitment to America.

As part of that commitment, it is important that I exercise my right to vote, my right to free speech, and my right to petition the government. Still, this is not enough. I must also contribute to society in my own, individual way. America is not only a political state, it is a society that was shaped by many people, in many ways.

Many of the greatest Americans were not involved in politics. If Mark Twain had been a career politician, we would not have his novel, Tom Sawyer, and we would not know how fun and profitable it can be to white-wash a fence. If Alexander Graham Bell had spent his life studying Constitutional law, we might still be communicating by Pony Express. If the father of the skyscraper, Louis Sullivan, had been a Washington lobbyist, the world of architecture would be less interesting and a lot shorter. If Harriet Tubman had been a member of Lincoln's Cabinet, there would have been many slaves that never made it to freedom. The point is not that these people weren't making political statements. Of course their lives reflected their political opinions. The point is that they contributed to society in their own way.

Right now, I am experimenting with a few ways to express my commitment to America. I'm no Ansel Adams, whose pictures inspire awe in our nation's natural beauty, but I do take photographs of my surroundings that express my commitment to America. One of my pictures is of a building with a billboard displaying the message, "Support our Troops in Operation Desert Storm." Below the billboard, on the building are the words, "Troops Out" in black spray-paint. When I took the photograph, I thought of it as merely an ironic urban scene, superimposing two messages into one image, but now it seems to me it is an example of the American forum. The maker of the billboard, the maker of the graffiti, and I, the maker of the photograph, all considering America's direction.

I'm not on a par with Bob Dylan, the American troubadour, but I play the bass guitar and occasionally I write songs. One of them called "Indecision" describes an inner struggle. Two lines read, "I try to communicate. I do so with perseverance. But hypocrisy retaliates with its interference." The tunes and lyrics are simple, but the song reflects my occasional frustrations about life.

And what about this speech? I do not think the great American orator, Fredrick Douglas, will lose his place in history because of me, but I am using this speech to explore and explain my commitment to America. It made me think about how my photography and music reflect that commitment. Even now, as I recite, I gain more insight into who I am and what my commitment to America means.

I've discovered that I treasure the freedom of expression that allows me to contribute my music, my photography, and my opinions to American society. My whole generation and I experience this freedom because of many Americans before us; Americans who have given their ideas in political speeches, in songs, in stories and in actions; Americans who have worked in factories and universities and grocery stores; Americans who have given their loyal services and even their lives, in the armed forces. In response to and in honor of those Americans, I contribute my ideas, my talents, and my life to America in order to make it better now and for generations to come. This is my commitment to America. It is the greatest commitment that I can make.

INTRODUCTION—IAN MCDONOUGH, VICE-PRESIDENT, RETURNED SERVICEMEN'S LEAGUE—SOUTH AUSTRALIA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: A long-held tradition among the Veterans of Foreign Wars is to maintain close relation-

ships with our counterparts in other countries. VFW members have strong affection for troops with whom they have shared the field of battle.

In World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam, many American troops fought alongside the troops of Australia. These close ties have carried forward in our current relationship with the Returned Servicemen's League of Australia.

This morning, I am especially pleased to introduce the current Vice-President of the Returned Servicemen's League from South Australia, Ian McDonough.

RESPONSE—IAN MCDONOUGH

COMRADE MCDONOUGH: Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. I would probably be like one of our Prime Ministers. He lost his trunks in the Indian Bank one day and got caught with his pants down. I have been experiencing audiences up to about 200. Your Adjutant General, I am very pleased to meet him, but this is a con man.

I have only met him last Friday for the first time and I have met him twice since, and he has put one over on me each time. Being 34 years in a law agency, it is a bit hard to take, Howard. It has been a pleasure meeting you. I have the honor to present to you the Australian Flag. It is the first one respective government has presented outside of Australia on behalf of the British Governor.

In addition, I would like to present the VFW with this Returned Servicemen's League gold plaque from my President in Australia. That was the first Con Act of your Adjutant General. The second one was this morning he asked me to present a plaque on behalf of the Australian Veterans organization, called the Greater Southeast Australia Association on behalf of their Vice-President.

It is an honor to present this. I served in 1960 in the Australia Air Force. I know the area well. I most certainly treasure our association, so this is given to you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER. Thank you, Ian.

INTRODUCTION OF SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE MOC—GLEN MARONEY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER. Thank you, Ian.

A national gathering of the Veterans of Foreign Wars would not be complete without a visit from the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie.

Elected Supreme Commander at the 74th Supreme Scratch in 1993, Glen Maroney first became a member of Gopher Pup Tent No. 2 Grand of Minnesota after joining VFW Post 246 in 1948.

Glen is a World War II and Korean War veteran, serving as a U.S. Naval Officer in the Pacific Theater during the Second World War and being recalled to active duty during Korea.

He has been active in both the Military Order of the Cootie and the VFW for more than 45 years.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cooties, Glen Maroney.

REMARKS—MOC SUPREME COMMANDER GLEN MARONEY

COMRADE MARONEY: I almost thought I needed to take a bow out there. That is a Cootie greeting. Anyway, good morning, my dear friends, National Officers, Commander-in-Chief George and the National Officers of our Ladies Auxiliary, the beautiful ladies, my fellow comrades out here and friends all.

We have your other Auxiliary that have had a beautiful year this year. I am extremely proud of our members and what they have done. We will start our Supreme Scratch this coming Thursday at 1:00 o'clock over at the Riviera. That will be our 75th Anniversary.

That is 75 years our veterans have come back to these encampments and to do things and have a good time and renew old friendships and acquaintances. Some people ask me why in the world would you name an outfit a Cootie? Well, this happened after World War I, the ones that came out of the trenches of Europe.

They didn't have all these head doctors, psychiatrists, therapists, whatever you want to call them, that tell you today what is wrong and put on you Prozac. How to solve your problems then was in laughter, good times. They weren't so darn thin-skinned that we couldn't tell an ethnic joke, a religious joke, or any kind of a joke, where like today we are not politically correct to start with.

What I am saying, they got over their problems with laughter. Our original parameter was to both perpetuate humor and offer advice to American servicemen. And we still to this day try to have a good time in our meetings, enjoy each other and enjoy life. I think we should look to that a little bit more. We need to lighten up and let's have some fun.

As we matriculated through the years, the Cooties got a little more serious program. Some of you with better ideas than I came up with our hospital program which they call the "Keep Them Smiling in Beds of White." I am proud of what we have done in the hospitals this last year.

We have set all-time records. I am not going to give you a lot of figures. You don't want to hear them anyway. We set all kinds of records, but one thing that has really made me realize how good we have been doing is the VAVS. You all know that is Volunteer Service for Veterans Administration Hospitals that puts out figures as to what the organizations do.

There are 172 VA's in the United States or under their jurisdiction. We Cooties are represented in 160 of them, which is a good record. We need more of you, though, to join with us and to get those other 12. We are working on them. More importantly, there are 60 regular organizations who are registered with the VA system to do volunteer work.

We are not number one or number two, I am sorry to say. That is the American Legion and their Auxiliary. We are not even number three and number four. That is the VFW and their Auxiliary in that position. Number five, no, the DAV, the Disabled American Veterans.

But we are number six and we are proud of that figure. We are very proud of that. Our motto this year was "Volunteer With Pride." We have some of the greatest volunteers in the world, and I am proud that they selected me to lead them this year.

I want to reiterate and try to get through here, and it is a hard thing to do. When we become Cooties, we do not abandon the VFW. We still stay strong and work with the VFW, and under the leadership of our great Commander-in-Chief this year we have been fostering and trying to promote that word around the country.

Just as an example, I have one of our Supreme Officers down front. He is Quartermaster of his Post. He has been District Commander two or three times. He has held all kinds of offices in his Department. Bobbie Birdett, my Supreme Adjutant Quartermaster, is down front. Along with him I would like to introduce his wife, Faye, who is our Supreme Senior Vice-President of the Cooties Auxiliary.

Just one more short thing and I will get out of here. I know we have a lot of speakers coming. I have tried to somehow show the fact that we are active in the VFW and we have tried to pick up our VFW booster program, not just a numbers game where we say only you members can sign up and things like that.

We wanted the states, when we called them, to give us a resume on what they are doing to promote and help their VFW on membership. We have got some great letters from some of them. Some didn't respond. It is a new program and didn't get through the heads right away, and they have to think about it for a while.

I would like to announce at this time that the Grand Commander Rick Allen of North Carolina will be the winner of our VFW Booster Program this year. Rick is here. With that, as I said earlier, we have had a terrific year. I am proud of the fact I was able to lead this Auxiliary for the VFW and I am especially proud to be here with George and serve with him this year.

I know with Howard, George and I retiring, we will all be around. Howard is not going to wander off on his motorcycle into the sunset like the rest of us. Thank you again for all of your kind attention.

INTRODUCTION OF PROFESSOR TEH-SHAUN HUNG, VACRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For more than two decades, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has pledged their support for our friends in the Republic of China on Taiwan through resolutions at our National Convention.

The citizens of the Republic of China on Taiwan are proud of their success and economic achievement. Certainly, that success, in large part, can be attributed to the employment and development programs that the Republic conducts for its veterans.

The tremendous care, support and vitality of its veterans programs have been an inspiration and model for the VFW. We wish to thank our friends with VACRS, the Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen, for their long and beneficial friendship.

Joining us today to reaffirm our pledge of brotherhood and comradeship is Professor Teh-Shuan Hung, Vice Chairman of VACRS.

RESPONSE—PROFESSOR TEH-SHUAN HUNG

PROFESSOR TEH-SHUAN HUNG: Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Delegates to the Convention, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen and the veterans of the Republic of China, I extend to you our most sincere congratulations on the occasion of the National Convention of the VFW. I am very pleased to be with our old friends from the VFW here in Las Vegas.

As veterans, we have endured the horrors of war, and we long for peace and quiet. Unfortunately, even today, with the near-demise of communism as a force of evil in the world, we still have many trouble spots, which could erupt into wide-spread violence, and possibly world war, at any moment. In Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti, Somalia, and in a host of other places around the world, the embers of hate are fanned by greed, until they rage into a roaring fire of death and destruction.

We believe that it is the special responsibility of the veterans of the Free World to unite in our efforts to promote a spirit of justice, which may calm the propensity toward war and violence. As we know, the devastation of war can only lead to economic dislocation, hardship, and suffering, not only for the military forces, but also for non-combatants within the nations and the people of neighboring countries.

The VFW has always been a close friend of VACRS and the Republic of China. We share many common goals and mutually beneficial interests in veterans affairs. We both promote the best quality in home care, health care, education and training, and job placement that can be provided for our veterans. We understand that veterans benefits are not merely grants from the government, but rather compensation for service rendered to the nation on which no one can place a price tag.

In the areas of foreign relations and national defense our two countries likewise share common aims. We are committed to expanding liberty, democracy, national security, and prosperity for all people of the world. We believe that the cooperation of freedom-loving people will triumph over dictatorship and slavery. As the Iron and Bamboo Curtains continue to fall, we are all hopeful that nations around the world can finally enjoy peace.

For two decades, the VFW has shown its endorsement of the Republic of China through Resolutions at the Department and National levels. You have supported the diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China, our return to the United Nations, and the continued supply of advanced military equipment for our armed forces. For this support our people are truly grateful.

As an important example, I would like to recall that, during the 1970s and 1980s, the Republic of China attempted to purchase F–16 fighters from the United States. Unfortunately, the Carter, Reagan and Bush administrations denied our requests. The VFW, in spite of the difficulties, knew that it was in the best interests of both the Republic of China and the United States to provide us with F–16s, under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act, so that we could maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

After almost two decades of continuous support, your Resolution was finally fulfilled, when President Bush authorized the sale of 150 F–16 fighters to our country in 1992. We thank you and are most grateful for your unending efforts in this regard, and we hope that you will support our continued access to advanced U.S. military equipment in the future.

We also hope that the relationship between the VFW and VACRS will continue to grow and prosper in the years to come, so that we will be able to enhance and foster the spirit of veterans' brotherhood between our organizations.

In closing, I give you my best regards for health, happiness, and a most successful Convention in 1994. Thank you very much.

MR. CHARLES KAN: On behalf of the Republic of China, we have a presentation that I have the honor to read, a certificate accompanying the Cloud and Banner Medal.

"Mr. George R. Cramer, Commander-in-Chief, 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 enhancement of ties and cooperation between the veterans of our two countries.

"In appreciation of his meritorious service, Commander-in-Chief Cramer is presented the Order of the Cloud and Banner with Cravat by the Government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Decoration Regulations." It has been signed by Lee Teng-hui, President, Lien Chan, Premier, and Sun Chen, Minister of National Defense.

We have a plaque presented by VACRS. "Presented to Mr. George R. Cramer, Commander-in-Chief, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to a strengthening of brotherhood between the VFW and VACRS by the Chairman of the Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen, Republic of China, August 22, 1994."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Professor Teh-Shaun Hung, I want to thank you for the medal and the plaque, and also I want to thank you on behalf of the VFW for being a most gracious host when we had an opportunity to visit with you folks in the Republic of China.

INTRODUCTION OF DR. WILLIAM BENNETT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Ladies and gentlemen, we are pleased and honored to have with us this morning one of the most exciting and intellectually stimulating speakers in America today. He is also the 1987 recipient of the prestigious VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan appointed Bill Bennett Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1985, he was named Secretary of Education; and in 1989 he accepted the Post of Director of National Drug Control Policy.

Dr. Bennett, in a decade of distinguished public service, earned a reputation as a man of strong, reasoned convictions who addresses the tough issues of our time in an eloquent, meaningful manner.

In his post-government career, Bill Bennett continues to have a significant impact on gut issues that move the American people.

Evidence of his influence on national political debate can be seen in his extraordinarily successful and widely praised "Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories," which was number one on the New York Times Best Seller List; and his book "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators", his assessment of modern American society.

A commentator and frequent guest on "Good Morning, America," CNN, MacNeil/Lehrer and Nightline, Bill Bennett is currently a distinguished fellow in cultural studies at the Heritage Foundation and is Co-Director of Empower America, a public policy "think tank."

A native of Brooklyn, New York, he grew up in Washington, D.C., where he attended Gonzaga High School. He went on to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from Williams College and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Texas, and a law degree from Harvard.

Please join me in a warm VFW welcome for the Honorable William Bennett.

KEYNOTE SPEECH—DR. WILLIAM BENNETT

DR. WILLIAM BENNETT: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Cramer, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great pleasure, privilege and honor to once again appear before the VFW. I treasure the award I received in 1987 and it was a great delight to get the phone call, as many of you know, last week inviting me to come. I have been on vacation with my wife and children and there are a few things I would give up for that family time, but I was happy to do so for your kind invitation. I have a reputation for speaking candidly, so let me speak candidly to you today.

Though I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak to you, I frankly do not understand why the President of the United States or the Vice-President could not come and speak to you today. For a long time it has been my view, and let me just say parenthetically I know we do not take sides in the VFW, it is not a political organization, but you will allow me free speech, nonetheless.

For a long time it has puzzled me and bothered me that the President of the United States nor the Vice-President could not see fit to attend the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts Jamborees. In doing so, to my knowledge, they were the first President and Vice-President to stiff the Boy Scouts in the history of the United States. To find out the same thing was done to the VFW simply adds to the embarrassment.

To me, this is more important than Whitewater. I don't understand Whitewater, I may never understand Whitewater, I may be with many of you never understanding Whitewater, but I do understand what it means to neglect critical and important institutions. It is not as if the virtues of the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts and the virtues of the VFW were in oversupply in our nation that we could neglect these august institutions.

VIRTUES VS. VIRTUES

Indeed, as I shall say in a few minutes you have given me, these are the virtues we need most of all. By the way, I hope you don't

mind my using the term virtues. I feel I have made some contributions in getting this word back into circulation with the "Book of Virtues." When I talked to my publisher a year ago about this book, he said, "What is it?" I said, "It is a collection of moral stories for adults and children and adults and children together." Then he said why don't we call it the "Book of Values."

I said no, it's not about values. When I hear the word values, I reach for my Sears catalog. This is about virtues, and a virtue is an excellence of character, and what we need I believe more than anything else today is attention to character, to nurturing the character of the young, and to instill in them the kind of virtues long associated with this organization and its brother and sister organizations.

The tremendous success of the "Book of Virtues" has, of course, meant a great deal to me and my family personally and financially, and I don't want to stay too long in Las Vegas to make sure that it remains so. But it says something else about the country and the culture. The book was number one on the New York Times best-seller list, which I have to tell you as a conservative Republican was the nicest thing the New York Times ever said about me. It's a book with no pictures, there is nothing dirty or nasty or salacious or illicit in it, and it has sold 1.4 million copies.

Three weeks ago it outsold Howard Stern's book four to one. Two weeks ago it outsold Howard Stern's and Roseanne's combined three to one. The last time I said that in public I got a phone call from a friend of mine named Rush Limbaugh, you may know him. He said, "Don't use that locution." And I said, "Why not?" And he said, "That's a hell of a thought, Howard Stern and Roseanne combined."

WINNING THE STRUGGLE

But anybody who suggests that the cultural war has been waged and we have lost it; that Americans don't care about what is decent and honorable and forthright is mistaken. There is a great struggle going on in the country and I think the greatest and most important struggle going on in the country is in the culture.

The stakes are these: Who wins gets to teach the children, and who gets to teach the children will decide what it is our children learn. Whether they will learn that America is the greatest country in the world, the greatest country that has ever existed, a country with faults and problems and a history that is mixed, but still the beacon of liberty and freedom in the world where whether they will learn something else about America.

Who gets to teach the children will decide whether our history is taught accurately, whether math is taught at all, whether children are taught to speak English for their sake as well as for the sake of the identity of this country. It is a fight and a struggle I invite you to join. A grateful nation thanks you, ladies and gentlemen, for your service to this great country.

It is our responsibility, people like me whose life is public policy, and whose life as an educator is to try to make it plain that our schools and colleges must teach the accomplishments of this country and how this country could not survive, could not have the greatness it has without the sacrifice made by you and your col-

leagues. So with that we thank you. Without the Veterans of Foreign Wars it would not have achieved what we achieved five years ago.

VICTORY OVER COMMUNISM

Perhaps one of the most significant events in the entire history of Western civilization, the overthrow of communism and the victory of freedom. The long twilight struggle against communism of which John F. Kennedy spoke, a struggle waged by Republicans and Democrats alike, over the last 40 years, has ushered in the victory of liberty and democracy and most important, the American idea.

Your contribution to that victory is not just a victory for the military, it is not just a victory for our children, it is not even a victory for America, it is a victory for civilization itself. Because the struggle to be clear, was a struggle between civilization and barbarism, between the goodness represented by democracy and freedom on the other side. Quite accurately, although to some it was a shock when Ronald Reagan said it, it was called "The evil empire." Indeed, that's what it was and it was vanquished by the forces of righteousness, decency and freedom.

DOMESTIC CRISIS

The struggles we face now are somewhat different, I would submit to you. Yes, there are still foreign problems and there are no doubt going to be needs and opportunities for the United States to involve itself militarily. History is not over, the military involvement of the United States in the wider world is not over, and yet I believe the great struggle before us is the struggle I described, the struggle for our culture, the struggle for our children, the struggle internally to the United States.

The great wars that the United States has waged and won were not fought and won so that we could see a 560 percent increase in violent crime in the last 30 years. The great struggles and wars were not fought and won so that we could see a 90-point decline in the scholastic aptitude test scores in the last 20 years. And the great wars and efforts that this country has waged were not fought and won so that we could see an increase in illegitimacy in this country that staggers the imagination.

In 1960, five percent of the children born in this country were born out of wedlock. In 1990, 30 percent of the children born in this country were born out of wedlock. Senator Patrick Moynihan, a Democrat from New York, and I have spoken often on this topic and he agrees with me that if this rate continues by the end of this century we will have a 50 percent illegitimacy rate in this country.

This country, this republic, cannot survive that kind of onslaught. We did not wage the wars against fascism, Nazism, Stalinism and communism in order to be overthrown from within by a declining decay of our own institutions. Our churches, our schools, our neighborhoods and our families are the places and the beachheads where these next wars will be fought and decided.

The struggle again is the struggle for our children. Public policies, sound public policies can make a difference. To have a serious criminal justice system and not one that's a revolving door system

will make a great deal of difference. We have to make it plain that we no longer believe what was popular in the '60s and '70s—that all criminals are victims and must be treated as such.

SENSE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

We have to have once again a clear and certain idea of personal responsibility, not the idea that we have seen recently in the courtrooms of California where a person can say "I'm not responsible because the riot made me do it," or "I'm not responsible because sometime in my youth I was mistreated." At the heart of American politics, at the heart of the American political philosophy, and at the heart of Western civilization I described a few minutes ago, is the idea of personal responsibility. If that goes, it all goes.

As to the welfare system, it is my belief and it has been for some time, that we must simply end the welfare system. The government must say we will no longer subsidize the wantonness of youth. Welfare programs were started, as many of you know—this should be a point underlined by this organization—to help the widows of those killed in service to their country. It has now been perverted into a system which rewards teenagers for the wantonness of the back seat of an automobile. This is not progress.

And in the third area—education. We need to make it plain that an education is the education of mind and heart, that all education is the education of character. That parents want the schools to do several simple things: To teach children how to read, and write and count and think correctly and to help to develop ideas right and wrong that will guide them through life. If the current educational structure cannot provide these ends and reach these ends in a straightforward way, then it is time to turn the system back to parents. In my view, the American people will do better than the bureaucracies that now govern our educational system.

LESSONS OF GOVERNMENT

So there are things to do in the realm of public policy. But I must tell you, I served in three different government jobs. I was Chairman of the National Endowment for Humanities. That's not the National Endowment for the Arts, I don't want you to confuse it. The National Endowment for the Arts is the one with the dirty pictures, the National Endowment for Humanities is the one with the dirty books but you have to be an intellectual to understand that.

Then I was Secretary of Education where I fought with teachers' unions, university presidents; then I became the nation's first drug czar, which the only laugh line I had in that position was that I could refer to my lovely wife as czarling and to our two little boys as the czardines.

Parenthetically, my wife thinks that my career in Washington is a case study in downward mobility. The thing started while at the Humanities, then I got into fights in Education, then I ended up in busts of the "Bloods" and the "Crips" at four in the morning in Los Angeles. And when I left that job she asked, "What's next dear, toxic and hazardous waste cleanup?"

But I saw a lot, I saw a lot about America. I visited classrooms; it was my wife's idea. When I became Secretary of Education, she said instead of making pronouncements, why don't you go around

the country and go to class and teach classes, talk to parents, teachers and kids and see what they think, then make your pronouncements.

I said, "Elaine, I'm the Secretary of Education for the United States, I don't do retail, I do wholesale." And she said, being a daughter of a salesman, "Do retail and you'll do better wholesale," and I did. And I went to 105 classrooms and taught class, and believe me, it's difficult to teach class with cameras in the back of the room. Dan Quayle will tell you that. And I will tell you that.

And when I was drug czar I went to 103 besieged communities and I said take me to where the problems are the worst and they would always take me to where the problems were the worst. So I've had a pretty good survey of the American scene and I can tell you that our greatest problems are not going to be solved by government. Our greatest problems are not going to be solved by public policies. The government can help, they can hinder, but right now I think it's doing a lot of hindering in its weak approach to crime and it's approach to welfare and it's approach to education.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

But the real answers I believe lie outside of government. They lie in the idea of personal responsibility. They lie in the idea of the strengthening of our institutions. And they lie, of course, and most significantly, in the spiritual and moral realm. They lie in that realm in which we are all called to our own sense of responsibility. What we must do first, it seems to me, not to conclude, is to attack the idea of dependence in our time. There is an idea in our time of dependence on government which we must slough off if we are to regain our sense of personal responsibility.

RICHMOND DEBATES

In the Richmond debate, the last of the presidential debates almost two years ago now, there was an important moment to me—the single important moment of that political campaign. A man about 40 years old, wearing a pony tail, approached the podium in Richmond—the interactive debate you remember with Clinton and Bush and Perot—and he said to the three men, "We are your children," said this 40-year-old man, "one of you will become the President. What will you do to take care of our needs as your children?"

"As your children we have needs, what will you to do take care of us?" It was a shocking question. This question that was asked in Richmond not far from where Madison and Jefferson are buried, this man, this self-governing citizen referred to himself as a child in the presence of the future President of the United States as the father who would take care of him.

What was perhaps more shocking than the question was the answers that were given. My colleague, my boss George Bush, a very good and decent man, demurred a little bit then answered the question. He told this man six or eight or ten things that he would do for him.

Then Ross Perot answered the question. Well, to be fair to Ross Perot, he didn't answer the question, he said something like open the hood and get granny out of the closet, open the barn and some

other stuff. It was very peppy, but it didn't really answer the question.

But then Mr. Clinton answered the question and answered with a long and elaborate litany about the things that he would do for this man. And that answer goes on today. Look, I don't want to take cheap political shots and use the VFW platforms and opportunity to do that, that would not be right that wouldn't be fair.

The political philosophy of the party empowered is a coherent political philosophy; it just happens to be one with which I disagree. That political philosophy says this: "Give us your money and we will take care of you. Give us more of your money and we will take care more of you. Give us all of your money and we'll take care of everything, cradle to grave, your health care, your child care, your condoms, everything you need, we'll take care of it."

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

That, it seems to me, is the challenge to the American political and public spirit today. We need to say something to that, in my view, Democrats and Republicans alike, because there are Republicans who participate in this philosophy. But Americans, whatever their political persuasion, need to stand up to the government and say to the government today: "Give us back our money and with it our sense of responsibility."

WHO WILL LEAD THE WORLD?

Finally, ultimately, as you know, because this is the idea for which you fought, this is an idea of self-government. This is an idea not of being in tutelage to a federal government. This is an experiment in liberty, liberty of the citizens, liberty of all the citizens.

I referred earlier to the great victory of freedom around the world. One of the great heroes of freedom of the era in the last ten years was Lech Walesa of Poland. Let me close by reminding you of what Lech Walesa said at his departure from the United States. He visited the United States and addressed the Congress, in which he thanked the American people for the service that the United States had provided in the cause of freedom. Then he went to New York City, and with the Statue of Liberty behind, he said goodbye to the United States. He said, "Thank you, thank you America for teaching the world the great lesson that freedom is more important than tyranny." Everyone thought he was finished, but he wasn't. He added a sentence or two: He said, "Now comes another challenge for the United States. Take care of this country," he pleaded with us. "Take care of America," said Walesa, "for if you do not lead us, who will?"

Well, we have taught the world a great lesson. Thanks to you and your colleagues, we have taught the world great lessons over centuries. Now there is a great lesson to be taught and to be relearned at home, so let us take care of that country at home.

And I hope now that you will join with other Americans to fix the problems at home; to get into the struggle in our own country, the struggle for the minds and hearts of our countryman and our children.

The ideas of America, the idea of liberty, the idea of freedom and the idea of personal responsibility. That is the great struggle of our time. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Dr. Bennett, for your sincerity and inspirational message. Quite frankly, I am glad the other fellow was unavailable.

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL TAE-WAN CHANG, KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Four decades ago, we stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our comrades in Korea on freedom's front line. We shared the hardships and agonies of a war that took a terrible toll not only in lives but the very fibre of a nation. Since then, we have continued to stand together, committed to defending the freedom we won. During the difficult days of the Vietnam War, our allies from the Republic of Korea joined us in fulfilling our commitment in Vietnam.

Today, Korea, through the sheer dynamics and energy of its people has emerged as an economic power in that region of the world. It is an achievement in which we share the pride of the Korean people. It remains an achievement that was made possible by the sacrifices of gallant veterans, both Americans and Koreans.

We take great pride in the special relationship that we share with the Korean Veterans Association. We know the courage and dedication of those veterans, but most of all we know their friendship.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our comrade- in-arms, General Tae-wan Chang, President of the Korean Veterans Association.

Comrades, please join me in giving General Chang a warm VFW welcome.

REMARKS BY GENERAL TAE-WAN CHANG, PRESIDENT OF THE KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

GENERAL CHANG: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great privilege for me to be invited to attend your 1994 Annual Convention. I extend warm greetings on behalf of all members of the Korean Veterans Association.

Dear VFW Members, the Republic of Korea, with its new government since February of last year, has made remarkable progress in all fields including politics, economy and social affairs. This progress and great achievements would not have been possible without your assistance in the Korea War. I extend our sincere gratitude for this assistance.

Today, in the midst of world political turmoil, the United States leads the pursuit for reconciliation and peace to form a new world order. However, North Korea is only eager to beef up its military power.

As you know well, North Korea has refused to allow complete nuclear inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency for the last six years and continues its nuclear weapons development.

The North Korean Nuclear Program provides a serious threat to peace not only on the Korean Peninsula but also around the world.

As you know, Kim Il Sung, the ruler of North Korea for the past 49 years, died last month and has been succeeded by his son, Kim Jung Il. The son is cruel and belligerent and this increases the possibility of a reckless provocation by North Korea. These factors have increased tension between the North and the South.

Dear friends, we take great pride in our traditional friendship. I look forward to your continued support in furthering the security and mutual interests of our two nations. In closing, I sincerely hope your Convention will be a successful and rewarding one. Thank you.

This plaque is presented to Commander-in-Chief Cramer, in grateful recognition of the dedication and continued support to the Republic of Korea and to the promotion of friendly nations between the two organizations. This is presented this 22nd day of August, 1994, Las Vegas, Nevada.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, General, not only for this fine plaque but I also want to thank your organization as well for the hospitality extended to me upon my recent visit to Korea.

Before we go into our closing ceremonies, I would like to remind everyone our Distinguished Guests Banquet tonight will feature Robert Stack and Gerald McRaney. I say that because they are perhaps going to arrive a little late. I do want you to know that we will have a show that will last for about an hour and one-half, your entertainment. I hope you can appreciate what we are doing here in the entertainment capital of the world.

I would like to call on our National Chaplain Dr. Charles Edwards for the Benediction.

[Whereupon, National Chaplain Charles Edwards, Jr., gave the Closing Prayer.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: This concludes the Opening Session of our 95th National Convention. We will reconvene at 9:00 o'clock a.m. tomorrow.

[Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 11:50 o'clock a.m.]

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET

AUGUST 22, 1994

[The Distinguished Guests Banquet of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Las Vegas Hilton Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, was called to order at 7:00 o'clock p.m., by Comrade Albert J. McMindes, Chairman, Board of Directors, VFW 95th National Convention.]

COMRADE MCMINDES: May we have your attention. We would like to start the program. If you will all rise and remain standing until the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance is given, please.

At this time I would like to call upon the National Chaplain, Reverend Edwards, to give the Invocation.

[Whereupon, the Invocation was given by National Chaplain Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.]

INTRODUCTION OF MASTER OF CEREMONIES

COMRADE MCMINDES: Good evening and welcome to the Distinguished Guests Banquet for this, our 95th Convention. As your Chairman of the Board of Directors for this Convention, I want to extend a sincere welcome to all of you from the City of Las Vegas and the great State of Nevada.

I sincerely believe that this banquet may well be one of the highlights of your Convention. We have a stimulating and what I am sure will be a memorable program in store for you. We hope that you enjoy the meal and the program.

It is my pleasure, and I consider it to be indeed a pleasure, to have the special privilege of introducing the distinguished member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who will serve as your Master of Ceremonies for the remainder of the evening.

The VFW Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief "Gunner" Kent has been continuously active in the VFW affairs at the State, District and National levels since joining the VFW in 1968. The VFW offices include All-American Post and Department Commander, Captain of the All-State Team, and the Western Conference Chairman.

He was named Arizona's Young Vietnam Veteran of the Year for 1979. He has also served as your National VFW Transportation Coordinator, Vice-Chairman of both the National Legislative and National Security Committees, and Chairman of the Americanism Committee. He is currently a Life Member of VFW Post 19972, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

I am proud to introduce a good friend, our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief "Gunner" Kent from the great State of Arizona.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Thank you, Comrade McMindes. It is truly my honor to have the opportunity

to serve as your Master of Ceremonies for this magnificent event. For your pleasure, the Sun Spots will entertain with their appropriate music during the meal.

After the meal, it will be my honor to introduce the head table and the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Please enjoy your meal.

[Whereupon, the dinner was enjoyed at this time.]

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: It is my high honor to introduce our head table guests.

[Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Kent introduced the distinguished guests at the head table.]

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I have the privilege this evening to introduce to this very special audience the National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Since its beginning, the VFW has drawn together dedicated men and women who share the same concerns and love for America.

As veterans, with a long and proud history of accomplishments, the VFW has always been in the forefront of every constructive program to set forth, expand and protect the rights of the American veterans. Whether its efforts were for a strong national defense or concern for the nation's veterans, the VFW must have inspired leaders who will guide us wisely.

We have been most fortunate to have a man of this stature to guide us this year. Throughout his 25 years of active involvement in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, George Cramer has been a man on the move helping his fellow veterans and his community.

In keeping with his motto, "Commitment to Service", he has worked hard, addressed the concerns and resolved the mandates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to introduce the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, George R. Cramer, from the Department of Illinois.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Commander-in-Chief Cramer.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Gunner, for the very kind introduction. It will be my pleasure to surrender the gavel to you Friday morning. You see standing before you a very proud man. For the last 12 months, he has had the wonderful privilege of leading the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and our Ladies Auxiliary.

Leading this great organization is very gratifying. I have seen the results of the work and services of over two million VFW members and over 770,000 members of our Ladies Auxiliary across the United States, in Central America, Europe and Asia.

In every city and town I visited, I saw positive proof that the VFW and our Ladies Auxiliary are a dynamic force serving our nation's communities and our nation's veterans. The year 1994 has been a pivotal year not only for world events but in our continuing efforts to ensure adequate funding for the veterans' health care programs, ensuring that veterans' programs received the proper funding, maintaining the integrity of the VA as Congress and the Administration review our nation's health care programs, and in

seeking eligibility reform in the VA health care system continue to be our biggest challenges.

To our commitment to service, we have supported our armed forces and the need to maintain a strong national defense. Our VFW has committed tremendous resources and travel to the POW/MIA issue. Our steadfast stand to resolve that issue has not wavered.

Your efforts in support of every program that we have undertaken this past year, whether it be in community and youth activities, the Voice of Democracy, Post development, Buddy Poppies, has proven that working together we can be successful.

Yes, it has been a very special year for me because I was proud to be with and serve with the finest men and women of our nation, its veterans.

In conclusion, let me say that the Veterans of Foreign Wars have always and always will be committed to serving America and its veterans. Before my personal mission as your National Commander-in-Chief draws to a conclusion, I wish to say on behalf of my wife Linda, my son Scott, and my daughter Cheryl, thank you for your hard work and thank you for your commitment to service.

I might say that I am sure you have noticed there is a vacancy next to me tonight. Linda and the kids were here and one of them got sick so you know where mom is. They are in the room, and she is taking care of the one that is sick. He is okay. I am sure you will find him terrorizing the hotel tomorrow morning.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Our first honoree has a face and voice instantly recognized by nearly every American and most Europeans. A fifth-generation Californian, he literally grew up among the men and women in the performing arts.

Stars of film, the concert stage, opera and radio were regular visitors during his formative years. It was only natural that he aspired to a career in the limelight.

Before achieving international acclaim as a performer, he garnered accolades as an athlete and in motor sports. He and his brother won the International Outboard Motor Championships in Venice, Italy, and he was a National Skeet Shooting Champion at the age of 16. In 1971, he was inducted into the National Skeet Shooting Hall of Fame.

While still in college, he began his acting career in earnest when he signed a contract with Universal Studios. His first assignment as the male lead opposite Deanna Durbin in "First Love" began a long and successful career.

However, just when his career began to pick up speed, he answered the call that echoed across America following that fateful day in December, 1941.

Commissioned as a Navy Ensign in 1942, his shooting skills gained him duty as an Aerial Gunnery Instructor. After four years, including a year overseas, he returned to his Hollywood career.

He has 40 successful feature films to his credit, including an Oscar nomination for "Written On The Wind." However, he is most

often identified with his emmy-award winning performance as Eliot Ness in the long-running TV series "The Untouchables."

He is one of the few actors to star in four major television series and is currently in his sixth year as the host of the highly-rated "Unsolved Mysteries."

He is particularly proud of the number of criminals that have been captured as a result of that show.

His portrayal of law enforcement officers and his strong support of aggressive law enforcement have brought significant recognition and honor to those who serve to protect and defend our city streets and country roads. In addition, he has been a veterans advocate throughout his lengthy career.

Please give a warm VFW welcome to a patriot, a veteran and a sincere law enforcement advocate. Please rise and honor this year's recipient of the VFW Commander-in-Chief's Gold Medal of Merit and Citation, veteran actor Robert Stack.

[Whereupon, a prolonged rising ovation is given to Robert Stack.]

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to Robert Stack in special recognition of his distinguished career in motion pictures and television, highlighted by his sincere and positive portrayals of a variety of law enforcement professionals.

"In grateful appreciation for a service to America as a naval officer during World War II and for his commitment to creating a safer environment for United States citizens in the television series "Unsolved Mysteries" which he hosts and resulted in apprehension of dangerous criminals."

It is signed this 22nd day of August by myself as Commander-in-Chief and Howard Vander Clute as Adjutant General.

Mr. Stack, as I told you, it is really kind of ironic that I should be presenting this award to you as a person who portrayed Eliot Ness. I told you I grew up in a neighborhood of your arch enemy, Mr. Al Capone.

RESPONSE—MR. ROBERT STACK

MR. STACK: Cicero, Illinois? Al Capone. I am deeply touched and honored. An award is conditioned upon the value of the people who give it. The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is the finest veterans organization in the world.

It is a kick for me tonight because I came from a military family in World War II. Five of us were in the Navy. From a Vice-Admiral aiding President Roosevelt, to a Captain Commander, Ensign and Seaman 2nd, and I was low one. But it is a fulfilling thing.

I was on the trip two months ago when we went over for the 50th Anniversary of the Invasion of Normandy. To see the men given recognitions like the death of a salesman, respect must be given. Finally, these men and women, to see them with their medals, not just the ribbons, but to see them dressed in their flight jackets going back to Omaha Beach getting the accolades they should have gotten a lot earlier than 50 years, it gave me a thrill.

I have been involved with veterans groups for the better part of my life. I have worked one group in particular, the Paralyzed Veterans. We put on a trap shoot and they shoot from the wheel

chairs, and they can shoot the socks off anybody who is standing up on their two feet.

I think one little bumper sticker puts it best that is on the back of one of these wheel chairs. The guys are all lined up, and on the back of this one it says, "This wouldn't be the land of the free if it wasn't the home of the brave." God bless you, thank you and keep the faith.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Mr. Robert Stack.]

PRESENTATION OF VFW AMERICANISM AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Each year, when we come together at our National Convention, one of the highlights of our gathering is to bestow the VFW Americanism Award. This award, given to an individual for outstanding contributions to the principles of Americanism, has been bestowed upon such notables as Senator John McCain, comedian Red Skelton, singer Lee Greenwood, actor John Wayne and many others.

Tonight we are pleased to add another individual to that distinguished list.

Our guest's show business career has not been quick or easy. He began acting in high school and college. Before coming to Hollywood, he labored long in repertory theaters and low budget films across the country. Coming to Hollywood, he drove a taxi too support his family and finance his acting classes while looking for acting jobs.

His first television role was on an episode of "Nightly Gallery." Four appearances on "Gunsmoke" were followed by steady work as a character actor in "Where the Ladies Go," "Women in White," "The Law," and "Roots II." In addition to made-for-TV movies, he worked steadily on several series, including "The Incredible Hulk," "The Rockford Files," "Police Woman" and "How the West Was Won."

One of his fondest roles was to play the last gunfighter to square off against Matt Dillon in the final episode of "Gunsmoke".

Bolstered by several successful years as a character actor, our guest was in a unique position to pick and choose among a variety of offers which came his way for a series pilot.

One particular script caught his eye and the rest, as they say, is history. He began the first of eight years as the irrepressible, yet immensely likable private investigator Rick Simon on "Simon and Simon." He immediately followed that success with a four-year stint as America's favorite Marine in "Major Dad."

He takes great pride in both "Simon and Simon" and "Major Dad" because he has been able to write, produce and direct, addressing some issues he considers very important.

He co-wrote a segment of "Simon and Simon" titled "I Thought the War was Over" in which his character suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder from his Vietnam service.

On another segment, he was able to deal with adolescent drug abuse, deglamorizing the use of drugs for his many teenage viewers.

In addition to his show business success, he has formed the Entertainment Industry's Council for a Drug-Free Society and is a strong supporter of the John Tracy Clinic in Los Angeles which teaches communications and educational skills to deaf and hard of hearing children.

A strong supporter of American military forces, he visited the troops in Somalia. While there, he lived as a soldier, donning his flak vest and helmet as he moved from compound to compound. His visit was a highlight and a real morale booster for troops in a dismal situation.

For his commitment to the principles of Americanism, demonstrated in his strong stand against drug abuse, his concern for those suffering from PTSD, his professional portrayal of a Marine officer and his support of our men and women in uniform, we are proud to welcome to the podium this year's recipient of the VFW Americanism Award, "Major Dad," Mr. Gerald McRaney.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Mr. Gerald McRaney.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Gerald McRaney:

"In sincere appreciation and special recognition of his exceptional ability as an actor, crusader for a drug-free America, entertainer of United States forces in Somalia and as a director and portrayer of an American serviceman in the film titled 'Vestige of Honor' and a segment of 'Simon and Simon' entitled 'I Thought the War Was Over' and special recognition of his starring role in the 'Major Dad' television series. His expression of patriotism by entertaining and encouraging members of the United States armed forces during their 'Operation Restore Hope' deployment in Somalia and his initiatives through use of entertainment media to chronicle the devastating effects of illicit drugs by America's youth demonstrate his devotion to this country and to his fellow man."

This has been signed by myself and Howard Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

Mr. McRaney, congratulations for what you do for America.

RESPONSE—MR. GERALD MCRANEY

MR. MCRANEY: I am deeply touched and highly honored to be recognized by such a prestigious organization. I also am filled with a sense of humility to be presented with an award for Americanism knowing full well that any person in this room is much more deserving of it than I am.

I just left the set. I flew in from Seattle where we are making a "Simon and Simon" movie of the week, and among the people working on the set is a Navy veteran of Vietnam, and then about a month ago I buried an uncle of mine. So, if you will, I will accept this honor, but not for myself, but for my buddy up in Seattle and in the name of Charles Lee Lewis, who served this country in the Pacific campaign during World War II.

I do believe Uncle Chuck might be looking tonight. He is probably pretty proud. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for the honor that you do to me, but more importantly, I thank you

from the bottom of my heart for the honor that you do to the United States of America. Thank you. [Applause]

PRESENTATION OF THE DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO AMBASSADOR DEANE HINTON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Since 1970, the Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award has been presented to eminent Americans for their individual contributions to the cause of American security, unity and world peace. No one is more deserving of this prestigious award than our honored guest tonight, Ambassador Deane Hinton.

Prior to his retirement from the State Department in March, Ambassador Hinton was the longest serving foreign service officer, serving overseas for more than 50 years. Ambassador Hinton has served under every President since Harry Truman.

During troubled and difficult times, he served with distinction as Ambassador to Panama, Costa Rico, Pakistan and El Salvador. In Washington, he served with the Bureaus of Intelligence, Economic Affairs, and European Affairs as well as with the Council on International Economic Policy in the White House.

In 1983, he received the President's Award for Distinguished Diplomatic Service.

At the time of his retirement, Ambassador Hinton was a Career Ambassador in the Foreign Service of the United States. This is the highest rank in the Foreign Service, limited to no more than five serving American diplomatic officers.

Born in Ft. Missoula, Montana, Ambassador Hinton served two years active duty with the United States Army during World War II.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my distinct honor to present the VFW Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award to a great American and distinguished statesman, Ambassador Deane Hinton.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Ambassador Deane Hinton.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: "The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Medal and Citation awarded to Deane R. Hinton, United States Ambassador.

"In special recognition of his distinguished career in the Foreign Service of the United States spanning fifty years and marked by his record of skillful diplomacy in handling assignments of extreme sensitivity and importance which have contributed immeasurably to maintaining global harmony and world order and in sincere appreciation for his exceptional service to the nation under every President since Harry S. Truman."

This citation has been signed by myself and Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr. Ambassador Hinton, thank you for what you have done for America.

RESPONSE AND PRINCIPAL ADDRESS—THE HONORABLE DEANE R. HINTON

MR. HINTON: Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Secretary Brown, Fellow Veterans:

Actually, I started as a Private under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. You are right, the Foreign Service career started with Harry Truman. Ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a singular honor for me to address you tonight. I am deeply appreciative of the award that the Veterans of Foreign Wars have bestowed upon me. It only seems unfair to subject you to me after dinner music, but still the Commander-in-Chief told me no speech, no award. So, to you, my friends, you pay the price.

It is my pleasure being with you. Let me start by expressing four beliefs about the United States and the world that I have arrived at in these 50 years. I won't argue them, I will just say them.

First, the nation's peoples, the economies and the faith of all of us are more definite every day than that proposed isolation solution to our problems, in fact, advocating formula for disaster.

Second, as the United State's relative power position moves, even though we remain the only super power, the need to strengthen multi-lateral institutions is central to a secure prosperous future. The United Nations, as discordant as it is, must play an increasing role in the managing of world problems in crisis.

A new world trade organization must supersede the GATT, and like it or not we must abide by the rule just as we expect others to abide by them. So, also we must continue to support and help fund the international financial institution's key regional bodies, such as the Organization of American States.

Third, and this is critical, there is no substitute for United States leadership in facing up to the world's problems. Neither the United Nations or anything else is likely to function well without our leadership.

Fourth, the strength of our position in the world depends on the strength of our domestic economy and society.

Just as we should not concentrate on world problems at the expense of the home front, neither should we concentrate on the home front at the expense of our international credibility. You will perhaps forgive me if as an Army brat, son of a soldier, a one-time soldier, and as a retired Foreign Service Officer I reflect tonight both on the state of the world and on two critical instruments dedicated to advancing our national security, our armed forces and our foreign service.

Neither works at its best without the other. In fact, resort to arms to deal with international problems is generally evidence of foreign policy favor, where it is the diplomat's job to advance the national diplomacy without the exercise of force. Still, diplomacy not backed up by the force, or possible force, is like a football team quarterback, whether to pass or not pass.

For this and many other reasons that you and I know that we need to maintain a strong national defense establishment. We also need, in my opinion, a strong State Department with strong foreign service. You may understand this a bit better if I tell you some-

thing about what Foreign Service Officers are and the FSO's, as we call them, do.

First, let me tell you what we don't do. I only wore striped pants once, and that was over 40 years ago. As to tea drinking, if it is not iced tea, I say that is all. That phrase about striped pants and tea drinking diplomats is a bum rap.

Pastor John Gordon Mean, my boss in Guatemala, was killed there by terrorists in 1968. I lost other colleagues in Guatemala, including the military group commander. In subsequent years, friends of mine have been killed in Cypress, Lebanon, Sedan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Now, it is high time that the American public understood that the Hollywood image of diplomats and a drinking society is a gross distortion of the reality. There are far more hardship posts in Africa, Asia, Latin America and in the Middle East than there are dozens of the plush, expensive European Posts. For every London, Paris or Rome, there are Africas, Ghanas, Kuwaits and others.

What does the Foreign Service do? Basically, it is the Washington's eyes and ears in a foreign land. Ambassadors are responsible for the President knowing what is going on and analyzing its impact on American interests, and for presenting recommendations to the Secretary of State and the President as to how best to advance those interests.

He and his staff also conduct negotiations pursuant to instructions from Washington on a wide range of issues which may include nuclear non-deliberation, maritime law enforcement, participation in peace keeping, protection of the Gulf copyright and patent rights, extraditions, cooperation of the war on drugs, economic development, mutual security and assistance programs, allocation of radio frequencies, air traffic rights and a myriad of other things.

For example, the last agreement I signed with Panama took years of negotiation by the Department of Agriculture experts, my staff and myself, related to screw worm eradication. Esoteric, yes. Vital to U.S. interests, no. Important, yes, to American Mexicans and Central American Cattlemen, and there may be some here tonight.

Other less glamorous but nevertheless essential functions are the constant protection of American citizens; administrative support for a wide range of government agencies, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Department of Defense, or what have you, and an increasingly commercial profession in helping to market the U.S. exports and promoting an investment.

I will skip a page or two. I will not put this harm on you people. The Ambassador and his staff, a multi-agency staff, should know the players in the country to which he is assigned, understand the decision-making process. Once you know your decision-making process in Washington, you know better than anybody else how to influence and control policy.

If they do, then visits by high Washington officials or phone calls, would be followed by sound diplomatic preparation that can get results. On the other hand, failures in diplomatic preliminaries in cities. Now, in setting strategic priorities can easily reduce the needed reputation at the top, and each such failure results in the loss of prestige.

What is far worse is loss of our credibility. The fiasco concerning human rights in China is a clear example. Another example, our diplomats in Europe should have been able to advise the President in advance of his proposal for a new ground of trade negotiations was premature, doomed to rejection this last June by the French President and other leaders of the industrial democracy.

Let me say one or two words about the researchers. The Secretary of State Christopher, in recent Congressional testimony, called for redefinition of national security, putting greater emphasis on American economics and building democracy and meeting threats both by our proliferations and environmental degradation, rapid population growth, the illegal narcotics, and terrorism.

The National Security Advisor, speaking at John Hopkins, laid out a strategy, what he called democratic awareness. He argued compelling that our interests and ideals require us not only to be significantly engaged but to lead. He is right. But fine words backed with shrinking resources will not get the job done. Indeed, the administration has not even sought the requisite appropriations from Congress.

No wonder Jim Hoagland, Associate Editor of the Washington Post, says, describing Bill Clinton's foreign policy is like describing the Loch Ness Monster. How can you describe what you cannot see? Jim will appreciate that.

We have opened 29 embassies in new countries in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in a period in which the State Department's budget has declined by over five percent constant dollars. Around the world in the last few years, we have been firing experienced foreign service nationals and also reducing Americans.

This year the intake of new Foreign Service Officers is 130, down from 200 last year. Our service is a rather small one. But in addition to the immediate Edwards impact, the long-run implication is 35 percent decrease in new officer blood in the Foreign Service to me is horrendous.

There are other endless lists of consequences of excessive budgetary stringency. In Brazil, in a country the size of the United States, more or less, political officers have a travel budget of $3,200 for all year. How can they do their job? The overall appropriation for the State Department is a little over $2 billion for the fiscal year.

That is less than the cost of one B–2 Bomber, a small fraction of the appropriation for our intelligence services, and almost nothing compared to domestic entitlement programs. I submit to you the American people cannot reasonably expect the Foreign Service to meet its responsibilities with declining resources.

Let's look at the world. It is a mess. It is a dangerous complicated chaotic mess. Moreover, we as people are showing signs of wanting to run away from it. Fifty years ago, and there has been mention of this from this podium tonight, the D-Day celebration reminded us we were a united nation, with a clear understanding of the imperative need of victory over the Nazi and Japanese aggressors.

The Cold War period, once the dangers were widely apprehended and the policies containment set, the struggle of Communism in the Soviet Union clarified and simplified most critical foreign poli-

cies. There were voices of dissent, but by and large the leaders, the allies of the United States, had the clear policies and they stayed with it.

That formula has then introduced successes unchanged today, simple in concept but difficult application. You must understand and define the American interests given the situation. Collect the relevant data, do some hard analyzing and establish strategic policies and then stick with them. Perseverance is pretty damn important in this business.

Now, there is some difficulties in doing these things, and particularly in these days when we are seeking the television impact shots on the American public backing. But we have to recognize, and certainly everyone in this room and this organization recognizes that there is a cost for freedom and that cost is not paid as you go along. It should be encountably more costly as you go along.

Leaders with a vision of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Richard Nixon, or the diplomatic skills and consensus of the George Bush or Dwight Eisenhower are not in evidence today. If in an actual vision of America's future World War remains to be drawn, we certainly have little or no consensus today about our interest in the Baltics and around Somalia, North Korea, to name just a few places.

I submit that it is more important than ever to strengthen the Foreign Service and fund it. Surely, to the extent that we are unable or unwilling to use force, because of public weariness or otherwise, our need for effective diplomacy becomes more critical.

The diplomacy, like the armed forces, are but tools employed with vision and political, while they can help America's selected leaders advance the cause of democratic leaders.

Henry L. Luce, in the 1940's, popularized the idea of the American Century. Over the past 50 years, despite some weaving, swerving and occasionally backsliding, Luce's vision has sustained American world leadership and it came to pass. With his prophesy fulfilled for half a century, also will be fulfilled with the next 50 years. Let us hope so and let us work for it. Thank you very much. [Applause]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Ambassador Hinton. We are delighted that you were able to be with us this evening. Your remarks are greatly appreciated.

Before I turn the microphone over to our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief "Gunner" Kent, I would just like to request that after the concluding ceremonies that you stick around for the show from the Sun Spots. When they first began their career in entertainment and got their start at, where else, a VFW Post in the Philippines and Okinawa.

I will turn the program back to Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief "Gunner" Kent.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Thank you very much. I would like to thank everybody for a special Distinguished Banquet tonight and for your attention during the ceremonies.

If everybody will please rise, we will now have the Benediction by the National Chaplain, Dr. Charles Edwards.

[Whereupon, National Chaplain Edwards gave the Benediction.]

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Thank you very much, comrades and sisters. That concludes our Distinguished Guests Banquet. Remember, we do have a show. Please stay around.

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 23, 1994

[The First Business Session of the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was called to order in the Barron Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, at 9:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Cramer.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Sergeants-at-Arms, will you prepare the room for the posting of the colors.

[National Sergeant-at-Arms George Sarver led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance and National Chaplain Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr., gave the Opening Prayer from the Ritual.]

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You may be seated. If you can quietly come in, we would like to start the proceedings. As people are coming in, let me take this opportunity to introduce the people that are sitting on the dias. I know you know most of them.

First of all, I would like to introduce the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, "Gunner" Kent, from Arizona; our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera from Massachusetts; our Judge Advocate General, Jim Plick from New Jersey; our Surgeon General, Dr. Howard W. Bryant from Washington; our Chaplain, from Texas, Dr. Charles Edwards.

Also the Chief of Staff from Iowa, Darrel "Sarge" Miller; and our Inspector General from Minnesota, Larry Ziebarth. Our Assistant Adjutant General for Administrative, John Senk; Quartermaster General Jim Bowden, and Assistant Quartermaster General Joe Ridgley.

If I may, as long as people are quietly coming in, I would like to introduce the Past Commanders-in-Chief on the dias this morning, not in any particular order. They are Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom; Past Commander-in-Chief and Director of our PAC, Bob Currieo; Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford Olson; Past Commander-in-Chief John Stang; Past Commander-in-Chief Norm Staab; Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron; Past Commander-in-Chief John Staum; Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace; Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden; Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock; Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas C. Walker; Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Hanson; our Adjutant General and Past Commander-in-Chief Howard Vander Clute, also Past Commander-in-Chief and Executive Director of our Washington office, Larry Rivers.

I would like to begin the proceedings this morning by calling on the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Richard Trombla.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174—Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report of this Committee as of last night. Total delegates 14,769; Department Commanders 43; National Officers 10; Past Commanders-in-Chief 23. That is for a grand total of 14,845 as of last night.

Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report of this Committee at this time.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. I missed a distinguished guest on the dais, the Southern Conference candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Jim Nier from Texas. I should have introduced Jim first.

I would like to call on our Adjutant General for any announcements that there may be this morning.

Convention announcements.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Next, I would like to call on the Chairman of the Committee on Convention Rules, Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON: Thank you. Good morning, comrades. I just wanted to make sure you were all awake out there. On behalf of the Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Convention Rules, Eric Sandstrom and myself, I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief Cramer for this appointment, and I will try to make it quick.

The Committee on Convention Rules to the 95th National Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Las Vegas, Nevada, met Monday afternoon, August 22nd, and agreed to the following recommendations which are respectfully submitted for your consideration:

1. That, with exceptions noted below, Demeter's Manual be recognized as parliamentary authority for this Convention.
2. That when a 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. Debate shall be limited to ten minutes for each speaker.
4. A delegate shall be permitted to speak but only twice on any one subject, or any pending resolution, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present; provided, that chairmen of Convention committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees; and in controversy the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity for final rebuttal.
5. All resolutions offered by individual delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or Department Adjutant and must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to committees.

6. 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.

7. 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 just 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.

8. This Convention will not consider any resolution dealing with race, creed or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. This Convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organization funds.

9. 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 approved by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

10. No person not a duly accredited delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, in a viva voce vote on any subject before the Convention.

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

12. On roll calls, the Chairman or acting Chairman of each delegation shall poll his delegation on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.

13. Delegations 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. 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 ten delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the delegates, without discussion of question.

15. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by ten delegates representing Posts in ten separate Departments.

16. 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 andelection of National Officers will be held according to the National Constitution and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, Article VI, Section 609.

17. 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.

18. Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present is necessary for suspension of the rules of this Convention. That is proposed by Cliff Olson, Jr., Chairman and Vice-Chairman Eric Sandstrom.

I move adoption, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. You have heard the motion. Is there a second? The microphones are on two sides.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ERIC SANDSTROM: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom from the State of Washington, and I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. Now, on the question. Hearing none, all those in favor will vote by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PRESENTATION OF VFW NEWS MEDIA AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO MR. JOSEPH GOULDEN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The VFW's News Media Award has, over the past decade, become an increasingly important honor. In an era when journalistic integrity and objective reporting have been given way to textbook journalism, sensationalism and rampant editorializing, those members of the media who value truth and simply wish to inform the public need to be singled our for recognition.

This year's recipient of the VFW News Media Award is just such an organization. Founded by veteran media critic and author Reed Irvine in 1969, Accuracy In Media or "AIM" has been a thorn in the mainstream media's side for nearly 25 years.

Accuracy in Media was created to combat the liberal bias infecting the nation's airwaves, newspapers and magazines. The mission of AIM is to foster accuracy and fairness in reporting, while investigating complaints of media error, distortion and bias and exposing them if the charges warrant.

Most of AIM's ire focuses on TV and newspapers, but magazines do not escape the organization's scrutiny. AIM's Director of Media Analysis, Joseph Goulden, a winner of a 1971 National Magazine Award and the author of 16 books, is dismayed by the prejudices he thinks distorts major magazines' coverage of issues like gay rights, the environment and the POW/MIA issue.

In an effort to reward integrity and journalistic excellence, we are proud to present this year's News Media Award to Accuracy In Media.

Here to accept the award is AIM's Director of Media Analysis, a U.S. Army veteran and respected military history author, James C. Goulden.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars News Media Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to 'Accuracy In Media' in special recognition of AIM's exceptional service to the American public through the fulfillment of its mission to foster accuracy and fairness in reporting by its assertive investigation of complaints of media error, distor-

tion and bias and its expose of warranty charges and in sincere appreciation of AIM's continuing efforts to combat the liberal bias infecting our nation's airwaves, newspapers and magazines." This award is signed by myself and Adjutant General Vander Clute.

Congratulations, Joe, in what you do for America.

RESPONSE—MR. JOSEPH GOULDEN

MR. GOULDEN: I accept this award on behalf of the founder and Chairman, Reed Irvine, who is a Combat Marine in the Second World War. I fought a lot of those guys in the Pacific. Yesterday morning, as my wife and I came through the Pittsburgh airport, there was one of your delegation there, and a fellow that is even grayer than I had a sign on his cap that said, "Remember Pearl Harbor."

That brought immediately to my mind something that is going on in Washington right now which our media has yet to pick up on, and it is the exhibit commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. I looked at this fellow in the Pennsylvania delegation, and I went back to what the script that the Smithsonian had written with taxpayer money.

Essentially, this exhibit said that we bombed Hiroshima, and actually, what these people were doing out there, the Japanese were defending their unique culture against the Western imperialism. This exhibit starts as if Pearl Harbor never existed as if and the Bataan death march never happened by the Japanese and the Asians, and it never occurred.

We are getting cracked up on this Accuracy In Media, and I hope we can inspire the media to take another look at this version of history and of the truth. Our goal essentially is to do to media what they do so vigorously for everyone. That is Accuracy In Media is an independent watchdog and try to correct errors when we find them.

A couple of issues I want to touch on briefly. In 1988, CBS News did a report called "The Wall Within", about six supposedly psychotic veterans, who were living as wild men in the Pacific Northwest. One of these men told Dan Rather, the interviewer, that he had personally skinned the lives of about 50 Vietnamese civilians, men, women and children. He had the psychotic episode that drove him off to live outside of society.

Reed Irvine was very suspicious of this report when it came out and he was trying to run down the identity of these barbarians. CBS News wouldn't turn the names over. They were shadowed interviews and we didn't know who they were. Finally, this story has been exposed to the work of the independent researcher by B. G. Birkett out of Dallas.

We got the names and the records, and we found these men did not have combat experiences they claimed. They were Vietnam REMS, some who are now drawing physical disability, simply psychotic. They have never been in the front lines or never have had any episodes such as they claim.

This goes back to something I recall from research I did a few years back on a book called "The Best Years About America in 1945 to 1950." I was really struck then in the way the media picked up on this vet syndrome. Any veteran in the armed services,

who had a couple of beers and got in a shuffle in a bar was a crazy veteran.

The VFW and other organizations fought that false image very well and I think finally expunged it from the press. What happens, though, when CBS News is proven wrong in such a crazed veteran story, they were given the service records of these six people that they featured in this broadcast. CBS News' response through Dan Rather was, "We stand by our story." CBS has not heard the last of this episode yet.

Another issue which was stressed very strongly by AIM, and that is the POW/MIA issue. I will go back to one of our favorite persons, Dan Rather, who wrote a rather lengthy piece in National Review earlier this year criticizing the Clinton Administration for distorting normal relations with the Communist regime in Hanoi, jumping up and down on Bill Clinton for doing this.

We went back and looked and saw exactly what Dan Rather suggested had been done in the way of reporting on the POW issue since the Clinton people came in office. In all of 1993, one story, one other brief mentioned period. We have been continuing all along the media voted the investigative press of this story, we could break it out in the open and find out what happened to those guys still missing from the four-year war era.

The media are not in the habit of committing error. The Washington Post, as a number of other newspapers, has a person assigned the job of ombudsman, these are the guys that go through the complaints. Richard Carlwood, while he held that position with the Post, had this to say in print about your rights as a person who has been aggrieved by the media.

"You are not entitled to a letter to the editor, you will not be entitled to a paid advertisement. If we don't like it, we don't print it. To ask for equal time on the evening news or reporting newspaper is very often the base of the mood. You have no right to fair treatment, right to be quoted accurately or in context, or even quoted at all in the news reports, broadcasts or commentaries."

Now, that is a fairly civilized newspaper, and that is the attitude they take towards truth in accuracy. It has been a new show all. As was said in the introduction, a lot of people are getting disgusted with the media and their ability to report accurately and fairly. There was a poll I noticed recently in the National Research Center about tracking public opinion on various power groups in America in the last 20 years. In 1973, they asked American adults, "What is your level of confidence in the media?" Hardly any, 15 percent, had any confidence, hardly any confidence at all.

In 1993, after 20 years of assertions, the figure was up to 39 percent that had hardly any confidence at all in the media. That is four out of ten people don't believe what the media are telling them. By contrast, people put great confidence in the military. In 1993, 42 percent were confident versus only 11 percent in the media. I think the media should be getting a message out of this, and not a very good message, that the people are not responding to distortion of the inaccuracies.

I will conclude by saying this: AIM, Accuracy In Media, we stand ready to go to the defense of the military establishment and of the veterans when you are mistreated by the media. We salute you,

and God bless every one of you men for what you have done for our country, and God's speed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Joe, along with your award is this honorarium of $1,500. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION—THE HONORABLE JESSE BROWN, SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and Sisters, it is a special pleasure to introduce to you our next speaker.

Sworn in on January 22nd by President Clinton as Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown has brought a new spirit and direction to the second largest Cabinet Department.

A decorated combat veteran of Vietnam, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1963, and served in Vietnam from August, 1965, to December, 1965. As a rifleman with the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, he was wounded in a fire fight near Da Nang.

Mr. Brown was formerly Executive Director of the Disabled American Veterans. Throughout his career, he has worked with and for veterans. His life has been truly dedicated to veterans' issues and concerns.

He began his employment with the DAV in 1967 in Chicago, moving to the DAV Headquarters in Washington in 1973. There, he served in a variety of positions with increasing responsibility, including Supervisor of the National Appeals Office and Deputy National Service Director.

He was appointed DAV Executive Director in 1988 and was responsible for overseeing DAV's National Service, Legislation, Employment, Volunteer Services and Communications Programs.

Jesse Brown has served as Chairman of the Vietnam Civic Committee, and was a member of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals and the Chicago Mayor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a fellow VFW Life Member and a true advocate for veterans, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown.

ADDRESS—THE HONORABLE JESSE BROWN, SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SECRETARY BROWN: Thank you so very much, Commander, for those very kind remarks. I was listening to George, our Sergeant-at-Arms out there, and I was wondering if he had aspirations for political office. He is very good at what he does. In fact, I wish I had him with me in Vietnam. He is outstanding.

Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Distinguished Officers, Fellow Members of the VFW, Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I do want you to know that I am so very, very happy to be here as we celebrate our 95th Convention. I want you to know that I am also making plans to attend our 150th National Convention. It is an honor as always to appear with Congressman Sonny Montgomery, the distinguished Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, who is rightfully known as the champion for our veterans.

He has proven time and time again that his feelings for our veterans and their families come from the heart. History, in my view, will probably never, never be able to fully measure the contributions this man has made to our nation and to those who have made such tremendous sacrifices and contributions on its behalf.

I also should like to share with you an observation about this great organization. The fact is great organizations do not just happen. It is no accident that the VFW has been so outstanding for so long. Harry Truman once said in times when there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things and make them better. Things are better because of the VFW and its leadership.

Commander-in-Chief George Cramer, Adjutant General Howard Vander Clute and Executive Director Larry Rivers do a wonderful job. They, and the rest of the excellent VFW staff, are there for you when you need them, and I want you to know that they are there for me, giving me advice and counsel.

I personally can never, never forget the Veterans Service Organization that put me on the path in life that has led me to my highest hopes. There is a special place in my heart for our veterans organizations and that will never change.

Some things have changed. For instance, the VA and the veterans organizations are working closely together on behalf of the veterans and their families. In the past year, together we have built a strong working relationship. I must tell you our good work together has not been without criticism.

I will tell you, frankly, there have been some very strong accusations made against me. I have been accused of being too close to veterans organizations. I have been accused of defending their interests too strongly. I have been accused of being too responsive to their hopes and to their dreams.

My friends, my fellow members, I say to you, the only jury that matters, I confess I am guilty. If it is a crime to work with those who have spent their lives helping our fellow veterans, I am guilty. If it is a crime to listen and be responsive to the needs of our disabled vets, I am guilty.

If it is a crime to work hard for the families of veterans who died for world peace, I am guilty. Of course, as you and I know working hard and putting veterans first is not a crime. It is, I suggest to you, our moral obligation to care for those who have won the battle. I make no apologies to anyone. I stand with you and that shall never, never change.

Last year, when I met with VFW leaders, they told me of your concerns. I heard that some things had happened at the VA for the first time. Over the past year, the VA veterans organizations working together have made important advancements on behalf of our veterans.

They are advancements involving former prisoners of war, Vietnam vets, Persian Gulf vets, women veterans and veterans for our homeless. For the first time, we have trained all 260,000 VA employees on how to treat our veterans, with dignity and respect when they come to our institutions.

For the first time, the VA wrote to nearly two million veterans inviting them to refinance their home loans. This saved them $450

million a year in interest payments. We also wrote to 40,000 veterans suffering from the effects of Agent Orange. We informed them that the VA is now paying compensation for acne, for various forms of lymphoma, soft tissue sarcoma, Hodgkin's disease, liver disorder, PTC and multi-myeloma and respiratory cancers.

Of course, we have not forgotten about our Persian Gulf veterans. We are providing immediate medical care and engaging in extensive research. I believe very strongly that we have a moral obligation to compensate those with undiagnosed illnesses.

I have told Congress so and I have written to all 535 members asking them to support legislation to accomplish this goal. Because of Chairman Sonny Montgomery, who is here with us today, the House has done its job and now we are waiting on the Senate to act.

For the first time, the VA has made helping homeless veterans a top priority. We have increased spending by $20 million. We held the first National Summit and we established a new $5.5 million grant program for public and non-profit organizations.

The VA is also addressing the concerns of women veterans. We have appointed a National Coordinator and have established comprehensive health centers. For the first time, we have established task forces to include the VFW to help us reduce our backlog and process our claims in a more timely manner.

We have also made great progress on some other issues that I know that many of you are concerned about. That is the reason why we are going to compensate former prisoners of war who developed ischemic heart disease, secondary health problems.

For the first time, veterans are represented in the development of health care reform. Your VA staff, and I say "your VA staff" because all 260,000 of them work for you. If it were not for you, the VA as an institution would not exist and they would not exist.

So, therefore, I always refer to VA employees to include myself as your servant. They were deeply involved in helping formulate the health reform proposals. As a member of the Health Care Task Force, I must tell you quite frankly I was shocked at the number of people who wanted to take our Veterans Hospitals away from us.

But we told them through your VA employees that this would be contrary to the moral obligation this nation has to those who have served and served honorably. We explained to them that we needed these hospitals to take care of the 670,000 who were wounded in World War II, the 100,000 that were wounded in Korea, the 300,000 that were wounded in Vietnam and the 500 that were wounded in the Persian Gulf. And, of course, those who will become wounded in future wars.

We explained that we needed these hospitals to provide nursing home-care for our older veterans, our World War I veterans and World War II veterans, our Korean veterans, and, of course, not too far beyond them are our Vietnam veterans. We might think of ourselves as young brats, but we are getting on up there. So, we need these hospitals to take care of our older veterans, to provide nursing home-care and to do research to improve the quality of care for all of our veterans.

Also to back up our military hospitals in times of national emergency and, of course, to take care of all veterans who have served

the nation and served it well. I want you to know that when we had finished negotiating, we walked away with a commitment that this nation's VA Hospitals will be maintained as a separate entity for our veterans. And I am excited about that.

We have a commitment that our service-connected former prisoners of war and our low income veterans who pay nothing for their care, they will also be eligible for extra VA services not included in the national package, services such as long-term nursing home-care.

On the health-care reform, we will open our doors to all veterans who want to get their care from the VA. For the first time in history, when a veteran comes to a VA Hospital, he or she will receive full, comprehensive care, everything that is needed to stay healthy.

There will be no more questions about conditions that are not service-connected, but just service, just medical care, and that is as it should be. We have urged Congress to work very closely with the Chairman here to pass a bill that protects the best interest of all our veterans, those who have given so very, very much to our nation.

We all know, quite frankly, that this is a time of great challenge for the VA's health-care delivery system. But I believe very, very strongly by looking in the depths of my heart that with the VFW's help, the VA will rise to accept that challenge.

You may have heard that two VA employees were accused of illegally removing documents from veterans' files. I say to you that this is a betrayal of the trust that you have placed in them. I want you to know in this place at this time that anyone caught destroying your records will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

There should be no guessing when it comes to Jesse Brown. Some people might refer to me as the honorable or the secretary. But the bottom line is Jesse Brown has been a national service officer for 27 years and he is going to die a national service officer.

As a national service officer, I understand, and they must understand, that we need those records to establish claims for service connection, increased evaluation, educational benefits for our children and medical care for our veterans and their families. Therefore, we are not going to tolerate that kind of behavior. We are just not going to do it.

As I look back at these and other issues, I feel that we can be proud of what we have accomplished together. I do not suggest that all of the VA's problems are solved. We continue to place and face many challenges, but we have proven that working together we can get things done. I know that this progress will continue.

Recently, I was reminded of why we do what we do; why we have a moral obligation to help our veterans. I had the honor of attending ceremonies in France, marking the 50th Anniversary of the landings at Normandy. I was proud to see Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera and Adjutant General Howard Vander Clute there.

I was so glad, very, very glad that the VFW was there representing our veterans who are World War II veterans. Paul, Howard and I knew that we were in a sacred place, 50 years after D-Day. I looked out at the sea which carried so many of our young men to an uncertain destiny.

I looked at Omaha Beach, where every foot of sand was paid for with the mud of our veterans. I looked at the cliffs where the American Rangers achieved the impossible, and then I knew that in that sacred place that freedom is not free. There, in that sacred place, it became clear that 400,000 who died and 700,000 who were wounded in World War II advanced the cause of freedom and world peace.

This, my friends, is a story that has been played out many times and many places and in many wars, wars like Korea where 35,000 died, and more than 100,000 were wounded, and wars like Vietnam where nearly 60,000 died and over 300,000 were wounded.

During the span of our nation's history, over 40 million Americans have accepted the challenge to defend our nation's principles and our democratic institutions. They did so at a price. As a result, we must be certain that those who have fought to defend our freedom are not disadvantaged because of their service.

There are those who may have forgotten why the VFW and the VA exist, why this nation has a sacred obligation to our veterans. Unlike many bureaucrats and politicians, when you and I think about veterans, we think about our friends, our buddies.

We think about our mothers, our fathers, and we think about our sons and daughters. We think about the veteran that comes to the VA for care. We think about the mother and father whose son shall never, come home. We think about a young wife learning that her husband will be disabled for life.

We think about the families and their hopes and dreams that will change forever. For these reasons, the VFW and VA understand the price of freedom. The VFW and VA understand the sacrifices that veterans and their families have made for our nation.

The VFW and VA understand that we have a sacred obligation to care for those who have borne the battle, and that is why we do what we do. Together, I suggest to you, we will continue to fight to assure those that have served, those that have been wounded and disabled, and those that have died receive the respect and honor they have deserved from a grateful nation. So, thank you very, very much. God bless you all.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Secretary Jesse Brown.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I want you to know that on behalf of all of you going out and raising all the money for the Golden Age Games, that is one time we saw the Secretary smile this year, just a couple of months ago, when Larry Rivers and I went into the Secretary's office in Washington and presented him, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a check for $50,000.

Mr. Secretary, I know you said you are going to make plans for the 150th Anniversary of this great organization and you said you were going to die a service officer. Mr. Secretary, you are a Life Member and General Order No. 1 says you cannot die. [Applause]

PRESENTATION OF VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO MR. PETER GRAVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Each year the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall of Fame Award honors an individual from the field of entertainment who has made a significant contribution to

America and her veterans. We are particularly delighted to honor this year's recipient this morning.

Our honoree has combined an enormously successful film acting career, from the classic "Stalag 17" to the hilarious "Airplane," with an equally rewarding TV career encompassing more than a half-dozen series, several major mini-series and numerous movies-for-television.

Since his film debut in "Rouge River," he has starred in a host of leading roles in such motion pictures as "The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell," "A Rage to Live," "The Raid," "The Ballad of Josie," "The Long Grey Line," "Texas Across the River," "Five Man Army," "Number One With a Gun," "Airplane II" and others.

His series credits include "Court-Martial," "Whiplash," "Fury" and "The Rebels," plus two Time-Life series, "Discover: The World of Science," in national syndication and on PBS–TV.

Additionally, he created the role of Palmer Kirby on ABC–TV's "The Winds of War" mini-series and reprised that role for "War and Remembrance."

He continues with his hosting chores for the third season of Arts & Entertainment Network's popular "Biography" series.

Despite a long and successful career on both the big and small screen our guest is most often remembered for his six seasons as the leader of an elite team of specialists fighting crime, corruption and radical foreign dictators on "Mission Impossible." That role established him as a star of international importance, a status that continues undiminished.

But we are here this morning to honor him for his real life role, that of a compassionate veteran.

Enlisting in the United States Air Force after high school, he developed an appreciation for America's veterans that has continued throughout his career. Over the past year he has served as the National Chairman and Spokesman for the Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program.

Those who work with the program have developed a unique affection for our guest. To quote them, "He has been a hands-on chairman, visiting the hospitals and establishing relationships with the veterans. On one occasion he passed up a TV guest appearance to be a part of the Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in crested Butte, Colorado. At that event, in spite of fatigue and altitude sickness, he invited the wheelchair-bound participants back to his room and enjoyed their company into the wee hours.

In a word, he has been the very best chairman the Hospitalized Veterans could have asked for. In addition to his work with hospitalized veterans, he will shortly begin taping a documentary on the G.I. Bill. He was eager to do this documentary as it was the G.I. Bill that, following his Air Force duty, allowed him to pursue his education and training as an actor.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I now introduce a veteran, humanitarian, Chairman of the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, star of films and television, and this year's recipient of the VFW's Hall of Fame Award, Mr. Peter Graves.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Peter Graves.

"In special recognition of his singularly successful film acting career and equally exceptional television career and his hosting for the third season of Arts & Entertainment Network's 'Biography' series and in grateful appreciation for the countless hours of service he devoted to veterans as the 1994 Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Chairman and for his plans to do a special documentary on the G.I. Bill which enabled him to enroll at the University of Minnesota as a drama major."

This citation is signed by myself today as Commander-in-Chief and by Howard Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

Let me say along with this citation we have two checks for you, one for $2,500 for Citizens Assisting the Pacific Palisade Youth, and one for $2,500 for the Motion Picture and Television Fund. We would like to see you get "Mission: Impossible" back on TV.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to recipient Peter Graves.]

RESPONSE—MR. PETER GRAVES

MR. PETER GRAVES: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief Cramer. Mr. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Boy, what a thrill to be here with you. It is a thrill to have these donations by your wonderful organization. The Motion Picture and Television Fund, I am sure you have all heard about it. It does wonderful work, including the motion picture country home and hospital, and all sorts of things for people in need in my business.

The other to the Citizens Assisting Palisades Youth, that is my wife's favorite charity. She is one of the founders of it and works most diligently in its behalf. She was not able to be here with me today, but I know how deeply she thanks you for that.

That is the best introduction I have ever had and the longest, I think. It made me think of something, a picture I forget about every once in a while, and I have done it and I should not. It was called "The Long Grey Line." As many of you may remember, it is a story of West Point from the early days of this century on up through World War II, and a marvelous old guy, Marty Monker, who served there for something like 50 years. Probably many of you know about this.

Well, I was in that film, and we made a great deal of it, most of it, at the United States Military Academy. It was directed by one of the great, great all-time directors, John Ford. Now, I am sure you have heard about him. He did "She Wore A Yellow Ribbon," "Stage Coach," and so many wonderful films.

I played a young corporal in the Army, about 1900, who was courting or trying to court a young lady played by Maureen O'Hara. This is already easy work. Now, it comes along there is another fellow by the name of Tyrone Power who is a rival.

We kind of mix it up every once in a while in vying for the affections and attentions of Maureen O'Hara. One of the scenes called for us to have a fight, a fist-fight in the stable yard. Now, of course, we filmed this in the mid-'50s and there were no longer any stables at West Point or no horses, fumes or whatever at that time.

What the way old man Ford wanted, and he could be cranky when he wanted to, what he wanted was for us to fight in the sta-

ble yard in a pile of horse manure. So it came the day for this to take place, and the prop guys had done a super job. There wasn't any horse manure, but they had straw and mud and a mixture of things ten feet high that looked exactly like the real stuff, and on the screen you couldn't tell the difference.

We showed up at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, and old man Ford said, "What is that?" They said, "Mr. Ford, we can't get the real stuff, so we put together this straw and mud and all these things." He said, "I want horse manure. I want it tomorrow morning at 8:00 o'clock."

Well, that day, trucks went out all over upstate New York to all the farms they could find looking for horse manure. By George, at 8:00 o'clock the next morning they had a pile of it about ten feet high. Even as big a star as Tyrone Power couldn't get out of this.

Now, old man Ford loved it. We fought all day long in this pile of stuff. I think I spent the whole night in a bath after that. I couldn't come near Maureen O'Hara for several days.

Ford was a brilliant director, but he could be very cranky at times. There was, as you remember, at West Point they had a football coach named Red Blake, one of the greatest coaches of all time. We had the whole cadet corps on parade one day for filming to use in the film. Of course, that is an impressive sight.

Ford had arranged this. This was really a rehearsal for him. He always did what he wanted to do with his cameras and so forth. So, Red Blake was standing watching these cadets on parade, and when they finished, they passed by and Red Blake had tears in his eyes.

He turns to Mr. Ford and he said, "Mr. Ford, if you can just keep your cameras turning and you can get it just like that, it will be something." Ford said, "Sometime I will tell you how to coach your damn football team." Well, that is life in the picture business.

John Ford is gone from us now, but pictures and television continue and the needs of veterans continue and veterans' affairs and interests must be addressed. You all do so and you do it well and with diligence. I am proud to be among you. I thank you immensely for these honors you have give me today.

PRESENTATION—VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO THE HONORABLE G. V. "SONNY" MONTGOMERY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you a friend of the VFW and our nation's veterans. A true patriot, he has given a lifetime of service to the nation in uniform and in the United States Congress.

Now serving his fourteenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, he joined the House Committee of Veterans Affairs in 1969. Two years later he was appointed to the Armed Services Committee. Service in these two positions has enabled him to stand vigil over the entitlements and services for our military personnel, our veterans and their families.

Our honored guest assumed the chairmanship of the House Veterans Affairs Committee in 1981. For his leadership in the crusade for a permanent peacetime G.I. Bill, a new Bill, now known as the Montgomery G.I. Bill, was signed into law by the President on June 1, 1987.

His effectiveness as Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee can best be measured by the manner in which he has been able to protect and fine-tune veterans entitlements and services.

A retired Major General of the Mississippi National Guard, his active and reserve service includes duty in World War II in the European Theater with the 12th Armored Division.

It is my privilege to introduce a fellow comrade, a Life Member of VFW Post 79, in Meridian, Mississippi, a friend, and in the finest tradition of Southern grace, a true gentleman, the Honorable G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Gold Medal of Merit and this Citation awarded to G. V. 'Sonny' Montgomery, United States Representative, District 3, Mississippi.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation for his enduring efforts, singular knowledge, assertive leadership and exceptional service as Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee and senior member of the Armed Services Committee and his unwavering support for the men and women of the armed forces, our nation's veterans and their families through his vigilant fights to preserve and strengthen veterans entitlements, protect the interests of the members of the armed forces and especially his dedication to advance educational and training benefits for veterans as embodied in the Montgomery G.I. Bill."

This citation has been signed today by myself, as Commander-in-Chief, and by Howard Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

Congratulations, Sonny, and thank you, Mr. Congressman, for what you do for our veterans.

RESPONSE—THE HONORABLE G. V. MONTGOMERY

CONGRESSMAN MONTGOMERY: Good morning. I tell you it is a tough act to follow the Secretary and Peter Graves, but I will try. I have been watching the doors and there have not been many of you that have left, so thank you very much.

Commander-in-Chief Cramer, please make General Order No. 2 live forever. You gave the Secretary No. 1 and I would like to have No. 2 on behalf of a number of World War II veterans out there, also.

To the other National Officers of the VFW and to Secretary Brown and to Mr. Graves, to Diane Evans, who will be on the program, other Distinguished Guests and my Fellow VFW Members:

I am very proud. In fact, the first veterans organization I joined after I got home from Europe in 1946 was the VFW on 8th Street, I believe. In my remarks, I have got to do that to catch up with these other two fellows. I mentioned to Howard Vander Clute that it showed that I joined the VFW in 1976.

I joined the VFW in 1947. I was one of the Post Officers in 1948, and I am proud of that. As Secretary Brown mentioned, he could use the Sergeant-at-Arms George, who got order here this morning. We certainly could use him, Commander-in-Chief, in the Congress of the United States. [Applause] I see you agree with that.

About six months ago, I went to my VFW State Convention in Jackson, Mississippi. I talked to my comrades in Mississippi. I said, "I know you are doing well in your membership drive for 1994."

They said, "No, Sonny, we are not doing very well. We are about at 80 percent."

So I and others gave them a challenge. We said, "You have got six months before the Convention. Let's get busy." They did, Mr. Commander-in-Chief. They are now 103 percent. You have got them on the second row.

Commander Byrd and Johnnie Sartor and others over there, thank you for the job that you did. I feel right at home here today. You say, "Hello, Sonny" and some of you say "Hello, Senator." I am on the House side, but you can call me Senator. I don't mind.

I wasn't sure whether we were going to make it or not. We were working on the Crime Bill in the House of Representatives. I told Jesse Brown we did pass the bill. It has gone over to the Senate side now. Even if we pass the Crime Bill, I don't believe I would go get in any dark alleys. I don't know what these people will do.

Thank you very much to the VFW for your Medal of Merit and Citation. I am very proud to have this award. I hope next year if I am invited back that I can wear this medallion. It is a special award and I appreciate it very much.

I do know that the record we have established in Congress for veterans would not be possible without the help that we have had from the VFW, and also I would like to mention the Ladies Auxiliary, what they have done, especially the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, which is so strong and does a tremendous job. I congratulate you with working with the VFW full membership.

I am very pleased that the VFW has chosen the Beech Aerospace Services Corporation, a worldwide aircraft logistics training and support company to receive the Large Employer of the Year Award. I understand that this national award is given annually to a company for its outstanding policies and achievements in hiring, promoting and retraining veterans.

The VFW has picked a good one. I know the company well, Commander-in-Chief. Its headquarters is in Madison, Mississippi. That is also in my congressional district. I don't think it had anything to do with winning this award. I am sorry that Dan Grafton will be here tomorrow. He is the Beechcraft President.

He is a wonderful person and a great company, who employs about 600 people. They have got another contract to move up to 900. I know a large part of that number will be veterans that they will hire, because they believe in this veterans preference, even though they are private enterprise. I sure wish the U.S. Post Office could honor veterans like Beech Aerospace has done and hire more veterans.

I want to commend you, Commander-in-Chief Cramer, for inviting me to the 95th National Convention. The last year under your leadership, Commander, the VFW has accomplished much since you were elected at the last Convention. The last time I saw you, sir, was at the 50th Anniversary of the D-Day Ceremonies, and it was an unforgettable week.

It is always a pleasure to be with my friend, Howard Vander Clute. Howard's record as your National Adjutant General speaks for itself. I had a nice visit with he and his wife last night. The organization has grown and prospered during the years he occupied

this crucial position. Howard is retiring after this Convention, and we wish him well and we will miss you also, Howard.

I want to thank Larry Rivers and his excellent staff for all they do on Capitol Hill. They really help us out in every piece of legislation that comes out of our Committee over there. The VFW, under Larry Rivers, has had something to do with what is in that Bill.

They have helped shape, as I said, every piece of legislation that comes out of our Committee. Larry Rivers runs the best banquet in Washington honoring members of Congress and knows how to get us out on time every time. I value the friendship of both of these two gentlemen that I have mentioned, and they have done a great job for the VFW.

Of course, I want to recognize the very able Secretary of Veterans Affairs, my good friend, Jesse Brown. Jesse, I appreciate your staying here. Most times in Washington, after you make a speech, you get up and leave. Thank you, Jesse, for staying. He is a good Secretary.

I want him to hear this. He has firmly established himself as a champion of veterans. The best thing about it is that you veterans like him. He has taken a lot of heat. He has taken a lot of heat for what is called the Office of Management and Budget.

They kind of tell the Congress what they would hope they would do to represent the administration. The White House has been on him, but he is still for issues for veterans. There is no doubt that he is the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and make no mistake about it. He stands up for us a lot of times. I see him up there dealing with legislation. Thank you again, Jesse Brown, for all you do.

Let me thank all of the delegates for your outstanding work through the years. If we don't have strong Posts back in the different states, we can't do a job in Washington. You have to go see the members of Congress, and you the Senators if you are going to get things done.

There are other organizations out there working against us trying to get these funds and we need your help. Please continue to work on veterans issues. I appreciate very much your stand for a strong national defense. This has been really an unforgettable year for our veterans.

This year we celebrated the milestone in national and world history, the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. On June 6, 1944, the military force, 175,000 Americans, British and Canadian troops launched the most massive sea and air assault ever attempted in the history of the world.

The goal was to liberate Europe and restore freedom to those people. The invasion was in the beginning of the end of the war and pushing the deadlock out. The Speaker of the House authorized me to be chairman of the group, and we took 27 members of the House to Normandy during the week of June 6th.

While there, Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Secretary Brown and our delegation joined President Clinton and other heads of state to pay tribute to the brave men and women who participated in the invasion. This story is a powerful part of both our past and future.

Many of you served in that historic military conflict. I went in about the fourth month after June 6th. How many of you did go into Europe—hold up your hands—in World War II? Don't be bash-

ful. How many were in the Pacific Theater? I want to tell you we have not forgotten you either. We are going to have a celebration.

General Kicklighter told me last night that we have already had several celebrations out in the Pacific and some more will be going on. Thank you for the job that you have done in World War II.

Some of you also have great distinction in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and other distant places. The delegates here have a common bond which makes this organization great. We believe in duty in mind, bravery in heart and purpose in spirit. You had it then, and please keep it.

We need it more than ever to talk about patriotism and love of our country. The D-Day Celebrations reminded us of the courage and sacrifice that inspired President Roosevelt to sign into law two Bills 50 years ago, three weeks after the Normandy Invasion. They have been touched on this morning.

On June 22nd of this year, Secretary Brown and I joined President Clinton in the 50th Anniversary celebration of the signing of the G.I. Bill of Rights, and with the help of the veterans organizations, Congress created the G.I. Bill to help veterans readjust to civilian life.

Many people here today have benefitted from that Bill, either by education from the different wars or the home loans. Those that have benefitted by the G.I. Bill hold up your hand. It is most of the audience, Mr. Secretary, here today.

I still live in the same home I financed under the G.I. Bill. I thought I had a four-percent interest, Mr. Secretary, but it was four and a quarter, but we will not worry about that. This G.I. Bill passed that long ago will probably be the greatest piece of legislation passed in this century. It moved America forward and you were a part of it.

I am going to talk to you about the Veterans Preference Act. We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of this Preference Act. As a result of that, the legislation of the Federal Government is currently deleting the employee. The Federal Government all right. Most of the departments do hire veterans.

They do hire our veterans under the Government Preference Act. Recognizing the value of this legislation, President Clinton said, "This nation owes a great deal to our men and women who have worn our country's uniform. The prosperity and freedom we enjoy today are the priceless gifts of their service and commitment."

The President affirmed these remarks recently when he directed the Justice Department to drop an appeal of a ruling against the U.S. Postal Service. The Postal Service violated the Veterans Preference Act while implementing a reorganization plan.

Secretary Brown asked the administration not to appeal the case. I asked the President of the United States not to appeal the case, and the VFW acted promptly and got in touch with the President. Now, it was not appealed. Let me share with you the response.

We have had some critics and criticism who say the Veterans Preference Act makes it difficult for minorities and women to get some of the better jobs in the Federal Government. I am quick to tell them as Chairman of the Veterans Committee my job is to stand up for veterans, male and female of any race, creed or herit-

age. As long as I am Chairman, I am going to see that these veterans are protected.

We have had many good years working with the VFW. I would like to mention a few of the things. We have done the best we could to protect and strengthen one of the best medical systems in the world. Yes, I know there are a lot of problems out there, and you see them because you go there in the hospitals and the out-patient clinics. We are trying to get that corrected, and we are working with the Secretary on that.

We have protected and expanded the compensation of the VIC and pension programs. We have expanded and reformed the home loan program. We have re-established new programs for the homeless veterans. We have set up Vietnam veterans cancer centers and for post-traumatic stress disorders.

We have provided special medical care and compensation for veterans exposed to Agent Orange, and we have established a new U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals. So we have had some help along the line by the staff that I have mentioned today.

I would like to recognize my staff director, Mack Fleming, who is really a true veteran, and Carl Commentator also. I wish they would stand. They are on our Committee and do everything they can for veterans and the VFW knows it. You two stand up. I would appreciate it if you would give them a hand. [Applause]

Mack Fleming helped make the speech, so I guess he didn't want to hear it anymore. We passed the 1995 VA Appropriations Bill. I will be brief on that. It is $37 billion to run the VA system that Jesse Brown has. It includes $16 billion for medical care, and that is $111 million more than the President requested.

It is also $610 million more than we got in 1994. We are getting some more money now to run the Veterans Hospitals. In this appropriation, it has passed and these are the final figures. It includes $252 million in medical research, $41 million more than proposed by this or the last administrations.

I am sold on medical care in the VA system. They do a lot of good for the veterans. They don't get much credit for it. They have made a lot of us live longer and in less pain. When we get their good medical research, the accomplishments, we pass it on to the civilian sector. We have done a lot of things. If I had more time, I would just cover some of them. Medical research is certainly important in the VA.

On general operating expenses, we have an increase of $44 million. Now, $10 million of that will go to processing of claims and backlog of cases. I have talked to Secretary Brown about this. We have a problem. It takes too long to process the claims in cases, and we ought to do better and we will try.

Under the administration's plan to reinvent government, which passed in Congress earlier this year, 252,000 federal employees must be cut from the payroll during the next five years. The VA's share of the reduction would be about 27,000 people.

Now, 25,000 of that total would come from the VA medical staff, 5,000 cut in medical personnel, professionals in the next five years. We quickly introduced a bill exempting the VA Hospitals from the personnel cuts. The House passed the bill in April over the opposition of the Administration.

One hundred eighteen members of the House voted against the bill. That is one of the highest numbers we have ever had to oppose a veterans bill. I don't like to get any votes against my bills. I didn't like it a darn bit when they voted against that bill.

Some of them are finding out about it back home. The bill is now pending in the Senate. You might work on the Senate. Don't see staff members in the Senate. Get a hold of the Senators and say, "Listen, I want you to pass that bill over there" and we will get something done.

On August 8th, the House passed and sent to the Senate, our Bill 4386, the Persian Gulf War Benefits Act. This is for Persian Gulf veterans who are seriously ill. We have not been able to diagnose what is wrong with them. Therefore, there is no compensation that could be paid to them.

Secretary Brown supports this legislation. It is not a budget buster. The Secretary will approve each case, but it will give compensation to some of these veterans. We don't know what is wrong with them and we need to get that bill moving in the Senate.

Health-care reform, we will be very busy the remainder of the year and we will be since we have gotten the Crime Bill out of the way working on health-care reform. Mr. Cramer, I want to sincerely thank you and your staff, Jim Magill and others, for working so closely with us and the veterans organizations to come up with a workable bill.

We are included in the general hard bill health care and we will be putting in the Senate bill the bipartisan health care bill. The veterans part of the health care pending before Congress could not be better. Veterans would come out real well. We do have health-care legislation.

The bottom line is that in health-care reform the veteran will be given more options and different medical care than he or she is given now. Now, the Enola Gay, you know what the aircraft is. That is the one that is led by great pilots of the atomic bomb in World War II, and bringing the war to a close.

I want to mention something that some of you VFW members know about and some of you don't know about it and should know about it. Next August, the Smithsonian Institute will have the exhibit in the Air Space Museum entitled "The Last Act."

This museum is the most visited of any other museums any place else in Washington. "The Last Act" is the atomic bomb at the end of World War II. There is much controversy about it and the VFW leadership and I are working to see if we can get this changed.

Those in charge of the exhibit are trying to show that President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb was wrong. The exhibit would attempt to convey the message that Japan was not the aggressor in World War II. Now, I knew that would get your attention.

When I first heard about it, I asked the Smithsonian officials to meet with the VFW and other veterans organizations. They did that. We have let everyone know we are concerned about this. Now, if something comes out like this, where it is a very explosive situation from veterans throughout the country, and I certainly hope that it will be.

I am reminded of the deep sorrow that I felt when I was visiting the Island of Corregidor in 1987 and reflected on the horrors experienced at the hands of the Japanese by the American soldiers, forced to take part in the Bataan death march.

I reminded them that President Truman's decision to drop the bomb saved hundreds of thousands of American lives and that the Pacific to be displayed otherwise should not be allowed. I know you are glad I am wrapping it up here. I have enjoyed it.

I am very proud of our legislative record that we have worked with the organization over the last 28 years. We have been very fortunate to work with a number of VFW Commanders and VFW staff, and I have really relied on these VFW Commanders.

Commander-in-Chief, I would like to restate the names of those here today that have really helped me and guided us in the past 14 or 15 years. They are Howard Vander Clute, Art Fellwock, Bob Currieo, Cliff Olson, Billy Ray Cameron, John Staum, Norman Staab, the late Earl Stock, Larry Rivers, Wally Hogan, Jim Kimery, Bob Wallace, Jack Carney and George Cramer.

Also, I want to recognize another former National Commander who has been a great help to all of us, a source of strength to us. He is a former long-time Washington Executive Director of the National, Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt. I wish these gentlemen would just stand up and let me thank them with you for the work they have done for us. [Applause]

I am proud to be a member of the VFW because you are big and strong. When you talk in Washington, Congress listens. One of your areas of work is to do everything that you can for the veteran or his or her dependent. Another area that you are strong in, and there are few organizations that do this, you believe in a strong military defense.

I hope you will continue to push for a strong military defense. We are cutting the military too much and too fast, and I am concerned about it.

Now, listen to this. I want to thank the good Lord that the VFW does score members of Congress on how they vote on the military. Keep it up. We pay attention to it. God bless the VFW and God bless the USA.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Congressman Sonny Montgomery.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Congressman Montgomery, not only for your diligent work over the many years on behalf of our nation's veterans, but I also want to thank you and your staff for always keeping the door open so we can discuss veterans issues.

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: It is always a great pleasure when we have the opportunity to honor one of our own for a lifetime of distinguished service.

The gentleman I wish to introduce has, for more than 42 years, unselfishly given his time and energy to our great organization. He is a veteran of World War II, having served in the European Thea-

ter as a gunner on a B–17 Flying Fortress in Italy from November, 1943, until November, 1945.

For his service, he received the European, African Middle Eastern Service Medal, an Air Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

Returning at the end of World War II, he joined VFW Post 3061 in Vermillion, South Dakota, in July, 1948. He is still a member of that Post.

He became a mail carrier in 1946 and retired from the U.S. Postal Service 34 years later in 1980. While working full-time in 1952, he accepted the position as Adjutant/ Quartermaster of the Department of South Dakota.

He is the father of eight sons and three daughters. One son, Major Randall Radigan, spent three years in Vietnam as a medical dust off pilot. Another son, William, Jr., has 26 years of service in the U.S. Air Force and is currently a major in Weisbaden, Germany.

William, Sr., resides in Vermillion, where he is also a member of the American Legion, the Vermillion Fire Department and a member of the Vermillion City Council.

Our purpose here today is to honor Comrade Radigan as he continues to perform as Adjutant/Quartermaster of South Dakota.

Few men have given so much for so long to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. His outstanding record has created a standard by which those of us who continue the work can aspire.

Please join me in a warm welcome for a veteran who has given much to make the VFW great, William J. Radigan, Sr., from the great State of South Dakota.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to William J. Radigan, Sr.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of 42 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 State Quartermaster of the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States."

This citation has been signed today by myself as Commander-in-Chief and by Howard Vander Clute as the Adjutant General.

Bill, you know many times we have honored those that retire, but I think it is important and very fitting and proper that we need to look at the people that give of their time for so many years and award them while they are still working for us. We really appreciate people like yourself.

RESPONSE—COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN, SR.

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061—South Dakota): Commander-in-Chief Cramer, the distinguished individuals on the podium, and to all the Post Commanders-in-Chief, and to you, my Comrades, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

It would have helped if I had known this was going to happen. I am so honored and feel such an emotional high today that I don't think any of you could understand it if I tried to explain it to you. I think it is appropriate that today I extend some thanks to two ladies who have worked in our office through the 42 years, one for

11 and one for 31 years. Rena and Shirley Potts have been such a help to me.

I am grateful to my wife who for 40 years before she left us worked so closely with me. I am grateful to all my comrades and sisters in the Department of South Dakota who made this all possible for me. When I took the job, I agreed to stay 18 months, and then I was going to be on my way to other things.

It has been a great trip and I am still active and I still enjoy it. This honor is something that few people get. Naturally, I am deeply, deeply moved. My appreciation is known only to me.

As I look out in this room today, I think I would like to have you know something else about me. First, I have to thank my children who gave up some things, all 11 of them, so I could do this job. I want to thank my God for giving me the ability and the strength to do it, and then I want to say something to all of you.

This is a great honor, and I don't belittle it, but there is a greater honor in this organization as far as I am concerned. I have known most of these men as they walk through their offices. It has been wonderful. Today, I have a privilege and an honor.

I can walk out into this audience and it will make no difference what the man's military rank was, it will make no difference what position he holds in civilian life, it will make no difference what his financial status might be. The only thing that makes any difference today here is that all of you have offered service to the great United States of America and that you are eligible to belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

My greatest honor as long as I shall live will be that when I walk up to one of you I can shake your hand and call you "comrade". There is no greater honor. I am appreciative of what you have done for me today, Commander-in-Chief, and my friend George. I certainly appreciate it. I will cherish it all my life. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Comrade Radigan.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I would like to call on our Adjutant General for a few announcements. [Convention announcements.]

PRESENTATION—VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM G. PAGONIS, USA (RET.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: We are indeed very honored to have with us today the man responsible for two of the most significant logistical operations of the past decade, the dismantling of the Cold War infrastructure of the U.S. Army in Europe and total logistical operations for Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Retired Army Lieutenant General William G. "Gus" Pagonis.

Based on his Desert Storm experience, he co-authored a book entitled "Moving Mountains—Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Cold War."

To put the Desert Storm feat in perspective, one book reviewer described the situation as follows: "Pagonis' logisticians and transporters moved 560,000 service personnel and their equipment to Saudi Arabia, the equivalent of relocating the entire City of Rich-

mond, Virginia, and everything in it, halfway around the world; supplying and repositioning them over an area larger than half of the Eastern United States.''

Today, he is a Senior Vice-President for Logistics for Sears, Roebuck & Company, the single point of contact for logistics for Sears.

A native of Pennsylvania, General Pagonis served with the 501st Infantry, 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam in 1970–'71. He is the recipient of the Silver Star, Bronze Star for Valor with Three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Combat Infantry Badge among others.

For his contribution to the success of Operation Desert Storm, I am pleased to present the Commander-in-Chief's Gold Medal of Merit to a distinguished soldier and logistician, William G. ''Gus'' Pagonis. General Pagonis has indicated that he wishes to contribute the honorarium accompanying the Gold Medal of Merit Award to the VFW sponsorship of the Golden Age Games.

Please welcome a great soldier, executive and Life Member of VFW Post 167 in Charleroi, Pennsylvania, William ''Gus'' Pagonis.

''Veterans of Foreign Wars Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to William G. Pagonis, Lieutenant General, United States Army, in recognition of over 29 years of distinguished service to his country in the United States Army, which included duty as the Commander of the 1097th Transportation Company in Vietnam and later as the Division Transportation Officer of the 101st Airborne Division during its deployment in Vietnam, and for his role as Commanding General, 22nd Theater Army Area Command, United States Central Command, Saudi Arabia, from August, 1990, to January, 1992, an assignment that required his taking full responsibility for logistics during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

''His inspiring leadership manifests itself in the fact that Operation 'Desert Storm' was a dramatic military success with minimum loss of life of United States forces as a result of the proficiency of his command in providing food, shelter, fuel, arms, ammunition and other logistical support. His performance and his selfless devotion to the cause of this nation's vital interests in the Persian Gulf have thereby reflected great credit upon the highest tradition of the United States Army.''

This citation is dated the 23rd day of August, 1994, and signed by myself as the Commander-in-Chief, and by Howard E. Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

General Pagonis.

RESPONSE—LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM G. PAGONIS

LIEUTENANT GENERAL PAGONIS: Thank you very much. First of all, everybody knows that Generals don't do anything but the troops do. We end up getting a lot of credit when we should not. I will tell you that all of you who participated in the Gulf War or saw me on CNN, I looked a lot taller on television, but I am the same guy.

Somebody asked me while I was here if it was going to be hard to go from a General to becoming a private citizen. I said, ''No, not as long as you serve the United States Army troops.'' I will tell you that I was ordered by General Schwarzkopf to serve for six months and I stayed there 18 months.

During the last six months, he came back over to say goodbye to the troops prior to his retirement. All the soldiers loved to get their picture taken with General Schwarzkopf. I was standing maybe 20 feet away, and this one trooper walked up to me and said, "Sir, can I have my picture taken with you?" I said, "Sure, don't you want to wait for the boss?" He said, "Yes, but your line is a lot shorter."

I must tell you that my entire 29 years in the Army I have always had soldiers keep me in my place, and you don't have to ever worry about getting big-headed. I have to tell you a couple of quick stories, because only this group would appreciate them.

During the time I was overseeing Iraqi POW's, I became the Colonel Klink of the prison camps. I didn't realize that I was to run the prison. There were some great guys from New York, men and women who served in the Military Police. We captured 70,000 prisoners in less than 48 hours, and the idea was to sacrifice about 70,000 troops and throw them into the battle, and these individuals had no food, water for days, and no shoes.

They were petrified when the American soldiers and Marines captured them that they would be tortured and not taken care of. I don't have to tell people in this room, just the opposite occurred. Now, CNN didn't report any of the stuff, but just the opposite occurred.

Soldiers gave their field jackets to the prisoners. They were given water, medical supplies, and many of them were ready to take up arms and fight against Hussein. This just showed the great tradition that the American soldiers, sailors, Marines and Air Force have always done a marvelous job.

I would like to close with there are 520,000 service members, your sons, daughters, grandchildren, and many of you in this room served in the Gulf War. During the 18 months that I was there, it was 180 degrees different than anything I have ever been exposed to before.

Women were allowed to drive. I had 15,000 female soldiers that drove trucks, forklifts right in the heat of battle. All of these kinds of customs were so different, yet we did not have one major or minor incident in the 18 months. That just shows how great these young Americans were.

All we know is that soldiers, airmen, Marines, sailors are not like the 42-year-old veteran that Broderick Crawford was in the movie. They were 18 and 19-year-old Americans. I tell people anywhere I go I feel good about this United States, because these great Americans are still with us and are still serving their country.

I am honored to be with you today among the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and it is an honor and privilege to have served in the military. I thank you so very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, in a few moments and throughout the remainder of the Convention, we will be taking up important business of our Committee Reports and acting on the Resolutions proposed for adoption by this Convention. I have asked the Committee Chairmen to use the following procedure in presenting the respective reports.

First, the Committee Chairman will read the list of Resolutions which the Committee recommends to be adopted or adopted as amended. Following the reading of this list, the Chairman will

move the adoption of those Resolutions. After that motion and the second, the Chair will ask if there are any of those Resolutions that the comrades want to set aside.

Note will be taken of those Resolutions to be set aside and actions will be taken on those Resolutions which have not been set aside. After the vote on the Resolutions, which were not set aside, the Chair will take up those Resolutions which have been set aside for debate. They will be taken up in the order in which they have been set aside.

Each Resolution will be voted on by the Convention as a motion to adopt. If the Committee has recommended referral of any Resolutions to any permanent Committee of the VFW for review, those motions will then be acted upon. After action is completed on the Resolutions recommended for adoption or for referral to a Standing Committee, the Chairman will read the list of those Resolutions in which the recommendation is rejection.

After the list is read, you will have the opportunity to move for the adoption of any of those Resolutions. Each motion will be taken up and disposed of in order. No motion is made by any comrade. The Resolutions under our Convention Rules automatically are rejected by the Convention.

The first Committee to report, I will call on Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace to give the Report on the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROBERT WALLACE: Thank you, Comrade Commander. First of all, let me thank you for the appointment as Chairman of the By-Laws Committee and also let me thank you for giving me the Vice-Chairman who served this organization with distinction in 1974-'75 as Commander-in-Chief, continues to serve, John Stang, from the great State of Kansas, as well as the members that were appointed to this Committee.

A special thanks to the Final Review Committee that you have set up this year and worked diligently to clean up any housekeeping on the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I want to recognize them. The Chairman Dwaine Wilson, members Ed Burnham, Jack Melban, John Gwizdak, Glen Gardner, George Riedel, Vernon Soukup, Frank Zenzer and Larry Maher. I want to also thank Jim Plick, our Judge Advocate General, for his advice and counsel. I want to thank John Senk, Tom Kissel and all those that served on the By-Laws Committee.

The Committee met Sunday afternoon and the following is what we propose to you today. By-Law B–10 and By-Law B–5 have been pulled because they have typographical errors in them and will not be presented at this Convention. At this time, the Committee recommends the passage of B–1, B–2, B–3, B–4, B–6, B–8, B–9, B–11, B–12, B–13 and B–14.

Commander-in-Chief, I move approval of those By-Laws.

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

COMRADE JUDGE BROWN (District G—California): Commander-in-Chief, I am Judge Brown, District G, California. I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; opposed. The "ayes" have it and it is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: At this time I will go through the Manual of Procedure. The Committee recommends approval of M–1, M–2, M–3 and M–4. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that we approve M–1, M–2, M–3 and M–4.

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

COMRADE CARL AIELLO (Post 1645—Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: M–5 was rejected by the Committee. The change in the Ritual, the Committee recommends passage of R–1, R–2 and R–3. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move approval of R–1, R–2 and R–3.

COMRADE JUDGE BROWN (Post 7792—California): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, once again, you have heard the motion and second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, if you have nothing else for me, I thank you and I thank the members of this Convention for their cooperation, and especially the members of this Committee. Thank you very much.

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Al Hedges from the Department of Europe. I would like to have B–16 set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I think you are out of order. The motions have already been passed.

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): Nothing was said about this, Commander-in-Chief.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): Is this on the eligibility question? Do you wish to address the eligibility question, B-16, that was objected to in Committee? You would like to bring that up?

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): I would like to bring it up, yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Okay. Go ahead.

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Before you debate anything, it will have to be a motion to adopt.

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): I make a motion that we adopt B–16.

COMRADE CHARLES BODILY (Post 9342—Department of Europe): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Okay. Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: On the question, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the reason the By-Laws Committee rejected B–16 is because it deletes the requirement for citizenship in the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The primary organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States citizenship is a mandate to belong to this organization, and the By-Laws Committee feels that to belong to an Auxiliary unit the individuals should also be citizens of the United States of America.

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I believe I can address this body on this subject.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Go ahead. You are on the subject.

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): I am not here to rehassle with this group. In modern times, we, in the VFW, have been seeking changes in other Resolutions that went through the Committees in the past couple of days or yesterday, or the day before that were calling for change.

Section 1102, which you have announced, Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief Wallace, I would like to point out why we would like this done. I cherish my citizenship as much as any of you do. I am sure that all of the veterans around the world who are there by military assignment or by government assignment, or by work, when they go to these foreign countries around the world, while living there, they marry and some of these people are in these countries for many, many years. They obtain a wife.

Now, this man is an American citizen. Many Europeans are wives, and that wife bears children for him, and they will become American citizens. I am an American citizen, but I do live overseas. I have a life to run. I have a wife who is very dear to me. She speaks English better than I do.

The options that you give us, not you give us but the United States gives people for citizenship is three years with a waiver, five years otherwise. All right. That still means that when you take these foreign wives back to the states they are still not eligible for the VFW Ladies Auxiliary.

This is wrong. I have met some people in different areas that do have wives in the Ladies Auxiliary who are working on citizenship. The Ladies Auxiliary title means just that, Ladies Auxiliary. It doesn't say Ladies Auxiliary of Citizens. This woman performs all of her duties as the wife of an American citizen overseas.

When that man joins the Veterans of Foreign Wars overseas, he is accepted as a U.S. citizen. Do you mean to tell me we are going to tell that man he is a second-class citizen because his wife just happened to be separately born in another country?

I don't believe we really want to do that. We are not only from the Department of Europe, and I am not talking about Europe, I am not talking about retirees, I am talking about a large segment of the American citizenry that lives overseas and eligible to be Veterans of Foreign Wars members.

I have also seen and addressed the people who said if my wife can't be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary then I don't want to be there. That is not too often. But it does happen.

In closing, I must say that I have been going to Conventions from Europe for the past 18 or 19 years. I have been spending my wedding anniversary here and my birthday. This is Friday. I will hit my sixty-eighth birthday. I sure would like to have a birthday present from you to take back to my wife and tell her, "Honey, you can stand next to me in a VFW." Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JAMES CARLISLE (Post 10097—Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I understand the Department of Europe's problem with this particular case, but how about the rest of the country? What would this cause in our state of Florida where we have non-citizens that have lived there for 25 or 30 years who have been married to citizens and the only reason they are not citizens is because they don't want to be an American citizen?

We certainly don't want them in our Ladies Auxiliary. I think that one of the big points here is the fact that the Ladies Auxiliary has not come to us and asked us to change this. I think that when they come to us, then we can sit down and study it further. This is why I am opposed to changing the By-Laws on this particular case. Thank you.

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

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PATRICK BUCKMAN (Post 9342—Department of Europe): I ask that the Resolution be read to the delegates in full, please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: Many years ago they told me that the eyes would be the first to go, but that is not true with me. That was the second. This pertains to retired military people who reside in a foreign country.

"WHEREAS, the spouses of these members do not reside in the United States except when their spouses are re-assigned on military orders or who do not expect to reside in the United States for a sufficient time to qualify for naturalization of citizenship in the United States; and,

"WHEREAS, the spouses of these members have faithfully supported their husbands in all endeavors, both career and private business, and supported their husband's involvement in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States by assisting in fund-raisers and other functions, although they are not currently eligible for membership in the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and,

"WHEREAS, these spouses would be active members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States were it not for the citizenship restriction and would be able to sustain Ladies Auxiliary Posts in overseas areas after native born American ladies went back to the United States due to reassignment of their husbands; and,

"WHEREAS, these spouses will not be eligible for naturalization of citizenship until they have resided in the United States for a

minimum of three years with a waiver and have attended extensive classes on the American government and culture; and,

"WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Ladies Auxiliary has the opportunity to assist these spouses in learning about the American government and culture so the spouses may pass their tests and be active members of the Ladies Auxiliary at the same time; and,

"WHEREAS, it is impossible for the Departments in Europe and the Pacific and Panama to sustain Ladies Auxiliary Posts without the National By-Laws being changed to allow for foreign wives as members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States;

"THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the 17th Annual Convention of the Department of Europe, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National By-Laws be amended by deleting the citizenship requirement for membership in the Ladies Auxiliary, thusly amending Section 1102—Eligibility, by deleting the last sentence of the first paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following 'members must be not less than 16 years old.'"

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I wrote this Resolution. The reason why I wrote it the way it is written is because in the Department of Europe we have one Auxiliary in Elsein, Germany.

Each year, usually in October, the Senior Vice-President of the National Organization of the Ladies Auxiliary visits Europe. She visits that Post in her travels. We are told every time they come over, yes, they, the Senior Vice-President, supports the idea of this Resolution

On the 23rd of June, I submitted a letter to the National Organizations asking for their support or their indication of support to this Resolution. To date I have not received an answer from them. As far as the question of them coming to us, comrades, we are the parent organization. We set the rules.

The ping-pong game is being played back and forth, and we don't want to shove it down their throat. Their game is, "Well, we can't do anything until we do something over here." Now, if you understand the "Whereas" on the three-year requirement of residency before you can even apply for citizenship, this is very important. It is five years without the waiver and three years with the waiver.

The point here is if I start an Auxiliary in Europe, for instance, and my wife joins that Auxiliary, and she learns how to run the Auxiliary, and I come back to the States in three years, she transfers into that Auxiliary, two things will happen. One, you have got an active member in that supporting your Post, and, two, your Post will help her learn how the Americans really live to pass their naturalization test.

That is the whole point of this Resolution, to make the Auxiliary and the VFW a stronger organization. That is why I ask for the support of this body to make this change. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CHARLES CANNON (Post 5076—Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am on the Committee and I am here to op-

pose this. Number one, how can any person take an obligation to defend the United States as the Auxiliary does and not be a citizen? That is number one.

Number two, wives don't always stay with husbands. They get a divorce. As long as the Ladies Auxiliary pays their dues, they can remain a member. So, I object to this By-Law change.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 3. There is nobody there.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, my name is Ron Rusakiewicz, a member of Post 9468, Stratford, Connecticut, and a member of the By-Laws Committee. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, and my good comrades, I want to tell you this particular By-Law amendment was debated very well on Sunday afternoon in the Committee meeting and was debated by a good many comrades from all over this country that were chosen to head that Committee and to work on that Committee and give recommendations to you here on this floor today.

I want to tell you we have great sympathy for those Departments who would like to see this particular By-Law amendment passed. There were a few problems with it. When you get into it just a little bit deeper, the debate on it was part of the Ladies Auxiliary.

The last By-Law in their By-Laws is that the By-Laws cannot conflict with the men's By-Laws. How could you possibly have a By-Law that says you can have someone in the organization without citizenship and yet still we cannot? We were looking to opening up Pandora's box.

The second thing that was brought up, and it was brought up here on the floor again today, it simply said that when they join a Ladies Auxiliary let them become citizens. That wasn't explained very well on the floor. I am told that if you are a national of a certain country, and you either own a business or if you have any rights from that country whatsoever, obviously if you become a citizen of another country, you lose those. So, again, we have sympathy for the women, but in this case I don't think it can be you can have your cake and eat it, too.

Finally, I think the most important point, as our good comrade on Microphone No. 2 said before, another member of the Committee, is that it is, in fact, important that the Ladies Auxiliary has never come to us, has never proposed the Resolution, nor have they ever proposed a By-Law amendment in this organization to change this.

So why in God's good name are we trying to do that to them? I think this is simple. I think we want to keep it simple and I think we ought to defeat this By-Law amendment. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE M. W. BRYANT (Post 35—Missouri): I move the previous question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is there a second? If there is no second, we will continue debate.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JUDGE BROWN (Post 7792—California): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, there has been a motion and a second to move the previous question. Under the Rules of the Convention, the proponent of the adoption of this Resolution has one more chance to speak.

If there is no one at Microphone No. 3, I will recognize Microphone No. 1, one person, and then after that we will vote on moving the previous question.

COMRADE AL HEDGES (Post 9334—Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, in answer to the question about the Ladies By-Laws, naturally, they can't change their By-Laws until we change ours, to start with. Their changes are predicated on what we do, not what they do.

Secondly, we have got soldiers coming in these countries that are also non-citizens serving our country. Also they marry and the point is we are the ones that are losing in this battle. We are losing membership in both organizations.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion before us is to move the previous question or to stop debate. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

We will now vote on the motion to adopt this Resolution. Should you vote "yes", that means that the members of the Ladies Auxiliary would not have to be a citizen of the United States. If you vote "nay", or in the negative, it means that we uphold the By-Laws as they are today and members of the Ladies Auxiliary must be a citizen of the United States of America. Do you understand that?

Okay. All those in favor of adopting the motion will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed "nay". The Resolution is not adopted.

Anything else? Comrade Commander-in-Chief Wallace, I will discharge your Committee. Thank you for your work.

Next, the Chair would like to call on the Chairman of the Finance and Internal Organization Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. First of all, I want to thank you for the appointment to serve as Chairman of the Finance and -210-¶ Internal Organization Committee. I also want to recognize the fact that the Committee was an outstanding Committee and we had a most able Vice-Chairman, and that being Joe Scerra, Past Commander-in-Chief from Massachusetts.

My name is Art Fellwock and I am a member of VFW Post 1114 in Evansville, Indiana, and a Past Commander-in-Chief. I will, first of all, read the Resolutions that the Committee adopted.

Resolution No. 201, Amend Congressional Charter. The Committee voted to adopt this Resolution. I make a motion that we adopt Resolution No. 201, to Amend the Congressional Charter.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, there is a motion. Is there a second?

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE VERNON SOUKUP (Post 8081—Illinois): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Any questions? All those in favor of the motion will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: The Committee was in a negative mood, I think, because these are the ones the Committee voted to reject. I shall read them to you.

No. 202, Life Membership Card Designating Commandership on all Levels of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Resolution 203 was referred to the Americanism and Community Activities Committee.

Resolution No. 204, Request for Reconsideration of 1994-'95 Commander-in-Chief's Membership Program was rejected.

Resolution No. 205, Sale of VFW Buddy Poppy, was rejected.

No. 206, Amend Congressional Charter, was rejected in favor of 201 that you just passed.

Resolution 207, 100th Anniversary 1999 National Convention, was rejected.

No. 208, Eliminate Age Requirement for Sons of VFW, was referred to the Americanism and Community Activities Committee.

Resolution No. 209, Safe Student Transportation Award, was rejected.

No. 210, Post to Establish Fund to Support Korean War Association, was rejected.

No. 211, Provide VFW Cancer Insurance Program, rejected.

No. 212, Amend National Membership Program, rejected. Proposal No. 213, "Buddy Poppy", rejected.

No. 214, Print Constitution, By-Laws, Ritual and Podium Edition in Loose-leaf Form, rejected.

Proposal No. 215, Eliminate Age Restriction for Sons of the VFW. This was referred to the Americanism and Community Activities Committee.

Resolution No. 216, Abolish the Political Action Committee Program, rejected.

No. 217, Changing of Wording in Resolutions to By-Laws, Rules, Ritual and Manual of Procedure, rejected.

Resolution No. 218, was rejected.

Does anyone wish for any of these I read to be set aside at the present time?

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

COMRADE DON HEVER (Post 9433—Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Department of Minnesota requests that we set aside Resolutions 217 and 218.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): Comrade, you will have to take those up one at a time. Since they were rejected by the Committee, you will have to propose them as an affirmative motion. That motion will then have to be seconded.

Do you understand, Comrade?

COMRADE DON HEVER (Post 9433—Minnesota): Commander-in-Chief, the Department of Minnesota moves the adoption of Resolution No. 217.

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

COMRADE RUSSELL VILLWOCK (Post 3579—Illinois): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question? There is nothing on the question. All those in favor of adopting Resolution No. 217 signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "nay". The "nays" have it.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOHN VRTJAK (Post 1612—Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jack Vrtjak, Post 1612, Department of Illinois. I move that Resolution 213 entitled "Buddy Poppy" be adopted.

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

COMRADE ROBERT SMALL (Post 8322—Illinois): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question.

COMRADE JOHN VRTJAK (Post 1612—Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would respectfully request that the Chairman read the entire Resolution. There are only a few "Whereases", and they are short. I wish the comrades would please pay attention before I debate this. Thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: Resolution No. 213 is entitled "Buddy Poppy".

"WHEREAS, 'to assist worthy comrades, to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans'; and,

"WHEREAS, to carry out the intent of the above words found in Article I of the Constitution of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and,

"WHEREAS, at the 1923 Encampment of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States at Norfolk, Virginia, the 'Buddy Poppy' was adopted to 'Honor the Dead by Helping the Living'; and,

"WHEREAS, a certificate was issued on May 20, 1994, granting the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States all trademark rights in the name 'Buddy' under the classification of Artificial Flowers; and,

"WHEREAS, the 'Buddy Poppy' is a flower of remembrance to 'Honor the Dead by Helping the Living' since the 1923 Encampment; now, therefore,

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the 'Buddy Poppy' remain in its original shape and color with only the tag removal permitted when used in displays."

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

COMRADE JOHN VRTJAK (Post 1612—Illinois): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. We are sorry that the maker of this motion could not be present—I beg your pardon, I yield to the maker of the motion.

COMRADE JOHN BUETTNER (Post 1699—Illinois): Comrades, the Buddy Poppy is the emblem as much as our Cross of Malta. If you want to go over to the other side of that door, when do we let something that we are dedicated to be colored, painted, changed? We will not let it happen to the Cross of Malta.

I say on this Resolution, leave the Buddy Poppy red like it belongs. Let us honor the dead by helping the living. That is our emblem of the Buddy Poppy. I am sure that none of us would paint one of them black or white, green, and go out and try to sell it to the public on the street and say this is our emblem of the Buddy Poppy.

You must put red yesterday, this day, and I am sure all of us heard through our Chaplain say to honor the dead by helping the living. The red is our Buddy Poppy. It is used numerous times. So, Comrades, let's pass this Resolution and leave that Buddy Poppy red like it belongs. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 2, anybody else at Microphone No. 2?

Mr. Chairman, will you explain the Committee's reasoning on this?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: The Committee's thinking on this was that it definitely would limit the use of Buddy Poppies and the creativity of the assemblers of the Buddy Poppy displays. I know all of you have seen some beautiful Buddy Poppy displays.

There is a lot of momentum on that. It would work against the goals of our organization to promote the sale and use the Buddy Poppy to honor the dead by helping the living. We sincerely think that this would work against this in the sale of the Buddy Poppies. So, we, on the Committee, recommended that we reject this Resolution.

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

COMRADE JOHN BUETTNER (Post 1699—Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, on rebuttal, I also understand what they are saying, but, comrades, just a little real quick statement. Illinois has been real proud. We have won lots of awards on the National level.

About 92 percent of our awards, and I mean they are great, like 26 percent over the last eight years. I have been Buddy Poppy Chairman for the last fourteen years in the Department of Illinois. The Department of Illinois does not color very many poppies in our state, but we get the awards. Incidentally, I see some plastic poppies out there in the displays and I think they should be out of there, and I don't think it hurts selling your poppies.

We are interested in the Buddy Poppy and what we stand for, just what we are on our Cross of Malta. Again, comrades, I don't think not coloring the poppy will hurt our sales or our creativity. We can do it with the red poppy. Let's stick with it and keep it like it is. Thank you, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RICK BARNELL (Post 6520—Illinois): I just want to speak and say if we are concerned about the situation with the Buddy Poppy displays, then let's change some of our entry forms, too. The instructions, basically, what the award is to be given on.

Let's not change the Buddy Poppy. I am in agreement let's keep it red. Let's keep it in its form. Let's honor those veterans that have given it all.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else on debate? I will call for the motion. Should you vote "yes", that means that the

Buddy Poppies will only be used in their red color. If you vote "no", it means that you will be able to use them as you are using them today, and you can change the color of the Buddy Poppy.

All those in favor of adopting this Resolution will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed "nay". Let me do that one more time. All those in favor of adopting the Resolution, signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed say "nay".

The Chair is confused. All those in favor of adopting the Resolution, please stand. Please be seated. All those opposed to adopting the Resolution, please stand. I don't believe the Chair is confused, I believe the motion haspassed and will be adopted.

Past Commander-in-Chief Fellwock says because I am from Chicago we stuffed the ballot box early on this morning. Is there a Resolution somebody wants to set aside?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOE SCOTT (Post 1333—New Jersey): I would like to have No. 205 set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You want to move for passage?

COMRADE JOE SCOTT (Post 1333—New Jersey): I move that we adopt or pass Resolution No. 205.

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

COMRADE DENNIS WALL (Post 7164—New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dennis Wall, Post 7164, New Jersey, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second to adopt Resolution 205. On the question.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOE SCOTT (Post 1333—New Jersey): I would like to have the Resolution read so that everyone in the room will know what they are voting on or voting for.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: For the sake of saving time, let me just read the "Resolved". I think it will get to the meat of what we want to talk about.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the sale of poppies by the National Organization of the same design to other organizations be stopped."

COMRADE JOE SCOTT (Post 1333—New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the sale of identical poppies, deleting the tag on the bottom that says "Buddy Poppy." Now, I understand that Buddy Poppy, the wording is patented. The removal of that tag and placing a substitute tag with other organization's name on the Buddy Poppy, and pardon me, on the poppy of the same design, has deterred the sale of Buddy Poppies in our area.

I am sure what happened in our area in New Jersey is going to go on. It will become a steamroller and other organizations around the country will do or adopt the same, providing they can still buy them through the National Headquarters.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467—New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Howard Vander Clute, Post

6467, New Jersey. I certainly don't like the idea to stand here and speak in opposition to two distinguished Department Officers from New Jersey. Perhaps I can shed some light on this issue.

You might recall that eight or ten years ago we were faced, perhaps even longer than that, about 12 years ago we were faced with the situation that we had a manufacturer in New Jersey who was gouging us with prices to supply the parts to the National Organization.

As a result, we were able to by taking our case to court negate the contract that we had with them, because we found that the conditions of the contract they had provided, many of the provisions were false. We were able then to provide a new manufacturer of parts.

We even had this manufacturer design and produce a machine that makes the petals for us, and we have a veteran operating that machine five days a week, and they continue to do so. That company is in Kansas, by the way. We were able to control the price of poppies for a long period of time.

In order to do so and in order to protect the investment of the manufacturer who designed the machinery, we had to give him a long-term contract. In order to meet the terms of that contract, we have contracted with other Veterans Service Organizations to provide them their poppies.

Not all of them are exactly the same as ours. I think the reference here is to Catholic War Veterans. We produce annually less than 300,000 for the Catholic War Veterans, while we produce for ourselves 18 million. It is hard for me to imagine that this could affect the sales of Buddy Poppies that are conducted by Posts and Auxiliaries in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Remember this, the most important part of this issue is that we have been successful in protecting the price of poppies for sale in the organization. You have not had a price rise in years, and it is simply because we can keep that machine running constantly and we can protect the investment of the contractor that produces the parts.

Obviously, we want to continue doing what we are doing. Now, 300,000 poppies for the Catholic War Veterans does not significantly hurt the sales of VFW Buddy Poppies. We make them also for the DAV, and we have been trying to contract with the AmVets.

They are not poppies, as you know, they are an entirely different flower. All of this business protects our investment and protects the price. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOE SCOTT (Post 1333 - New Jersey): The objection is not money. The revenue that we receive, the Post receives from the Buddy Poppies, is used in the Relief Fund. Many of the Posts stand out there in the hot sun, in the rain at times, and offer the sale of Buddy Poppies.

Many people will come up, and the public is not knowledgeable of the difference between the VFW Poppy, the DAV Poppy, and the Jewish War Veteran's Poppy, and whatever else. They see the same design. When the poor fellow, our member, is trying to collect the money for our VFW Poppy, they say, "We have already given." They will display the poppy.

Our member will go up to them and say, "May I see the tag on that poppy?" It was not a VFW poppy. You just went through a motion to keep it red, the poppy red. I agree that is great. Why can't we sell a different colored poppy if it is money we are worried about to the other organizations so that the public can distinguish the difference in the poppies?

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

COMRADE JOHN DeBOLD (Post 364—New York): I got here a little late from New York and when I walked in I just heard this Resolution before the floor. I said to myself I am definitely opposed to this. If you take it away, where is the money going to come from to support our guys in the hospitals?

So, let's talk about reality. They have done away with the parade, and I don't want to do away with this. This is an important thing to have. Forget about the Jewish War Veterans. They should have these poppies and let's not abolish ours. We need it.

If you are going to abolish it, we will have nothing for our hospital veterans. God Almighty, don't take it away. Caring begins at home. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 3, anybody there?

Microphone No. 1.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JAMES FERGUSON (Post 7686—New Mexico): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, it seems to me that we are arguing a moot point. After all, we are all veterans organizations, and I can't see any reason why 300,000 poppies are going to hurt the VFW in any way. I say we stay with the program we have at this time. Thank you.

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

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061—South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Bill Radigan, Post 3061, South Dakota, Chairman of the 1993–'94 Buddy Poppy Committee. Our Committee reviewed this. We are all aware of what they were doing.

I think that all of us have the feeling that the first thing you consider are the veterans. These other organizations, basically, use the money for the same things we do, and it really doesn't make an awful lot of difference who they benefit from.

They are veterans, they need us, and we can help these other organizations who probably couldn't have a program unless we helped them. I think it behooves all of us to stand up and be veterans and to say if we can help you, the Veterans of Foreign Wars are ready to do it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anybody else?

Microphone No. 1. The rules of the Convention say that a delegate can only speak twice on the question. I think you have already spoken twice.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TOM ADKINS (Post 6423—Kentucky): As long as we are producing these poppies, if they start interfering in our business, we could surely stop producing them. It is real simple. If it gets to become a problem, we eliminate them getting the poppies.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is there anything else? We will now vote on the motion. If you vote "aye" on the motion, that means we stop the sale of our poppies to other organizations. If you vote "nay", it is business as usual and we continue with what we have been doing.

All those in favor of adopting Resolution 205 will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "nay". The Chair is not in doubt. The motion fails.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD HEVER (Post 9433—Minnesota): I move adoption of Resolution No. 218 and request the Chairman to read it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Just make the motion. Is there a second?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD GATES (Post 141—Minnesota): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the motion and the second to adopt Resolution No. 218. Don, would you like to hear the Resolution in its entirety?

COMRADE DONALD HEVER (Post 9433—Minnesota): Yes, please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: The Resolution is as follows:

"WHEREAS, resolutions presented to the resolutions committee at the various VFW conventions should be presented by a proponent of the resolution; and

"WHEREAS, the thoughts that brought about the resolution are best related by the author or at least by the Post, County Council, District or Department from which the resolution originated; and,

"WHEREAS, the chairman of the committee that hears the resolutions could impose restrictions on speakers who are not members of the committee; now, therefore

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that the VFW Post, County Council, District or Department that proposes a resolution will be able to speak on the resolutions committee that will hear the resolution and give its recommendation to the VFW District, Department or National Convention for which the committee was convened."

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

COMRADE DONALD HEVER (Post 9433—Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, last year in the City of Dallas, I attended the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual Committee Meeting. Last year, as it was this year at that same meeting, the Chairman would not allow anyone outside of the Committee to speak on Resolutions taken to that Committee.

I felt that that was absolutely outrageous last year, considering one Department in our organization presented to that Committee no less than nine Resolutions. That Department was not represented on that Committee. By the ruling of the Chairman that Department could not speak to that Committee.

The one thing that the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual Committee deals with is the By-Laws, and it is my understanding

that in the Committee it would take a simple majority to recommend approval or rejection to the floor. On the floor, it requires a two-thirds motion.

If I am mistaken about that, please correct me. I felt that it was only right that the members of the Committee should be given the full knowledge, the full thoughts of the meaning behind a Resolution that is brought up, and I felt that is only right and proper.

I want to also personally thank Art Fellwock from Indiana, Chairman, and Joe Scerra, Vice-Chairman from Massachusetts, for their graciousness in allowing me at that Committee to speak. This Resolution was presented and they allowed me to speak.

I knew that I was going to come to the floor and speak, but I necessarily wouldn't be able to speak at that Committee meeting. I feel that the knowledge of the information available that came about from the Resolution, the thought behind it should be presented to the Committee where they could ponder it, they could debate it, and that is what I really feel that the good, honest open debate should be, should be available.

The way it is set up right now, it can be denied at a Committee meeting. That is with the thought that each Committee has members from every Department or nearly every Department that was brought up, and I refer to the Committee on Veterans Benefits, Veterans Service, where the Department of Oregon had a Resolution and where the Department of Oregon is not represented, at least not in this booklet. That is all I have. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Chair would like to ask the Chairman of the Committee to explain the reasoning behind the Committee's decision.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: The Committee discussed this in quite length, and I can say that Don knows, and he recognizes the fact that yesterday during our Committee Meeting I allowed Don to speak, a non-member of our Committee. On most Committees in the VFW, we do allow participation after the Committee members have spoken, allow other VFW members to speak on the Resolution.

We have done this many times. The VFW National Organization tries to put on every Committee someone from that state, every state. So, someone from that state, where that Resolution originated, can speak for that Resolution. Now, we try to do that all the time.

However, at times we must have discipline. I refer to last year that you will recall I was Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and we had threats from outsiders that were going to come in and disrupt our meetings and disrupt the POW/MIA.

So, we maintained a very stringentness that only Committee members could speak because we wanted no one to disrupt our meeting of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am saying for most of the time all of the Committee Chairmen are very lenient. They let most everybody speak.

However, we have to have some rules and regulations and some disciplines so that, by golly, if someone intends to disrupt our meetings at any time we have some disciplines that we can enforce that

policy. This is why the Committee recommended rejection of this Resolution. They can always come to the floor here and speak.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anybody wish to speak? If not, go ahead at Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD HEVER (Post 9433—Minnesota): I fully realize and understand Past Commander-in-Chief Fellwock's feeling there that we must maintain order. There is no question about that. We can't have chaos in running your meeting. I certainly also am very confident that every Past Commander-in-Chief has held the gavel on many, many occasions and many various levels, and they certainly would be well experienced to take care of whatever would be out of order and order could be maintained.

The fact still remains that there is a possibility that the Department that will present the Resolution to this body, at any National Convention, will not be represented on this Committee. The same would apply to your Departments. You might have some Resolutions coming out of your Districts or Posts.

If you want that Resolution read, a real good way of doing that is have a proponent on the Committee to make the motion to adopt. You will have somebody there to adopt it. Who is going to do it? Yesterday they were only looking for a motion to reject.

Whatever minutes I have left, I want to personally thank the comrades that stood up at that Committee meeting and backed my thinking here as far as the Resolution. Thank you very much.

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

COMRADE HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467—New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, first of all, I think that Past Commander-in-Chief Fellwock made an excellent point when he said you must have good discipline. I think there is another element here, too.

The Commander-in-Chief has the authority to appoint and does the best he can to cover all of the Committees with the experienced comrades who know the process of the National Convention. Most all of you have been to many Conventions. This is simply a recommendation from the Committee to the members of the Convention.

The debate occurs here on the floor. No one that I know of, any Past Commander-in-Chief that has served before, has denied any comrade the right to speak on a Resolution or a By-Laws amendment on this floor, and to articulate the reasons why that Department, that District, that Post presented that thought through that Resolution and/or By-Laws amendment.

There are two things here. It is only a recommendation to the Convention, and with the benefit of those who serve on the Committee. They are not biased when they are assigned to consider these Resolutions and/or Amendments, and simply bring the facts to the floor.

The debate occurs here. No one is being denied nor has anybody ever been denied that right. This is the most democratic organization I have ever seen, and our By-Laws are in place to support it as a democratic organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anyone else? I will now bring the motion to a vote. The motion is to adopt the Resolution which would allow the proposer or author of any Resolution to

speak in front of the Committee, even though he or she is not a member of the Committee. If you reject the motion or the Resolution, the Committee just gets to debate the Resolution in the Committee Meeting, which is the way it has always been.

All those in favor of adopting the Resolution will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". The "nays" have it.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD GATES (Post 141—Minnesota): I move the adoption of Resolution No. 209.

COMRADE DONALD HEVER (Post 9433—Minnesota): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second to adopt Resolution No. 209. Now, on the question, I recognize Microphone No. 2, Donald Gates from Minnesota.

COMRADE DONALD GATES (Post 141—Minnesota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am not even going to ask to have the Resolution read, unless somebody else does. I wrote the thing. If there are errors in it as communicated to me by the Committee, the errors fall on my shoulder. It is the Safe Student Transportation Award.

I understand the reason for its non-recommendation was the fact that it would incorporate a new program and new finances, and all the other associated baggage that goes with the creation of a new program. It was actually meant to be another facet of the existing safety program. I would ask that it be considered as such.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anyone else? Hearing none, all those in favor of adopting this Resolution will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The "nays" have it. Anything else?

If there is nothing else on Finance and Internal Organization, Past Commander-in-Chief Fellwock, I discharge you and your Committee and thank you for doing a great job.

INTRODUCTION—DIANE CARLSON EVANS, VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL PROJECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: In our nation's capital on Veterans Day, 1993, after nearly a decade of work, the Vietnam Women's Memorial was dedicated on the grounds of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This historic event would never have happened had it not been for the tireless dedication of our next guest.

Diane Carlson Evans served as an Army Nurse in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969. That experience provided the motivation for launching the efforts that resulted in the Vietnam Women's Memorial.

Please welcome a member of VFW Post 4393 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Diane Carlson Evans.

Before you say anything, Diane, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is my pleasure to present to you a check in the amount of $2,500 for the Ladies Memorial, which brings our total contribution over $100,000.

REMARKS BY DIANE CARLSON EVANS

COMRADE DIANE EVANS (Post 4393—Wisconsin): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Cramer. I am a Life Member of the VFW, but it is Northfield, Minnesota.

Commander-in-Chief Cramer, my Fellow Veterans and Members of the Auxiliary, Friends of the VFW:

This is truly a moment I have waited for for ten years to be able to come before you and say thank you, thank you, members, from all across America of the VFW for helping us build a Vietnam Memorial for Women in Washington, D.C. Our years of hard work paid off.

My very special thanks to Paul Spera that sat with us on the platform last fall to represent the Commander-in-Chief and the VFW at the dedication, and my very special thanks to Cooper T. Holt, who early on was very helpful with the Vietnam Women's Memorial as our National Adjutant.

A special thanks to Howard Vander Clute, Larry Rivers and every single National Commander since 1985, beginning with Billy Ray Cameron, who some of you may remember in 1985 when I came before this delegation for help. We all kept our eye on this mission and with sheer grit and a lot of determination, which is what it takes when we are fighting for issues for veterans, we now are a lasting legacy for all future generations and a beautiful tribute to the quiet soldiers of the Vietnam War, the women. Silence is no longer a hiding place for these women. Thousands came to the dedication last fall.

They were thanked by a grateful nation, they were thanked by the Chair of the Joint Chiefs, General Shalikashvili, and they were thanked by other veteran that hugged them. At last the men and women that served beside each other during that turbulent history of our Vietnam War are together in time and place forever.

The figure of the statue, portraying a wounded male soldier and women that served in varying roles, was designed by Santa Fe Sculptor Glenna Goodaker. This monument will always be a reminder that America is great because of the men and women working together side by side.

There is now a sense of calm, healing and completion at the Vietnam Women's Memorial, not unlike the calm that thousands of women brought to the wounded and the dying during the Vietnam War. The remaining cost of the design, construction and the landscaping of the Memorial, the debt that we still have is still $300,000.

So, we thank you for this check for $2,500, which will go to help retire that debt. We continue to look to you for your financial support. To fund the project's continuing mission of education, research and identifying the women who served, Senator Warner and Senator Murkowski, and Congressmen Morella and Lambert introduced the Vietnam Women's Coin Act of 1994 with minting of coins for 1995.

The coin design will be emblematic of the Vietnam Women's Memorial. Thanks for your help in contacting legislators to co-sponsor this bill. It did pass unanimously last fall in the Senate. However,

with 236 co-sponsors in the House, our bill is being held up in the Subcommittee, chaired by Joe Kennedy.

I have flyers here at the Convention. On your way out, please pick up a flyer or stop by our booth. The co-sponsors, who have signed on are starred on these flyers. I would ask that each of you go back to your state and try to get at least 300 to 400 co-sponsors so we can prove to Mr. Joe Kennedy that this coin is needed and wanted by the people of America.

On behalf of the Vietnam Memorial Women's Project, I extend to you all of our internal thanks. You did the right thing in 1985 and every year since when you decided to help, and you will all know that when you visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In the words of Sculptor Glenna Goodaker who said that my hand can shape the clay which might touch the heart and heal the wounds of those who served, it fills me with humility and deep satisfaction and I can only hope that future generations that view the sculpture will stand in tribute to the women who served.

Now, congratulations to the VFW and to the first woman Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Yes, this is wonderful. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Next, I would like to call on the Chairman of the Americanism and Community Activities Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Staum.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON AMERICANISM AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STAUM: Good afternoon. It is 12:15. I will try to make this as quick as possible. One thing I do want to say, yesterday morning I had the privilege of introducing General Davis to you for his comments regarding the Korean War Memorial.

General Davis' comments to me in private were that he was never more impressed by the reception he received from you and the courtesies received here. At the Memorial Service, I sat next to him and he was deeply moved. Coming from a medal honor recipient, he is probably one of the most decorated veterans in the United States. He has a new respect and a new love for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I think we will see him around here many more times participating.

Yesterday afternoon, we had the Committee on Americanism and Community Activities meeting. We had a number of Resolutions, and at this time I will read the Resolutions that were recommended for adoption by the Committee.

Resolution No. 101, U.S. Flag Desecration, recommended for adoption.

Resolution No. 102, to Support and Promote Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program, recommended for adoption.

Resolution No. 103, Cooperation with National and State Organizations to Promote Youth, Safety and Patriotic Programs, recommended for adoption.

Resolution No. 104, Oppose any Action to Change our National Anthem, recommended for adoption.

Resolution No. 105, Oppose any Effort That Would Ban the Pledge of Allegiance in Public Schools, recommended for adoption.

Resolution No. 106, Censor/Remove Henry B. Gonzalez for Remarks on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, recommended for adoption.

No. 107, English as the Official Language of the United States of America, recommended for adoption.

No. 108, Proper Respect to our National Anthem, No. 108 and 117 regarding Memorial Day, and we recommended No. 111 simply because it was the most concise and the best of the three Proposed Resolutions. That is to return Memorial Day to May 30th. We recommended that No. 111 be adopted.

Resolution No. 112, National Flag Celebration Week, with a Further Be It Resolved that the President sign a Proclamation supporting National Flag Week. That was recommended as adopted.

Commander-in-Chief, I move that the body accept the recommendations of the Committee.

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

COMRADE ROBERT STOUT (Post 8398—California): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question, is there any discussion?

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 8541—Texas): I move that Resolution No. 106 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else? No. 106 will be set aside. We are voting on the recommendations of the Committee on the rest. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: We will take up 106. Let me look in the book. This was discussed on the Committee floor, Ernie. Let me make a couple of comments here. I think I know what you want to say. It calls for the official censor of Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez from Texas for the comments made about the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance on the U.S. House of Representatives.

This is the staff's recommendation, by the way. Our national censorship could be viewed as a local problem and inappropriate. The staff did recommend rejection. However, the Committee felt very strongly that veterans should be able to speak out against something like this.

Now, I could read the whole Resolution. It is very long and it is quite inflammatory. However, Ernie, go ahead and talk, please.

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 8541—Texas): I make a motion that Resolution No. 106 be rejected.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): There is a motion on the floor to adopt the Resolution. You have asked it be set aside for debate. You can debate that motion at this time, but the motion before the floor is to adopt the Resolution.

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 8541—Texas): I am prepared to debate it. I thought somebody had to second it to let me talk.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: It has been seconded. Go ahead and talk.

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 8541—Texas): Comrades, this is my Congressman from the 20th District of Texas. I understand a lot about him. He has been in Congress for 39 years, something like that. He has got a lot of points that you don't know.

Some of you watch him on TV and some of you don't. When you take things out of context and you start glaring them in front of the media, they make a lot of to-do about it. We don't approve of some of these. Several of us have spoken to him personally about these remarks he makes.

But if you take something out of context, you can make it mean anything. Let me say this, he has the right of freedom of speech. You cannot deny his freedom of speech as it has been proven many, many times.

Number two, I don't think it is in the purview of this body to censor any Congressman, because the censor of a Congressman has to be done by that body and done with the Speaker of the House presiding.

Number three, if you are going to do this, then I request that we put a list of all Congressmen before this body and let us decide whether we as a body of Veterans of Foreign Wars should even censor them or not censor them. Many Congressmen have made remarks that are derogatory and against what our thinking is.

I move this Resolution No. 106 be rejected.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): That is out of order.

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 8541—Texas): That is my recommendation, and whatever words you want, that is okay. I don't like them talking about my Congressman.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is there anyone else?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WALTER LUKSTA (Post 9115—Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Walter Luksta from the Department of Illinois, Post 9115. As a point of order, I don't have a copy of the written Rules of the Convention, but is there any contradiction between the Rules of the Convention that we have adopted and this Resolution?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: As far as I hear it, no.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JAMES FERGUSON (Post 7686—New Mexico): If I may, Commander-in-Chief, I was at the meeting where we talked about this, and personally I offered to hang the man. I think that maybe if you read the Endorsement Act of what the Congressman said about us or about the members in the Pledge of Allegiance, I think that some of the rest of the people in here might get as upset as we were at that meeting. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Do you want to hear it read? I will read the portion from the Congressional Record dated June 14, 1993, Page H3502. By the way, this was submitted by the Department of Washington.

"Nothing is sadder to see than the harried instinct in taking the Pledge of Allegiance here in the House of Representatives. What is that pledge? That pledge was not around until just about three dec-

ades, three and one-half or four decades ago. Here we are, we have taken an oath and that oath is to the Constitution, not to the flag. The flag is a symbol, and here we are like a good little herd reminiscent of the hypocrisy," and it goes on.

That is what the Congressman said. I am quoting out of the Congressional Record. This is why the members of the Committee felt that we should adopt this Resolution.

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

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 8541—Texas): Comrades, if you take that and take just part of it, I would be with you and willing to run somebody out of town on that. When you look at what could be said about things that are happening in Congress and remarks made against it, I don't think that is a reason to ask for censorship of a Congressman.

We have five military bases in the District. He fights to keep them open. He fights to keep the people employed. He fights, and we are not losing anything in San Antonio because of his being in there. He is on very important Committees in Congress.

He is very well respected. He is controversial. I will tell you this. If you don't have a Congressman up there a little bit controversial once in a while, what do you send him up there to be, to be a "yes" man up there? That is why on some of these things the present President tries to put through. We need controversial Congressmen.

I say, comrades, I don't think this body should take a stand against a Congressman of the United States. I, for one, am a 46-year member of this veterans organization, and I don't recall it ever being put on the floor where we voted to censure a Congressman.

I may be wrong, but I would challenge the Judge Advocate or Parliamentarian to give us a ruling on that. Thank you.

COMRADE DAVID GREANEY (Post 7420—California): I move the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: We need a second.

COMRADE GERALD GILGENBACH (Post 8847—Ohio): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Okay. Before we vote on the motion, I will allow one person to speak against the recommendation of the Committee. If anyone wants to do that, please do so

Microphone No. 1, there is nobody.

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969—Washington): Did you say who wanted to speak in favor of it or against it?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Against the motion. Did I say in favor of it?

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969—Washington): All I have heard is people speak against. I would assume you would allow someone to speak in favor of it.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): When somebody moves the question, the opponents, under the Convention Rules, have the last word. If there is anybody out there, a single proponent that wishes to speak against the motion, he has his say now.

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969—Washington): That would be myself. The entire reason behind the Department of Washington doing this is that we feel that any time any Senator or Congressman gets——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Corky, you are in favor of the motion, right?

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969—Washington): I am opposed to it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion is to adopt.

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969—Washington): The motion is to pass?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Yes.

COMRADE GEORGE BERTHIAUME (Post 969—Washington): My apologies. The motion is to approve 106. I am in favor of it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion on the floor right now is to move the previous question. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Now, we are going to move the previous question. To vote "yes" means to adopt the Resolution and to vote "no" means to reject the Resolution. All those in favor to adopt the Resolution, which means censor the Congressman. Now, to say "no" means we don't censor the Congressman.

All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: The following Resolutions were rejected by the Committee.

Resolution No. 108, which is entitled "Memorial Day" and that was rejected in favor of No. 111.

No. 109, Proper Respect to our National Anthem, that was rejected.

No. 110, regarding Hunter Safety, was rejected.

No. 113, A Tribute to the Flag, that was rejected.

No. 114, in Celebration of America Week, that was rejected.

No. 115, "Meet You At The Poll", that was rejected.

No. 116, "Flag Etiquette", that was rejected.

No. 117, Support Senate Resolution No. 132, Return Memorial Day to May 30th, and that was rejected in favor of Resolution 111.

We also received, and I don't think printed in your books, Resolutions No. 203, No. 208 and 215, and those were all dealing with Sons of the VFW and the age requirements, and those three Resolutions were rejected.

That is the Report of the Committee, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

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

COMRADE WILLIAM HAAS (Post 7980—Illinois): In regard to what the Commander-in-Chief said about rejection of 203, and the others, the Sons of the VFW——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Before you debate it, somebody will have to make a motion to adopt.

COMRADE WILLIAM HAAS (Post 7980—Illinois): I would like to make a motion that that be adopted, restrictions on the Sons of VFW, with the age be removed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You are talking about multiple Resolutions now, right? You will have to do each one.

COMRADE WILLIAM HAAS (Post 7980—Illinois): The one that restricts.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Which Resolution would you like passed? You have to make a motion to adopt one Resolution at a time. We would like to know who you are and where you are from.

COMRADE WILLIAM HAAS (Post 7980—Illinois): I am William Haas from Post 7980, Illinois. Resolution 203, I don't know the context or the Resolution or Resolved part of it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You are still debating the motion. Are you going to make a motion to adopt No. 203?

COMRADE WILLIAM HAAS (Post 7980—Illinois): I am. However, I——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Make the motion to adopt No. 203.

COMRADE WILLIAM HAAS (Post 7980—Illinois): I move adoption of Resolution No. 203.

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

COMRADE RUSSELL VILLWOCK (Post 3579—Illinois): I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second to adopt Resolution No. 203. Now, on the question.

I will recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WILLIAM HAAS (Post 7980—Illinois): I come before you to speak in regards to this, the age restriction on the Sons of the VFW. Commander-in-Chief Cramer, it was my privilege to serve you as State Director in 1983. We have got these young men in our organization as the Sons of the VFW and we teach them loyalty, patriotism, citizenship and consideration for welfare of others.

Along with this, they also learn our ways and help us in raising funds and do the duties and obligations set forth for us and them. Then the age of 16 or 18 comes along and we put them in a button. We no longer have any use for them. It is ridiculous, in my opinion, with all of us advancing in age.

Those in World War II, in particular, are in the area of 70 or more who can easily use the talents and the abilities that we have taught to these young people in our efforts to accomplish our duties and obligations. My son was Past State Commander of the Sons of the VFW. His sisters are members of the Auxiliary.

They are still vibrant and helpful in doing it just as my son and many other sons and grandsons could be in the Sons of the VFW. I also carried it to New Orleans and it didn't even receive consideration. One of the individuals is up on the roster now. We were flatly turned down.

Now, the thing that I would like to remind you is that when my sons or my grandsons reach age 16 or 18, it doesn't mean that they are not my sons or grandsons anymore. They are forever, so long as the good Lord will let them breathe and live.

I ask you today to consider extending this age and let's make use of these people that we have taught and made good citizens. Let's make them apply this to things we have taught them. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I would like to ask the Chairman of the Committee to explain the reasoning of the Committee.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: I think in your book you will find this under Financial and Internal Organization. However, it was sent over to our Committee. Resolution 203, the recommendation that came down, 203 would eliminate the age restriction on the long-standing youth program called Sons of the VFW.

This Resolution would eliminate the current youth activity and create a Men's Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The staff recommended rejection.

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

COMRADE ROBERT FONTENOT (Post 6394—California): I am the State Chairman of the Youth Activities and the Sons of the VFW. I wholeheartedly support the comrade that got up and spoke on the extension of the age, because once these kids become 16 years old, then we kick them out, back into the community.

It seems like to me we are sending a bad message to the youth of our country when we get them into our organization and get them started, to train them, and then kick them right back out when they become 16 years old and we can no longer use them.

I belong to the American Legion and the DAV also. They all have no age limit. They do all right. I can't see how we can continue trying to get former Sons of the VFW, and when they get 16 years old we send them back to the community and we no longer use them.

That is, do you think we are going to get the other youngsters to join with us and when they become 16 if we are not going to use them anymore? I think that we are sending a bad message with the age limit. Thank you very much.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Can I read something else, a recommendation? The Resolution, as I said, Resolution 208 also dealt with this problem. Let me read that. Maybe it will clear up the 16-year-old bit. Resolution 208 would eliminate the 16-year age restriction for the Sons of the VFW in favor of no age restriction.

It is the same as Resolution No. 203 and also no age restriction at 16 is inaccurate inasmuch as 18 years of age has always been the limit for the Sons' program. The Sons of the VFW is not a feeder program for the VFW organization. The Sons of the VFW was a youth program that was established to give young men an opportunity to work side by side with their fathers as they do beneficial activities within their communities.

The Junior Girls unit was established for a similar purpose and is used as a feeder program for any young woman wanting to participate in the Ladies Auxiliary. They also recommended Resolution 208 be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE AL BUBECKI (Post 4425—Florida): I am speaking in favor of the motion, because I believe that the VFW needs all the help it can get. Getting these young people to continue to help us after the age of 16 is a worthwhile project, not only in the way of getting help but also in educating them. I am in favor of the motion.

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

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287—Florida): Commander-in-Chief and Delegates to this Convention: As you know, I have the opportunity to serve you as the Assistant Adjutant General and to see that the programs work every day, as does Gordon Thorson in the arena of Youth Activities.

It was our recommendation to reject for the similar reasons that Past Commander-in-Chief John Staum recommended to you. Obviously, this is not an Auxiliary and one in which we would have to think long and hard about if we wanted to form another Auxiliary.

The truth of the matter is that over the 10,000 Posts that we have in this organization, only roughly 40 Posts have Sons of the VFW units. One of the things we must be very careful about is that, as all of you know, regarding the Flying Squadrons this last year, the IRS is attacking us in every venue. We have to make sure that we are careful to keep our tax exempt status.

I want to warn the people here in this Convention that we are under closer scrutiny by the IRS to protect our exemption under 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. It would not be wise to try to attempt to broaden the past for participation at our canteens. That is the problem we are faced with. We recommend rejection of this Resolution. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is there anybody else at Microphone No. 3?

COMRADE STEVE JACOBS (Post 6944—California): Comrades, Benny said we have 40 units. The reason is because they don't stay in the units. I am a Life Chairman of the Youth Activities in the State of California. I am a Past Department Chairman and what we need to do is keep those kids.

I understand the canteen problem. You know, as the Commander-in-Chief said about the age, we need to keep these kids involved. The Auxiliary started out the same way, and it was the Junior Girls, and now they can belong to this organization.

We all know when we go out with poppies and do parades and do everything else, it is good to have young men. They are our sons and our grandsons that could be side by side with us forever. I think we need to adopt this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LAWRENCE MARTELL (Post 10131—Florida): I move the previous question.

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

COMRADE NORMAN GAOVETTE (Post 8681—Florida): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: There is a motion and a second to move the previous question. I believe one person can speak in favor of the adoption. Is there anyone that would like to speak? Is there anybody at Microphone No. 2?

COMRADE RAY SODEN (Post 2149—Illinois): I rise to support the Resolution that we extend the age limit of our Sons of the VFW. I stand before you with very much pride in the fact that I wrote the original Resolution that started the Sons of Veterans of Foreign Wars in the National Organization.

One reason why we only have 40 units, and I am going to say this as straight as I can say it, is because the National Organiza-

tion has not promoted it to extend it beyond what its original intention was supposed to be. We have to have some continuity.

Comrades, we have the Dads of the VFW who are in the Department of Indiana, and Evansville is one of the greatest supporters of their activities and run a lot of their functions. There is no reason that my son, who is a Past Commander of the Sons of the VFW, could not have the opportunity as he has done voluntarily to stand side by side on Poppy Day to help shake the can, to help raise money as he has done for many years, or to participate and help around the Post with any activity that we have.

We need all the support that we can get. If you have ten percent of your Post's membership coming out to help, or participate in the meeting, you have a great attendance. You have a great participation, believe me. So, we do need all the help we can get.

So, we have the Junior Girls unit and the mobility of it because of their By-Laws. That allows them to join the Auxiliary. We hope and pray to God that our sons and our grandsons never have the opportunity to become eligible for this organization.

We want peace in the world. That is what we are telling everybody. So, let's let them participate on some level and join with us hand in hand in promoting Americanism and promoting youth activities to working with our Junior units.

My son, a Past Commander of the Sons of the VFW, would be willing to work with the units, would be able to communicate with them and help on all of our programs. Let's add another little arm of strength and utilize that vitality of youth and let's put them to work. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Ray. Let me just clarify one thing. There is a dad's organization, but they are not part of the VFW.

Before I move the previous question, because we are encountering so many problems nationwide now with the Internal Revenue Service affecting our membership today, I would like to call on our attorney from Kansas City, Larry Maher, to explain some of the situations that we have.

COMRADE LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): I am just going to explain one situation it impacts that which you are about to do here. The Internal Revenue, the Baltimore District Office, has taken a position that all of the Auxiliary units, to the extent they can use the club, have to be counted against the 75-percent requirement for (c)(19) qualification.

If you had all of the members of the Sons of the VFW together with the members of the Posts, and you don't have 75-percent eligible veterans of the VFW, you could lose your 501(c)(19) exemption. That is the position they are taking. We don't agree with it. We are going to fight them over it.

But understand, if you expand the eligibility beyond 16, it looks an awful lot like you are making them eligible to go into that club, and that is precisely what the IRS wants you to do. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion before us is to move the previous question. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

The motion in front of us now is to adopt Resolution 203, To Lift the Age Limit of the Sons of the VFW. If you vote "yes", we don't have any age restriction. If you vote "no", we retain the rules as they are today. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "nays" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Commander-in-Chief, that is the end of our report and we ask that the Committee be discharged.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. John, you and your Committee are discharged for the rest of the Convention.

I would like to call on our Adjutant General to make a couple of announcements.

[Convention announcements.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I would like to call on our Assistant Adjutant General Benny Bachand to give a briefing on this evening's Patriotic Rally.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287—Florida): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. As all of you know by now, the VFW will have a Patriotic Rally this evening in the Las Vegas Convention Center. Buses will run from the Bally to the Convention Center, and then they will continue to run after the program.

Those Department Commanders, Auxiliary Presidents and those units that are in the parade portion will have to assemble by 4:30 in M-1. The doors to the Convention Center will open at 5:00 o'clock. The program will start at 5:30. Then the parade starts.

We will have a tribute to America, a program that will last approximately one hour and 15 minutes. I will assure all of you that by 8:00 o'clock this evening this program will be done, and I hope to see all of you here because I think we have an exciting program for you this evening at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Benny. Let me just say we are attempting something different this year instead of just walking down the street with hot weather and a parade. Benny has put another great program together here.

I want to tell you something. Last night, after the banquet, in which we had about 3,000 attending, better than half of the people left the hall. Those who left, you missed a tremendous show for about an hour and one-half. I want to thank Benny and Joe Ross for getting those people together for us.

WINNERS OF INSURANCE DRAWING

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The final order of business is to bring up our Insurance Director, Bob Crow for today's insurance drawing. While he is coming up here, I know there must be an officer from the Big Ten Conference around here, and I want you to know you have a small 50-pound box for yourself to pick up in the Conference Room in the Business Center.

COMRADE ROBERT CROW: Thank you, Chief. Again, this year we are going to have a cash drawing, and this is sponsored by Combined Insurance Company of America. They are currently our underwriters of all our individual health, life and accident programs.

At this time I would like to have Past Commander-in- Chief Jim Kimery to go ahead and draw six tickets. We are going to have six drawings today. They will be for $25, $50, $100, and then $25, $50 and $100. That will be the order of the drawings.

Tomorrow we will have three more drawings, and they will be for $25, $50 and $100. Then on Thursday, we will have four drawings. They will be for $25, $50, $100, and then a grand prize winner of $1,000. I will see if I can get the tickets and we will read off the winners.

The names will be listed down in the Insurance Booth in the display area. If the individuals are not here to pick up their money, we will send it to them after the Convention. The winner of the first $25 is Jack Adkins, Post 3404, Missouri.

The $50 winner is Phillip G. Phistry, Post 10124, New Mexico. The $100 winner is Kenneth Mueller, Post 6401, Kansas.

The second three drawings, the $25 winner is Elmer Talkington, Post 10386, Arizona. The $50 winner is Charles Horne, Post 9969, Oklahoma. And the last $100 winner is Frank J. Landerway, Post 3641, Colorado. If any of these gentlemen are here, or if you know the gentlemen, they can stop by and pick up their money after the meeting.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: All right. I will now recess this meeting until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning. I will see you at the Patriotic Rally tonight. Thank you for a great attendance.

[Whereupon, the session was recessed at 12:55 o'clock p.m.]

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 24, 1994

[The Second Business Session of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Barron Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer, presiding.]

COMMANER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, prepare the room for the Pledge to the Flag.

[The National Sergeant-at-Arms lead the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.]

[The Opening Prayer was given by the National Chaplain Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr.]

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Good morning. I hope you all had an enjoyable afternoon as you keep the silver state smiling. Those who attended the Patriotic Rally last night, did you enjoy it?

First of all, the members of the General Resolutions Committee, I would like for you to meet with Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney outside the second set of glass doors for a Resolution that was proposed yesterday. We would like to get you together briefly so you can over that Resolution if you would, please.

I would like to call on the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Richard Trombla, for his report.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174—Kansas): I am Richard Trombal, Department of Kansas, Chairman of the Credentials Committee. This is a temporary report as of last night. We have 16,263 delegates; Department Commanders 44; National Officers 10; Past Commanders-in-Chief 25. That is for a grand total of 16,342. This is a temporary report, Commander-in-Chief.

INTRODUCTION OF EILEEN FULTON, MARCH OF DIMES NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON AND HONORARY MEMBER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Our next guest has one of the most recognizable faces in the world today. As the forerunner for television vixens such as Susan Lucci, Joan Collins and Donna Mills, she will shortly celebrate her 35th Anniversary as the infamous "Lisa" on CBS–TV's award-winning drama "As The World Turns."

Although best known as "Queen of the Soaps," she is a dramatic actress, songstress and comedienne who has appeared both on and

off Broadway in the "Fantasticks," "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll," "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" with Hal Holbrook, and in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

On the big screen she played the lead role in "Girl of the Night," an adaptation of Harold Greenwald's novel "The Call Girl."

She is an accomplished cabaret performer and song stylist, receiving nationwide rave reviews for her one-woman show featuring her powerful soprano voice. She recently released a new CD and cassette entitled "First Kiss," featuring a collection of beloved romantic standards and torch songs.

She is currently dividing her time between "As the World Turns," Broadway, Regional Theater, singing and writing her autobiography, and several murder mysteries. She is also writing her memoir "Diva Darling", which will be available in May, 1995, to coincide with her 35th Anniversary on "As The World Turns."

Although she has one of the busiest schedules of any performer, she finds time for those disabled and less fortunate. She has served as Chairperson of the New York Metropolitan Committee for UNICEF, co-hosted cerebral palsy telethons, worked for the Lupus Foundation and Martha's Table, a Washington, D.C. organization to benefit homeless mothers and children, and hosted the March of Dimes International Telethon.

She comes to us today as the National Spokesperson for the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation.

Please rise and welcome the "Queen of the Soaps", actress, authoress, singer and humanitarian, Miss Eileen Fulton. [Applause]

RESPONSE—EILEEN FULTON

MS. FULTON: Thank you very much. Thank you for such a speech. I want to meet this wonderful person that we are talking about. I know there are a lot of you out there who have not seen me on "As The World Turns," so I am going to catch you up on my character for 35 years.

My name, Lisa Miller Hughes Eldridge Hughes Shay Coleman, almost Hadley, McCall, now Mitchell, and now looking, and she is looking. I have only had six husbands, but I have had seventy some odd, very odd, lovers. I have just has a ball on that show. That is why I stay with it.

We used to be live, and I don't mean that we are dead now, but you understand that we did the show live. I have a couple of little stories I would like to share with you, because that was the most horrific time for me.

We had on our show, and we do a lot of things about doctors and lawyers, but we had a young man, an actor, to come on for one day and he had to play the part of a specialist. He had to come in and diagnose a patient who was dying off of diverticultis.

The young actor came in and he said, "Okay. I can do this; I can do this. 'Gentlemen, I am here to tell you that your patient is dying of divicu—what is that word? That she, no, no diverticulitis. He said, yes, difficlus. I can't get that. Well, when we would do the show, I am coming through the door, so perhaps you will just stop the cameras and then if I don't say it right the first time I cold have another chance."

They said, "You will never have another chance. This is live. Twenty-three million people will be watching you." That is the wrong thing to say to an actor who is scared to death. "Twenty-three million people? Diverticu—how do you say that?"

Well, one of the actors on the show was very clever and very kind. He read this commercial that goes bum, bum, bum, bum, bum dippety-do and bum, bum, and diverticulitis. I think you got it, diverticulitis. Yes, he got it.

We all went about doing, "Diverticulities, I think you have got it." He said, "That will help me remember." All day he was practicing and getting that right, and he said, "I have got it. I know how to say it. When I come on the air, I will say diverticultis. I have got it."

On the air, he was all just full of himself. He had on his nice suit. He painted on his mustache and he came through the door in front of 23 million people and he says, "A gentleman, the patient is dying of diverticulties. I think he has got it."

Another cute little story, I had to walk around and say it three months. I had to walk around and say, "I am pregnant and I don't know how it happened."I had had four husbands and two children, and I didn't know how it happened? Oh, come on now.

So, I walked around saying, "I am pregnant and I don't know how it happened. How have I gotten pregnant? How did it happen? I don't know. I am so pregnant. How did it happen?" Finally, a lady from Birmingham, Alabama, sent me a letter. She enclosed a pamphlet from the Planned Parenthood. She said, "This is how it happened. Get on with it."

This life has been full of stories like hers and I could stay up here all day and tell you about these, but the real reason I am here is to thank you especially for the March of Dimes for all the wonderful work that you are doing. I have worked with the March of Dimes for quite some time.

I didn't realize what the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary have done for the March of Dimes. I am so impressed. I want to thank you. You have helped with your time, with your support, your energy, your love, your kindness. You have marched in the Walk of America, you have gone door-to-door for the Mothers March.

You know what you have done. It is wonderful. I think it is time that the rest of the world knew what you did. And why should I be amazed? You are my heroes. You have saved our country more than once and now you are saving lives. You are helping prevent birth defects.

I would like to tell you just a quick story of something, and I would like to personalize one thing that you did do. I think this is totally amazing. In Brownsville, Texas, in 1990, there was a couple, Teresa and Ramon Salazar. They looked forward so much to having a family.

Teresa had two miscarriages. The third time she went full term and she was so excited because she was going to have this baby. At that very time in 1990, there was discovered that in Brownsville alone children were being born with neural tube defect.

That is a birth defect affecting the brain and the spine. In five years, 68 babies in Brownsville alone had died or had this birth defect. This is a major epidemic. In Texas, the Department of Health,

with the help of the March of Dimes and their expertise, came in to see what was causing it.

The cause, we are not sure, but they did come up with a wonderful discovery. This is because of your money and your support and devotion that you have given. They found that Vitamin B can help save at least 50 to 70 percent of the children born and keep 50 to 70 percent of the children—do you understand what I am trying to say—can prevent 50 to 70 percent of the children born with this. I think this is wonderful.

Well, Teresa wanted another baby. She went to the doctor. The doctor put her on vitamins, the Vitamin B, and that is folic acid. She went for prenatal care and when their baby was born she gave birth to as healthy baby. I thank you for making this possible for her.

I think some of you were there at the Wayne Newton Show the other night. Didn't I see some of you at the Wayne Newton Show? I saw you, yes. I was impressed by what Wayne said. It kind of reminds me of you. Wayne said, when he was thanking his audience, and he is a very gracious man, he said, "You can give your money; a man's money is his money. When you give time, you give a part of your life."

That is what you have done. You have given your money and your support, but you are also giving your time. You are giving a part of your life. The March of Dimes thanks you and so do I. Thank you very much.

We do have our awards now. I have got the mike and it is my show. (Laughter) we are going to give our awards. We have four. The first one, I will read to you what it says on this beautiful plaque. It is from the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation.

"Because you cared enough to support the campaign for healthier babies, more of America's babies will get a healthy start in life." This award goes to Plymouth, Wisconsin, Post 5612, VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary, for outstanding support of the March of Dimes Mission, 1993–'94. Congratulations.

The next one, again, "Because you cared enough to support the campaign of Care for Babies, more American babies will be born healthy and have a healthy start in life." This goes to VFW Post 1, Department of Michigan, and the Ladies Auxiliary, in financial support of the March of Dimes, 1993–'94.

This award goes to North Dakota VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary No. 2 for the financial support of the March of Dimes mission for '93–'94. Congratulations. They were first last year and many years before, and you will be first again. Congratulations.

Ms. EILLEN FULTON. You-all have been so marvelous and you are so quiet, and we are standing up here and having our pictures taken. This is the last award.

To the National Headquarters of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary for continued support of the March of Dimes Mission, 1993–'94. Here we go. Congratulations. Thank you again for your help and your support. You are wonderful.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER. Tank you, Eileen. Accepting the award for the national organization are the two people that should be because they do so much for us, our Director of Commu-

nity Activities, Mike Gormalley and, of course, our Assistant Adjutant General for Programs, Benny Bachand.

PRESENTATION OF THE J. EDGAR HOOVER AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: On May 13, 1994, in a candlelight ceremony at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., the name of Detective Evelyn Gort was added to the names of those officers who died in the line of duty.

It was early in the morning in Coconut Grove, Florida, last October 30 when Detective Gort of the Metro-Dade Police Department, off duty and in the company of a friend, were approached by a man with a gun who attempted to rob them.

As her friend handed over three dollars and the keys to his car, Detective Gort pulled her handgun and exchanged shots with the gunman before being fatally wounded.

The gunman fled on a motorcycle driven by an accomplice. He was later dropped off at a hospital where police arrested him after determining that the bullets taken from his body had been fired from Detective Gort's gun. His accomplice has since been apprehended by police. Both men have extensive arrest records.

The recipient of many commendations, Detective Gort was recognized not only by her peers but those of the community whom she served as a dedicated and respected law enforcement professional.

On three separate occasions, Detective Gort was commended by the Director of the Metro-Dade Police Department for her investigative skills leading to arrests in major fraud and embezzlement cases.

Following her death, Detective Evelyn Gort received the Police Department's Gold Medal of Valor which stated her actions were well above and beyond the call of duty and were performed in the true spirit of the law enforcement Code of Ethics.

The life of Evelyn Gort, 34 years of age, mother of two daughters, and an law enforcement career of seven years has ended. What has not come to an end is her memory.

Today the Veterans of Foreign Wars honor her memory and pay tribute to her and the men and women in law enforcement who so unselfishly serve their communities.

Accepting the VFW J. Edgar Hoover Award for Detective Evelyn Gort are her mother, Mrs. Ofelia Gonzalez, and her sister, Mayra Fausett.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, J. Edgar Hoover Gold Medal and Citation awarded posthumously to Detective Evelyn Gort, Metropolitan Dade County Police Department.

"In special recognition of her exceptional career as a distinguished law enforcement officer as evidenced by her many commendations for dedicated and devotion to law enforcement, including the Gold Medal of Valor, distinguished officer of the month awards and employee excellence awards and in grateful appreciation for her professional excellence, personal bravery and courage in the face of great personal danger above and beyond the call of duty and in the true spirit of the law enforcement code of ethics for which she sacrificed her life resulting in the survival of her fellow officer and the increased safety of the public of Dade County."

The citation is signed today by me as Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by our Adjutant General, Howard Vander Clute. Of course, along with this award goes an honorarium of $1,500.

RESPONSE—MS. MAYRA FAUSETT

MS. FAUSETT: For myself and for my family, I would like to thank all of your from the bottom of our hearts. You are our heroes. So many of you have died to make this world a better place as my sister did. She is my hero. She was a wonderful human being.

When someone dies, often you always have to say something nice about them. In my sister's case, there was nothing but something nice. She was a person that cared more about the people that she served than about herself. She gave of herself 24 hours a day.

She gave her life to save another human being. She will always be with us and she will always be a memory of the Metro-Dade-Police Force. We are so grateful for all the things that you have done and that everyone has done. You have made these ten months a little easier. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF VFW EMERGENCY SERVICE AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Each day, countless brave men and women, members of the Emergency Services in our communities, put their lives at risk fighting fires, providing rescue service, civil disaster assistance or rendering emergency medical care to save lives.

The Veterans of Foreign War Emergency Services Gold Medal Award seeks to focus national attention on the deeds and sacrifices of those who so nobly meet the emergency needs of our nation's communities.

Our recipient this year is a 22-year veteran of the North St. Paul, Minnesota Fire Department. In addition to his accomplishments in providing medical training and safety education to his community, he has been recognized by the citizens of North St. Paul for his dedication to the well-being of others, both on and off duty.

As an example, the State Police of Minnesota presented their Lifesaver Award to him for saving the life of a four-year old boy after the car in which the child was riding crashed into a boat trailer at high speed. His CPR efforts restored the child's breathing and pulse and the boy survived.

We are honored today to present the VFW Emergency Services Award to a fine example of all who serve their communities in emergency services with dedication, concern, and at times, sacrifice, Captain Thomas Korlin, North St. Paul, Minnesota, Fire Department.

Please give a warm welcome to Captain Korlin. [Applause]

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Emergency Services Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Captain Thomas Korlin, North St. Paul Fire Department.

"In special recognition of his distinguished career spanning twenty-two years of exceptional service as a firefighter, engineer,

tactical and training officer and medical officer for the Fire Department's Ambulance Service and in sincere appreciation for his selfless and dedicated service protecting life and property at great personal risk and his C.P.R. teaching and training of fire and ambulance personnel and his fellow employees.''

This citation has been signed by myself, of course, as Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by our Adjutant General. It also includes an honorarium of $1,500.

Captain Korlin, I understand there are five members of your Fire Department out in the audience with us. I am sure they would like to be standing up here to help you accept this award.

RESPONSE—MR. THOMAS KORLIN

MR. KORLIN: Good morning, gentlemen. I would just like to inform you of one fact in anticipation of this morning. It is unreal for me because I am not much of a public speaker. I assert myself on a medical emergency call, and a fire, and I am here at this time very nervous.

I will start with when I received the letter from Mr. LeFebvre's office in Washington, D.C. I was asked to be the first recipient of this award. Needless to say, I was flabbergasted in receiving this award, because I wasn't even aware of the fact that I was nominated.

Being here to receive the award is a great honor, but it is honor enough in itself to know that your peers think that much of you to give you this nomination. I would like to especially take this opportunity to thank Commander of Post 1450 in St. Paul who was going to be here present this morning but was unable to attend. He called me Sunday morning and made me aware of the fact he was in an automobile accident and will be unable to attend.

Also my Fire Chief and members of my Department, which I did not know were coming. I just met them maybe about a half hour ago. They are here. I would like to introduce them to you, if I may. They are Mr. Mike Chungman, Retired; Dominic Singotti, Captain of the Fire Department; Jerry Burnham, firefighter, and our illustrious Chief, David Six, and Honorary Member in Rio Grande, California, Mr. David Athey. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

To just give you a little past history, after graduating from high school I joined the Navy and served aboard the U.S.S. Carrier Independence. I got married to my wife, Nancy, in 1968. We have two children, a son 19 and a daughter 17 years of age.

I have always enjoyed helping people, especially those that are in some kind of need. So, in 1972, I joined the North St. Paul Fire Department. Today, I am a Captain. I am the oldest continuous active Emergency Medical Technician in the State of Minnesota. As I mentioned before, I am also a C.P.R. American Red Cross Instructor.

A little history of our city. The city of North St. Paul has population of approximately 1,000 people. We are just in the suburbs of St. Paul. We have a 40-member Fire Department who are all volunteer except for our Chief, and we respond to approximately 300 fires a year.

We man two ambulances and we respond to approximately 600 mercy medical service calls during that year. That gives me ample

time to do what I really like to do most. However, there are times even being a volunteer you feel like throwing in the towel.

One I can always remember being in the back of my mind forever was an incident back in November, 1985. My wife and I had a few couples over at the house for the evening. One of these members, a gentleman was an Emergency Medical Technician and a firefighter.

He was on call for an ambulance that night. It was a typical November evening, and we had just received about six to eight inches of snow. When the ambulance call came in that a pedestrian had been struck, he arrived on the scene rapidly and found a 13-year-old lad, who I will call Mike, lying in the snow-covered street with an extreme head trauma, no pulse or respiration.

He was loaded in the ambulance for C.P.R. and artificial resuscitation where it was done by an individual that was at my house, who I will call Harvey. Excuse me for a minute. My friend, Harvey, said the young man loaded in the back of the ambulance had braces on his teeth.

Subsequently it dawned on him that the individual, the young man he was working on, was his own son. Harvey, in turn, did C.P.R. on his little boy and took him to the emergency hospital, and they worked very diligently on Mike to save his young life, but they did not.

The doctors came out of the hospital ER room and approached the emergency crew and informed them that there was nothing more they could do, and they were going to be notifying immediately the parents. Harvey turned and told them that there was no need for that, because he was his father.

Another incident that I recall is that a young lad was run over accidentally in his driveway. I answered the call, and I was the first person on the scene. What took place was that the mother was washing the car and abruptly left momentarily.

When she came back, she found that the car had rolled out of the driveway. The young lad was standing in the middle of the driveway. I got there and there was no pulse, no breathing, no obvious trauma to the young guy. I immediately started C.P.R. resuscitations on the boy.

Again, I carried the young man to the ambulance and brought him to our nearest trauma center. En route to the trauma center, I got breathing restored in the individual, but I never got a pulse back on him. Needless to say, he in turn died.

But as fate would have it, a week later, the family and I were up north on vacation. Coming back on the interstate, it was typical road construction in Minnesota during the summertime and the traffic was backed up probably five or six miles, stop and go.

I had made the comment to my wife at that time that note of the traffic. Just right at the time I witnessed a car slam into the back of another vehicle traveling about 65 miles an hour, and the other vehicle was at a dead stop. Unknowingly, somehow I got my first aid kit out of the trunk of the car and ran down there to the interstate, probably 100 yards or so, where I found a four-year-old lad, no pulse, no breathing, and he had severe head trauma.

I in turn administered C.P.R. and artificial resuscitation to the young boy. Because of the distance that the ambulance had to trav-

el, I stayed with the young lad for about 15 minutes. Needless to day, I did restore his breathing and his pulse again.

The young boy was in critical condition for several months, but he made it and he is alive today. That child's respiration and healthy life was enough work for me. Needless to say, I received the Minnesota State Highway Patrol Lifesaver's Award for that year. The following year I received the Firefighter Award and Emergency Medical Technician State Award. Now, this one.

I would like to thank the VFW especially for recognizing the efforts of our nation's firefighters. As far as I know, the VFW is the only organization that does.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, especially my wife Nancy. They may not have been at the fires, but they have done a lot of sacrifices, so I would like to thank my family. Thank you, gentlemen, for this prestigious award.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Mr. Thomas Korlin.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Captain, once again, we thank you, and we thank the people of your profession for helping to save lives.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW AVIATION AND SPACE AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: NASA's successful servicing of the Hubble Space Telescope represents one of the most extensive and difficult servicing missions ever attempted.

After finding and retrieving the bus-size Hubble Space Telescope, the team of astronauts aboard the space shuttle Endeavor completed the servicing and repairs needed to refurbish the telescope.

With more space walks than any other mission, their success represented the culmination of incredible efforts by both the scientific and NASA community.

We are honored to have with us today mission specialist Tom Akers who, prior to the Hubble Space Telescope mission, had flown two previous flights in which he, as part of a three-member crew, captured the stranded Intelsat satellite and on a second space walk evaluated space station construction techniques.

Colonel Akers joined the Air Force in 1979, following four years as the high school principal in his hometown of Eminence, Missouri.

Selected for the astronaut program in 1987, Colonel Akers is a veteran of three space flights.

We are honored to present the VFW Aviation and Space Award to the scientific and NASA community for its combined contribution toward enhancing our understanding of space.

Please join me in welcoming Lieutenant Colonel Tom Akers, who will accept the award on behalf of NASA and the community of scientists which contributed to the success of the Hubble Space Telescope servicing mission.

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars Aviation and Space Award, Gold Medal and Citation, awarded to The Crew of STS–61, National Aeronautics Space Administration.

"In special recognition of exceptional contributions in the field of space evidencing, the dedication, knowledge, professionalism and

courage of the crew in accomplishing its difficult and challenging servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope, demonstrating the versatility and resourcefulness of men and women in space."

This has been signed by myself, the Commander-in-Chief, today, and attested to by Howard E. Vander Clute, Adjutant General. With this award goes an honorarium of $1,500.

Congratulations, Colonel Akers.

RESPONSE—COLONEL THOMAS AKERS

COLONEL AKERS: Thank you, George, It is an honor to be here today to represent the rest of my NASA STS–61 crew and also the entire NASA team who put together the mission that resulted in us repairing the Hubble Space Telescope just this past December.

I think it is entirely appropriate, and I am very pleased that the VFW chose to include not just the STS–61 crew members, seven of us, but also the entire NASA team because, indeed, it was the epitome of a team effort of what we accomplished last December some 300 million miles in space in Europe.

In fact, we like to tell people that we think that mission was so successful for three reasons. Number one, we had good hardware; number two, we had good preparation; and number three, we had good people.

The good hardware included not only the excellent space shuttle that worked faultlessly. It included the Hubble Space Telescope that had been designed several years before and deployed in space in the spring of 1990, and it was designed for space walkers like myself to go out and work on them.

That hardware also included over 200 tools that we had in the space shuttle's cargo bay to work on the telescope with. The good preparation also included the work of a lot of good people. We trained for over a year and one-half. Most of our training was underwater in a very large swimming pool down in Houston, Texas, where all of us astronauts live, and also several trips over to Huntsville, Alabama, to the Marshall Flight Space Center where we also trained in a larger pool.

Each of us who went outside on that mission had over 200 hours of training underwater. All that good preparation wasn't just training for us, it was training for the ground team. For each of the seven astronauts up in space, we had literally hundreds of people on the ground who were watching while we were working in space making sure that we didn't miss anything or do anything incorrectly.

Finally, of course, what makes every good team is good people. I think we have some of the best people in the country working in NASA, and I am very proud to be a part of that team. As you all know, everyone accomplishes a lot more by teamwork.

We like to spread the word that for astronauts there are thousands of scientists, technicians, engineers, custodians and secretaries that all go together to make up the NASA team, not just the ones at NASA doing the work on the mission, but the scientific information that that Hubble Space Telescope is sending back.

That data that you have seen in the media, and certainly in the past month or so, you have seen what a great job the Hubble Tele-

scope is now doing helping us to learn about the outer edges of our universe.

Again, I would like to thank you for this award. I think it is also very appropriate that the $1,500 honorarium has been donated to the NASA Scholarship Fund, and it will help some young men and women as they pursue their future going to college and, hopefully, they will be around to help us in NASA to solve some of the problems we are going to encounter in the future as we build a space station and hope to send someone to Mars during my lifetime. Thank you.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For this report, I would like to call on the Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. To all of the outstanding delegates at this Convention, I would like at this time to thank the Commander-in-Chief for giving me an outstanding group of comrades to work with on the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee.

Serving alongside with me is an outstanding Past Commander-in-Chief, Pat Carr, from the great State of Louisiana. Billy Ray Cameron, Past Commander-in-Chief from North Carolina, served as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on POW/MIA. Unfortunately, Billy Ray heads up the Emergency Services for the State of North Carolina and had to return home because of flooding problems.

So, in his place the Vice-Chairman, Russell Rieke, from the Department of Illinois, will be giving the report of the Subcommittee on POW/MIA. I would like to thank Ted Steadman, our Director, for all of his able assistance and kindness he have given us during our meeting.

Most of all, Chief, I want to thank you for presenting to us an outstanding group of comrades dedicated to serving the organization, who served on the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. At this time I would like to present those Resolutions that were adopted.

No. 403, The Lessons of the Cold War.

No. 404, Limit Foreign Ownership of U.S. Businesses and Properties.

No. 405, Stop Illegal Immigration at the Border.

No. 406, Continue Castro's Isolation Until he is Removed.

No. 407, Punish Terrorists Now.

No. 408, Strategic Defense Should be a Strategic Priority.

No. 409, The Future is Brighter in Central America.

No. 410, Add the B–2 Bomber to our Arsenal.

No. 411, Protect our Technology and Industrial Base.

No. 412, Oppose Lifting the Defense Department Ban on Homosexuals in the Armed Forces.

No. 414, Maintain an Effective U.S. Coast Guard.

No. 415, Standing Firm for Freedom.

No. 416, National Strategy of Peace Through Strength.

No. 417, A Common Sense Military Balance in Europe.

No. 419, Military Service; an Honored Profession.

No. 420, Start for Start Treaties I and II.

No. 421, Strengthen Intelligence Services to Prevent Strategic Surprise.

No. 422, Limit U.S. Role in Yugoslav Civil War.

No. 423, Support for the Republic of Korea.

No. 424, Support for the Republic of China on Taiwan.

No. 427, Grant the AFEM to Veterans of El Salvador.

No. 430, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal Navy Medal Augmentation Team Operation Urgent Fury. That is Grenada.

No. 432, Surrender of U.S. Sovereignty.

No. 433, Supporting a Korean Service Medal.

No. 437, Oppose U.S. Forces Under foreign Command and Reveal Contents of Presidential Decision Directive 25.

No. 440, No Women in Combat.

No. 441, Demand Iraq Account for Kuwaiti Missing.

No. 442, Support for United States Naval Training.

No. 443, Support Retention of Selective Service.

No. 444, Support for the U.S. Army School of the Americas.

No. 445, Support for the Reconfiguration of Merchant Marines.

No. 447, Security of the Panama Canal.

No. 448, Merchant Marine Academy Tuition.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move these be adopted by this Convention.

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

COMRADE TED EATON (Post 2104—Massachusetts): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. Now, on the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: Now, I will read those that were rejected.

No. 425, Support the Exclusion of Iraqi POW's.

No. 428, Oppose U.S. Forces Under Foreign Command.

No. 434, Uphold Current Ban on Homosexuals Serving in the Active, Reserve and National Guard Forces of the United States.

No. 436, No to U.S. Military Intervention in Haiti.

No. 438, Congress Urged to Re-examine All-Volunteer Military Services.

Those are the ones that were rejected, comrades.

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

COMRADE LEO RELLER (Post 2366—Indiana): I move that we adopt Resolution No. 436.

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

COMRADE LEWIS WEISHEIT (Post 1114—Indiana): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the motion and the second. On the question.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: That is the Resolution of No U.S. Military Intervention in Haiti.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: On the question.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PETER PUENTES (Post 10209—Florida): We should oppose the military intervention in Haiti, because Haiti is not Panama or Grenada, or there is no interest for the United States citizens that are at risk at Haiti. Also military intervention will not solve Haiti's political problems, which has been shown in previous years. We should adopt Resolution 436, and I implore the comrades to adopt it. Thank you.

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

COMRADE LEO RELLER (Post 2366—Indiana): This Resolution is very dear to the Commander-in-Chief. He has already sent three warnings to the White House in regards to intervention in Haiti. If we reject this, we will undercut his warnings.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else? Anything else? Comrades, you have heard the motion to adopt Resolution 436. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; opposed "no". I guess we will have to do it again. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed "no".

Well, good morning. Please, let's hear it one more time. All those in favor, please stand. Now, those opposed, please stand. I think it is close, but I think the "ayes" have it. The Resolution is adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: You win a few and you lose a few, you know. At this time, my comrades, I would like to present to you the Vice-Chairman of the Subcommittee on POW/MIA, who will report in the absence of the Chairman, Past Department Commander of Illinois, Russell Rieke.

REPORT OF POW/MIA SUBCOMMITTEE

COMRADE RUSSELL RIEKE (Post 5694—Illinois): First of all, let me say to our Commander-in-Chief George Cramer, from the bottom of my heart I would like to thank you for we adopt these Resolutions.

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

COMRADE TERRY McKINNEY (Post 886—Illinois): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

COMRADE RUSSELL RIEKE (Post 5694—Illinois): The following Resolutions were rejected by the Committee.

Resolution 429, we rejected 429 because it was, in essence, the same as Resolution No. 401.

No. 431 was rejected because it was the same as 401 and 429.

Resolution 439 was rejected in favor of Resolution 418 but, in essence, was the same.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, they are automatically rejected if there is no one wishing to make a motion.

I have two other things. In yesterday's paper was a news article about missing Vietnam veterans. "The remains of three pilots shot down in the Vietnam War have been recovered and identified. The Pentagon has said they are Air Force Captain Leslie Boye, Air Force Major John Peter from Tusla, Oklahoma, and Navy Captain Hubert Modeen of Middleboro, Massachusetts.

"The remains of 335 Americans have been identified since the end of the war, and there are still 2,229 missing. If you would, sometime today stop off and see the representatives of our Joint Task—Full Force Accounting, and the Central Identification Lab.

They have set up a booth in the display area, and we encourage you to visit and see how they work to try to recover our MIA's and our POW's. Believe you me, I stand before you, and I saw what the JTFFA in Stoney Beach are doing for us or the POW/MIA's in Vietnam. They are doing an outstanding job.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes my report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Russ, for your work on the Committee. I also want to thank you for what you have done as the Vice-Chairman of the POW/MIA Committee. This is the first time that our Chair Officers over the past four years have had the opportunity to travel either on their own or with members of the State Department to investigate this issue, both in the United States and abroad.

This is the first time that we have thought it was necessary that a member of the troops, all of you, have the opportunity to go as well and get first-hand information. So, you don't have to believe what we are telling you. I think Russ got that firsthand information. I want to thank you, Russ, for taking the time from your schedule to travel overseas for us.

I would like to call back the Chairman of that Committee, who is also the chairman of the PAC and also PAC Director.

COMRADE FRED VonHINKEN (Post 4159—Michigan): Commander-in-Chief, I believe you went right from discussion and action on Resolution 436. I have a comrade here that has been standing to speak on another Resolution. You went right into the POW/MIA Subcommittee Report. This comrade has been standing here waiting.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: We saw people over there, but I didn't see anyone raise their hand at the microphone. I will tell you what I will do. I will go back, if you have something to say. I will give you that opportunity. What I would request, if you want to make a motion or something on a Resolution, please then go to the microphone. Don't just stand there so we don't know what is going on.

The Chair recognizes the comrade at Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DENISE NICHOLS (Post 4171—Colorado): Excuse me, sir. I did talk to the Sergeant-at-Arms. We skipped over Resolution 425. I understand that one was turned down. I am Denise Nichols, a Desert Storm veteran. I would like to know the reason why 425 was rejected by the Committee.

I would like to make a motion that that Resolution be adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: First of all, you are making a motion that Resolution 425 be adopted?

COMRADE DENISE NICHOLS (Post 4171—Colorado): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is there a second? Is there a second? Please go to the microphone.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: There is a motion and a second to adopt Resolution No. 425. On the question.

Mr. Chairman, do you want to let us know what the Resolution is?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: Resolution No. 425 is Support the Exclusion of Iraqi POW's. Do you want the Resolution read in its entirety, or just want the "Be It Resolved"?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Just the "Be It Resolved."

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: "Be It Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the bipartisan request from the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and urge the Secretary of State, Secretary of Health and Human Services and the President to withdraw the refugee status to be granted to these former Iraqi soldiers."

The rationale behind the rejection was the fact of erroneous information that we had received. I will call on our Director Ken Steadman to explain the erroneous information.

COMRADE KENNETH STEADMAN (Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs): Comrades, if you will recall at our last Convention in Dallas, we acted on this Resolution based on the information that we had then and, indeed, I wrote the Resolution in the hours just before our Committee meeting.

However, shortly after that, when the Resolution reached Washington and got to the Secretary of State's desk, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera and I went to the State Department to address this particular issue at which time we were informed, given the data which proved that the Iraqi's, which we had reported as being POW's and brought here as refugees, were, in fact, line bosses, individuals who had deserted the Iraqi Army and had crossed over to the coalition forces and provided the coalition forces with the information which was a value to them in defeating Iraq and the recapture of Kuwait.

It was either those, a large number of them were Kurds, who had rebelled, if you will recall, up in Northern Iraq and were also rebelling down in the South. All of these people had been erroneous lumped in as POW's. That was the original mistake.

I compounded it for you. I made the mistake at the Convention last year of reporting them as Iraqi POW's. They were, in fact, legitimate Iraqi refugees who were brought here, about 2,000 of them. I did report that, I think it was in October or November, when the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Spera asked me to put out a paper, which I did to all Departments, explaining the error of that Resolution.

Unfortunately, that Resolution was picked up again this year. So, it again contains erroneous information which I originally put out. I apologize and I thank you for hearing me out.

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

COMRADE DENISE NICHOLS (Post 4171—Colorado): I am the one that originally brought that back up. I would like to report to the Convention that some of our Desert Storm veterans have gone to testify in Washington, D.C., which one of these Iraqi POW's is now located in his own hometown.

After the publicity of his testimony, he was called by this Iraqi POW and kind of laughed at. He was told, "Well, I am sorry you are sick, sir, but I am being taken care of by your government. I

have food stamps, I have got welfare" and the whole list of things that our government is providing. "I am really sorry you are sick."

It didn't end there. After he testified again, the Iraqi POW has called him and threatened his family and the Desert Storm veteran. He has had to put his family in hiding, sir, so I really think we ought to do something about the Iraqi POW's that were brought to this country that are receiving better care than our sick Desert Storm vets and are now making threats.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Before I ask for any other comment, in my own mind, if I understand what is going on here, if we adopt this Resolution it keeps the Iraqi refugees out. If we don't adopt it, it allows them to come in. I have to agree with you. I think we ought to take care of our own people first before we worry about the rest of the world.

Microphone No. 3.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144—Massachusetts): Just for clarification, comrades. As Comrade Steadman said, when you passed that Resolution last year, we went to the State Department and we brought the matter to them, and they gave us certain information which indicated that the individuals that were allowed into this country were not, in fact, Iraqi POW's.

We also got information, as Ken just stated, that some of them are Kurds, some were individuals who deserted and came to our side. Just so that you understand how we operate, we did not accept that information at face value. Ken Steadman has a wide mentor of individuals within the Defense Department and the State Department, and he was instructed to contact that network and gather as much information as he could.

Based on that information that he received, opposition came up to this Resolution. I am only telling you this, not to say that we should not pass the Resolution, but to let you know that when you do pass something like this we will follow up on it and we investigate it independently as well as we can.

With that in mind, I will join with the Commander-in-Chief in recommending that we pass this Resolution, because we have a lot of problems with our own people here that we need to take care of and maybe stop letting all the refugees in to begin with.

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

COMRADE JOHN DEBOLD (Post 364—New York): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I concur with your thoughts with regard to taking care of our own. As I said yesterday, and I will say it again until the day I die, charity begins at home and no place else.

Right today, they are picking up the people that want to leave Cuba. What are they doing with them? They are bringing them to Guantanamo Bay and we have to support them also. I believe that——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrade, we are on a motion. This is unrelated.

COMRADE JOHN DEBOLD (Post 364—New York): You are talking about taking care of our own. They pick up the people from Cuba and take them to Guantanamo Bay and we are supporting them so——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrade, you are out of order. Anything else on the question?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KEITH BROWN (Post 4695—Texas): I think that we are addressing the issue of POW's. Those other individuals who left their armies and came over to our side are not POW's. So, I support the ban of POW's.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else? If not, all those in favor of adopting Resolution 425 will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): I don't believe the great Chairman of this Committee has yet reported on 113 as either being approved or rejected. That was Concerning the Granting of Asylum or Residence, Temporary or Permanent, in the United States or its Territories to any Leader, President, Monarch or Dictator.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is that No. 413, Ron?

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): Excuse me, Resolution 413. I apologize.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: I did not read that particular Resolution. Resolution No. 413 is Concerning the Granting of Asylum or Residence, Temporary or Permanent, in the United States or its Territories to any Leader, President, Monarch or Dictator. We will move adoption of that Resolution.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): We agree.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Ron, did you say you want to second that motion?

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): Yes, I would. That is exactly what I said. Ron Rusakiewicz, Post 9460, Stratford, Connecticut, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing none, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Anything else that we may have missed? If not, I would like to call back up our Chairman of the PAC Committee and also the Director of our PAC Office.

PRESENTATION BY THE PAC COMMITTEE

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SODEN: That is what happens when you are looking at those slot machines popping all night long. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this morning it gives me a great deal of pleasure, on behalf of the PAC Board, the Director and myself to present this to you for your support that you have given the PAC.

This is presented to George R. Cramer, Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars, in appreciation for your support to the VFW-PAC 1993–94.

Chief, I really want to sincerely thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve this year as the PAC Chairman. I present this to you with our most profound thanks.

Chief, I just want to add one thing. Bob Currieo has served as Director of the PAC for five years. He will be leaving that position to assume a new position with our organization. I sincerely would like each and every one of you to join with me in thanking Bob for the outstanding leadership and direction he has given to the Political Action Committee.

Bob, thank you very, very much. [Applause]

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BOB CURRIEO: Thank you.

INTRODUCTION—HARRY G. SUMMERS, JR., COWLES HISTORY GROUP

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: At the 92nd VFW National Convention, the VFW presented its prestigious VFW News Media Award to a distinguished author and journalist.

Retired Army Colonel Harry G. Summers, a syndicated columnist, editor and author of the "Korean War Almanac", has served on the faculties of the U.S. Army War College and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Beginning as an Infantry Squad Leader in the Korean War, he rose through the ranks, building a distinguished military career, as a Battalion and Corps Operations Officer in the Vietnam War and later as a negotiator in meetings with the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.

His articles on strategy and his commentary on military issues have appeared in syndicated columns across the nation and in such renowned military journals as "Army, Military Review" and "The Naval Institute Proceedings."

Colonel Summers is a nationally-syndicated columnist and editor of "Vietnam" magazine. Harry Summers knows of what he writes. He served with the 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division in Korea, 1950–51, and in Vietnam with the 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, 1966–67.

Among his decorations and awards are the Combat Infantry Badge for both Korea and Vietnam, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star for Valor, and two Purple Hearts. He is a member of VFW Post 8065 in Bowie, Maryland.

Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, will you please join me in welcoming a distinguished journalist and soldier, Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr.

REMARKS BY COLONEL HARRY G. SUMMERS

COMRADE HARRY SUMMERS (Post 8065—Maryland): I was impressed at the dinner the other night when the Past Commander was speaking and someone in the wings said, "Cut to the chase." Well, it is pretty easy to cut to the chase when you are talking about the future of the United States military and the future of the United States.

As you know, we are in disarray. We are in disarray not so much on the fighting ability of our armed forces because we probably have the best armed forces we have ever had. I had the great opportunity to interview General Fred Franks. Some of you may know he led the 7th Corps attack in the Gulf.

He lost a leg in Vietnam, and he left and spent 22 months in the hospital, and came back with an artificial leg, and he led the attack in the Gulf War. He is a great soldier. He is head of the Army Training Doctrine Command at the present time. He couldn't say enough good things about the soldiers that we have today.

As an Army Colonel to be named the General in charge of war strategy at the Marine Corps University, to sort of test the thesis, you can tell a Marine but you can't tell him much. I must say I am very impressed with the Marine Corps in everything they do, including education. They are a great group of students.

Anyway, the military we have today is in great shape. The challenge is keeping it in great shape. Even the President has said that we probably have cut as far as we can go, and I think that is certainly true. We are now probably at the rock bottom if we are going to protect the United States and defend its interests in the world.

I think it was particularly apropos this vote just a few moments ago on the Resolution to oppose invasion of Haiti. One of the things that has come back to the great truth is that the United States was called 160 years ago a treatarian military. What does it mean?

It means 160 years ago that the military no longer belongs to the king, it no longer belongs to the chief executive, it belongs to the people. The people have learned from the French Revolution and our people have learned from the American Revolution.

The American military belongs to the American people. It belongs in particular to the American people who know something about it, you, sitting in the audience. The people who know what the military is, certainly in its ranks know what it could do and what it can't do.

As General Shalikashvili recently said concerning Bosnia, "You just can't build a democracy on the point of a bayonet." The Iraqi military is the one telling people that. One of the strange things we have had since the end of the Cold War, for the want of a better name, we can call it intervention doves.

People don't know a damn thing about the military and will be against the military intervention and every intervention we have ever had, and now are screaming to invade Bosnia, invade Haiti, invade wherever. I mean, it is absolutely amazing.

Being from Maryland, and the people from Maryland will probably appreciate this, the strangeness of the political climate now. When Barbara Mikulski ran for the Senate last time, she has been opposed to the military and in the beginning she had a Schwarzkopf of Maryland. I thought you can't beat that, I must say.

The idea that the intervention of doves is somehow the military can do everything. They can build nations, they can do this and that and the other, and Haiti at least being one. Of course, President Clinton ran on precisely that platform, the platform that the military of the future, the primary job would be peace keeping, the primary job would be intervention under the U.N. auspices, would be intervention in all the troubled spots around the world.

We have got troubled spots around the world. We always have had and we always will be. The interesting thing is when the Presidential Directive 13, which was the alkaline of this new military

under U.N. command in intervening around the world, he ran into a fire storm from whom, the American people, who said no way.

It really should not have surprised me being from Arkansas, I must say. The last time I was at the Embassy in Saigon in 1975, I must say a terse moment, my counterpart said, "How can you do this? How can you abandon an ally in time of need?" I said rather cynically, "Look, I am from Ohio and I must say not only Ohians don't give a damn about Vietnam, they are not too keen on New York and San Francisco, either, when it comes down to it." I think that has generally been true.

One of the last speakers said Americans should take care of Americans first. That is hardly a new idea. George Washington said this in his Farewell Address, the idea that Americans should look to Americans first. I think that is generally true, and the idea that the United States somehow is going to be the world's policeman or the world's nanny is just not going to get it.

It is not going to get it, because the military doesn't belong to the President, the military belongs to you. You are the people who determine whether or not it is going to succeed. Now, if you sought this vote, it is not that lopsided, it is a concern we are concerned about humanitarian need and helping people in need.

We primarily are concerned with taking care of ourselves. I think that is the way it should be. That is the way it is going to be. As we look to the foreign policy and military policy of the United States, what is in terrible disarray now is this whole idea that President Clinton campaigned on that military is going to be the world peace keepers and to look after all the ills of the world.

The American people have said we don't want our sons and daughters doing that. We don't want to see them committed in all these places around the world. The interesting thing to me was that after all this luster, we are going to do this and do that, Senator Byrd from West Virginia stands up in the Senate last year and said get the troops out of Somalia by 31 December or I am going to get off this war.

An interesting aside, he said, "I want to send them the basic high school civic lesson that we have three branches of Government and the Congress controls the purse strings." Wouldn't you think an Oxford Rhodes Scholar would understand that and it wouldn't have to be explained to him?

I am not picking on Clinton but all the presidential administrations, especially the imperial eunuchs that surround him and the things they do. He said, "I am going to give them a wake-up call." The Senate just did it again, as you know, and said that the Resolution on the U.N. Resolution on Haiti was not going to cut it. That was not sufficient basis for the President to use it. The House of Representatives had already passed that.

I guess one of the best messages today is that the people are back in charge. The American people, and the people forget this, the American people gave it to us on faith in Vietnam for 31 months. They supported the war overwhelmingly for 31 months, the same period of time for the Invasion of North Africa, the VEA in Europe.

After 31 months, they said either win the damn thing or get the hell out. When the administration was not able to do either, that

was the end of the public support for the war. They are not going to be this patient in the future. We see it with Bangladesh, we see it with Somalia, with Bosnia, and we are seeing it now in Haiti.

The American people's patience on this sort of thing is very, very short. That is sort of the bad news about the defense of the United States today. When it comes to the peace side of the question, we are floundering because as Ambassador Hinton said the other day, we don't know what the hell we are doing. We have no plan.

The good news is that we are where it counts, and we were where it counts in World War II, Northeast Asia and the Middle East where we have true vital interests. Its interest is so vital that we will go to war for you and have gone to war for you in World War I and World War II in Europe, and the war in Asia in World War II, and Korea and Vietnam.

In those areas, where we have true vital interests, the President has been remarkably firm. That has not shown. I must say he has not much credit for it. President Carter came in the campaign for withdrawal of forces from North Asia and was told by the Soviet Union and China and Japan that was not a very smart idea since it was destablizing all of Southeast Asia. President Clinton has continued to station 100,000 troops in the Western Pacific.

The question comes, will we defend Korea? Those of you who are Korean veterans know it was an academic question. We are going to defend Korea as long as that division sits there. The President has also said you were in a dread fall in Europe on NATO, whether or not NATO would survive.

The President did guarantee the floor of 100,000 troops for NATO for several years. As we have had since 1949, we have enabled Presidents in the Gulf, and they are still there. The good news is that we are really where it counts, where vital interests are truly involved our defense is still pretty strong.

In these areas, the touchy areas of the world, the humanitarian areas of the world, the other ideal that the United States is the world's savior, there is no consensus among the American people that we ought to do that. The first thing that the President has got to do, or any President has got to do, is to go out to you and convince you that it is worth putting your sons' and daughters' lives at risk.

If you can't do that, we are not going to do it. That is the great secret, it seems to me, in the American military is that it does really belong to the American people. We take a real interest in what it is doing. At the end of the Vietnam War, as you may remember, there was a lot of that.

It said if we can't get rid of the draft, then we would have this great mass of people out there of volunteers. The people that said that they didn't know who they were and didn't even know anybody who knew who they were. We could just commit them anywhere, to do anything and we could get away with it.

When we talk about Foreign Legion, well, they learned in Beirut that doesn't happen. Nobody asked whether it was 240 soldiers or Marines killed at Beirut or whether they were draftees or enlistees. They were Americans and in the defense of their country. That was the key question.

We saw it again in Bangladesh when they drug those bodies through the street. Nobody asked whether they were draftees or enlistees. They were people who put their lives on the line for the United States.

One of the great blessings is that the American military, as I said earlier, belongs to the American people. That is your job and my job as a member of the VFW as well, to make sure that the President never forgets that, never forgets who the military belongs to. It belongs to you and it is your support that makes it what it is today. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP TO MAJOR BUDDY MERRITT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Last night, the VFW held its first annual Patriotic Rally. Much of the success of the rally can be contributed to "the tribute to America" by Major Buddy Merritt who produced and directed this tribute because of his love for this organization at a greatly reduced cost to himself.

His grandfather, Dr. Virgil Samuel, was VFW Surgeon General during the World War I, and he has performed at VFW functions at the Southern Conference. Major Merritt is a veteran of the United States Navy where he served in the Cuban blockade and received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

He is currently a member of the Army National Guard and was a helicopter pilot. He most recently went to the Persian Gulf with the Department of Defense and worked with the armed forces radio and television network where he provided moral support to our troops.

Major Merritt, to show you our appreciation for what you do to promote Americanism and good will, it is my pleasure on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to present to you your Life Membership in the VFW.

RESPONSE BY MAJOR BUDDY MERRITT

COLONEL MERRITT: I am really humbled by this. My grandfather was Surgeon General during World War I at the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and my great-great-grandfather was a Brigadier General who fought at Gettysburg and commanded the Iron Brigade at the Gettysburg battle.

I am the namesake of both of those gentlemen. I carry that in my blood. We had a little conversation at the hospitality suite last night. In that conversation I said to the gentleman I was speaking with, "You know, probably in this room right now are men and women whose ancestors are like mine. Maybe they weren't Generals, maybe they were Sergeants, maybe they were Privates, maybe they fought at Gettysburg or maybe they fought in the American Revolution."

"I think that one of the things that makes America great is that their blood flows in their veins." Maybe that is why I love you and the VFW. I can't tell you how highly I regard this. God bless you and I thank you very, very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you for the great rally last night.

I would like to call on Cleve Cox, Adjutant Quartermaster of North Carolina.

PRESENTATION TO ADJUTANT GENERAL HOWARD VANDER CLUTE

COMRADE CLEVE COX (Department of North Carolina): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Fellow Delegates:

I would like to ask Mr. Vander Clute if he would come forward, please. Last April at the Adjutant Quartermasters' Conference we decided to provide to you plaques from each of the Conferences upon your retirement. This force represents each Conference, with Bill Radigan from the Big Ten, Jack Mack from the Western Conference, Bill McArthur from the Eastern Conference, and me from the Southern Conference.

I might add at this time I am the junior member with 30 years. Radigan has 42 years and Jack has 36 years and McArthur with 33.

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: I am the junior member.

COMRADE CLEVE COX (Department of North Carolina): Howard says he is the junior member. Since I am making the first presentation, I would like to ask all the Quartermasters from the Southern Conference to stand, please. Howard, in addition to this plaque, I am also very proud to present this check from the Adjutant Quartermasters which represent the monies that were left over from the purchase of the plaques.

I understand that you and Susan are planning a trip to Europe next spring, and perhaps this check will make the trip more enjoyable.

Now, Bill McArthur representing the Eastern Conference.

COMRADE BILL McARTHUR: I would like all the Adjutant Quartermasters from the Eastern Conference to please rise. I am representing them in presenting this section. It is a four-section plaque. I am representing the East. Of course, since Howard is from the East, Howard and I go back a long way. To me, he has been an outstanding Adjutant General.

I didn't think he was going to be one. He certainly proved me wrong. He was a terrific Adjutant General.

COMRADE JACK MACK (Department of Utah): I am the Adjutant Quartermaster from the Western Conference, and I would like for all the Adjutant Quartermasters of the Western Conference to please stand up because all of you guys contributed to this award.

COMRADE BILL RADIGAN (Post 3061—South Dakota): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades: I would ask the Adjutant/Quartermasters of the Big Ten Conference to stand and join with me as I make this presentation to a great individual who has served our organization well.

Will all the Big Ten Adjutant/Quartermasters please rise. Howard, it is my pleasure to present you with this plaque. Now, comrades, my colleagues, the Department Adjutant Quartermasters have given me a great honor here today. I have been selected to present the final plaque from us to Howard.

It is also an honor but is bothering me a bit. This man has served us very well. Those of us who have been Adjutant/Quarter-

masters during his term of office know that there are three things always true about this gentleman. One thing is when you call and tell his secretary you have a problem, he will not forsake you. He will answer you. He will call you back and discuss it with you.

Number two, we all know when we have a problem that they may get sticky and they may get difficult and maybe a lot of conversation and there may be some feelings. Number three, we all know when it is all over, this comrade will walk up to us, shake our hand and tell us we have got to go on with the business of running this organization.

He made it very plain to us in the years that he served us, nearly 14, that we were Lieutenants and he was on our side. Howard, I don't think there is anyone in this audience that has served under you as an Adjutant/Quartermaster that doesn't feel that way and that we hate to see you go, but we want you to know that we realize you had an awesome job, you had tremendous responsibilities.

We think you handled them well and you treated us fairly. I would like every individual in here who has during Howard's term of office been either a Department Adjutant or a Department Quartermaster to stand as we present this plaque to him, which I am going to take the privilege to read.

"Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr., presented in appreciation of your many years of support and assistance as the Adjutant General. From your friends, State Adjutants and Quartermasters, August, 1994."

I have had fewer honors and privileges that have affected me more, Howard. I am glad I got to present this to you in recognition of all you have done for our great organization. We all thank you.

RESPONSE BY ADJUTANT GENERAL HOWARD VANDER CLUTE

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: To receive such an honor from distinguished Adjutant/Quartermasters representing each of the conferences is an honor that, first, I didn't expect, and secondly, I desire to share it with others.

Number one, I hate to have attention directed away from the Commander-in-Chief as he conducts this Convention, because I know how important it is to him and to all of you. I thank you for allowing this to occur, Commander-in-Chief, this morning.

I have a high regard and a deep respect for all of those members of this organization that serve, first of all, as Department Adjutant-Quartermasters, because I know the hardships they must endure in that position. In most instances, they are understaffed, simply because there is not that kind of revenue in the Departments to provide for the staff that is necessary.

Secondly, I suspect that most or probably most are under-compensated for what they do. It is a 24-hour job attending to the business of this organization, in each of our individual Departments, and to stand here and receive recognition from four Department Quartermasters who have service far beyond that which I have rendered to this organization, believe me, I have deeply felt emotion that I perhaps cannot explain.

As I stand here this morning and tell you again as I told you Monday when many of you were in attendance, that was an emotional high for me. I have been on an emotional high this entire week. Please let me repeat to you once again that my service to this organization was exciting, was memorable, was something that I will never forget.

My entire adult life has been spent in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and my life is long from being over, and I expect to dedicate the rest of my life, compensated or not compensated, because there are so many of you out there who work so hard for this organization with very little recognition and very little compensation, only the self-satisfaction of knowing that you are working for your country, you are working for your fellow veteran and for his survivors. That should be self-satisfaction enough for all of us.

However, I had the addition of being compensated for what I did. I initially had the privilege of going many places to represent you, which I was proud to do. I have been proud to serve every Commander-in-Chief that I have served.

I think this organization has been most fortunate to, first, have those Adjutant/Quartermasters working for us in the field, such as they have, and secondly, the kind of quality of leadership that we have been blessed with over the years. Thank you very, very much.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Adjutant General Vander Clute.]

PRESENTATION OF VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO THE JOINT TASK FORCE—FULL ACCOUNTING

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Veterans of Foreign Wars has been in the forefront of the POW/MIA issue for the last two decades, demanding that it remain the highest national priority.

The VFW was the first to call for an independent public commission to look into all allegations and give the true facts to families, veterans and the American public. Resolution of this important issue will not be made in Washington but in the field.

For the past two years, we have been most fortunate to have with us U.S. Major General Thomas Needham, Commander of Joint Task Force—Full Accounting.

Working out of his headquarters in Hawaii and with tams throughout Southeast Asia, he is the point man of an important mission. His job is to determine the fate of and make as full an accounting as possible of Americans still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

Because of the tireless efforts of General Needham and his dedicated staff, the VFW is presenting to Joint Task Force—Full Accounting this year's Armed Forces Award.

Ladies and gentlemen, a special welcome for General Thomas Needham.

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Thomas H. Needham, Major General, United States Army, and the Men and Women of Joint Task Force—Full Accounting."

"In special recognition of General Needham's leadership and devotion to duty and the dedication of those men and women of Joint Task Force—Full Accounting, who have endured exposure to disease, inhospitable climates and torturous terrain in pursuit of their mission to fully account for our missing comrades in Southeast Asia thus fulfilling our government's initiative to attain the fullest possible accounting of our missing men and that this issue will remain for all of us a non-negotiable matter of honor."

This has been signed today by me as Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by Adjutant General Vander Clute.

General Needham, I personally want to thank you and the young men and women of Joint Task Force—Full Accounting for what you have done to try to get an accounting of all our missing people.

RESPONSE—GENERAL NEEDHAM

GENERAL NEEDHAM: Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Kent, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Spera, our Distinguished Guests, Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for this generous introduction and welcome. I am deeply honored to finally stand before you today. As the President said so well during the 50th Anniversary of D-Day earlier this summer, you are those who when you were young saved the world. You are also those who responded whenever your country called.

In addition, the list of previous recipients of this award is most impressive. To be perfectly honest, I feel unworthy to be listed among them. However, I am most pleased to accept this award not as a recognition of what I have done, but rather as an acknowledgement of the magnificent work and the untold sacrifices made by the men and women of the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting and the Central Identification Lab in Hawaii and the United States Pacific Command.

A few of you know the full story of the efforts your Government has made to resolve the Vietnam POW/MIA issue. Fortunately, some of you have just recently, as of last month, seen our troops in action, have visited some of the isolated sites that the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting routinely inhabit.

You have seen some of the unbelievable terrain and some of you have seen the hardship these members endure on a daily basis. This is something that I have been trying to communicate at every opportunity that I have had. So, if you will indulge me for a few moments while I take this opportunity to brag on the men and women assigned to the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting.

The Joint Task Force—Full Accounting's undertaking is massive, it is intense, it is even more importantly working. The Task Force team has just one goal in mind and that is to answer truthfully the foremost questions directed by such as yourself that family members have on their mind.

What happened to those Americans still unaccounted for? If they died, where are their remains? Each member of the Task Force, from senior officer to the junior enlisted person, feels a close kinship with you and with the family members. In a sense, they work for you and they know it.

This provides an almost unbelievable motivation, a greater motivation than I have experienced in 33 years in uniform. Working under intense pressure and extremely dangerous environments and arduous conditions, these men and women, military and civilian, are performing magnificently and they never complain.

I must be honest they have achieved much more than we thought possible two years ago. The answers, the facts are passed on to you and, most importantly, to the families are truthful. But more than 8,000 occasions in the past 30 months, the Task Force has passed on meaningful data to family members about their loved ones.

The Joint Task Force—Full Accounting teams have investigated more than 1,500 cases in China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and more than 180 sites, both fresh and burial sites in those four countries, have been excavated. More than 240 sets of remains, with the potential of being those unaccounted for Americans, have been returned to U.S. soil.

The intense investigation of the priority structure the cases. Those cases, where we believe that the U.S. individual was alive at the time of the loss have been investigated. Those members have been reduced from 135 to 55. The remains of 38 individuals also have been identified and returned to their families.

The truth about the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting and its work is once we were granted the kind of access to the counties necessary, we aggressively reacted and pursued every opportunity to gain insight and information about the more than 2,000 Americans still unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War.

More families know more about their loved ones today, and that is a real measure of our success. The effort has not been easy, inexpensive or risk-free. The Task Force team members are working in some of the most difficult terrain in the world. They routinely deal with exposure to disease, very arduous circumstances and, yes, even hostile fire.

They spend 200 days a year separated from their families and they get little notice. To rectify that somewhat, I have brought along with me a representative group of dedicated, committed, hard-working troops who comprise the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting and the Central Identification Lab.

These folks are the ones that deserve your applause and recognition. I would ask them over to my left to stand as I read their name. Please stand up on the stage so you can see them.

First, Major Roger Overture with the United States Air Force; Master Sergeant Scott Marx, United States Air Force; Sergeant First Class Steve Thompson, United States Army; Mr. Ray Spock, Department of the Navy, civilian; Captain Kenneth Regis, United States Army, Central Identification Laboratory.

These folks are the ones that do the work and represent the 350 personnel assigned to the Joint Task Force—Full Account and Central Identification Lab that every day of the year are working. I not only thank them in your behalf, but I thank them for the service they have given to our country. Thank you very much.

So, if you will allow me, I will accept this award in their behalf. General Vessey, who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom two years ago for his service as a presidential emissary to Vietnam regarding the POW/MIA issue said he wished he could cut

the medal into 150 pieces to share it with the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting.

At that time I was appreciative, but not knowing how precisely he felt, but today on behalf of the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting, the Central Identification Lab and the men and women of the Pacific Commands who are working in Hawaii, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, I thank you for this honor and ask that you never forget the sacrifice and their devotion to duty.

Keep supporting our government as it works to resolve this extremely difficult and emotional POW/MIA issue. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, General Needham. We personally thank your young men and women who work with you at the JTFFA.

I would like to call next on the Veterans Service Committee Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt, for his report.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Cramer. Commander, I have certain comments I wish to express at this time. I would like to thank you for appointing me as Chairman of our Veterans Service Resolutions Committee. I want you to know I have truly enjoyed the challenge and all our Committee members, all 145 of them, were extremely active in all deliberations.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Washington office staff for their cooperation and expertise. Of course, I speak of Jim Magill, Director of our VFW National Legislative Service, Fred Juarbe, Director of our VFW National Veterans Service and other staff members, Commander-in-Chief, who made our job much easier, including Bill Dozier, Field Representative from the National Veterans Service, Jay Boone, Appeals Consultant of the National Veterans Service, John Dublin, Field Representative of the National Veterans Service, William Bradshaw, Senior Field Representative of National Veterans Service, and Jimmy Lee Wallace, who has been my right hand and Special Assistant of National Veterans Service.

Sid Daniels, Director of National Veterans Employment, Ted Simco, Field Representative of National Services. Robert Mahan, Assistant Director of National Legislative Services, Jim Jewell, Field, Representative of the National Veterans Service, and Rodney Graham, Military, National Veterans Service.

My comrades, all these individuals are seated on the platform and I would appreciate it if you would give them a hand. They have done a fine job for you. [Applause]

Delegates to this Convention, our Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions considered 125 Resolutions. The Committee members were divided into four separate subcommittees. The Subcommittee 1, VA Medical Programs, Ray O'Neill, from Michigan, served as the Chairman. Bill Kirsop from Florida served as Vice-Chairman.

Subcommittee 2, Veterans Benefits and Entitlements, Richard Branson from Georgia served as its Chairman, and Carlo DiGrazia from Illinois served as Vice-Chairman.

Subcommittee 3, from National Employment, Tony Iuo served as Chairman and Gary Kurpius from Alaska served as Vice-Chairman. Our Subcommittee 4, on Other Benefits, Alfred Simmons from Maryland served as Chairman, and Tom Hanson from Minnesota served as Vice-Chairman.

Comrades, all of these Committee members, at least to my opinion, served with distinction. They performed their duties over and above the call of duty. Commander-in-Chief, you also appointed Harvey "Bulldog" Smith from Georgia as Vice-Chairman of our Committee, truly an energetic VFW member.

"Bulldog" certainly gave of his time and efforts toward the successful conclusion of our Committee work. He is a credit to our VFW, he is dedicated to our cause, and I certainly enjoyed working with him. "Bulldog", take a bow, please. Give him a hand. [Applause]

Now, Commander-in-Chief, with your permission I will begin the report of our Committee by reading those Resolution numbers that were approved by our Committee, and secondly, I will submit to the delegates attending this Convention the Resolutions that were approved, as amended.

Finally, I will submit the Resolutions that were recommended for rejection or were rejected in favor of other Convention Resolutions. We have a booklet for those of you who are trying to keep up with us on the Resolution actions.

Now, for the first group. Those Resolutions that were approved by Committee action, and if any delegate would like any of these Resolutions to be set aside, please make a note of the Resolution number and request such action after I complete the report of this particular group of Resolutions.

If you are ready, I am ready, and we shall take off. These are the Resolutions that have been recommended for approval: Nos. 601, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 612, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 631, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 642, 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 659, 660, 661, 662, 665, 667, 668, 673, 676, 678, 680, 686, 688, 689, 690, 691, 693, 694, 701, 702, 703, 709, 712, 713, 716, 720 and 724 which is not in your packet, and the title of that is VA Grave Markers.

They have been recommended for approval. Now, those are the ones that the Committee has recommended approval of. Are there any set asides? Are there any set asides?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN LUTZ (Post 6640—Louisiana): I would like to have set aside Resolution 650.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Are there any more set asides? Commander, I move that all the Resolutions recommended for approval by your Committee, except the one set aside, be accepted by the delegates attending this 95th National Convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, there is a motion. Is there a second?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE TORCHY DAMES (Post 2260—Wisconsin): Commander-in-Chief, I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN LUTZ (Post 6640—Louisiana): Comrades, I am currently stationed at Travis Air Force Base and I am Operating Supervisor of the David Grant Medical Center. I am also in a joint planning venture group with the DOD and the VA. I would like to make a few remarks about Resolution No. 650. What is most important is perhaps the bottom line.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Excuse me. Let me tell you that Resolution 650 is Health Reform Regarding VA and DOD Health Care, for those of you that don't know what he is talking about.

Go ahead, sir.

COMRADE JOHN LUTZ (Post 6640—Louisiana): My name is John Lutz, Post 6640, Louisiana. I am currently on active duty at Travis Air Force Base. The bottom line is this. The VA and the DOD joint ventures is not the complete picture. When you speak of health care reform in the VA and the DOD, it cannot be in a vacuum with health-care reform that we hear and talk about every single day and the dialogue that is going on currently in Washington.

We have to realize that it is our responsibility, just as William Bennett said the other day, to take it upon ourselves to educate ourselves. What is it that is happening, what is required? Having been a part of the joint planning group at Travis, I can tell you that it is a much more complex problem and what we really need is an understanding.

What I would like to do very quickly is just give you, comrades, a quick education on what health care reform means to the VA and the DOD and civilians. The bottom line, the VA and the DOD have been mandated by Waashington to compete against the civilian counterparts. You think about that.

As the beginning of this Resolution 650 says, that the VA Health Care System is the largest health-care system in the country with 172 hospitals and an operating budget of $15 billion. According to Representative Montgomery, it will soon be $16 billion a year, the system that accesses 10 percent of the 60 million plus veterans in this country.

In the DOD, we have never done much with cost containment, particularly as well as our civilian counterparts. In other words, what I am telling you is that the lean green machines are not in the VA or the DOD. If we are given a mandate to compete against them, it will probably be a slaughter.

For myself, on active duty, I was never guaranteed health care for the past 17 years for my wife or my children. It has always been conditional on space availability. When I retire in a few years, as a retiree, it will be conditional. It will not be a guarantee. It will be only on space availability.

Keep in mind what I am saying as far as competing against civilian counterparts. These men tell us we have an over-abundance of beds in our——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrade Lutz, the Chair is becoming confused. One, I am not sure if you are speaking in favor or against this Resolution. Two, I think that you are introducing subjects into what you are saying that are not pertinent to this current Resolution.

COMRADE JOHN LUTZ (Post 6640—Louisiana): Comrade, this is the closest thing I saw in 650 of what you have on your agenda where I can address what actually is happening in the field in a VA-DOD facility. I am here to tell you that, yes, it is working.

We are trying to make it work very well. But it is just a small part of the picture and that it would behoove the VFW and all the comrades here to understand that there is really a much greater concern personally.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrade, are you speaking in opposition to this?

COMRADE JOHN LUTZ (Post 6640—Louisiana): I am not. I am supporting it, but I am saying it does not cover the full picture.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: In that case, you were out of order. I will have to ask you to stop. Now, what I need to do is to have somebody make a motion to adopt Resolution 650.

COMRADE JOHN LUTZ (Post 6640—Louisiana): I will make the motion to adopt.

COMRADE DEWAIN WEST (Post 2874—Wisconsin): I will second that motion, if there is a motion on the floor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the motion. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: For the second group, those Resolutions that were approved, as amended, again, I will read the Resolution number and if any delegate would like any of the Resolutions to be set aside, please make a note of the Resolution number and request action after I complete the report of this group of Resolutions.

These are the Resolutions approved, as amended. I will tell you most of them really include dotting the I, and crossing the T and trying to make the Resolution read better. These are the Resolutions approved, as amended. They are Nos. 611, 613, 614, 615, 632, 641, 644, 656, 657, 658, 663, 666, 672, 679, 687, 699, 700, 704, 711, 714, 721.

We have a 725 that is not in your packet. It is entitled Amended Tax Returns for Military Retirees. Now, those are the Resolutions relative to approved as amended. Are there any set asides? Are there any set asides?

Commander-in-Chief, this concludes the Resolutions that the Committee recommended be approved as amended. At this time I would like to ask the delegates if there are any Resolutions in the group to be set aside?

I heard none, therefore, I move that all Resolutions recommended for approval, as amended, except the set asides, which we have none, be accepted by the delegates attending this 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN SAUNDERS (Post 4809—Virginia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: I will get into the rejected ones. Finally, for the last group of those Resolutions that were recommended for rejection or rejected in favor of other Committee Resolutions. According to the Convention Rules that you adopted, I must read the number and the title of these particular Resolutions.

Here we go on the rejected Resolutions, or rejected, as amended. No. 602, Approve One-Member Decision at the Board of Veterans Appeals. It was rejected simply because it is already accomplished by Public Law 103–221.

No. 629, Tinnitus. That was rejected because it is accomplished by proposed regulatory changes already.

No. 630, Herbicide Exposure, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 630.

No. 664, Veterans' Re-employment Rights Protection, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 680.

No. 669, Guarantee Full-Strength Chaplain Service, rejected in favor of Resolution No. 666.

No. 670, Military Funerals, rejected in favor of Resolution 721.

Resolution 671, Establish a Federal Legislative Chairman in all 50 States, rejected because the Committee felt that it was a duplicated service provided by individual Departments and the VFW Action Corps.

No. 674, Remove Means Tests, rejected because we feel it is contrary to the VFW position on eligibility reform.

No. 675, National Fund Expenditures Saved From Reduction of Defense Expenditures be Dedicated and Expended to Provide Needed Benefits and Services to the Nation's Veterans and their Families, rejected in favor of Resolution 613.

No. 677, Military Hospital Closures. This was rejected in favor of Resolution 610.

Resolution 681, Prevent VA Functions Being Further Splintered. This was rejected in favor of Resolution 625.

Resolution 682, Nursing Home at VA Hospital Fort Harrison. This was rejected because we feel that is a local issue.

Resolution 683, Need for Another VA Domiciliary Facility. This was rejected again because we feel it is a local issue.

No. 684, Reinstate the VA Transportation System. This was rejected, not germane to the VA programs.

No. 685, Elimination of the VA Pauper's Oath for Hospital Admission. This was rejected again because it is contrary to the VFW policy on eligibility reform.

No. 692, Civil Service Employment Practices Standardization, rejected because we feel that it requires further development.

No. 695, Entitlements and Benefits of Retired U.S. Military Personnel. This was rejected because the Committee feels that it creates another special category of veterans.

No. 696, Reinstatement of U.S. Veterans Employment Rights and Entitlements Affected by CINCUSNAVEUR Policy. This was rejected because we feel that it needs further development.

No. 697, Veterans Federal Employment Preference by General Accounting Office a Priority. This was rejected because it requires further development, in our opinion.

No. 698, Commissary and Post Exchange Privileges for U.S. Military Retirees Residing Overseas, rejected in favor of Resolution 689.

Resolution 705, Funding for VA Hospitals, rejected in favor of Resolution 608.

Resolution 706, Maintain Hospital and Commissary Facilities, rejected in favor of Resolution 610.

Resolution 707, Enforce Compliance of Veterans Preference Laws, rejected, in our opinion, because it requires further development,

Resolution 708, Abolish the Means Test as a Criteria for VA Medical Services, rejected because the Committee feels it is contrary to VFW eligibility reform.

No. 710, Guaranteed U.S. Armed Forces Medical Support for Retirees, rejected in favor of Resolution 609.

No. 715, Rebuilding/Reinstatement of Complete Inpatient/Outpatient Services at Sepulvedva V.A.M.C., rejected because it is unsafe, in our opinion, to reveal and not cost effective.

No. 717, Eliminate Social Security Law Inequities Known as "The Notch", rejected in favor of Resolution 639.

No. 718, Establish a New U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Northern Virginia, rejected again because we feel it is a local issue.

No. 719, To Help the Victims of Agent Orange and other Defoliants, rejected in favor of Resolution 660.

I have two Resolutions that are not in the packet, and again we recommend rejection.

No. 722, The Gulf War Veterans Blood Ban, rejected. The Committee felt it was not VFW policy to dictate medical determinations.

No. 723 is not in the packet and it is entitled "VA Grave Markers," rejected in favor of Resolution 724.

Commander, this concludes the Resolutions that are recommended for rejection by your Committee. I again ask the delegates if there are any Resolutions from this group which they wish to set aside.

Back to No. 630, Herbicide Exposure, we rejected it in favor of 660. That is 630. We rejected it in favor of No. 660.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the Resolutions of the Committee to reject, which will automatically be done unless you make a motion to adopt.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ERNEST GLYNN (Post 7327—Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I wish Resolution 717 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You will have to make a motion to adopt Resolution 717.

COMRADE ERNEST GLYNN (Post 7327—Virginia): I make a motion to adopt Resolution 717.

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

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Pignone, Post 3173, Commander of the Department of California, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second to adopt Resolution 717. On the question.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ERNEST GLYNN (Post 7327—Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I wish to inform my comrades about this very important question. You have no Resolution in my humble opinion before this Convention today more important to every man, woman and child in America than the Social Security "Notch Law".

In the law originally of 1937, one percent of the wages, up to $3,000, was deducted. This has been amended through the four decades of this operation so that now 7.65 percent from employers and 7.65 percent from employees, a total of 15.3 percent, and this money has been more than adequate to carefully fund the Social Security operation.

However, in 1977, the Social Security "Notch Law" was erroneously conceived to be going bankrupt in the year 2020. Therefore, those persons born after 1 January, 1917, and later amended through the year 1921 and 1926, were cheated out of their earned employment benefits, otherwise known as Social Security "Notch Law", to the total of $2,200 and more.

Currently, there is more money in the Social Security "Notch Law" than is needed to pay-as-you-go basis. Resolution No. 639, which was adopted by your Committee, and I respect the operations of that Committee, it is not definitely positive. I offer these to be positive, be done by the 16,000 delegates to this Convention, because the Social Security Administration, as of August 15, 1994, was established as an independent agency.

By that action, 12 persons have now been nominated to a Commission of outside experts that will meet in Washington, D.C., on the 16th of December. I am on the Speaker's list for that to tell them that we think that here in this Convention that the Social Security "Notch Law" should be amended to do three things: restore the benefits of those in the "Notch Law" four percent, 1917 through 1926, to those that were existing in turn to entitlements before that 1977 law went into effect.

Secondly, those government agencies, those state agencies, those persons, those individuals who made the loan from the Social Security "Notch Law", escrow account, should be invited to pay back the money they borrowed from that. If you make me a loan, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, and I say I am going to pay it back, by George, I think you have a right to expect me to pay it back.

I think that we should have a right to ask the General Accounting Office to say who done those wrongs, where they are, and invite them now to pay that back and put it into the fund before we start cheating people in the sundown of their life out of the money they thought they were going to have, the money that they were planning to give to their children.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, if we have the integrity of this great organization totally strong, if we have the integrity, and if we have the courage to go forward with this and say we feel this way, not only for the members of our organization and our sisters in the Auxiliary, let us do the honorable thing and quit cheating those people by the Federal Government.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrade, I think we got your point. I will give you two minutes to summarize what you are trying to say.

COMRADE ERNEST GLYNN (Post 7327—Virginia): All right. Two minutes in summary, let's restore what they said they were going to have. Let's have an actuary to complete what they will have to pay and be on a pay-as-you-go basis. From the actuaries that I have been told are in the Congressional Record, people who are actually in the field as actuaries, say that five percent from the employer and five percent from the employee, a total of ten percent, is adequate.

Let's go back on that, and two years from now let's take the crystal ball and let's throw away the broken mirrors, and let's go on the actual facts that are reported at that time and say whether we need it or whether we don't need it, not when somebody is running for office.

Remember, 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and one-third of the members of the Senate stand for election between now and November of this year. Give them the message when they ask for your vote to do something for us and quit cheating us, and send down the word. I heartily thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: My comrade, I think we all agree with you and the reason, as you so strongly put it, the reason that the Committee rejected this Resolution was in favor of Resolution No. 639, which they felt had a stronger message than Resolution No. 717.

I will call on the Chairman to speak to that at this time.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: I am not the speaker, I just agree with everything that the comrade said. We just got a better Resolution. That is all.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else? The motion is to adopt 717. As I said, we have passed 639, which is already stronger. So all those in favor of adopting Resolution 717 will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "nays" have it. It is so ordered.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM LINEBERGER (Post 4103—California): I make a motion to adopt Resolution No. 722.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 6061—Colorado): I second the motion. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I understand there will be an amendment offered. I suggest it be offered and we take it with the amended Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, there is a motion and a second on the floor. Let me ask you, are you making a motion to amend what he just said or what?

COMRADE JIM LINEBERGER (Post 4103—California): Yes, I am.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Go ahead and make your motion to amend.

COMRADE DENISE NICHOLS (Post 4171—Colorado): Commander-in-Chief, I am Denise Nichols, Post 4171, Colorado. Our amendment, if you have the Resolution, if you will read it first, then I will offer the amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Go ahead and read it.

COMRADE JIM LINEBERGER (Post 4103—California): What I am going to do, Commander-in-Chief, is read the original Resolution first, and I will attempt to read the proposed amendment that was handed to us earlier.

Resolution No. 722, Gulf War Veterans Blood Ban.

"WHEREAS, in 1991, a coalition of nations led by the United States participated in Operation Desert Shield Storm to liberate the nation of Kuwait from Iraqi armed forces; and

"WHEREAS, upon return home from the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations, many veterans began to experience a moderate amount of severe health problems, commonly known as Gulf War Syndrome; and

"WHEREAS, the cause of the veterans health problems may result in multiple exposures to smoke, pollution, pesticides, chemical and biological weapons, experimental vaccines, depleted uranium and leishmaniasis; and

"WHEREAS, as several hundred veterans have died of Gulf War Syndrome and many spouses, children and family members of Persian Gulf veterans are also experiencing symptoms of the Gulf War Syndrome;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we support national and state legislation to ban blood, plasma, tissue, sperm, egg and organ donations from Persian Gulf veterans, and that the ban should remain in place until such time that medical research can prove without a shadow of a doubt that the Gulf War Syndrome is not a communicable illness."

Now, the proposed amendment, I am just going to attempt to read the "Be It Resolved."

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support national and state legislation to seek and support the immediate testing of Desert Storm veterans for biologic, chemical and radiation exposure; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports a national policy and efforts to protect the public from exposure to the Persian Gulf War veterans based on the findings of test results, and that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States support reinstating a ban on blood and body donations from this group of veterans until all medical and health questions on biological exposure are answered."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: That is the amendment that you are speaking about. Is there a second to the amendment?

COMRADE JOHN SPORTSMAN (Post 6747—California): I second the amendment as read.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the amendment to the motion. Now, on the question. This is on the amendment. Does someone want to say something on the amendment?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DENISE NICHOLS (Post 4171—Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am a nurse and I have a Master's Degree. I have served in Desert Storm. I have been very active in this issue over the past year and one-half, and have made many trips to Washington at the National Institute of Health and Senator Riegle's hearings.

Senator Riegle has produced a report about this that was released on May 24th. It is quite large. His work is not done. I can't tell you some of the things I know from him, because we have to let the Senator handle this from the best possible way.

He addressed the issues of biological chemical contamination. He felt that the Vietnam vet that is his staffer on this, who served in Vietnam who wrote this report, they definitely feel that we probably had a biological chemical exposure. They are calling us the toxic cocktail veterans.

We have people that are showing symptoms that did not go over there. We have people that dealt with our equipment when it came back from the Gulf that never went over there. A Vietnam veteran out of Sharp Army Depot that dealt with our equipment is having problems.

I can tell you more, but I am kind of held back because Senator Riegle's staffers asked me to hold back a little bit. Also, we have veterans' families, the spouses reporting problems. We have the children being born, which you are already aware, similar to Agent Orange problems, with birth defects, health problems.

I have a daughter who will turn eight on November 4th, Election Day. She was four when I left. Guys, I am a little worried she is showing some of the symptoms I first experienced. I am trying to remain calm, professional about it. This is not an unusual story across the nation.

I spend a lot of money on phone bills talking to vets and trying to support them and all hope that things will move ahead. We need the VFW to champion our cause. You are comrades from previous wars who have bits and pieces from radiation from Agent Orange.

We need your expertise to help us champion this cause. We are very concerned about the public health. We don't want to contaminate you by you getting blood or by you having an organ that may be donated by a vet. A lot of our vets are not as fully informed as the ones of us that are going to Washington and speak out.

We are standing out there and being brave. We are putting our lives out there again, and we need you behind us. I remember the motto of this organization and the Malta Cross, "To Honor our Dead is for us to Serve the Living." Let's do it now and protect the public.

Redbook just had an extremely excellent article come out this September. This brand new article, we have had it on major news shows, we have had it on major magazines. What more can we do to get the issue out there? We are the ones suffering. We are asking you to support us.

I can go on and on. I will tell you that we had no biological warning devices, we had no protection from that equipment. On February 9th, Senator Riegle released, and included on the May 24th report, pages upon pages of biological agents that this country alone, not to mention France, England or any other country, had sent to Iraq up until eight days before Sadam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

We had no detection equipment, no protective gear for them. Let's do the right thing. Please, VFW comrades, support me in this. I want to protect you and your loved ones. I want to get the answers from the Desert Storm vets. We have got to work at maximum speed if this is a biological issue.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Before we go into any further debate, I would like to call on the Chairman of the Committee to explain the Committee's reasons for rejection.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: On the subject we are debating now, she is doing an excellent job of it, No. 722, the Gulf War Veteran Blood Ban, we rejected it. The Committee rejected it simply because it is not VFW policy to dictate medical determination.

Now, furthermore, we all know on the Committee that this Resolution came from the Department of California, adopted at their Convention. It was assigned to the Medical Group Subcommittee 1. The subcommittee recommended, after a lot of study, rejection of this Resolution as it is not VFW policy to dictate medical determinations.

This determination, in our opinion, is in the purview of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, the National Institute of Health and the American Medical Association. It is also noted in Committee deliberations that the discussions phase of this Resolution, if approved as written, a Persian Gulf veteran would be barred from donating, for example, an organ, kidney, et cetera, to a family member who might perish without such donation.

The "Be It Resolved" also states that medical research be able to "prove without a shadow of a doubt" that Gulf War Syndrome is not a communicable disease or illness. There is absolutely no absolutes in medical research.

Commander-in-Chief, that is the reason for the Committee's action.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): I rise in favor of this proposal by the lady. The only thing I can see wrong with it is that they are the ones that are carrying this disease. They are trying to tell us, comrades, not to use their blood, not to use their parts in order to protect us.

This thing has been going on down in Washington, D.C. It may not be our policy, but we are signing up these young people and we have got to show them that we stand by them. If they are asking us to help in this cause, I see no reason that we shouldn't, because it will affect us if we say go ahead and give us their blood and give us their body parts and our children and our families can suffer.

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

COMRADE JIM LINEBERGER (Post 4103—California): I am Jim Lineberger, once again, Post 4103, South San Francisco and District Manager of District No. 12, Northern California. It was through my District and the Department of California that this Resolution was presented.

Before getting into my reasons for your support of this Resolution, I would like to say at the outset that over the past couple of days, those of us who have been directly concerned and involved in this Resolution have approached many Departments, State Departments at this Convention.

I want to thank you very, very much for your courtesies, for your understandings and I hope, comrades, when it comes down to the vote that you will support California because we do feel very, very strongly about this issue. Now, the matter at hand, in fact, in my District, the Department of California, I have over 1,500 Desert Storm and Persian Gulf veterans who are members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

They have come to the Department of California by way of the 12th District and said this is something that is sorely needed. We don't profess to be physicians, chemists or anything of the sort. We are interested in humanitarian aspects of this.

We are simply trying, as Commander Pignone pointed out, to carry out the wishes of those in our ranks who are personally acquainted with this problem. I would also like to advise that in the last three days I have had an opportunity to speak personally with the closest aide and advisor to Congressman Montgomery.

I want to say this, that the House of Representatives and the Congress of the United States has appropriated $56 million to look into this problem. This Bill has now been approved by the House. It has been passed on to the Senate. It will no doubt be decided by a Committee of the Senate and the House.

We know that there are a lot of Desert Storm and Persian Gulf veterans out there. We want to protect them and we want to protect you. There will be others speaking on this Resolution. Please give us your support and your consideration. We thank you so much for your attention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN BURNS (Post 2097—Connecticut): I wish to speak in favor of the motion. It was many years ago when the State of Connecticut brought a Resolution on Agent Orange defoliant and it is the National Officers on the Committee that voted against it.

With a lengthy debate on the floor, we were the first veterans organization to go on record favoring legislation for Agent Orange. I wish we would be the first organization going on record in favor of this Resolution.

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

COMRADE FLOYD VOLKER (Post 1660—California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, my name is Floyd Volker, Post 1660, Sacramento, California, District 17. First of all, the amendment does not dictate to the Veterans of Foreign Wars about taking this on personally and making themselves vulnerable.

What it does is it takes our veterans that come to us for help, and what we are doing is supporting the legislative branch and get-

ting behind them to get that blood tested. To answer the question that our young men that came back from the Persian Gulf, and some of them don't even talk about it, we are answering their pertinent question, that they want to be tested and they want to be known.

That is the main point here. They are just asking for it. We didn't know how to do it. We came here and we talked to the experts. A lot of the Commanders are behind it. Let's make the VFW support it and get that money appropriated and get the men in to be tested for the specific things we are asking for. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RICHARD FITZGERALD (Post 7721—Florida): I stand to support this with a very free statement of an adage taught to me many years ago, that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anyone else?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DEAN LUNDHOLM (Post 5888—California): I am the one that wrote the original Resolution. I will have to apologize for not knowing what the VFW policy is. We have not been in the Veterans of Foreign Wars very long. We are begging for your help to know why we are sick, why our spouses are sick, why our children are sick.

Do they want to pay us off with compensation? Yes, we need compensation. My only income is $100 a month in food stamps, which I have got to sit there in Safeway and be degraded every time I use them. Yes, it is a little personal issue. Yes, it is a little touchy issue.

These wounds are fresh and salt doesn't help. We want to protect the American people. That is what we signed up to do. We want the VFW to be the crusaders in this battle, regardless of what their past policy has been.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN STEPHENSON (Post 3031—Arkansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am a Vietnam veteran and I would like to speak in favor of this. The CDC years ago, or not even that long ago, came out and took millions of our taxpayers' dollars only to turn around and tell the government they weren't qualified to do a study on Agent Orange.

If they are not qualified to do a study on Agent Orange, they sure are not qualified to do one on the Gulf problem. We need the medical people to find out what in the world is wrong with this problem and get it corrected now.

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

COMRADE CLYDE DAVIS (Post 1604—Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Clyde Davis, Post 1604, Department of Illinois. I move the previous question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Is there a second to move the question?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE FRANZ WEDEMANN (Post 2828—California): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, there is a motion and a second to get on with the vote. We are just voting on the amendment first, to get the amendment on the floor for a vote. All those in favor will say "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

We will now vote on the amended Resolution. It was incorporated with the "Therefore, Be It Resolved." All those in favor of the amended Resolution, as it was read here, signify by the sign of—we have stopped debate already.

COMRADE JACK VRTJAK (Post 1612—Illinois): The motion was to put the question. We should have been voting on putting the question, not voting on the amendment. We should be voting on the amendment as the second vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: We were now voting on the amended motion, is that correct? You-all are starting to confuse me. I thought this motion was to adopt the Resolution, as amended, correct? All those in favor of adopting the Resolution as amended, as it was amended, signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed to the contrary. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

No. 720 has been adopted as amended. Are there any further motions to adopt Resolutions that were suggested for rejection?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DOMINIC RAMONO (Post 7330—Connecticut): Commander, under a personal privilege, I was on the floor prior to the count of the vote on the Social Security "Notch Law", Resolution 717. I would like to speak in favor of 717, because there was only one speaker.

Irregardless of that, whether I get recognized to speak after the vote, I am here to question the vote. It was a voice vote. It seemed like the "ayes" have it, and I am asking for reconsideration of that vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Chair was not in doubt. That Resolution 717 was rejected. If you want to move for reconsideration, you have to be on the prevailing side.

COMRADE DOMINIC RAMONO (Post 7330—Connecticut): I am asking for a recall.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You did not vote in favor of rejection, right? Then you cannot do that. Is there anyone else, someone who would like to perhaps make a motion to adopt a Resolution that we rejected on Veterans Service? There is nothing.

Are you done, Mr. Chairman?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To you and your Committee, you are now discharged.

I would like to call on the Director of Parades, Bob Brady, for his awards.

COMRADE GLENN TUCKER (Post 7327—Virginia): Comrade Commander, I rise for a point of personal privilege, if you please.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: State your rank, serial number and state your point.

COMRADE GLENN TUCKER (Post 7327—Virginia): I am from Post 7327, Springfield. I stood at this microphone purposely to ask that Resolution No. 718 be set aside so that I could bring some-

thing before this Convention. It is a separate Resolution and it has not been discussed here on the Convention floor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Are you making a motion?

COMRADE GLENN TUCKER (Post 7327—Virginia): I make a motion to grant us that privilege.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: To adopt 718, is that what you are saying?

COMRADE GLENN TUCKER (Post 7327—Virginia): Yes, 718, a motion to adopt.

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

COMRADE DOMINIC RAMONO (Post 7330—Connecticut): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I will take the second. But if you don't mind, I would like a point of personal privilege since I introduced somebody to do some awards, I will not forget you. I want you to do these awards. Some of these units have early flights this afternoon, and we would like to give them their awards before they leave. We will bring this right back after the awards.

NATIONAL MARCHING UNITS AND PARADE COMMITTEE WINNERS

COMRADE ROBERT BRADY (Post 7090—Pennsylvania): Commander-in-Chief, our awards to the units that won during the period of our contest that started Monday through Wednesday are as follows:

The winner of our Senior VFW Color Guard was Aurora Silver Rifles, VFW Post 2629, Aurora, Ohio.

The Senior Ladies VFW Auxiliary Color Guard was District 6 VFW Ladies Auxiliary Department of Arkansas.

The winner of our Junior ROTC Color Guard, Regulation Drill, was won by the male unit from Upson Lee High School, NJROTC, VFW Post 6447, Thomaston, Georgia. Accepting for them will be the Department Commander since this unit had to fly home yesterday.

The winner of our Junior ROTC Armed Drill Team was from Griffing High School, Male, Army JROTC, sponsored by VFW Post 5448 and 8480, Griffin, Georgia.

The winner of our Junior ROTC Unarmed Drill Team was the female unit from Basix High School, VFW Post 3848, Henderson, Nevada. This is a Marine Corps Junior ROTC Unit.

The winner of the Junior Open Field Contest, from Rubidoux High School, Air Force Junior ROTC, VFW Post 8632, Riverside, California. Rubidoux is also declared the National Champion Overall Junior ROTC Unit as they achieved the highest scores during the period of our contests.

The Best All-Girl Junior ROTC Color Guard was the All-Girl Unit representing Griffin High School Army Junior ROTC, VFW Posts 5448 and 8480, from Griffin, Georgia.

This is the Best All-Girl Junior ROTC Rifle Drill Team. This was won by Upson Lee High School Junior ROTC, VFW Post 6447, Thomaston, Georgia. Accepting is the Department Commander.

A Special Judge's Award goes to the Top Hats, VFW Post 92, New Kensington, Pennsylvania.

At the Patriotic Rally last evening, the Best Appearing Senior Men's VFW Color Guard, the Silent Sixteens, VFW Post 6933, Darien, Connecticut.

Last night at the Patriotic Rally, the Best Appearing Senior Ladies VFW Auxiliary Color Guard was the Happy Dayettes, VFW Post 7591 Auxiliary, Madison, Wisconsin. Do we have a representative from Wisconsin that will accept, please?

Assisting us this morning was the First Sergeant Dusalle of the Eighth Division. Thank you for your attention and that is the extent of my report, Commander-in-Chief. For those of you who might be interested, the Ritual Team contest will begin at 2:00 o'clock. We have three teams. The contest will be held in this hotel in Ballroom B. Thank you.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS (CONT'D.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Now, if the maker of the motion is still here, the one that set aside 718, are you still here? Let me say that in checking with the Sergeant-at-Arms at the microphone, you were present at the time we asked for any additional Resolutions to be either set aside or to be voted upon and have been rejected.

Because I have already discharged the Committee and because I think that we have given you ample time to respond to anything, I am going to rule your motion out of order. I will do this, I will give you two minutes to say anything you want pertaining to that Resolution as a point of personal privilege.

That is only to speak about it. We will not take any action on it. I am sure that you are going to speak for two minutes. The microphone is now on.

COMRADE GLENN TUCKER (Post 7327—Virginia): I rise to ask that reconsideration be given even though the Committee may have been discharged. We have asked repeatedly in these Conventions for——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Sir, the motion was rejected. To bring it up under reconsideration, you would have to be on the prevailing side of the rejection. I do not think you are. Do you have anything else?

COMRADE GLENN TUCKER (Post 7327—Virginia): No, I couldn't because there was a little confusion at this podium. I do wish to speak on this Resolution. That is one of the things I came to this Convention for.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I will give you two minutes; you have used 20 seconds.

COMRADE GLENN TUCKER (Post 7327—Virginia): 220,000 now veterans live in the 50-mile radius of the Washington Monument. We have been promised a VA medical facility to serve those war wounds, disease and injuries, created or aggravated by a military service. No such facility exists.

We are told we can go to Baltimore, Martinburg, Richmond or Irving Street. Those are areas of high crime, those are areas where it is a financial hardship for the individual veterans to go or ask a member of his family to transport him there. It is risky to be in

the District of Columbia after dark. We no longer have the financial resources to pay for our own medical attention.

We have asked in this Resolution to have a medical facility, to be owned and operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans of Foreign Affairs, be established in the vacant facilities now available in the federal domain in that area before they hand it out to private industry or for breeding and development of those people who are interested in making a fast buck.

I ask this Convention, I ask your Committee, I ask everyone in the Veterans of Foreign Wars to consider the need, the hardship and the physical problem these persons have. There are more than 150,000 veterans over the age of 65 that live in my own County of Fairfax, Virginia.

Now, 880,000 people live there. The criteria established in 1960 is out of date and must be revised. The VA knows that. They say, "Well, Glenn, you have the requirements"——

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, my comrade. I have given you two minutes and I believe the delegation at this Convention have already voiced their opinion on this Resolution.

I next call on the Chairman of the General Resolutions Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY: Boy, it is refreshing to follow the Veterans Service Committee. It is great. I would like at this time to recognize the Committee, and certainly I want to give recognition to our Vice-Chairman Norman G. Staab from Kansas.

Certainly, Commander-in-Chief, I want to thank you very much for appointing such a professional, knowledgeable and dedicated Committee as this General Resolutions Committee. I will now present the Resolutions that have been approved for you at this time.

Resolution No. 301. Resolution 303 was amended. Resolution 304, Resolution 309, Resolution 310, Resolution 311, Resolution 319, Resolution 320, Resolution 322, Resolution 323, as amended; Resolution No. 324, Resolution No. 325, Resolution 327, Resolution 329, Resolution 330, Resolution 331, and a new Resolution that was presented to our Committee this morning, Resolution 332, National Convention Parade Alternatives. These are the ones that we recommend approval.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that these Resolutions be approved.

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

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAVID GREANEY (Post 7420—California): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. Are there any Resolutions that you would like to have set aside?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PHIL ANDERSON (Post 284—Washington, D.C.): I would like to set aside Resolution 310.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else?

Microphone No. 2, I am not sure if you want to be recognized or just exercising.

COMRADE JOSEPH RELLS (Post 856—Texas): The last Resolution, 332 that was brought in this morning, can we have that read? I am not familiar with it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: I will read the "Be It Resolved."

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that a Patriotic Rally be held as an alternative to the Annual Military Parade at the 96th National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Council of Administration be empowered to decide annually if a military parade or an alternative form of patriotic salute will be held during the next National Convention and that such decision be made at the October meeting of the National Council of Administration and promptly promulgated throughout the organization in the General Orders and the VFW Magazine."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else? We will now vote on the question. All those in favor of the Committee's recommendation for the Resolutions to be adopted, with the exception of Resolution 310, will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Now, would somebody like to bring up Resolution 310 for debate?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PHIL ANDERSON (Post 284—Washington, D.C.): Resolution 310 is, in fact, a political instrument involving a sensitive and highly political issue. It is not germane to the longstanding policy and principles of the VFW. In order to maintain our political neutrality, I move rejection of Resolution No. 310. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion is out of order. We understand your debate. We already have a motion on the floor to accept. You should be debating why you don't want it accepted. Anything else?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CLAUDIO PEDERY (Post 5471—Washington, D.C.): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to give you a brief background why I am opposed. We revolted against Great Britain's taxation without representation. Ladies and gentlemen, we pay tax in the District of Columbia, but we don't have representation in the Congress. We don't have a delegate. Comrades and Commander-in-Chief, we need that. We would like to oppose that opposition.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Do you suggest that this Resolution not be accepted? Let me read the "Be It Resolved."

It says, "BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose statehood as an unconstitutional approach and ask our Representatives in Congress to strongly defeat any act that they may be confronted with in the future."

Anybody else?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PHIL ANDERSON (Post 284—Washington, D.C.): We oppose that, Commander-in-Chief. I guess we have 700,000 peo-

ple in the District of Columbia. Many of us are Veterans of Foreign Wars. Why don't you help us defeat this Resolution? We need also representation in Congress. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Anyone else?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STAN KOLNIAK (Post 2238—Louisiana): I speak in favor of the Resolution. Could we have that Resolution read in its entirety? I think that it would explain many of the issues that would be questionable to the comrades present.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: "WHEREAS, the majority of the citizens in this beloved Republic honor and adhere to the United States Constitution; and

"WHEREAS, a certain segment of politicians in Congress and the news media are promoting efforts to establish another state forum our Federal District of Columbia; and

"WHEREAS, granting statehood to the nation's capital is inconsistent with Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the Constitution which designates a neutral district outside the boundaries of any State where the capital city is to be located; and

"WHEREAS, if the District of Columbia were to be granted statehood, the specific terms of Maryland's secession of 1791 would be violated inasmuch as the State of Maryland seated land to fulfill the land requirement of the federal district serving as the national seat of government and not for any other purpose; and

"WHEREAS, Article IV, Section 3, Clause 1 of the Constitution states that no new state shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State; and

"WHEREAS, if the call for lack of representation was real, then an alternative consideration could be to retrocede the District of Columbia back to the State of Maryland, save a reduced Federal Enclave, and those current citizens that were seated into Maryland would enjoy a full and equal voice in national affairs; and

"WHEREAS, this ten-mile square area lacks the economic base to support a state and does not contain an independent economy to sustain its own government furthermore shows its impractical application, so be it now, therefore,

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we oppose statehood as an unconstitutional approach and ask our Representatives in Congress to strongly defeat any act that they may be confronted with in the future."

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

COMRADE THOMAS PIERCE (Post 9566—Massachusetts): While I agree with all of the statements that were just made as part of that Resolution and I don't disagree with the gentleman who was in favor of not defeating this Resolution, I do think that it ought to be defeated.

I think that the reason it should be defeated, it is a political problem, and I don't think that the VFW wants to be entering into political problems that don't have to deal with veterans.

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

COMRADE JOHN LEWIS (Post 4061—Colorado): I move the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Let me do one thing before I accept Microphone No. 3's motion. The gentleman asked at Microphone No. 1 that the Resolution be read first. He didn't have an opportunity to speak on the motion. I will allow Microphone No. 1 to speak.

COMRADE STAN KOLNIAK (Post 2238—Louisiana): Thank you, Chief. First of all, comrades, this is not a political question. The political question is on the other side of the proposal to make a statehood out of federal territory. This is unconstitutional.

You cannot form a state from a federal enclave. This proposal of statehood of being made by a single vote of Congress. That is not correct. It cannot be. I think that it is a Resolution that pretty well bears out the reasons for it. It is a Constitutional question.

The support of the Resolution, as voted in the Committee, was to mainly retain what we had today, period. In addition, just think of our own state. What type of industries and how many industries does it have? They are many and various. D.C. does not.

In other words, would you concur in voting a statehood for very large city? I mean, that area is not even as large as the county that you live in. What is that going to open up? In addition, the 23rd Amendment that was voted on is contrary to statehood.

In other words, that amendment was voted and delegated three votes, delegate votes, electoral votes. They acknowledged in their amendment, if you look up the history of that, that amendment acknowledges the existence of a federal enclave and no state could be formed from it.

So, I mean there are many areas. Our forefathers brought about and created this seat of government, period. Are we going to turn around and stand against them? Not in any way unless we retain the status of what we have today as being the seat of government from the federal government. And in addition some of these people mentioned, you know, they don't have negative voices, and so on. Maryland voted and gave us this seat. If they want any kind of voting privileges, they can always recede.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The Chair will now accept the motion made from Microphone No. 3 to move the previous question. Is there a second to move the previous question?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RUSSELL VILLWOCK (Post 3579—Illinois): I second the motion to move the previous question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Comrades, all those in favor of moving the previous question will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

We will now have the motion before us. The motion is to adopt this Resolution, which keeps the District of Columbia the way it is today. If you vote "yes", that is the way it is. If you vote "no", what you are saying is that you want the District of Columbia to become a state.

All those in favor of adopting the motion will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: The Committee has recommended rejection of the following Resolutions:

Resolution 302, Resolution 305; Resolutions 306, 307, 308, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 321, 326, 328.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Unless someone moves to adopt one of these rejected Resolutions, they will be rejected.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LARRY BENDER (Post 788—Iowa): I make a motion that General Resolution No. 302 be approved.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: There is a motion. Is there a second?

COMRADE ROBERT MATHIESEN (Post 8486—Iowa): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the motion and the second. Now, on the question.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Committee recognizes the fact of the POW/MIA stamp and they also recognize the fact that on November 24, 1970, a stamp was issued in recognition of the POW/MIA and that the Resolutions that have been introduced to this Convention have not been all-inclusive of World War II and Korea. For that reason, the Committee defeated the Resolution.

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

COMRADE LARRY BENDER (Post 788—Iowa): I will make this short. Resolution No. 302 does not encompass all. It does not take anybody out. The Veterans of Foreign Wars and delegates to this Convention have always been the champion of the POW/MIA issue.

Unless we forget our comrades now, there have been reissues of other stamps in the past and there will be in the future. To remain to keep this issue before our assistants, I ask this motion be adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Anything else? Any further discussion? All those in favor of adopting Resolution 302 will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "nays" have it.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for your work and the work of the Committee. Unfortunately, I can't discharge you. You have to get your full eight hours of day. You get all the catch-alls that might come up right now.

Next I would like to call on Howard Vander Clute to give the Report on the Buddy Poppy Display Winners.

PRESENTATION OF BUDDY POPPY DISPLAY WINNERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: This concerns the Buddy Poppy Display Winners. Let me tell you that we have 83 displays in the contest this year. That is the highest number of poppy displays that we have had in recent reporting at our National Conventions.

Let me tell you that 50 percent of those 83 displays used painted and/or dyed poppies in the display. I just bring this to your attention because of the action of this Convention yesterday.

Public Promotion of Poppy Sales, this is Category 1, window, booth, parade or Post displays, sales promotion, in 3rd Place is Wichita Memorial Post & Auxiliary 3115, Wichita, Kansas.

In 2nd Place is Grand-Mesa Post & Auxiliary 9221, Cedaredge, Colorado.

In 1st Place, naturally, Reddy-McClellan Post & Auxiliary 8789, Bowie, Texas.

In Category 2, Memorial or Inspirational Display, for example, wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes, in 3rd Place is Howard M. Black Post and Auxiliary 1508, Lake Elsinore, California.

In 2nd place, Casper Memorial Post and Auxiliary 9439, Casper, Wyoming.

In 1st Place, naturally, Cole-Miers Post and Auxiliary 3619, DeRidder, Louisiana.

Category 3, Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies. This is, for example, Post Home displays, table centerpieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats and novelty pieces, almost anything other than the two before mentioned are in this category.

In 3rd Place, General W.W. Atterbury Post and Auxiliary 3420, Newark, Delaware.

In 2nd Place, Klemenic Nail Smith Post & Auxiliary 4663, Clifton, Colorado.

And in 1st Place, naturally, South Portland Post and Auxiliary 832, South Portland, Maine.

In Category 4, Memorial or Inspiration Displays by Junior Girls Units and Sons of the VFW Units.

In 3rd Place was Wallis-Witcher Junior Girls Unit, VFW Post 3031, Rogers, Arkansas.

In 2nd Place, Collinsville Memorial Junior Girls Unit, VFW Post 5691, Collinsville, Illinois.

In 1st Place, naturally, Category No. 4, is Richard J. Gross Sons Unit, VFW Post 8896, East Berlin, Pennsylvania.

Honorable Mention, in Category 1, is Harper Erdman Post and Auxiliary 1548, Libby, Montana, and Chief Pontiac Post and Auxiliary 1699, Cahokia, Illinois.

For Category No. 2, Honorable Mention goes to Hoevel-Barnett Post and Auxiliary 1341, Bull Shoals, Arkansas, and Paul McVey Post and Auxiliary 1592, Charleston, Illinois.

In Category 3, Honorable Mention goes to Roscoe Post and Auxiliary 2955, Roscoe, Illinois, and Grandview Memorial Post and Auxiliary 8100, Grandview Missouri.

Category No. 4, Honorable Mention goes to Olan Forest Smith Junior Girls Unit, VFW Post 8577, Copperas Cove, Texas, and Robert V. Lindsey Junior Girls Unit, VFW Post 10041, Bethel, Alaska.

The awards for Directors, Joseph Monfort Post and Auxiliary 9400, Sunnyslope, Arizona; Billy Krowse Post and Auxiliary 9969, Del City, Oklahoma; Heart of the Lakes Post and Auxiliary 1008, Waterford, Michigan; and Manheim Post and Auxiliary 5956, Manheim, Pennsylvania.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort the Commander-in-Chief to the front of the podium for special recognition to the over one million sales of poppies.

The Over One Million Club was established several years ago to pay special recognition to the Departments whose poppy sales equaled and/or exceeded one million. This year's recipients are: Illinois, who led the nation in sales, with 1,211,000.

They were followed by the Department of California, with 1,193,500. Next was the Lone Star State of Texas, with 1,109,500.

Then the Department of Minnesota, with 1,013,185. And, finally, the Buckeye State of Ohio, with poppy sales of 1,000,208. Congratulations to those that exceeded one million. This helps us, obviously, make our commitment to at least our manufacturer of approximately 18 million poppy sales annually.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Before we go into the Closing Ceremonies, is there anything else to be brought up before this Convention?

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that we reconsider Resolution 213 that was passed by the delegates in yesterday's session.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Glen, what I have to do is to ask you if you were on the prevailing side when that happened?

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): I voted "yes".

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

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): I did vote on the prevailing side and I know of no other Resolution that needs to be reconsidered more than this. I second the motion for reconsideration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the motion and the second. Is this the one on poppies?

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion on the floor is to reconsider the decision about the color of the poppies being used in the displays. Now, on the question.

DELEGATE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): If I may, sir, read the "Resolved" part of Resolution 213 as it was passed yesterday.

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the 'Buddy Poppy' remain in its original shape and color with only the tag removal permitted when used in displays."

COMRADE JOHN BUETTNER (Post 1699—Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am asking for a motion that takes precedence over this one. It is a precedence over the motion. You must take a vote on the reconsideration.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): He is debating the motion. As I understand it, the comrade from Texas is debating that.

COMRADE JOHN BUETTNER (Post 1699—Illinois): When a motion for reconsideration is put before the delegation and seconded, it must be voted on before it is debated. There is no debate on the reconsideration before the vote.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): I respectfully disagree. You can debate the motion to reconsider. He is debating the motion to reconsider. After the debate on the motion to reconsider, if the motion to reconsider is approved, then we will return to the main motion and debate the main motion and pass or fail on that basis.

The motion to reconsider is debatable. As I understand it, the comrade from Texas is debating the motion to reconsider, and if anyone wants to get up and oppose the motion to reconsider, they may get up and debate that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Continue, please, Microphone No. 2.

DELEGATE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): Thank you. Commander-in-Chief, I stand here, my comrades, asking that we reconsider Resolution 213, because I feel that the action of this Convention would, as it stands, greatly tie the hands of those that work so hard each and every day to put together the Buddy Poppy displays.

We have now congratulated the Posts and Auxiliaries for the presentation of the flags to those that place and received Honorable Mention. On Resolution 213, most of these displays that have received awards today would not even qualify to be judged at next year's National Convention.

Under Resolution 213, the Posts and Auxiliaries will use less poppies and more background material and we don't want that to happen. We want the poppy to be used in the displays. I think also, comrades, that this Resolution would create a decrease in the ordering of Buddy Poppies by the Posts and the Auxiliaries.

We have had a decrease the last two years on the National level. The decrease in poppies doesn't sound like much, but you have got to remember that the revenue from these poppies goes to support National Service, the Department service funds.

They go to support the National Home, and also goes to help the veterans in the hospitals that are putting these poppies together. I think that this Resolution also is contradictory due to the fact that the Resolution says if you can put a display together, you cannot color the poppy, but we can take off the tag that identifies it as a Veterans of Foreign Wars Buddy Poppy.

That is ridiculous. If we are going to have this display, we have got to allow these comrades and sisters to have the freedom to continue to use the poppies and use and use it as it best portrays and puts together the displays they would like to have brought before this Convention. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Glen. Let me just say before I call on the next microphone, I don't know how many people had the opportunity to see many of the displays that are in the hall or have witnessed many of the displays over the past Conventions.

I noticed that this year's Convention, as in prior years, many displays have the American flag in them. I wonder how we are going to display the American flag in all red.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RAY ORTMANN (Post 6498—Wisconsin): The entire body was here yesterday. The hall was full. We discussed it. I rise and object to reconsideration at this time. We talked when the hall was full, and now we have got a small nucleus in here and that is not right.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): I want to thank the good comrades for staying to take care of the business of this organization. If the hall is not full, that is not our fault. Comrade Commander-in-Chief and my good comrades, I would like to see this Resolution rejected.

We need to reject this and reject it for a number of reasons. Number one, when the Posts and Auxiliaries buy their poppies they become the property of that Post and Auxiliary. Our Post buys 22,000 poppies. If we have 2,000 or 3,000 left over, we will make a display, and then we take the rest of them and we throw them out.

So, we buy 22,000 more poppies next year. That is the purpose of the program. We say in the Buddy Poppy Program that the amount of poppies used in the display does not allow you to win an award or not. You see all the displays that say 2,000 poppies. How many are there?

Can you imagine if we are going to take away this Resolution, if we don't reject it, the ingenuity, the artistic ability, the creative work of the ladies and men who build these great patriotic displays, we all come here and at our State Conventions to view in awe; that will be gone.

What is there now to look at? A red sky or a red sea or red grass. That is what this Resolution says. You will not be able to artistically use the poppies in the way you want to at the Posts. We revere our poppy and if we drop it on the floor we pick it up and we may even dust it off a little bit.

We care about it. We probably revere it as much as we do our American flag, because it is the symbol of our hospitalized veterans and the veterans who won the wars. I think in this particular instance, if we don't defeat the Resolution, what we are really doing is we are giving more control or more protection to the Buddy Poppy than the United States gives to our flag.

Comrades, we need to reject this and go on with having a great Convention in the Veterans of Foreign Wars with those poppy displays.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I would suggest and I would appreciate what has been said so far, that when people get up to speak on the reconsideration, that you speak on why we should or should not reconsider the motion.

I now call on Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOHN BUETTNER (Post 1699—Illinois): I am speaking against this. Comrades, when the Chaplain finished his prayer this morning, he said "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living." The VFW has three emblems, the American Flag, the Cross of Malta and the Buddy Poppy.

Since 1923, at the Enclave in Valley Forge when they adopted the poppy, they also honored the dead by helping the living. That is what it stood for. A certificate has been issued that the words "Buddy Poppy" cannot be used in any real or artificial flower by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We have our poppy displays. And to the gentleman from Texas, I will say one thing. I talked to Comrade Senk out there. Walk out there and look at a couple of your 1st Place ones. They are beautiful painted all kinds of color. But, comrades, you should not worry about the sale of poppies. They are plastic poppies we have had for three years.

So I don't go with our coloring. Illinois will go along with you on this. Right today, Illinois received four awards out there. I am

proud of our state. We had 96 poppy displays in our Department Convention, using over 100,000 poppies this year.

We are not against in Illinois telling them you can't, because National says you can't. We try to keep our competition with them. Over all the years I have been involved, since 1969, the Department of Illinois is far above and ahead of any other state to receive awards at the Convention without colored poppies.

We don't need an artistic display, we don't need any professional show of floral displays. We need a Buddy Poppy display and a Buddy Poppy is a red poppy. As we go down the line, with all of the things you want to think about, there is no way that these men that put these together, I don't think anybody in our hospital will be very happy if we went and told them that I am going to buy 100,000 of these poppies but I am going to go out there and color 50,000 or 60,000 all different colors so they can look real pretty.

Comrades, we do make displays that are beautiful with red and they will not hurt the sale of Buddy Poppies. It hasn't hurt the sale of poppies in the State of Illinois. We almost prohibit color, but very few do. I think we better revert to our original motion as we did yesterday and stand by our convictions and honor the dead by helping the living.

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

COMRADE HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467—New Jersey): I had one thing in mind to speak about when I came down here, but after listening to the comrades that came before me I have something else I want to express.

First of all, let me make it very clear that I am speaking in favor of reconsideration. In regards to what a comrade said earlier relative to the attendance this morning and the vote that was taken yesterday, I would simply say that these are the dedicated, interested working members of this organization who have the fortitude to remain until all of the business at this Convention is conducted. I have complete confidence they can make an appropriate decision on this matter if it is reconsidered. That is number one.

Number two is we expect to sell 18 million poppies every year, and although as was pointed out there may be still some of the old craft plastic-coated poppies used in displays and painted, that is fine by me, because what we are doing is simply utilizing poppies and that they will purchase more.

Number three is this organization, with your money and your indulgence, each year spends about $6 million of its annual budget on Veterans Service and community service, substantially over $6 million. The sale of Buddy Poppies, the revenue from that contributes, as you know, to Veterans Service, which has been pointed out before by the comrade from Connecticut and others who have spoken.

That doesn't bother me one bit to go in there and look at those beautiful displays. Those displays are generally for our own use and to compete in a contest so they can be displayed here at our National Convention. We don't paint poppies and go out and sell them. That doesn't happen.

We are simply using it as a means to promote the sales. If this makes an attractive display and allows the members of this organization, and particularly the members of the Ladies Auxiliary, and

as you heard, the Junior Girls and the Sons of the VFW are to be used, their artistic talent and abilities to create these kinds of displays because they have an interest in the program, and it helps them understand why we sell the poppies in the first place.

For heaven's sake, we are grown men. We understand that we need the revenue from the sale of poppies. What is wrong with allowing our organization to express itself memorially as they do by painting the poppies? The sale of poppies is what counts. We don't go out and sell them in any other color. I support reconsideration of this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE M. R. GAOVETTE (Post 8681—Florida): I am in full support of reconsideration of Resolution 213. You know, comrades, if you stop and think, our Ladies Auxiliary, the backbone of this organization, does an awful lot of work for us.

One of the few places they get to work is working in these Buddy Poppy displays. Now, do we want to take that away from them? The old saying is if it works, why fix it.

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

COMRADE WILLIAM RADIGAN (Post 3061—South Dakota): I am Bill Radigan, Post 3061, South Dakota, Chairman of the 1993–'94 National Buddy Poppy Committee. I rise before you today in support of reconsideration of this motion. I think it is very important to the National Organization and every Post and Auxiliary within the organization.

It is becoming more and more apparent to all of us that work in this program, and I have for many years like many of you, we have Posts and Auxiliaries that cannot go out on the street and sell poppies. It is so difficult for them, and it is so dangerous.

In some places, they can't get into, and they can't get permission to sell. They can't get permission to go out on the streets. We have to provide them some kind of avenue to take part in this program. My comrades, I ask and I tell you there is nothing in the regulations that we have that say if they want to stay all red with their poppy display, they can stay all red.

But our rules and regulations provide that they cannot use colored poppies. I would rather they use colored poppies than tissue paper. We have had great displays made out of poppies, made out of only poppies. I think we ought to be very serious when we consider telling people that maybe we will accept your display if you have four or five red poppies and a lot of tissue paper, instead of thousands of poppies in the display. I am for the thousands of poppies. Thank you.

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

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): I rise in favor of the motion. One of the things we must do and Howard is correct in what he said, and I am happy that he said them so I don't have to say it; I will say this, that one of the things why we get the poppies is to get out into the public and sell them out there.

We wouldn't be able to if we colored them. They are red when we buy them, and we should have them red when we sell them. We do have it like that. I get out myself and sell poppies. The purpose and the reason for the Buddy Poppy is to meet the public and

have the public look at me, that I am a veteran, I helped give you the freedom to buy the poppy or not to buy the poppy. That is the reason for it.

What Howard said is if you have some left over and you want to make your display, you can color it whatever color you want. The main purpose is to get out there and ask for donations. We should not be selling them. We have to ask for donations. If we sell them, the IRS says give us your taxes. So donations is what we need. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE PETER PUENTES (Post 10209—Florida): I move the previous question.

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

COMRADE WILLIAM DOUGLAS (Post 1710—Arizona): I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion and the second is to move the previous question. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

We will now vote on the motion. The motion is to reconsider the Resolution that you adopted to restrict the colors of the poppies. If you vote for this motion, it means that you can go in and reconsider what you have done. All those in favor of reconsidering will signify by the sign of "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Microphone No. 2.

DELEGATE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): I move that we reject Resolution No. 213.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): I second that motion.

PARLIAMENTARIAN LAWRENCE MAHER (Post 7356—Missouri): I am not certain that we need a motion at this time. We are reconsidering the Resolution that came through the Committee from the Department of Illinois, and that Resolution is to restrict the red Buddy Poppies.

As I understand it, that is the Resolution that is before the house. We will debate that Resolution now and vote it up or down at the end of that debate.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Does anybody want to debate the motion that is in front of us to accept this Resolution 213? What you will have to do, if you want to accept this motion, as you previously did, if you want to keep it the way it is, to keep the color of the poppies in the red form only, you will vote "yes" again.

If you are saying that the poppy displays that you allow people to color them, then you would vote "no". Does everybody understand that, "yes" for red poppies in the display and "no" to color the poppies in the display? Is there any more discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467—New Jersey): Again, we now have before us the question, as I understand, being returned to this body as a result of reconsideration. If I am correct, the Resolution that we are considering is to restrict the color of the Buddy Poppy to red.

We can no longer paint them or dye them, or change the color for the purpose of displays. Is that correct, sir?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: That is correct.

COMRADE HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467—New Jersey): Then, I urge the delegates in the interest of promoting the sale of Buddy Poppies, in the interest of helping disabled veterans, in the interest of making a substantial contribution to our National Home annually from sale of these poppies, and in the best interest of this organization to defeat the motion, to defeat the question that restricts us from coloring poppies. Thank you.

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

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): I move in the same direction that Comrade Howard moved. I am in favor of the same thing. I want to bring it out so we can paint the Buddy Poppy, do what we want after the fact of selling them on the street. I am against the motion. I am in favor of rejecting the proposal.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): I think we have heard a real good discussion by both sides of this, and I move the previous question.

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

DELEGATE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: What I will do, before we vote on the motion, I will let the maker of the Resolution speak for one last time.

COMRADE JOHN BUETTNER (Post 1699—Illinois): I think today is going to be a black day. When does this organization take an emblem, and just listen to me, gentlemen, take an emblem we have dedicated ourselves to in Flanders Field and save the dollars we might lose so we can do anything we want to?

Maybe next year, let's take the Cross of Malta and sell it out on the public street. We don't need it anymore. Comrades, I assure you I am not angry with you, I will continue to make a poppy display. I have since 1969. I think I have got a rack full of trophies and there has never been a colored one that will compare with the people that still are using plastic that were used five years ago. We are dedicated to our poppy program. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. I will call for the motion. All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

The motion, if you vote "yes", is to keep the poppies only red, or if you vote "no", you want to color them as you have been doing. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all opposed "no". The Resolution is defeated.

Does anyone else want to bring up something?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 2541—Texas): This body yesterday adopted Resolution 106. I would like this Resolution to be reconsidered.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: First of all, if you are making a motion to reconsider, were you on the prevailing side?

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 2541—Texas): No, I was not on the prevailing side.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Get somebody on the prevailing side to make the motion to reconsider. If I am not mistaken, that Resolution has to do with something about a Congressman, is that correct?

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 2541—Texas): Resolution 106, proposed by the Department of Washington State, is to censor and remove Henry B. Gonzalez.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: To reconsider, somebody on the prevailing side must move for reconsideration.

Microphone No. 1. There is no one there.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TED CONNELL (Post 9192—Texas): I voted correctly, and I wish to make a motion that we reconsider.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is there a second? Whoever seconds the motion must be on the prevailing side or can anybody second it? I guess you can second your own motion, Ernie.

COMRADE CHARLES CANON (Post 5076—Texas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the motion and the second to reconsider Resolution 106. Now, on the question, is there any discussion?

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 2541—Texas): I wish to express why I am asking for reconsideration. I have discussed this further with more people throughout our organization, various states and leaders of this organization, to explain that we have already taken care of this matter in his Washington office.

This was done, the Resolution was because he made a statement on June 14, 1993. We apprised him of this and in his office in Washington, D.C. We have taken care of our own matter. If that is what you want done, the way you do it with other things is you write a letter to him or call him, and that is the way you take care of these things with Congressmen.

To ask this body to censor a Congressman, I think is very erroneous and would be setting a precedence, something we have never done and something that when the Commander-in-Chief goes before Congress and presents a Resolution of this body, I would like for someone to say yes, we are representing you on Resolution 106, and if you say something wrong we are going to censor you. That wouldn't look too good, although it might be right on our side.

The other thing is this was infuriated by the Chairman of the Committee reading one "Whereas" and a fiery statement. If I am wrong, hang me from this ceiling. I can explain what this page in the Congressional Record is. If I explained it to you, you might understand something that I tried to put across yesterday, that we should not censor this Congressman.

Right now we have less than five percent of our membership that is attending this Convention in here now. We have the Pledge of Allegiance here. We say a prayer. Congressman Gonzalez, when he made that statement, was talking about pork barrel spending in the House on the Resolution.

He made a statement they opened the Congress every day with a prayer. They pay a Chaplain a tremendous amount of money to

come in and give a two-sentence prayer. He is paid for that and no other obligation, and nothing else. He is saying that is pork barreling.

He says, likewise, since we have less than five percent of the membership when all this takes place, likewise, they have five percent of the Congress in there when they open the business of the Congress. Some of his Congressmen, he said the only time they are there is when they are called in to give the Pledge of Allegiance for our glorious flag.

That is the only time they are there, and less than five percent of the Congressmen are in there, and later come in and do business for our great nation. He made the statement that is significant as when they are walking down the street and say "Heil Hitler, heil Hitler."

That is the way he made that remark. Gentlemen, that was not derogatory towards the flag of our country He is a very good Congressman and supports the veterans. That is the reason for my reconsideration.

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

COMRADE HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467—New Jersey): Essentially, I agree with reconsideration. I speak on behalf of those comrades from the Department of Texas who are trying to restore that motion to this floor. I think, first of all, that for an action, and this is an institution because that is what we have been called, this is an American institution of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and many in this room have shed blood to protect the Constitution of the United States and allow anyone to express their views about our institutions or about our government as long as it doesn't indicate an attempt to overthrow the government.

Number one, I also agree that we obviously do not have the power to instruct the Speaker of the House to censor. It doesn't occur that way in the rules of the Congress of the United States. It seem to me that it would satisfy perhaps the delegates here today if we wrote to the Speaker and said that we take his remarks as a personal affront to this organization, and simply let him know that that kind of conduct from a Congressman on the floor of the United States House of Representatives is inappropriate to members who have served in the armed forces of the United States.

I hope we can get this Resolution reconsidered and perhaps be amended so that we can say the delegates desire to deliver a message to the Congress that was an affront to an organization such as this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1, did you have somebody there?

COMRADE BOB SADLER (Post 1189—Oklahoma): I stand in favor of reconsideration of this question and suggest very strongly, as I would in my own state, that Texas take care of their own politicians.

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

COMRADE TED CONNELL (Post 9192—Texas): I clipped a quote today from this newspaper in the city, an editorial by Sammy Grady which says, "Except for child molesters and church robbers, con men who prey on widows, no group is more scorned than the politicians in Washington, D.C."

Henry Gonzalez is obnoxious, is despicable, all of the things I personally campaigned against him in the beginning and each time that he has had an opponent since then. But this is not the way of a great organization to take care of a problem that is in San Antonio, Texas.

Gonzalez should be relieved of his duties, but it must be done by the voters in his District. Therefore, I speak for reconsideration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. You know, let me take a point of personal privilege here. I sometimes wonder what you said, Past Commander-in-Chief Connell, I sometimes wonder when we send a message like this what we would do to our own organization because you have got to remember he still is a lot stronger than we are. I hate to think of what his repercussions could be to this organization.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): I am in favor to bring it back on the floor for the simple reason of what Howard said and what Ernie has said, to bring it back and have amendments made to the motion and let the State of Texas take care of the problem with Congressman Gonzalez.

He is not totally a bad man, but he offends us. He offended the American flag. I believe we should let Texas take care of that in their own District. Thank you.

COMRADE PETER PUENTES (Post 10209—Florida): I move the previous question.

COMRADE RUSSELL VILLWOCK (Post 3579—llinois): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Does anyone else want to speak in favor of reconsideration one more time? All those in favor of moving the previous question will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Now, the motion we are voting on is the motion to reconsider. All those in favor will signify by "aye"; those opposed "no". All those in favor of reconsidering the motion will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it and it is so ordered. Now, we can debate the Resolution.

Microphone No. 1.

DELEGATE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): I stand, Commander-in-Chief, in opposition to this Resolution. I would ask the delegates to defeat this Resolution as has been stated and allow us, those in Texas that have to deal with Henry Gonzalez on a monthly basis or daily basis, to take care of our problems.

Whether you like it or not, let me tell you, my comrades, as Past Commander-in-Chief Ted C. Connell has said, Henry B. Gonzalez has been on Capitol Hill for 30 years. He is a powerful individual. He only sits on the Appropriations Committee. We don't need anything from Appropriations, no more than the VA budget and everything else that we want.

He is only the Chairman of the Banking Committee. The guy doesn't have any money, he only owns half interest in 42 banks in Texas. You know, we can't stand here and censor all these Congressmen that we don't like. As Howard said, we don't have the authority to censor them.

We have got to deal with them in a businesslike manner. We have got to deal with them in the way we can deal with them. My comrades, I, as many of you, have had discussions with Congressmen, pro and con, in the way they support issues.

We don't ever agree with them on everything. If we start trying to censor every Congressmen that does something we don't like, then we are going to have to be on this Convention floor maybe three weeks. I would encourage you delegates to reject this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: What you are saying is that what the Resolution says, you are trying to say that not only the VFW but the veterans of this nation could suffer some very strategic financial grief in the future. Is that what you are trying to tell us there?

DELEGATE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): Yes.

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

COMRADE EARNEST MUDD (Post 2541—Texas): I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I don't believe that anybody made another motion.

COMRADE TED C. CONNELL (Post 9192—Texas): Did you not take the motion to defeat?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The motion is to approve and you voiced your opinion against it. He did not make a motion. The motion is already on the floor. What he suggested is everybody should vote "no" instead of "yes".

COMRADE TED CONNELL (Post 9192—Texas): You have no motion on the floor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: There is a motion to adopt the Resolution as it is. We are going under reconsideration. Comrade Gardner suggested that we vote "no".

COMRADE HOWARD VANDER CLUTE (Post 6467—New Jersey): Commander-in-Chief, let me go back to my earlier remarks. Please let me return to my original remarks relative to an amendment. I think the delegates expressed themselves yesterday, and I think that the sentiment of most of us who belong to this organization remains the same.

But we recognize that the action that we took was not in our best interest. That has been brought to our attention by the Department of Texas. I am going to suggest that we amend, if you will accept an amendment, the Resolution that was placed on the floor.

I have not written this. I will have to extemporaneously give this. I think we can get a sense of this Convention. I offer this as an amendment:

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we correspond with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States to express the sense of this Convention that his remarks on the floor of the House of Representatives in reference to the Pledge of Allegiance are a personal affront to the members of this organization who have served honorably to preserve the nation," and simply let everyone know that those kinds of remarks are not appropriate on the floor of the House of Representatives.

That will delete all the other language in here that is very strong and also asks us to do things that are not possible for us to do. I move that as an amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Is there a second to the amendment?

COMRADE JOE SCOTT (Post 1330—New Jersey): I second the amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the amendment and the second to the Resolution.

On the question, the Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RODNEY WILKINSON (Post 2539—Mississippi): There are two things I would like to say. Number one, next year it might be your Congressman or my Congressman. Think about it when you come to this vote. Number two, we may not like what every man says, but every man in here fought for his right to say it. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460—Connecticut): With all due respect to my good friend Howard Vander Clute in trying to fix something we already agree should be in Texas' hands and let them fix it. As I understand the Resolution, the "Whereases" are very inflammatory as well.

I noticed in the amendment that our Past Commander-in-Chief Vander Clute proposed there was nothing to strike anything from the original Resolution. I would urge everyone in this great Convention to simply reject this Resolution and put it back in the hands of Texas where it belongs and let them clean it up.

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

COMRADE TED CONNELL (Post 9192—Texas): Let me urge my comrades to defeat this Resolution and let us handle it.

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

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): I move that we dress up the Resolution, the previous Resolution and the amendment, and I second the amendment to the Resolution that Howard Vander Clute made.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I am not sure what you said. Any further discussion? You said move and we have a motion on the floor.

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): That is what he said, he would amend it and take out the other amenities in there.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You are speaking in favor of the amendment and you don't want to have a motion?

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): Right.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BOB LOFTUS (Post 4643—Florida): I stand to defeat this Resolution. When the people elect our Congressman, we go back to the polls and we put them back in. Why should we go ahead? I agree with Texas. Let them clean up their own house. When we have our problems, we are the ones that talk to them. I speak in favor of defeating this.

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

COMRADE RUSSELL VILLWOCK (Post 3579—Illinois): I move the previous question.

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

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GERALD BURKEL (Post 5373—Wisconsin): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second to move the previous question. All those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Now, on the amendment to the motion, first of all, to add this to the Resolution, what Howard suggested, we didn't have a second so the amendment is gone. What we are back to now is the original motion to adopt Resolution 106 as it was presented.

COMRADE RICHARD PIGNONE (Post 3173—California): I did second that amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The amendment has been seconded. We are now really going back to the amendment that Howard proposed to add what he said into the original Resolution. All in favor of adding this into the Resolution, what Howard said, will signify by the sign of "aye"; opposed "no". The amendment is defeated.

Now, all those in favor of the original Resolution, the way it was presented to censor the Congressman, will signify by the sign of "aye". I don't believe the Chair is going to be in doubt on this. Those opposed will say "no". The Resolution is defeated.

WINNERS OF INSURANCE DRAWING

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: If there is nothing else, I would like to call on the Director of the Insurance Program to bring us the drawings for today's lucky winners.

COMRADE ROBERT CROW: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I would like to thank Jack Carney for doing the drawing today. The winner of the $25 drawing is Joseph Koch, Post 1564, Pennsylvania. The $50 winner is Donald Mason, Post 3547, Nevada, and the $100 winner is Genesio Benenuto, Post 5933, New York.

Tomorrow, we will draw a little bit earlier so you have an opportunity to have any winners pick up the money. We will be open until the close of the day, and tomorrow they will be open until about 12:00 or 1:00 o'clock.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, please rise and salute the flag of our nation.

[Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was given at this time.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: This Convention is recessed until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning. Thank you for your indulgence.

[Whereupon, the session was recessed at 1:35 o'clock p.m.]

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 25, 1994

[The Third Business Session of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Barron Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Allen F. Kent, presiding.]

CALL TO ORDER

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room and Salute the Colors.

[Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms Sarver led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.]

[Whereupon, National Chaplain Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr., gave the Opening Prayer.]

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: You may be seated. At this time we will have the Report of the Credentials Committee by the Chairman, Richard Trombla.

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174—Kansas): Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla from the Department of Kansas, Post 1174, and Chairman of the following National Council Members report to the Credentials Committee: District 11, District 16, District A and District G.

Comrades, this is a temporary report of the Credentials Committee. As of last night, the total delegate strength was 16,862. The Department Commanders 52; National Officers 10; Past Commanders-in-Chief 25. That is a grand total of 16,954. Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, this is a temporary report of this Committee at this time.

INTRODUCTION—GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT, PRESIDENT, WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE FOR AMERICA MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, INC.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Ladies and gentlemen, in 1986, Congress authorized the construction of a Memorial in Washington, D.C., that would be a lasting tribute to the women who have served or are serving in our nation's armed forces.

Nearly two million women have served in the U.S. military, from the American Revolution through the Persian Gulf War. For that reason, it is fitting that such a Memorial receive the support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

This morning we are pleased to have with us the distinguished President of the Women in Military Service for America Foundation, Retired Air Force Brigadier General Wilma Vaught.

Prior to her retirement from active duty, General Vaught served as the senior woman military representative to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services from 1982 to 1985.

General Vaught became eligible for the VFW while serving with the Military Assistance Command, U.S. Air Force, Saigon Vietnam in 1968 and '69. She is a member of VFW Post 346, in Washington, D.C.

Please join me in a very warm VFW welcome for the President of the Women in Military Service for America, Brigadier General Wilma Vaught.

REMARKS—GENERAL WILMA VAUGHT

GENERAL VAUGHT: I am deeply honored to be here with you again this year. I think this is my third year, and particularly I am honored to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. You know, I was one of the 7,500 military women that served in Southeast Asia, and I was proud of our armed services then and I remain proud today of each person who has served and each person who is serving.

I know that you feel as I do that some of our troops today in some of the humanitarian missions have a difficult task before them. They need to be in our prayers and our thoughts. Before I say anything about the Memorial, there is something I do want to say, and I understand that a number of people have been honoring Howard Vander Clute, who has been a friend of ours over a period of time. We want to do that, too.

You have been a great friend. We are going to give you something here today. That is the Women in Military Service Memorial Coin. Just because I have given you one, Howard, I want you to know that doesn't let you off the hook in buying one. We present this with our deep appreciation. [Applause]

You know, we have been in a period of remembering recently and paying tribute to our service people, past and present, and we will soon be doing more of those as we recognize the Battle of the Bulge coming up on May 8th.

This past November we observed the seventy-fifth anniversary of World War I, and then the great celebrations in honor of D-Day, and what a memorable moment that was. As we think about these remembrances, I want to think a bit about the history of the women who served and that we are going to document and preserve that history and make it visible through the Women's Memorial.

As your about to be Commander-in-Chief Kent said, women served in every one of America's wars, every single one. And sometimes it was with great difficulty, sometimes there was only one or two in some of the early wars, but they were there. Their stories are a multi-faceted story of honor, of humor, joy, of their veteran's status or service not being recognized after they got out, accomplishment of the struggle for acceptance, of discrimination and of progress.

Within the last month, in terms of progress, the Army has just opened 30,000 new jobs for women. Interestingly, as I travel around the country, I find few people that know about the history of women in the military, including those of us who are serving or have served.

That is going to change when we get the Women in Military Service Memorial built, because we are going to capture that history. We have a unique mandate from the Congress, because we are going to recognize the living, the dead, all services, the officers, the enlisted, yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's women.

It is unique in another way because we are building this Memorial at the main gate of Arlington Cemetery, which has some existing structures there, and those structures will become a part of the Memorial.

We have an incredibly beautiful design. It will have at the top of our tablet with quotations of the women that served, and that will serve as the skyline, and an Educational Center where we have exhibits, where we have the computer registrations of the women who served. You are going to be proud to have been a part of that as a member of the VFW in supporting us where it counts because only money builds memorials.

We have made enormous progress since I spoke to you last year. We have got a federal grant of $9.5 million to cover the repair and restoration work. We have a coin authorized for 500,000, like the one that I just gave Howard. We have 1,440,000 of those sold now, which gives us up to $11 million to build the Memorial.

We still have more than I like to think about yet to sell, about 3.6 million. We need to sell every one of those coins if we are going to break ground in the spring. For those of you who may still work for the federal government, we are in a combined federal campaign. Think of us when that starts this fall.

Six states have donated money. We sell things. I never dreamed in retirement I would be out selling bumper stickers, T-shirts, sweatshirts, coffee mugs, and all those things that you folks sell and all the rest of us do. Shortly, thanks to Commander-in-Chief George Cramer and the Council this past year, there is going to be a letter going out from the VFW to each Post with a brochure telling you about the Memorial.

I hope when you get that, you do one or all of the following. Number one, if you have any women veterans who are members of your Post, I hope you will make sure they are registered. If not, I hope you will register them for the Memorial.

Second, something you need to do is to honor your wife or spouse, because let me tell you, they have supported the United States simply by doing that and they have received not as much recognition for being a wife as they should.

Third, you should just send a donation. I ask you to do that now, because we need it to make our ground breaking time the spring of this coming year. I just want to tell you we don't discriminate, we take money from anybody.

The VFW to date has given us about $35,600 from 41 states. California leads with $4,710, followed by Maryland with $3,960. Those two states make up about a third of the amount of money we have received from the VFW. The Women's Auxiliary has do-

nated $103,000 and the name of the VFW Auxiliary will be listed inside the Education Center of the Memorial.

As I think about the Memorial and what it means to women, I think of a woman named Cindy Bowden, a Specialist of the U.S. Army. I just want to close with her story. On February 28th, 1991, just hours after the seizure had been declared at Desert Storm, Specialist Cindy Bowden was rendering first aid to the surrendering Iraqi soldiers which killed her Platoon Commander and several others.

Cindy immediately took her rifle in an attempt to defend her comrades. A second explosion mortally wounded her. In her last letter home, Cindy wrote: "Dear Mom and Dad, I hope you never have to open this letter, because it means something has happened to me. This is my final goodbye to both of you. Do not only mourn for me, mourn for all of us who have given our lives so that others may live free."

I am confident that you served for the same reason that I spent 28 and one-half years. We served so that others could remain free. The Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery will enshrine the generations of women like Cindy, who have served and given the generations to follow a heritage and tradition, special and honorable as those have held dear through time.

Believe me, we are counting on the VFW to help us make our ground breaking this spring so that the maximum number of World War II and Korean women veterans will be alive to see it done. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United Stats, I would like to present you this check for $2,500.

GENERAL VAUGHT: We don't discriminate. We will take it.

PRESENTATION OF JAMES C. GATES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: The James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award is presented annually to an individual or organization that has made extraordinary contributions in advancing veterans' employment opportunities. This year we are honored to present this prestigious award to James R. Edge.

Jim, as he is called by friends, began his career in employment with the Vermont Department of Employment and Training three years ago. He currently holds the position of Local Veterans Employment Representative.

Since joining the Employment Service in 1991, Jim has used his organizational skills, his office computer and the print and electronic media to serve hundreds of unemployed veterans. Through his individual efforts, Jim has heightened the awareness of employers in his community to the many qualified veterans in the area. Here are just a few of his accomplishments.

He started a "Veterans Newsletter" to introduce himself and coworkers to veterans who were searching for work. He later formed "Veterans Network", the first support group for unemployed veterans in Vermont and possibly the nation.

Jim was the first job developer in Vermont to capitalize on the placement enhancing potential of personal computers and fax machines.

He produces video resumes of unemployed veterans which are later aired over local broadcast channels.

He helped establish a veterans transitional housing project to address the plight of homeless veterans in Rutland, Vermont.

Jim is an extremely energetic, innovative and productive employment representative whose efforts have increased the employment of veterans in his state and brought tremendous pride to all of us.

He is a veteran of the Korean War and served with the 1st Calvary Division in Vietnam. Please join me in recognizing our 1994 James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award recipient, James R. Edge.

This citation reads as follows: "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, James C. Gates, Distinguished Employment Service Award presented to James R. Edge, Local Employment Representative, Rutland, Vermont.

"In special 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."

This has been signed by George R. Cramer, Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by Howard E. Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE—MR. JAMES EDGE

MR. JAMES EDGE: Good morning. My name is Jim Edge and I am a veteran. I would like to thank you for this wonderful award, and thank you for having me here. I would like to acknowledge that I would not be here, and the things I have accomplished would not have been possible without the help of a bunch of caring veterans and wonderful support throughout the State of Vermont and Rutland, Vermont, where I am from.

I am pleased to accept this award on behalf of all the veterans providers throughout the country who care enough to make a difference in the lives of veterans. Still there is lots of work to be done, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about something that is very important to me, and that is every veteran have a home and have a job.

I do mean all veterans, not just homeless veterans. I mean the unemployed and the underemployed. I think the plight of our nation of homeless veteran is a national disgrace. Let's not forget about the working poor who just manage to scrape by seeing that his family is fed and they are living from hand to mouth.

I am very nervous and I didn't think I would be. I believe that the VFW and the Legion and the DAV, and the AmVets have all done wonderful jobs for veterans. We have spent a lot of money, and we help our communities. I think that, however, we need to remember that charity begins at home.

Our government is cutting back on veterans entitlement employment every day. They are looking for ways to cut back. We need to take care of our own. I think that it is great that we have a

baseball team or we help finance a school band trip, or we help finance a town park.

How can we call ourselves a veterans organization when there are veterans sleeping under bridges or in bus terminals, or vet families in substandard housing just managing to get by? When these men and women were called to serve their country, they didn't look for draft deferments, they didn't run to Canada, they didn't have daddy call the Congress for them, they stepped forward and did their duty.

Now, they are having problems and if we don't help them, shame on us. I know some of you are saying we do help these people, and you are right, we do. Unfortunately, it is a very small percentage of them. A far larger percentage are ashamed of the situation, they are proud people, and some of them don't know how to reach out for help.

The only way I have become aware with them is after working with them over a period of time. They learn to trust me and they let me know what their real situation is, that they don't have a home or whatever.

All I am asking of you is this: when you get back home, in your city or town, look around and see how you can help veterans that are down and out in your area. See what is needed. Maybe a veterans' shelter, maybe a training opportunity, maybe soliciting some jobs or help those in your Post.

Maybe just start a local veterans fund so a man or woman can have a pair of boots or clothes so he can go to work. It could be someones needs like the price of a haircut or a tank of gas to get a job interview. If we don't take care of our veterans, who will? All I ask is when you get back home, look around, ask questions, find out what these veterans need, and do it.

With God's help, someday there will not be a hungry or unemployed veteran in the United States, and that will be a proud day for all of us. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Jim, on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we would like to also present you with this check for $1,000.

MR. JAMES EDGE: Thank you very much.

WINNERS OF INSURANCE DRAWING

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: At this time I will call on Bob Crow to do the Insurance Drawings so we can get rid of the rest of this money.

COMRADE BOB CROW: Thank you, sir. I am going to have the distinguished Past Commander-in-Chief Joe Scerra to do the drawing. As soon as we have drawn the four tickets, the first one, that will be for $25, then $50, $100, and the last one will be for $1,000.

Any of the prizes which are not picked up at the insurance booth by around 12:00 o'clock or 1:00 o'clock today will be mailed to the winners at their home within a week or so. That is once we get back and get a check cut. If any of you know the $1,000 winner and he is not here and he is still in the area, you might want to contact him and see if he wants to stop by and pick up the money.

Before I read the names, I would like to again thank the insurance company, Combined Insurance of America, for donating all the prizes, the cash prizes we have given out this week.

The $25 winner is Kasper Kebel, Post 1117, Illinois.

The $50 winner is Lawrence Tholen, Post 2864, Kansas.

The $100 winner is Kenneth A. Buckley, Post 9400, Arizona.

Now, the $1,000 winner is William D. Ferguson, Post 9143, Georgia. Thank you, gentlemen.

PRESENTATION—NATIONAL LARGE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR TO MR. DANIEL A. GRAFTON

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Each year, the VFW presents a national award to both a large and small company. These companies' policies and achievements in hiring, promoting and training of veterans is exemplary.

This year we are honored to recognize Beech Aerospace Services, Inc., of Madison, Mississippi, as the National Large Employer of the Year. Beech Aerospace Services is a major defense contractor providing maintenance and logistics support for over 1,100 military aircraft at 200 locations worldwide. At the time of nomination, the company numbered 1,486 employees of which 55 percent were veterans. Sixteen percent of the employees are disabled veterans.

As a government contractor and responsible corporate neighbor, Beech Aerospace is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in employment. It is further committed to affirmative action for persons with a handicap and for disabled and Vietnam era veterans.

The company reviews its personnel processes annually to ensure that procedures provide thorough consideration of applicant's qualifications for job vacancies filled by hirings or promotion; and for all training opportunities.

Beech Aerospace's demonstrated efforts and firm commitment to a progressive policy encouraging the hiring of qualified veterans is indeed exemplary. The company justly merits honor and recognition by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Here with us to accept the award, is Beech Aerospace President and an Air Force veteran, Daniel A. Grafton.

The citation reads as follows: "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, National Large Employer of the Year Award presented to Beech Aerospace, Madison, Mississippi.

"In special 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 25th day of August, 1994."

This has been signed by George R. Cramer, Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by Howard Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE—MR. DANIEL GRAFTON

MR. DANIEL GRAFTON: Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Kent. Speaking for the men and women of Beech Aerospace Services, I thank you for honoring us as the 1994 Veterans

of Foreign Wars Employer of the Year in the category of Large Companies.

Beech Aerospace Services is an aircraft logistics and training support company headquartered in Madison, Mississippi, and employs more than 2,600 people worldwide, of which 63 percent are veterans. We oversee and manage more than 1,100 military and government aircraft, at over 200 plus sites, and are recognized as a leader in our marketplace.

This award is truly appreciated and makes us stand very tall. Also I would like to thank the Mississippi State Employment Security Division for nominating us, to Commander Dan Patterson of VFW Post 6473, Salem, Mississippi, and their consideration and support.

The State Commission knows our policy, knows our requirements, and knows to send us a veteran first when a position is open. It knows that veterans fit our business in bringing qualities of employees we are looking for. Our policy has always been to assure careful, thorough and systematic consideration of the job qualifications of veteran applicants.

There is a considerable pool of talented veterans out there. Some 17.8 million veterans are under the age of 65. We believe this policy is not only best for the veteran and our country, but it provides our company with the trained and talented professionals who are team players with good work habits.

It is a win-win situation for all of us. However, recent statistics showed that the veteran population was continuing to decline through the year 2010 by an average annual rate of one and one-half percent. This continuing declining of the number of veterans, especially under the age of 45, which are some 6.3 million currently, is a direct result of the downsizing of the military.

As the pool gets smaller, it makes filling our work with qualified workers more difficult. We will not lessen our resolve to actively pursue him or her first. The commitment of your more than two million members and 760,000 Ladies Auxiliary members to protect veterans entitlements, support national security measures, and exercise influence on national legislative actions affecting veterans is commendable and vital to the veterans' interests.

Beech Aerospace Services thanks you for all that you do for our country and thank you for this prestigious award. It is an honor for all of our employees, but especially for our own 1,571 veterans. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: In addition, we would like to present you with a check for $1,000.

MR. DANIEL GRAFTON: Thank you. I would like to donate this check to VFW Post 6473 for education of the employers in the area to hire veterans.

[Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Cramer assumed the Chair at this time.]

VISIT OF LADIES AUXILIARY DELEGATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to my station, please.

My comrades, will you give a nice warm round of applause to the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Juanita Crowe.

Comrades, as you know, I just had the opportunity to represent all of you at the ladies' meeting just a little while ago and en route I had a telephone call and some more faxes I had to pick up. At this time, it gives me indeed a great pleasure to have the opportunity to introduce to you a lady I have gotten to know very well over the last three years, a lady that has been very helpful to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and helping the Ladies Auxiliary to be very helpful to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

From the volunteer state of Tennessee, our National President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW, Juanita Crowe.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.]

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT JUANITA CROWE: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. It is certainly my privilege to be standing here before the greatest organization in the world, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Commander-in-Chief Cramer, National Officers and VFW Members:

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to greet you one more time as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The 1993–'94 year has been a very interesting and challenging year for the Ladies Auxiliary and the VFW.

I am very proud to say that our Auxiliary set many records this year. We donated $46 million conducting our community service programs and, of course, we also topped $3 million for the sixth year in a row for our Cancer Aid and Research Program.

We owe that assist also to you, because without your help and support we couldn't have made it. You know in cancer we do help our cancer-stricken members, but we also donate a large majority of this money to research, which helps all mankind. I am also proud that we now have an Auxiliary Museum which officially opened July 29th in the VFW National Headquarters. I invite you to see it the next time you are in Kansas City.

Your Commander-in-Chief just donated $2,500—well, he had an envelope. Where is Jim Bowden? He had an envelope, but he didn't have anything in it, but he said that if I would see you, Jim, that he was sure you would honor his signature on a blank envelope for $2,500 to the National Museum. The Ladies Auxiliary certainly appreciates that, comrades.

My thanks to all of you for your assistance to the Auxiliary during the past year, and also to me personally. I know that many of you play a very key role in making my official visits to your states so enjoyable. I did enjoy every state that I was in.

I wish I could write a book, and then I thought about it, and then nobody would believe what was in it anyway. Then I thought I might make about a million dollars if I told everything that I know. So I will just say "thank you" and forget the whole thing.

I particularly want to thank you, George and Linda, for everything that you have done for me personally and for our Auxiliary and for making this year so memorable. It has certainly been my pleasure to serve with you. As a token of my appreciation, I would

like to present you with this flag set and hope that you will have time when you return home to enjoy your new stereo that is there waiting for you.

It has been a good year and a great Convention, and I look forward now—where is the Tennessee delegation? Are they here? I look forward to getting back to my home state of Tennessee. I thought I would have time to rest a little bit, but they say we have got in Tennessee what is known as a reverse drawing that we make money for our community service, and they said you have got to work the reverse drawing. I said okay.

I will help there, and then I am going to rest. They said, "No, we have got to have 1,000 hot dogs for the Special Olympics in September." I was hoping it would be on Gunner's homecoming and I could get out of it, but it didn't happen that way.

Before I sit down, I want to present a lady that has certainly made my year very, very enjoyable. Sometimes—no, I will not tell it. Anyway, my Chief of Staff, a wonderful lady, a lady that has certainly, and I mean this sincerely, made my job a lot easier. That is, from the great State of Texas, Barbara Gulick.

Commander, thank you again for all the hospitality. It has been a pleasure serving with you. [Applause]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Madam President, once again I want to thank you for your support and the support of the Ladies Auxiliary. I thank you for the lovely Flag Set that you gave to me, and I want to thank you for the stereo that you also gave to me. You did tell me I could stay home and listen to it for a while and, Madam President, your order will be obeyed.

Let's have a nice hand for Juanita Crowe, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged ovation.]

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD, GOLD MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN M. CARNEY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Only a handful of men have risen to the VFW's highest office. Those with that distinction have shown us the finest in dedication, leadership and commitment.

Our next guest, Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief John M. "Jack" Carney, is no exception.

A naval hospital corpsman, he was attached to the 1st Marine Division during the Korea War. He joined the VFW in 1958 and has served his fellow veterans for more than 45 years in nearly every office a member can hold.

As Commander-in-Chief in 1992–'93, Jack took on a variety of sensitive issues in support of America's veterans. His first effort was to call for the resignation of former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Edward Derwinski. Derwinski departed that office a few weeks later.

Jack was a major force in bringing recognition to veterans of the Cold War in Korea and his call for North Korea's assistance in resolving that war's MIA situation continues to result in increased cooperation by that government.

His efforts brought increased attention to the maladies suffered by veterans of the Persian Gulf War, victims of Agent Orange and atomic veterans.

His motto during his year as Commander-in-Chief was "Stand Up, Speak Out." For him, standing up and speaking out for veterans is not just a motto, it is a way of life.

Please join me in giving a warm VFW welcome to our Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief John M. "Jack" Carney from the great State of Florida.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Distinguished Service Medal" and this Citation awarded to John M. Carney, Commander-in-Chief, 1992–'93.

"In sincere appreciation and special recognition of his total dedication and commitment to the highest ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and his continuing efforts in support of its programs and purposes. Through his exceptional and enthusiastic leadership during the 1992–'93 administrative year the Veterans of Foreign Wars demonstrated its commitment and readiness to serve our nation and its war veterans, including veterans of the Cold War in complete affirmation of his mission for the VFW to 'Stand Up, Speak Out'."

Of course, this citation has been signed by me today as the Commander-in-Chief and attested to by our Adjutant General Howard Vander Clute. To both Jack and Joanne, I want to say it is an honor and privilege for me to present this Distinguished Service Medal, and not only that but it was equally as rewarding to have the opportunity to serve on your team. Congratulations, Jack.

RESPONSE—PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. This is indeed a great honor. You know, when you are the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the 2.2 million men and women that are dedicated to the highest principles of this nation, you are supposed to inspire, motivate and be a part of the team.

You know something, I thought a little different. The motivation, the inspiration, the time to do something is because of each and every one of you. Your personal involvement with me and our team, your personal shake of the hand, a pat on the back, to meet me at the airport or to greet me in your Posts, inspired me, motivated me.

Your exchange of ideas with me just gave me that much more willingness to make sure that my job was your job, my ability was your ability, and my willingness to stand up and speak out was because of each and every one of you. I think this honor this morning is your honor. I accept this award with Joanne on behalf of each and every one of you, and the men that could not be here.

Because of you and because of your caring, and because of you willingness to welcome Jack Carney into your hearts, Joanne and I are very proud to accept this award.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: If I may, I would like to take this opportunity and the privilege of the Chair to maybe read to you a little fax I intercepted this morning. I have been inun-

dated with faxes since I arrived here last Thursday. Larry Rivers kind of told our Council a couple of days ago what was happening out here. So, you know what is going on.

It says, "People should flood the Las Vegas Hilton," and it gives the fax number, "addressed to George Cramer, VFW, Commander-in-Chief, because these faxes cost him $3 per page. Send letters of complaints to him but don't duplicate the complaints and make sure you call the Washington office tomorrow, and hopefully if you are planning to resign from the VFW and give them your card number and Post number."

Let me tell you, this all stems from the fact we gave the young men and women of the JTFFA that prestigious award yesterday. Believe you me, think about this yourself. If you were to give three years of your life to a commitment to a project like that, where you would be away from your family for six weeks at a time, and then return for two weekends, or possibly ten days, and then go out for another six weeks and repeat that month after month and year after year for three years, that is why we gave those people those awards.

All these faxes say, and they are very repetitious, they complain that General Needham shredded evidence on the POW/MIA issue. He did not shred any evidence that was not already in the computer or on file. That is a fact. All he did is consolidate all of the records involved worldwide into the POW/MIA in the JTFFA.

I think he was smart in doing that. Why have records in Bangkok, Washington, Hawaii and all over? Bring them into your central office so everybody knows what is going on. That is all that gentleman did. Let me tell you, I have been inundated with telephone calls, first of all, since I got here, and I even got one at 1:00 o'clock this morning, where people said they were going to protest what we did. That is great.

I asked every one of those individuals who called me, and there is more than one, what VFW Post they belong to. Every one of those people said they did not belong to any VFW Post, but they were offered money to stand around and hold up a sign by some individual.

I have also received calls from people that say they are family members of POW/MIA people. Well, you know, the Vietnam War has been over for about 20 years. The Korean War has been over about 40 years and World War II has been over for 50 years. So, I asked the individuals, if your loved one disapproved some 20 years ago, what did you do 20 years ago or more when you got that letter from the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine Corps, when you received that letter that your loved one was missing?

They all said, "Well, nothing." I said, "What did you say within the first 10 years that your loved one was missing?" They said, "Well, nothing." I said, "When did you get involved in the POW/MIA issue?" They said, "Well, four or five years ago." I said, "The VFW has been involved in this issue for two decades, 20 years."

Excuse me, my friends, but if I had a loved one missing I would be on my Congressman's door the next day. I wouldn't wait 15 years to do something about it and to put my name in lights just so I could get involved in the issue.

PRESENTATION OF VFW SMALL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: This year, we are greatly honored to present the prestigious VFW National Small Employer of the Year Award to Lear Siegler, Management Services Corporation, also called LSI. LSI's policies and achievements in hiring, promoting and training of veterans is noteworthy.

The company operates at several sites across the United States and overseas. Today, however, we focus attention on LSI at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, which specializes in the repair and refurbishment of combat aircraft, vehicles and engineering equipment.

LSI started its Fort Campbell operation in June, 1992. One of its top priorities, from the beginning, was to make maximum use of the State Employment Service Systems in the area to meet its work force needs.

The local Job Service Office in Clarksville, Tennessee, was of great assistance to LSI in responding to its initial personnel requirement of 117 highly qualified workers. The veterans representatives at the Job Service Office screened, processed, and referred dozens of qualified applicants who possessed years of experience with military vehicles and equipment, all veterans.

It is particularly noteworthy that the company decided to recruit its workers through the Public Job Service as many newly separated veterans seek initial employment after military service through the veterans program operated by the State Employment Service.

To date, with 117 employees on board, LSI has maintained an average of 92.5 employees per year since its start-up. 98.3 percent of its work force are veterans, including 15 percent who are disabled.

It is important to note LSI placed its confidence in the Tennessee Department of Employment Security. This relationship made it possible for a substantial number of qualified veterans to be referred to meaningful jobs.

Receiving the award for Small Employer of the Year is LSI's Plant Manager and a Vietnam veteran himself, George Whitmill.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States National Small Employer of the Year Award presented to UNC Lear Siegler, Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

"In special recognition and grateful appreciation for meritorious service in effecting a very comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of veterans."

This has been signed by myself this day as Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by Howard E. Vander Clute, Adjutant General. Along with this award goes an honorarium of $1,000. George, congratulations.

RESPONSE—COMRADE GEORGE WHITMILL

COMRADE WHITMILL: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Tennessee. If I get a little tongue-tied, I will blame it on the Tennessee delegation last night. Thank you very much for this award.

UNC Lear Siegler and those of us at the Fort Campbell Site 0311 truly are grateful for this recognition. I am very honored to be here today. I would like to also thank the membership of Local Clarksville, Tennessee, Post 4895 for their support, and the employees for their fine work.

It is the quality of their work that has established a very positive reputation for Fort Campbell. That reputation significantly contributes to keeping our company and our Fort Campbell site in business. There is no substitute for providing quality to the customer as our formidable success. This is the first and most essential element.

I would like to say I am proud to be a veteran and a member of the VFW. I find that is an organization with a great history and noble purpose. The company I work for, UNC Lear Siegler, perhaps known to many of you as LSI, was established in 1961 to provide aircraft maintenance and related services to the U.S. military.

LSI's affiliation with the military has expanded over the years to encompass ground equipment, logistics operations, engineering and communications equipment support. Our parent company, UNC Base Services recently acquired LSI and the company is known today as UNC Lear Siegler.

We started working at our Fort Campbell site in June, 1992, repairing vehicles and engineering equipment returning from Desert Storm. Within a few weeks our requirements grew to 117 members. Employees with experienced Army experience on equipment was needed quickly to respond to the 101st Division's needs.

Fortunately, the Fort Campbell area, with thousands of veterans, has an abundance of the skill and knowledge we needed. Mr. Bobby Williams, the local Job Service Office in Clarksville, Tennessee, was able to meet the challenge of dozens of applicants possessing years of experience.

They were veterans. These were the people with experience that was needed, and they were also people that were not afraid of hard work, and who had met and passed the test of maturity and willingness. Our business was not to achieve goals or comply with company policies or to win awards, we just made good sense.

It proves to have been the right decision. We were extremely fortunate to have found a pool of personnel with skills and experiences that we needed on such short notice. With that, I would like to thank Mr. Williams and the Clarksville Job Service Office.

Once again, I would like to thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars for their recognition and the opportunity to be here with you today in Las Vegas. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: We are deeply honored to recognize the Anchorage office of the Alaska Employment Service for our National Local Office of the Public Employment Service Award.

The Anchorage office has excelled in providing services to employers and veterans alike, particularly Vietnam era veterans who comprise nearly half of the 70,000 veterans in the state. The unit's

commitment to service is a total effort. They promote veterans service at every opportunity.

In addition to exceeding performance standards for placing veterans in jobs, the Anchorage veterans unit continues to distinguish itself by developing innovative programs to assist veterans.

The Anchorage office is currently the home of the only state employment service agency in the nation that assists veterans preparing for Postal Service exams. Since the program started in 1989, over 1,200 veterans have taken the class.

The veterans units continues to conduct an Outreach Program to the veterans community through a television program called "Alaska Veterans: Update."

In 1993, the veterans unit provided crucial leadership in the multi-agency planning of the first stand down for homeless veterans in Alaska.

The veterans units continues to provide regular transition assistance services to active duty military personnel, at-large and small installations alike, including distant sites in the Aleutian Island chain, some 1,500 miles away.

These accomplishments clearly identify the Anchorage office as one that has excelled in service to veterans and one that justly merits recognition by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Here to accept the award is the team leader, James Mason.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States National Employment Service Office Award" presented to Alaska Employment Service, Anchorage Local Office, Anchorage, Alaska.

"In special recognition and appreciation for meritorious, professional employment service rendered to veterans."

Of course, this has been signed today by myself as Commander-in-Chief and attested to by Adjutant General Howard Vander Clute.

Mr. Mason, we certainly want to thank you and congratulate you for receiving this award. Along with this award goes an honorarium of $1,000.

RESPONSE—MR. JAMES MASON

MR. MASON: Good morning. Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Distinguished Guests and Friends:

It is indeed an honor for me to accept this award on behalf of the Alaska Employment Service, Anchorage Office. This prestigious honor is one that we will long cherish. The local staff in Anchorage has not always found it easy to serve those veterans.

Sometimes they find them needing some assistance, caring and concern, or sometimes just a friendly hand up as opposed to a mere hand-out. As veterans representatives, our staff has worked to find ways to service veterans. We have been able to successfully inaugurate approximately ten mandated programs, and with the assistance of the local employment staff we have been available to service veterans population locally of approximately 30,000.

To maximize our efforts, we have had veterans representatives in other stations on two military bases and the VA Regional Clinic, and the Anchorage Vets Center. We conduct post-employment workshops and do a weekly statewide veterans' television program.

We have our program workshop for sailors, Marines and airmen serving at those industries from one end of Alaska to the other. I am also very proud to report that with the support of the scenic agencies in the area it has been outstanding, particularly those that have sent the donations, such as the VFW, the American Legion and the DAV and other agencies, plus the Alaska Vocational Rehabilitation Center, the VA itself and other federal agencies.

I wish to thank the State Department of Labor and the State Director of Employment and Training, Mr. Dan Travis, and the Director of the Alaska Women's Training, Judy Knight, and especially our local area manager, Mr. Jerry Padro, for their support and insight and in the freedom that allows my staff to create activity to accomplish our mission, which is to promote economic ability by responding to the needs of both the employers and veterans seeking jobs.

Last but not least, I would be remiss if I did not extend our sincere thanks to the Nominating Service Officer who made this recognition possible, and that is the VFW Service Officer, Mr. Gary Hurbers.

I would like to make one final announcement. This $1,000 award is going to be donated to the Alaska 1994 Stand Down, which is a homeless veterans campaign.

PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, U.S. SAVINGS BOND DIVISION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For many years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has promoted the purchase of U.S. Savings Bonds as an effective savings tool and a way to keep America strong.

In keeping with that VFW priority, I am pleased to introduce the Manager of the Office of National Organization and Federal Programs, U.S. Savings Bond Division, Department of the U.S. Treasury, Mr. Kenneth J. Burch.

RESPONSE—MR. KENNETH BURCH

MR. KENNETH BURCH: Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Executive Officers, National person Benny Bachand, Members and Guests:

It is my pleasure to be here today representing the Department of the Treasury, Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, and the Savings Bonds program. The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has a very important influence on the lives of veterans and their families.

That is why I would like to be here today to share some thoughts about savings and savings bonds with you. One of the foundations of our economic strength is savings. The more we save, the better our individual futures will be; the better America's future will be as well.

Savings, as you know, builds capital. Capital builds business and industry. Unfortunately, Americans have not been very good savers. We have, in fact, one of the lowest levels of savings in any Western industrialized nation. So, one thing that you as commu-

nity leaders should be concerned with is encouraging everyone to save and save more regularly.

The savings bonds are of continuing importance to America because they make it easy to save. Not only are bonds sold in every nation in the land, but they are also offered to millions of employees to have the Payroll Savings Plan where they work.

The Payroll Savings Plan is becoming more and more popular each year through small, regular allotments where an employee can build a collection of savings bonds over time that is truly impressive. The single decision to join the Payroll Savings Plan gets you started, and then the employee can just sit back and watch their savings grow.

There are other reasons beyond the ease of purchase to buy savings bonds. The foremost among them is savings bonds today are truly a decent investment. A buyer of bonds gets a guaranteed rate of four percent, which compared to similar investments, such as savings accounts, checking accounts, CD's, money markets, you look today out there, you go in your bank, the rates are pretty low.

The savings bonds are very competitive. Once the bonds are held for five years, they receive market base rates. That means that bonds will be competitive under any conceivable economic situation. The current market base right now is 4.7 percent. That is 4.7 percent, up from 4.25 percent in the past six-month period. All indications are the next six months cycle or market base can go up over 5 percent.

There are still other advantages which you may be interested in about savings bonds, including safety. Bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. If lost or stolen, they will be replaced free of charge by the United States Government.

They are also exempt from state and local income tax, which sets them apart from other investments. Perhaps the biggest plus of buyers is the added tax rate. The bonds purchased are used for educational purposes. Education today, as you know, is very expensive for your children and your grandchildren.

Those buyers who need income and certain other limitations, and most Americans do, savings bonds can be completely tax free. Currently, the value of U.S. savings bonds held by Americans today is $178 billion. Last month, $687 million worth of savings bonds were purchased.

All in all, buying bonds today makes a stronger economy and well into the future. I know all of you will take this message back home. Tell your members about savings bonds and they more they know, the more likely they are to be a part of the program.

I know that you will give savings bonds your full support as you have in the past. With your help, the program will continue to grow, helping other generations of Americans to a better, more secure future.

It is now my pleasure to make a presentation to the National Organization's Chairman for Savings Bonds Program, Benny Bachand, for his continuing support of the Savings Bond Program.

Over the past few years, Benny has volunteered his time in spreading the word about savings bonds to over 100 of the nation's top national organizations. Thank you-all for your support. I look forward to working with all of you in the years to come.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND: Thanks and buy bonds.

PRESENTATION OF VFW OUTSTANDING VA HEALTH CARE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: The National Hospital Committee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars has established an award recognizing the Outstanding VA Health Care Provider of the Year. This year's recipient is Mr. Charles "Chuck" Bouley, a Vietnam veteran, and a physician's assistant at the Audie Murphy Memorial VA Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas.

Chuck is a 21-year Army veteran. He served in Vietnam in 1970 and '71 with the 85th Evacuation Hospital at Phu Bai.

In the past year, while undergoing chemotherapy treatments, and with a real "commitment to service," Mr. Bouley continued to work because he knew his veterans depended on him, even though he was feeling the effects of chemotherapy treatments.

Despite his illness, and with determination and dedication to the veterans of the Audie L. Murphy Memorial VA Medical Center, he worked tirelessly to alleviate many backlogs.

As the VA looks at ways to improve its service to veterans, the dedicated and professional efforts of employees such as Chuck Bouley serve as an inspiration to all.

Please join me in welcoming Mr. Charles "Chuck" Bouley, recipient of the VFW Outstanding VA Health Care Provider of the Year Award.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Outstanding Health Care Provider Award, 1993–'94, presented to Charles "Chuck" Bouley, Physician's Assistant.

"In special recognition of his singular achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding VA Health Care Provider of the Year, 1993–'94."

This award is dated today, the 25th day of August, and signed by myself as the Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by Adjutant General Howard E. Vander Clute. Thank you for what you do for our nation's veterans.

RESPONSE—MR. CHARLES BOULEY

MR. BOULEY: Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Fellow Veterans, Distinguished Guests:

I want to thank all of you for this distinguished award. I want to thank Don Donnelly from Post 880, Statesville, Texas, and all of the Texas veterans. I want to thank my wife for her continued support. Again, thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF VFW OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: This year we are honored to present the VFW's Outstanding Community Health Care Provider of the Year Award to Dr. Murray T. Pritchard of West Plains, Missouri.

Dr. Pritchard began a lifetime of providing quality health care to his fellow veterans during World War II when he was with the

119th Medical Battalion attached to the 168th Infantry in the 35th Division. Captured in North Africa, he was held in Stalag 3B in Frankfurt until he was liberated in March, 1945. Returning to the United States, Pritchard continued in the medical field.

He joined the staff of the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in 1973 where he worked in the Outpatient Department until he retired in 1985. His care and compassion made him a favorite of the staff and patients.

Not content with retirement, he returned to work in the new Mobile Clinic at the Poplar Bluff, Missouri, VA Medical Center.

The VA Mobile Clinic travels in a special bus to five sites in rural South Central Missouri and North Central Arkansas providing health care to veterans. Dr. Pritchard is on the road four days a week with a team. He has a reputation as a physician who really listens to and cares about each veteran he treats.

In September, 1992, Dr. Pritchard accompanied the VA Mobile Clinic to Florida where they spent two weeks treating Hurricane Andrew victims.

Please join me in welcoming a World War II veteran of North Africa, a former POW, a Life Member of VFW Post 1828 in West Plains, Missouri, and a caring physician and humanitarian, Dr. Murray T. Pritchard.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Outstanding Community Health Care Provider Award, 1993–'94, presented to Murray T. Pritchard, Doctor of Osteopathy.

"In special recognition of his singular achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Outstanding Community Health Care Provider of the Year, 1993–'94."

This has been signed this date by myself as the Commander-in-Chief and attested to by Howard E. Vander Clute, our Adjutant General.

RESPONSE—DR. MURRAY T. PRITCHARD

COMRADE PRITCHARD: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, and thank you all fellow members of the VFW. I want to explain a little further about our mobile clinic. There are six such mobile clinics being used in the United States. We were lucky enough to have one.

This is a pilot program, and it has been going on for two years, and there have been statistics being compiled to see if it is feasible. We think it is going to be, because we have been very successful with our mobile clinic.

I would also like to have my wife to stand, who is the chief volunteer on this mobile clinic. She has been very faithful in helping the veterans to be ushered in and to be shown where to go for treatment. We have on our staff a physician, a physician's assistant, a registered nurse, a coordinator and a driver who is the expert on the computer and fax system.

Our team has been very successful, and we have at times seen as many as 200 patients in a three-day period in one location. Sometimes we have to have a special nurse to help us in these busy locations. We are very much indebted to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Each one of our stations is at a VFW Center. We have a place for these older veterans to come and to rest until they are processed. They are in the shelter where it is either air conditioned, if it is needed, or we have heat for them. It is very comfortable.

These patients, many of them, are not able to go to the VA Hospital. They are older and they are sick. Some are crippled and some are blind. These are the ones that we are serving the greatest need to.

I would like to add one more thing. These Veterans of Foreign Wars volunteers and the people who are working with us are really great. They have made the greatest contribution to the success of our mobile clinic. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF VFW OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: This is the first year the VFW Hospital Committee has established an award recognizing the outstanding VA Volunteer of the Year.

The first recipient of this award is Comrade Daniel W. Moore, a Life Member of the Anthony T. Calista Post 5579, Gibbstown, New Jersey.

Comrade Moore's many volunteer activities include bingo parties for patients of the Nursing Home Care Unit at the Elsmere VA Medical Center in Wilmington, Delaware, off-shore fishing trips for patients on charter fishing boats, and his countless hours in support of the annual VAVS Carnival.

Moore has become a regular on Christmas Eve, dressing up in his Santa Claus suit and passing out cookies and soft drinks to all the patients at the Medical Center.

Moore is a Navy veteran of the Korean War, serving in 1950 and 1951, and again in 1953. He returned to active duty in 1955, retiring in 1973.

Because of his consistent and unselfish efforts, he has not only contributed to the quality of life and well-being of his fellow veterans, but has enhanced the reputation of the VFW and VFW Post 5579, known by all the patients as the best volunteer group at the Elsmere VA Medical Center.

Please join me in welcoming Comrade Daniel W. Moore, the 1994 VFW Outstanding Volunteer of the Year.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Outstanding Volunteer Award, 1993–'94, presented to Daniel W. Moore.

"In special recognition of his singular achievements in support of the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the outstanding volunteer of the year, 1993–'94."

The citation is dated today and signed by myself as the Commander-in-Chief and, of course, attested to by the Adjutant General, Howard E. Vander Clute.

Having the opportunity to have worked as a volunteer in a hospital, I think besides this award one of the most rewarding things is to go up to a patient and see how appreciative they are of the VFW volunteers that are out there in making their life a little more enjoyable. Dan, the first recipient, I congratulate you. I hope your success rubs off on the rest of our membership.

RESPONSE—MR. DANIEL W. MOORE

COMRADE DANIEL MOORE (Post 5579—New Jersey): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, being a volunteer is not without compensation. I personally receive an emotional high every time I go to the hospital and do something for these guys.

Their eyes light up when they know somebody cares. It is my humble opinion there is no program which the VFW has which is any more important than the hospital volunteer program. Remember, comrades, they are our people, they are veterans, and if we don't look out for them who in the heck will? Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF VFW POST SERVICE OFFICER AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: This is the third year that the Veterans of Foreign Wars has recognized one of its own, the Outstanding National Post Service Officer. The Post Service Officer is the crucial first link for veterans and their dependents at the "grass roots" level.

This award is presented annually to the VFW Post Service Officer who attains the highest percentage of claims assistance referrals. These are referrals made on behalf of veterans, their dependents, and survivors to the appropriate Department Service Officer for processing within the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The recipient of this award is Comrade John J. Speckman. Comrade Speckman is Post Service Officer for VFW Post 5890 in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

Speckman is an Army veteran of World War II. He served nearly three and one-half years in the South Pacific with the 27th Infantry Division, 165th Infantry Regiment on Makin, Eniwetok, Saipan and Okinawa.

This award testifies to the commitment of Comrade Speckman to his duties as a Post Service Officer. He has reached out to members of his Post and Ladies Auxiliary. He has gone the extra mile on their behalf.

His service to others is in the finest tradition of our VFW commitment to "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living." It is for that reason that we formally recognize him today.

In addition to Mr. Speckman's awards, VFW Post 5890, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, will receive a plaque recognizing Mr. Speckman's accomplishments.

Please join me in welcoming Comrade John J. Speckman.

"Veterans of Foreign Wars National Outstanding Post Service Officer Award presented to John J. Speckman, Rio Rancho Post 5890, Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

"In special recognition for having achieved an exceptional record of service to VFW members and their families, marked by a spirit of dedication, compassion, selflessness and faithful adherence to the VFW principle 'Honor the Dead by Helping the Living'."

This citation is signed this day by myself as Commander-in-Chief, and attested to by Howard E. Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

Before I give you this plaque, Howard, do you want to put his cap on his head, please? John, congratulations and thank you for your assistance in helping veterans.

RESPONSE—COMRADE JOHN J. SPECKMAN

COMRADE SPECKMAN (Post 5890—New Mexico): Comrades, I gratefully accept this plaque as the Outstanding Service Officer, and I want to give thanks to our State Service Officer, Comrade Charlie Nasser.

I started in New York many, many years ago at the Department Post, Beachhead Post. I see a lot of these guys from Illinois here because I used to be in 335, and I retired to New Mexico. Now, I have all this time, I am pleased to dedicate it to something worthwhile.

I urge any of the Service Officers to really continue giving your help to these elderly fellows, because a lot of guys would love to be here today that just can't do it. You should really get your kicks out of seeing them when you see them places. Thank you, gentlemen.

INTRODUCTION—MR. MIKE LYNCH, GENERAL MANAGER, HELP HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Since its inception in 1971, the Help Hospitalized Veterans Project has delivered more than 13 million arts and crafts kits to veterans in more than 260 VA and military hospitals. This effort represents more than $100 million in donations to this worthwhile effort.

Recently Help Hospitalized Veterans became a priority with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Here to discuss that relationship is the General Manager of Help Hospitalized Veterans, Mr. Mike Lynch.

REMARKS—COMRADE MIKE LYNCH

COMRADE MIKE LYNCH: I first want to thank the VFW for allowing the Help Hospitalized Veterans organization to be a part of your National Convention. Particularly, I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief Cramer and Mr. Vander Clute for their evaluating our program and allowing us to be a part of this worthwhile effort.

Before I continue on, I have got to share a personal moment with you-all. Raised in Houston, Texas, as a child, and as a teen, my mother and my father allowed me and took me to many events of the VFW, the dances and the various charity fund-raising efforts that Post 8930 in Houston did when I was a kid.

I have got to tell you that if my father was alive today and could see his son addressing my father's comrades, he would be very proud. I, too, am now a comrade, being a Vietnam veteran, and very proud to be a part and a member of the VFW after being recruited in Kansas City.

For those of you who do not know what HHV is, Help Hospitalized Veterans, I will give you a quick insight on who we are. We are a national known profit group that was formulated in 1971 to distribute arts and crafts kits to hospitalized veteran patients throughout the country, in VA and military hospitals.

This program is designed to allow the veteran's mind to get off of his problems while being hospitalized. These kits are an escape. As one Chief of Recreation Services told me, these kits are not to kill time but to make time live while I am hospitalized.

It is true, if you have ever been in the hospital, there is nothing that you can do, and you can go stir crazy. It is worse than walking a perimeter or being on guard duty for hours.

On June 13th of this year, with the permission of the National VFW Headquarters, we were allowed to mail to all Posts a videotape describing the program, along with a couple of posters and a letter from myself and a letter from Mr. Vander Clute explaining and requesting support from Posts nationwide.

I am pleased and very proud to say as of this date we have received contributions in excess of $50,000 representing over 600 Posts that are currently participating in the HHV Craft Kit Program. What this means is this has allowed us to distribute an additional 12,500 craft kits to our comrades that are hospitalized across this country.

So, on behalf of HHV Board of Directors, it is an honor for me to present to the VFW this token of our appreciation, and the appreciation of thousands of hospitalized veterans served by VFW members everywhere. Thank you for all you have done and enjoy the rest of your Convention. God bless you all.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: At this time I would like to take the opportunity to introduce once again the comrades who have led this organization the first 95 years of its life. If I may, I will start with the past Commanders-in- Chief that are on the dais, and if you would, please hold your applause until I have introduced all of them and then you can respond.

Past Commander-in-Chief and Executive Director of our Washington office, Larry Rivers; Past Commander-in-Chief and Director of PAC, Bob Currieo. You gentlemen will remain standing. Past Commander-in-Chief Norm Staab; Past Commander- in-Chief Art Fellwock; Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson; Past Commander-in-Chief Joe Scerra; Past Commander-in-Chief Ted C. Connell; Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney.

Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace; Past Commander- in-Chief Bob Merrill; Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt; Past Commander-in-Chief John Mahan; Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Hanson; Past Commander-in-Chief Rich Holman; Past Commander-in- Chief Ray Gallagher; Past Commander-in-Chief Pat Carr; Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden; Past Commander-in-Chief John Stang; Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas Walker; Past Commander- in-Chief R. D. "Bulldog" Smith; Past Commander-in-Chief John Wasylik; Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom.

Sitting on the dais is Past Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant General, Howard Vander Clute. Also Past Commander-in- Chief Billy Ray Cameron was here but called home because of his employment.Past Commander-in-Chief John Staum; Past Commander-in-Chief Wally Hogan; Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Kimery. I think that is all of them. How about a nice hand for all of them. [Applause]

I would now like to call on our Adjutant General Vander Clute for any announcements that we may need today.

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: Department Commanders, 1993-1994, those of you who just left office recently in June, a 30-minute get together at the sports bar in the Hilton at 1:00 o'clock. That is signed by Charlie Shewmaker, Past Commander of the Department of Kansas.

The Department Commanders for 1992–'93 will meet out in the hall to your left immediately following the close of this meeting.

Comrades, the Commander-in-Chief has given me the privilege this morning to introduce hard-working members of this Convention Corporation, but before I do that I want to say that I have been through fourteen of these Conventions as the Adjutant General.

I remarked to our Commander-in-Chief this morning, I can't remember any Convention that was conducted quite so well as he has done. He has moved the Convention, he has given everyone an opportunity to express themselves on Resolutions that were being debated on the floor.

He also, as he should do or as any Chair should do, explained the Resolutions in the parliamentary procedure that was necessary to have the debate run smoothly, and to have the process of adoption or rejection go very quickly. I think that you-all agree with me that he has indeed conducted a very fair and very democratic and a very expeditious Convention. Perhaps you would like to acknowledge him for that.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation to Commander-in-Chief Cramer.]

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: Comrades, also because I suspect that it is within the domain of the Adjutant General to manage the Sergeant-at-Arms at our National Convention, I have been given this opportunity. Maintaining order and discipline at a National Convention is essential for its expeditious conducting.

Sometimes the Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms are asked to do things that perhaps can be perceived by delegates as being abrasive to their comfort and ease. But it is necessary to seat people. It is necessary to see there is not an undertone or perhaps even an overtone at a National Convention.

So, sometimes I know that you may lose your patience with them or not entirely understand what their duties are. But in all fairness to those of the ranks of Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms, you must understand they come here and spend every day on the floor of this Convention.

When you leave here to go and engage in some of the revelry of the Convention, which we all enjoy to do, they generally have another assignment. Sometimes their assignment, along with the National Officer, will last long into the evening.

Then they are expected to again be on the floor of the Convention by 8:00 o'clock to begin the process of the day, conducting a disciplined Convention. Comrades, this morning I know that now that

perhaps you have thought about that, you can appreciate the work and industry they do in performing their duties.

I want to introduce to you them this morning. The National Sergeant-at-Arms, George F. Sarver, of Post 402, Pennsylvania. The Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms are Carl C. Aiello, Post 1645, Massachusetts; Barry Hoffman, Post 6240, Kansas; William F. Miller, Post 4206, Florida; Nicholas Polansky, Post 2083, Connecticut; Joseph P. Schirmers, Post 4847, Minnesota, and Fred H. VonHinken, Post 4159, Michigan. I have saved this comrade for last, Walter W. Hamilton, Post 7420, California.

In conjunction with the introduction of Walt Hamilton, he submitted a letter at this Convention asking to be relieved of his duties as Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms. He has expressed in this letter, and I will not read it all to you, but he has expressed in the letter his appreciation to the many Commanders-in-Chief, Past Commanders-in-Chief who continue to appoint him to this position.

He certainly has performed in the highest tradition of the Veterans of Foreign Wars during this time. The reason for his withdrawal, I suspect, as you all know, he is a candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief in the Western Conference and he, I suspect, will have other concerns that he must attend to while seeking this office.

My comrades, I express my appreciation to the Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms every day after the session. During the session, I am probably barking at the Sergeants-at-Arms constantly. But I know and I appreciate what they have done to help to conduct these Conventions.

Join with me, please, once again, and give them the appropriate round of applause.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: While the Sergeant-at-Arms leaves the stage, we will go into nominations for 1994–'95 officers. If you are going to nominate somebody and would like to come up to the dais, please do so. I think that you would like to do that.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort our Representatives for our National Home, please.

VISIT OF NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the President of the National Home, Past National President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Alice Hutto.

NATIONAL HOME PRESIDENT HUTTO: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. Good morning, Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Distinguished Guests, and most importantly, you Comrades in the audience:

I just want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your love, your support, your compassion and your dedication to the National VFW Home. We appreciate it so much.

Now, I would like to introduce to you your elected trustees. They are Allen Jones from Pennsylvania, Ed Sanders from Indiana, Hal Webber from South Dakota. I don't think Hal is here. His wife had surgery. Also George Smith from New York, Robert Keys from Arkansas, Bob Houston from Michigan. Also the Commander-in-Chief

George Cramer, our able Adjutant Quartermaster Jim Bowden and Howard Vander Clute, Adjutant General.

Again, I just want to say thank you. You know, our National Home is alive and very well, and it is all because of you and your continued support. For that we thank you so much.

Now, I would like to present to you our excellent Executive Director, Susan Shoultz, who is doing an excellent job at our National Home for us, as well as running the Home.

MS. SUSAN SHOULTZ: Good morning. To our Commander- in-Chief, Officers and Guests, and to you the membership of the VFW:

There is much excitement and anticipation at the VFW National Home. We look forward to 1995 and the 70th Anniversary of our operation. The Home was created in 1925 to care for the widows and orphans of the men who fought for their country.

Since then, over 1,500 children have spent growing up years in the National Home. As the world in which we live has changed and new generations of young people have to go out to work to defend their way of life, the National Home has remained steadfast and ready to care for the families of these courageous individuals.

It is an unfortunate reality that after 70 years there are children and grandchildren of the membership that continue to need a home during their growing up years. During these past several months, the referrals of children to the National Home have doubled over the previous year. This means we will have achieved our goal of operating at full capacity during 1995.

As we look forward into the future, it is becoming increasingly clear that the National Home will need to continue to exist to provide for children a safe and loving home and set a value that will ready them for responsibilities of adulthood.

Equally important, the National Home will continue to exist as a living memorial which serves to honor you and your service to this great country of ours. Don't forget the children. We do not let them forget you.

Now, I would like to introduce to you our 1994–'95 Buddy Poppy Child, Sharon Zaddock.

REMARKS BY 1994–'95 BUDDY POPPY CHILD

BUDDY POPPY CHILD ZADDOCK: Good morning. Welcome to Las Vegas. I am glad to be here. My name is Sharon Zaddock. I am the Buddy Poppy girl for 1994–'95. In September, I will be going in the fifth grade. I have been living at the VFW National Home with my mother, my older sister and my younger brother for four years.

We live in the Maine Cottage, which I think is cool. The home has given me the chance to be involved in a lot of activities. I have been in gymnastics for four years. My older sister is jealous because she cannot do cartwheels better than I. I have taken piano lessons for two years. At my main recital, I did one song by myself and one with my other sister. I learned a lot about the songs. I had a lot of fun, too.

Finally, the National Home has been a great teacher, too. I have taken care of rabbits for two years under the 4-H program at the National Home. I have learned a lot about rabbits. This year, when I learned about rabbits, I was a Judge. I am getting real nervous.

The best part of going to the fair is seeing the horses. I really love horses. Each year I keep bugging and bugging and bugging my mom to buy me one. But does she? No. This past summer I played softball. I guess you could say this is the first time I had a person that actually pitched to me. I guess you could say our team was disabled because we lost every game. But we are the most improved team.

We have Michigan Day and Ohio Day and I help with the carnival games. I like it because I get to meet a lot of new people. After I am done, I go and play with the other kids. There is so much to do there. We play games and watch videos. We get to do arts and crafts.

I like to play basketball and volleyball, and then the other side has to catch it or else you get a point. Last year I was lunch room helper and I served the food and cleared off the tables. I also helped the kids to solve their problems like, unfortunately, it has happened with my brother.

I started trying karate lessons for self-defense only. This is one of my favorite karate moves. It is called the star step. I am a junior in Girl Scouts. My mom said she liked me being in the Girl Scouts because she knows she will get Girl Scout Cookies each year.

I like horses, stuffed animals and dogs. I have got a dog. In my spare time, I like to read poems and I would like to share one with you. It is, "Beware of a Dog."

"Beware of a cat, beware of a mouse, beware of a bat for being lost or anything in this girl's house."

This apartment has given my mother the opportunity to have a job and save for a down payment on our own home. Next year we will be ready to move out. Thank you one more time. Have a wonderful time at the Convention and thank you.

NATIONAL HOME PRESIDENT HUTTO: On behalf of the Board of Trustees and employees of the National Home, George, we would like to present you with this small token.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you, Alice, Sue and Sharon. Rush Limbaugh and Oprah Winfrey, look out. The competition is on the horizon. How about a big round of applause for the National Home Representatives. By the way, I am sure that Sharon would like to, if she has not already, start a collection of pins. Should you have some, give them to her.

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: We will now go into the nominations for 1994–'95 officers for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. For the purpose of nominating our next Commander-in-Chief, the Chair recognizes from Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona, Past Commander-in-Chief James R. "Bob" Currieo.

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BOB CURRIEO: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. National Officers, Comrades to this great Convention, it is a privilege to come before you this morning to place in nomination for Commander-in-Chief a man who has certainly paid his dues in our organization.

He has served in the Post, District and Department of Arizona, has achieved the high honor of All-American Post Commander and Department Commander. He has served our organization in various National offices, and in the past two years has distinguished himself as our Junior Vice and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, traveling to the four corners of this great nation of ours and to many, many nations overseas, and the troubled spots that confront our country.

He has traveled on four different occasions to Vietnam in quest of answers to the troubling MIA issue. He is a retired Marine, who had served more than 20 years in the Corps, retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer. He has dedicated service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He is a no-nonsense leader, who believes firmly in the motto of his beloved sword, always faithful, always faithful to himself and always faithful to his comrades, and always faithful to the veterans of this nation. He will help host our Association in the 21st Century, beginning another 100 years of success for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

It is an honor to place in nomination for the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the name of Allen F. "Gunner" Kent from the Department of Arizona.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of a second, the Chair recognizes from Post 1710, Phoenix, Arizona, Department Commander of Arizona, William Douglas.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOUGLAS (Post 1710—Arizona): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates:

I rise to second the nomination of Allen F. Kent for the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year? Is there any other nomination once, twice, three times? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

For the purpose of nominating the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 1994–'95, the Chair recognizes from Post 905, Gardner, Massachusetts, Past Commander-in-Chief Joe Scerra.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOSEPH SCERRA: Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer, National Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief and Delegates to the 95th National Convention:

I have the great honor and privilege to place in nomination before this Convention a dedicated and outstanding comrade. Unanimously endorsed by the Eastern States Conference, the Department of Massachusetts, and all other conferences for elevation to Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

I nominated and you elected this distinguished comrade almost a year ago as our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. His service to you and our organization has been exemplary and in the highest tradition of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

As our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, with full knowledge of the objectives, aims and mandates of our membership, he accom-

plished every duty, commitment and assignment given him with great competency. Endowed with a great degree of ability to articulate explicitly the sensing of the needs of our membership and organization. This year, with more than ordinary ability, effectively represented our organization on local, state and national levels.

I predicted a year ago that this dedicated and extremely well-qualified officer would be a valued assistant to the Commander-in-Chief and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, with the splendid ability to fully inform and motivate our membership.

He has fulfilled this prediction to the extent that the welcome mat has again been exhibited wherever he has been.

Paul Spera has served our membership and organization with the highest degree of accomplishment and dedication in all his endeavors during the year 1993–'94, and he has faithfully discharged the duties of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Eminently qualified and competent with a history of superior service to our organization, and unquestioned leadership ability, I, with pride, on behalf of the Eastern States Conference and the Department of Massachusetts, place in nomination Comrade Paul A. Spera, a Life Member of North End Post 144 for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for 1994–'95. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of a second, the Chair will recognize, from Post 8699, in Boston, Massachusetts, Past Commander-in-Chief, Clifford G. Olson.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFFORD OLSON: Thank you. Good morning, comrades. I was just talking with some of the people with respect to the officers next year and I find that we don't have one Navy man left. This is your last chance to cheer for the Navy.

Comrades, I stood before you last year in our Convention and stated that I would never come to this rostrum and nominate or endorse a candidacy of a man I didn't feel was worthy or qualified to hold an office, whatever that office may be.

Last year I was proud to second the nomination of Paul Spera for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. You and I have not been disappointed with his actions. I don't have to reiterate what Past Commander-in-Chief Scerra has put before you. I stand here proudly without fear to second the nomination of Paul A. Spera for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Also for the purpose of a second, from Post 2346, in Saugus, Massachusetts, the Department Commander, Stanley T. King.

COMRADE STANLEY KING (Post 2346—Massachusetts): National Commander-in-Chief Cramer, National Officers and Delegates:

I stand before you with personal pride to second the nomination of Paul A. Spera. A little history, in 1982–'83, Paul Spera was the Department Commander of Massachusetts and did an excellent job. I was very proud and honored to serve as the Post Commander of the largest Post at that time in Massachusetts, and my Post worked diligently and hard and made the All-State Team of Paul Spera.

I have been serving with Paul for a number of years. It is a great privilege and with pride to say that my Department, the Department of Massachusetts, stands behind Paul Spera for this office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. We are with him, we have been with him, and we will continue to be with him.

We are proud of Paul and proud of the Department of Massachusetts. We could say something about the Navy not being alive. We are alive in Massachusetts. The Senior Commander and the Junior Commander are all from the Navy.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Are there any other nominations for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations once, any other nominations twice, and any other nominations three times? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of nominating the 1994–'95 Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, from Post 9192, in Killeen, Texas, the Chair recognizes Past Commander-in-Chief Ted C. Connell.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CONNELL: Commander-in-Chief, my Comrades: I stand before you a proud delegate from Post 9192. I am proud to have been chosen to nominate a great American for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Jim Nier has been an All-American District Commander, an All-American State Commander.

He entered the Army in 1959 and served for 22 years. He served both in Vietnam and Korea. He returned to the United States and while stationed in Maryland attended night school where he received his Bachelor's Degree in Business and his Master's Degree, both by attending night school while serving full-time duty.

After that, he was assigned as an instructor at the Command Sergeant Major's Academy in El Paso where he retired. I know of no individual that would be better qualified for this job. Being only the third member of the Texas delegation to have been nominated and served in this high job, without further ado, I give to you the name of Jim Nier for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of a second, the Chair will recognize from Post 5359, in Dawson Springs, Kentucky, Past Department Commander Joel Hurley.

COMRADE JOEL HURLEY (Post 5359—Kentucky): It looks like we have got a few more than the Southern Conference Commanders here, but we are glad to have them up here, too. On behalf of the State Commanders of the Southern Conference who served in 1989–1990 with the Junior Vice Commander designee, and under the leadership of the great Chief, Wally Hogan, we proudly second the nomination of Jim Nier from the great State of Texas for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for 1994–'95.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief once; any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief twice; any other nomina-

tions for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief three times? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

For the purpose of nominating the Quartermaster General for the year 1994–'95, the Chair will recognize from Post 6240, in Russell, Kansas, Past Commander-in-Chief Norman Staab.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NORMAN STAAB: Commander-in-Chief George Cramer, National Officers and Delegates to this Convention:

It is with a great amount of pride that I have the privilege to nominate a distinguished member of our organization, a fellow Kansan, to the high and prestigious office of Quartermaster General, James D."Jim" Bowden. Jim Bowden is a lifetime resident of the State of Kansas, and he has grown up in Emporia, southwest of Kansas City.

He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Emporia State University in 1966. Jim served his country in the United States Army and was stationed in South Vietnam in 1969. Jim was attracted to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, joining the staff at the National Headquarters in 1970 as Manager of Accounting.

Six years later he was promoted to head the VFW Emblem and Supply Department, where in nine years gross sales nearly doubled, reaching over $4 million by 1985. At that time, Jim's record at the VFW stood out such that he was asked to step up and fulfill the responsibilities as Assistant Quartermaster General.

Six years later, on April 16, 1991, after nearly 21 years at the National Headquarters, Jim was installed as the Quartermaster General, only the fourth Quartermaster General in the history of this fine organization.

In the short time he has been Quartermaster General, a reliable friend has made itself apparent. Jim believes strongly and persistently in the day-to-day influence of this organization's finances and readily demonstrates that belief that has been confronting its use as it becomes necessary.

Unselfishly and without compromise of what he believes is best for the VFW, while constantly keeping abreast of the economic news, he is bringing sound financial principles to a legitimate long-range plan that will keep the VFW not just above water but resting on a solid rock of a financial foundation.

This diligence and deep concern for the future comes with the initiative that he has put in place, makes Jim the kind of comrade that we need for financial help, the one to lead us into the 21st Century and make the Veterans of Foreign Wars as the driving force it needs to accomplish our honorable goals.

I proudly nominate James D. Bowden, Life Member of Post 869, Kansas City, Kansas, as Quartermaster General for 1994–'95.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of a second, the Chair will recognize from Post 864, in Brookline, Massachusetts, Department Quartermaster Bill McCarthy.

COMRADE WILLIAM McCARTHY (Post 864—Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, on behalf of Bill Radigan of South Dakota in the Big Ten, William Cox of North Carolina, represent-

ing the Southern Conference, and Darrell Bencken from the State of Kansas, representing the Western Conference, we are more than proud to represent the rest of the Adjutant/Quartermasters in nominating a man that we deal with on a daily basis. We think he is outstanding and, in fact, we know he is an outstanding Quartermaster General, Jim Bowden. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Are there any other nominations for Quartermaster General? Any other nominations once; any other nominations twice; any other nominations three times? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

For the purpose of nominating the Judge Advocate General for the year 1994–'95, the Chair will recognize from Post 4643, Satellite Beach, Florida, Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Delegates to this great Convention:

It is indeed an honor and a pleasure for me from the Department of Florida, and our candidate has been endorsed by the Southern Conference, I am pleased to nominate Charles Whiteacre. Charlie has had many distinguished credits to his history.

I am pleased to tell you he has been an attorney-at-law for 38 years. He attended Boston University, a graduate of the University of Miami, and he is a member of the Florida Bar until he just recently retired. He was City Judge in Hialeah, a Mayor of Hialeah, Florida, and I could go on and on and tell you about his personal involvement in politics.

However, he is a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and served as Post Commander, District Commander. He has been State Judge Advocate, State Junior Vice Commander, State Senior Vice Commander and State Commander. He was also President of the National Convention Corporation in 1958, and then again selected in 1970.

He has held many National Committees with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He has served his state and his National Organization with full energy and enthusiasm on behalf of the veterans of this country. I am pleased to place in nomination for Judge Advocate General for 1994–'95, Charles Whiteacre from Florida.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of a second, the Chair will recognize from Post 10131, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, State Commander Larry Martell.

COMRADE LARRY MARTELL (Post 10131—Florida): It is a great pleasure that I come before this august body to second the nomination of Charles Whiteacre from Florida. We call him the Judge. Believe me, comrades, he is the Judge. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Also for the purpose of seconding the nomination, from Post 1289, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOLT: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. My comrades, I am indeed honored to have the privilege and the high honor of seconding the nomination of Charlie

Whiteacre from the great State of Florida for the high and important office of National Judge Advocate General.

I want you to know that I have known Charlie Whiteacre for well over 40 years. Over this long period of time, I have always known Charlie to be a man of action, a man of action on the Post level, where he served as Judge Advocate, to Junior, Senior, the Post Commander and on the District level.

He is a man of action, serving in many offices there, including the Judge Advocate General, and certainly he is a man of action on the Department level serving there as Judge Advocate for many, many years. I think from 1979 to 1983. He also served as the Department Junior Vice, Senior Vice and Commander.

He has been on the National level, serving as President of the National Convention Corporation in 1958 and 1970, and he has served on practically every National Committee that I know anything about. Charlie served in the United States Army with the Americal Division in the South Pacific during World War II. I also served there, and that is why we won that damn war in the Pacific.

Now, our next Judge Advocate General has been an attorney-at-law for over 38 years. He is a member of the Florida Bar Association and several other Bars throughout the State of Florida, and not necessarily the Bar Association as you know it.

The office of Judge Advocate General, as I have indicated, my comrades, deserves a man of action. Charlie is that man. It is with honor that I second the nomination for National Judge Advocate General from the great State of Florida, Charles Whiteacre.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, are there any other nominations for Judge Advocate General? Are there any other nominations once? Any other nominations twice? Any other nominations three times? The nominations are closed.

For the purpose of nominating the Surgeon General for the year 1994–'95, the Chair will recognize from Post 249, in Butler, Pennsylvania, Past State Commander, Norman Rettig.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMRADE NORMAN RETTIG (Post 249—Pennsylvania): What an honor it is for me to be the Immediate Past Commander of the Department of Pennsylvania and to be here before you to nominate Patricia Potter for the prestigious position of Surgeon General.

Pat is a Registered Nurse and the State Surgeon of Pennsylvania, and served in Vietnam from Da Nang to the DMZ, and earned the Service Medal, Bronze Star of Republic, the Vietnam Campaign Medal with the device and other decorations. She served 11 years on active duty in the United States Navy. That is another Navy person. That is also me.

She is an active member, and I mean an active member in every sense of the word, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on the Post, County Council, District and Department levels. She has been a registered service officer since 1985. She was elected Department Surgeon in 1989 and is currently serving her fifth term.

As State Surgeon, she visits each of the ten VA Medical Centers in Pennsylvania at least once. I repeat, at least once each year, to monitor the quality of care. She has testified at U.S. Senate Public Hearings on Veterans Affairs, appointed by the Pennsylvania Gov-

ernor Casey to the Advisory Council for the Veterans Home, whose term will expire in 1996.

Her professional bio is extensive. She graduated from Presbyterian School of Nursing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She is licensed as a Registered Nurse in Pennsylvania. She graduated cum laude from the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

She was the unanimous choice of the Eastern States Conference, based on her enviable service to the VFW, especially for our hospitalized veterans. With great pride, we present our candidate, State Surgeon, Patricia S. Porter, Jamestown Memorial Post 5424, Jamestown, Pennsylvania, for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We solicit your support.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of a second, the Chair will recognize from Post 6493, in Warminster, Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania State Commander, Neale Diebler.

COMRADE NEALE DIEBLER (Post 6493—Pennsylvania): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates:

Several years ago, I attempted to convince Patricia to become a candidate and eventually serve as State Commander in Pennsylvania. She told me she was very happy with what she was doing and believed she could best serve our organization by remaining in that position.

That was a historic decision in her personal life as well as the Department of Pennsylvania and our National Organization. It is with overwhelming pride that I second the nomination of Patricia Potter for National Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Also for the purpose of a second, the Chair will recognize, from Post 4789, in Northeast Pennsylvania, National Council Member Frank Fisher.

COMRADE FRANK FISHER (Post 4789—Pennsylvania): Commander-in-Chief Cramer, Distinguished National Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, and all you important delegates to this Convention:

I, too, am proud to stand here to second the nomination of Patricia Potter as your National Surgeon. Believe me, having been associated with Pat in our own District for many, many years, and throughout the Department, if you want a working Surgeon, comrades, you have that in Patricia Potter for the year 1994–'95.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, are there any other nominations for National Surgeon General? Are there any other nominations once? Are there any other nominations twice? Are there any other nominations three times? Nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

For the purpose of nominating our National Chaplain for the year 1994–'95 for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Chair will recognize from Post 2149, in Bensenville, Illinois, Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. Commander-in-Chief, National Offi-

cers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, the outstanding Delegates to this 95th Convention:

I am indeed honored this morning to appear before you to present our nominee from Illinois and from the Big Ten Conference for the office of National Chaplain. Father Neville has served the State of Illinois as Chaplain and he has reached out to all of the various religions.

He has counseled and guided our Department in every direction. He has attended every meeting of his Department, the Council of Administration, District, Post. Father Neville is twice an All-State Commander of Richmond Post 2450 in Illinois.

He served with the Army during World War II, with the 31st Station Hospital at New Caledonia in the Southwest Pacific. He spent 48 months in that area. He attended Northwest Florida and Dayton Schools of Higher Education.

Father Neville was ordained a Catholic Priest of the Rockford Diocese 41 years ago. He is presently Pastor of St. Peter and Paul Church in the small community of Virgil, Illinois. Father Neville has managed to obtain other priests to come in and fill in for him so he can travel and dedicate himself to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all that we stand for.

He has been a humble and yet a very wonderful guidance to all of us in our Department. I know that he will carry this forth to the National Organization. He is dedicated to serving God and country. So, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I place in nomination the name of Reverend Thomas Neville for the office of National Chaplain for the year 1994–'95. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: For the purpose of a second, the Chair will recognize from Post 1301, in Marion, Illinois, the Illinois State Commander, Ed Griffith.

COMRADE ED GRIFFITH (Post 1301—Illinois): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates:

I proudly rise to second the nomination from the great State of Illinois for Thomas Neville as our National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Are there any other nominations for National Chaplain? Are there any other nominations once; any other nominations twice; any other nominations three times? The nominations will remain open until tomorrow morning.

Comrade Adjutant General, do we have any further announcements. There are no further announcements. If not, I know you will be disappointed, but if you want to rise we will salute the flag and I will recess this Convention until tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock a.m.

[Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was given at this time, followed by the Closing Prayer by Reverend Charles Edwards, Jr.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I thank you for your attention and have a good time at your banquets. We will see you at 9:00 o'clock a.m. tomorrow.

[Whereupon, the session was recessed at 11:25 o'clock a.m.]

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION

FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1994

[The Fourth Business Session of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Barron Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer, presiding.]

CALL TO ORDER

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room for the Pledge to the Flag.

SALUTE TO COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrades, face the flag of our nation, standing at attention and salute.

[Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms Sarver led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.]

OPENING PRAYER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I call on our Chaplain, Dr. Charles Edwards, for the Invocation.

[Whereupon, National Chaplain Reverend Charles W. Edwards, Jr., gave the Opening Prayer from the Ritual.]

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Before we begin, I would just like to inform you that anyone making any type of a motion or a second, please note there will only be one microphone on the floor today, and that will be right here in front, Microphone No. 2.

I will now call on our Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Richard Trombla, for his final report, and also ask him to introduce the members of his committee.

FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE RICHARD TROMBLA (Post 1174—Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Department of Kansas, Chairman of the National Credentials Committee. This is the final report of the Credentials Committee.

The total delegates, 17,387; Department Commanders 54; National Officers 10; Past Commanders-in-Chief 26. That is for a grand total of 17,477. Commander-in-Chief, this is a final report. I would like to request that the Committee be dismissed at this time.

I would like to introduce the members of my Committee. They are James H. Willis, Post 534, Missouri; Edwin Meyer, Post 9814, California; James Mascola, Post 3580, Illinois; James A. Kennedy, Post 3877, Minnesota; and Elwood Rickards, Post 7234, Delaware.

COMPLETION OF CONVENTION BUSINESS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Other than the Election and Installation of Officers, is there any further business to come before this Convention? Any further business?

If not, I would call on our Adjutant General Howard Vander Clute for any announcements he may have to make.

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Kent has asked me to advise you that tonight's reception for the Commander-in-Chief and for the National President, who by that time Gunner will be it, and Helen Marsh from Pennsylvania will be the National President.

They will host that reception tonight. It is Country Western, so if you have that sort of attire, that would be appropriate. But failing to have that, it will be casual. There is no invitation and there are no tickets. Just, please, come and join with all the others in offering your congratulations and support to these two National Officers.

The reception is 7:00 o'clock until 11:00. It is in one of these ballrooms. It will be in Ballrooms A, B and C. Have I left anything out? Commander-in-Chief, this will complete the business of the 95th National Convention other than that which may come from the floor.

Commander-in-Chief, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 95th National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, Title 214 of the United States Codes, Section 1332.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: Commander-in-Chief, the procedure provides that we must announce the names of the VFW National Home Trustees that have been nominated at this Convention by virtue of an endorsement from their Posts, their District or their Department.

In the 7th National Home District, which comprises the Departments of Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, to replace Robert W. Goossen, whose term has expired, we have four candidates. They are George Hollenbeck, Post 701, Lansing, Michigan; Eric L. Halvorsen, Post 5065, Sheridan, Michigan; Donald V. Nettler, Post 9507, Madison Heights, Michigan; and Evyline Woodcock, Ladies Auxiliary to Post 6034, Lansing, Michigan.

In the 11th National Home District, which comprises the Departments of Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Utah, Arizona, Alaska and the Pacific Areas, this is to replace Joan Katkus as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary whose term is expiring.

We have Charles H. Cloud, Jr., Post 3544, Winfield, Kansas, and Lee G. Lewis of Post 5559, Juneau, Alaska. That has been entered into the record as required.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: There being no further business, we will go into the Election of the 1994–95 National Officers. I now reopen nominations for the office of Commander-in-Chief. Allen F. "Gunner" Kent has been previously nominated. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations, once, twice, three times? The nominations are closed.

It would be nice if someone would make a motion that nominations cease and he be elected by acclamation.

At Microphone No. 2 in the center.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOUGLAS (Post 1710—Arizona): I make the motion that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous vote for Allen F. "Gunner" Kent for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMRADE CARL AIELLO (Post 1645—Massachusetts): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all those opposed. It is so ordered.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, by instruction of this delegation, I cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Allen F. "Gunner" Kent for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 1994–'95.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, I give to you our Commander-in-Chief, Allen F. "Gunner" Kent.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT KENT: Thank you very much. I appreciate it. I am looking forward to talking to you in a few minutes. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Gunner, I want you to know it feels much lighter up here now.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Commander-in-Chief's wife has asked that I read this letter received by fax this morning, dated 26 August, 1994.

"Congratulations, Commander-in-Chief. I am sorry we can't be with you today but I just want you to know that we are thinking of you and wishing you the best. We are extremely proud of you and all you have done. Here is to a productive, successful and fun year. See you in September, Love, /s/ Commander and Mrs. Jim Stringer and family, United States Navy."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Nominations are now open once again for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Paul

A. Spera, from Massachusetts, has been previously nominated. Are there any other nominations? Are there any further nominations once, twice, three times? The nominations are closed. Is there a motion?

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOSEPH SCERRA (Post 905—Massachusetts): There being no further nominations, I move that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Paul A. Spera of VFW Post 144, Massachusetts, for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 1994–'95.

COMRADE ARTHUR ROMLA (Post 144—Massachusetts): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. Any discussion on the question? Hearing none, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

ADJUTANT GENERAL VANDER CLUTE: As instructed by the delegates attending the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Paul Spera for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 1994–'95.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, I give to you our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul A. Spera.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SPERA: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief George. To the newly-elected Commander-in-Chief, Gunner Kent, to all the dignitaries and to all of my comrades, the best words are always the most simple words, and that is "thank you."

That is the only words that can describe this. It is a fantastic feeling. I want to thank some people from Post 144, my Post members and their wives that are here. Also the people from the Department of Massachusetts and the Eastern Conference that put me where I am today.

Let me introduce a few very special people I have up here on the podium. From San Antonio, Texas, a Life Member, my brother Thomas. Also my sister and that very special individual that we brought down with us, that 87-year-old young member of our family. Stand up, Ma.

Those of you who were in the Eastern Conference and three young ladies that show excalibur over being with me, which I stood by the way and I forgive them for that, Michelle, Angela, and one that we are really proud of because not only is he a Navy veteran but a Life Member of the North Hampton Post Desert Stormer, Don.

My State Commander, Stan King, and that very special lady that has made all of this possible for me, the woman I love the most, Joan. Let me just say a couple of words while I am standing here and then we will get on with it. We have a lot of challenges that face us and face veterans.

I want to congratulate Gunner on his election and congratulate all the other officers that will be elected. Gunner, I give you my promise that whatever is possible for me to do to make the "First

to Serve" team successful, I will do. All you need to do is to ask. Congratulations, Gunner. Thank you all very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Nominations are now reopened for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. James Nier from Texas has been previously nominated. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations, once, twice, three times? The nominations are closed.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359—Texas): I move we instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous vote at this Convention for James E. Nier as the Junior Vice Commander- in-Chief for the 1994–'95 year.

COMRADE MANUEL RIVAS (Post 8782—Texas): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. It is so ordered.

Comrade Assistant Adjutant General, will you cast the ballot, please.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as instructed by the delegates attending the 95th National Convention, I cast one ballot for the unanimous election of James E. Nier for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the 1994–'95 term.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, I give to you our newly-elected Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the great State of Texas, Jim Nier.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT NIER: Thank you very much, comrades. To Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera, all National and Department Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, my fellow Comrades and Friends:

First, I want to thank most sincerely Past Commander-in-Chief Ted Connell and Joel Hurley, and the 1989–'90 Southern Conference Commanders who served with me, along with Past Commander-in-Chief Wally Hogan, who collectively seconded my nomination yesterday.

Let me first tell you how truly I am honored that you have chosen me to represent you in the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I am fully aware of the responsibilities of this office and pray that God will guide me in discharging my duties.

I will do all within my ability to justify the confidence and the support that each of you has demonstrated here this morning. I am grateful to many people for no comrade reaches this plateau without the confidence and the guidance of the comrades and the leaders of the Posts, the District, the Department and the Conference of which he is a candidate.

To my VFW Post 8919, in El Paso, Texas, District No. 10, and the Department of Texas and its Ladies Auxiliary, you have been loyal and devoted, and for that I thank all of you. We have a tremendous group here this morning. To the Southern Conference, thank you for the opportunity. I shall never, ever forget it.

There are three other people that I shall never forget, John Gwizdak from the Department of Georgia, Preston Garrison from the Department of North Carolina, who were the candidates in the same campaign. We became friends and I cherish that friendship. Also Joe Pinnell from the great State of Alabama, deceased.

To my wife Kim and our family, thank you for being beside me. To my mother and brother who made the long trip from upstate New York, and my brother's lady friend, Brenda, thanks for being here.

Also with me on the stage this morning is my niece, Wendy Nier, who is on active duty in the Air Force here at Nellis Air Force Base, and two of her Marine Corps friends. It is good to have them all here with us.

I am looking forward to my travels across this great nation and to meeting as many hard-working comrades and sisters as possible who make up our great organization. I know it will not be only a rewarding but also a most learning experience. I look forward with enthusiasm to being a member of the "First To Serve" Gunner Kent, Paul Spera team, the team that will lead and guide our organization during 1994–'95.

There are many imposing challenges facing our organization and many tough decisions to be made, and I am grateful that you have afforded me the opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process that will help determine the future of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

No longer can we dwell on the accomplishments of yesterday. We must turn our attention to the challenges of tomorrow. I am asking each of you to join me in working together to ensure that we remain successful in the years to come.

The veterans, widows and dependents of this country are counting on us and our great organization. We believe in the VFW, you and I, and it is a major part of our lives, but we must encourage more of our comrades and sisters to be involved. I am asking you to join me in working to make the VFW the type of organization which will attract new, active members so our voice can be louder in our communities, in our states and on the national level.

Working together we can make our communities, our states and our nation more aware of the great work that we do. It is time that we tell America what we are all about, loud and clear. I am ready to accept the challenges and the responsibilities that come with the leadership role at the national level, but I shall always remember that this organization did not start at the top but at the bottom.

The grass roots members of our organization are what make it great. I assure you the concerns of the grass roots members will always be my number one concern. As I travel throughout this great organization, I will seek your support and I will ask your opinion concerning the tough decisions that we face.

Gunner, I pledge to you my total support and will do my best to make you proud as I will the Southern Conference and the great Department of Texas. I am proud to be here today, and I am very proud to be a member of the greatest veterans organization in the world, and I am truly proud to be an American. Thank you and God bless each of you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Before I go into nominations and election of the Quartermaster General, I would like to call back our Assistant Adjutant General Senk for the purpose of reading a telegram.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The telegram is addressed to Allen F. Kent, Commander-in-Chief.

"Dear Commander Kent. On behalf of the Weld administration, I offer best wishes to the officers and delegates at the 95th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are particularly pleased to congratulate Massachusetts native Paul A. Spera upon his election as your National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the 1994–'95 term. Paul is a highly respected leader of the veterans community and the Commonwealth and across the nation. He will certainly serve you well in supporting a strong national defense and advancing the goals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"Best wishes for a productive and enjoyable Conference. Sincerely, /s/ William F. Weld, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I will now reopen nominations for the office of Quartermaster General. James Bowden has been previously nominated. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations once, twice, three times? The nominations are closed.

COMRADE LEWIE COOPER (Post 774—Kansas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Lewie Cooper, the State Commander of the Department of Kansas, a delegate from Post 774. I move the nominations for Quartermaster General be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of James E. Bowden from the great State of Kansas as Quartermaster General for 1994–'95.

COMRADE GERALD MANGOLD (Post 7521—Kansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am very proud to second that nomination. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing none, all those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Assistant Adjutant General, will you please cast the ballot.

ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER GENERAL SENK: Commander-in- Chief, as instructed by the delegates attending the 95th National Convention, I cast one ballot for the unanimous election of James E. Bowden for Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 1994-1995.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, I give to you our Quartermaster General, Jim Bowden.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT BOWDEN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. You know, I think I am getting old because it seems like only yesterday that I stood here before you. So, once again, I would like to say thanks to all of you and a special thanks to my Department of Kansas. I look forward to working with all of you next year. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Jim, do you want Becky to recap you in the essence of saving money?

I will now open nominations for the high office of Judge Advocate General. Charles Whiteacre has been previously nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of Judge Advocate General; any further nominations once; any further nominations twice; any further nominations three times? The nominations are closed.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287—Florida): I move that we instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for the next Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Comrade Charles Whiteacre.

COMRADE EUGENE MANFREY (Post 6827—Florida): I rise to second that motion for Charlie Whiteacre.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. The Adjutant General will please cast the ballot.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as instructed by the delegates attending the 95th National Convention, I cast one ballot for the unanimous selection of Charles Whiteacre as Judge Advocate General of the VFW for the 1994–'95 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, I give to you our new Judge Advocate General, Charles Whiteacre, from the great State of Florida.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT WHITEACRE: Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Commander-in-Chief, Past Commanders-in-Chief and all Chiefs of the Southern Conference and Lawrence Martell, my Department Commander, and Jack Carney, who nominated me, they expect you to talk and I would like to, and I am going to talk. I would also like to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney and our entire Southern Conference delegation.

As I said before, the great Department of the State of Florida, headed by Larry Martell. Thank you very much. I pledge to this Chief my entire energy for whatever he directs me to serve. Thank you very much.

COMRADE EUGENE MANFREY (Post 6827—Florida): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to cap you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I will now reopen the nominations for Surgeon General. Patricia Potter, from Pennsylvania, has been previously nominated. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations once, twice and three times? The nominations are closed.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOSEPH SCERRA (Post 905—Massachusetts): On behalf of that truly great Department of Pennsylvania, and there being no further nominations, I move that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Patricia S. Potter of Jamestown Memorial Post 5424, Pennsylvania, as our next Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 1994–'95.

COMRADE NEALE DIEBLER (Post 6493—Pennsylvania): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: You have heard the motion. Is there anything on the question? Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as instructed by the delegates attending the 95th National Convention, I cast one ballot for the unanimous selection of Patricia Potter for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 1994-'95 term.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, I present to you our new Surgeon General, Pat Potter, from the great State of Pennsylvania.

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT POTTER: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Comrades:

It is really an overwhelming feeling to be able to stand here this morning. It is with a great deal of pride, and at the same time I think a great deal of humility. This is really an awesome spot to be in. It is one that many of us have looked forward to and thought about, but very few of us have ever thought that it could really actually happen.

Today, it actually has. I owe that all to a great many people, and those many people are all of you. I appreciate that very much, comrades. I think all of you are aware that today one of our prime concerns in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is health care.

It is of primary importance to each and every one of us for our needs today and for our needs to come. I assure you that I have been moderating the situation in the VA Hospitals. I have faith in the VA system. I know they can and will meet our needs so long as we support and keep after the Legislators and make sure we give this system the funding and the support that it needs so that they can in turn care for us.

I would like to thank, if I could, everybody individually, but when you reach this point, as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief pointed out, no one has ever reached this microphone under their own steam. There has always been with many, many people.

I think that the foremost people that I, like everyone else who has been here, has to thank is our families. Without my family, the same as everyone else, this would never be possible. Also my Post, my District, and in my District, my County Council.

There were three people that I really owe a great deal to. They are Carl Zappa, Ed Field and Joe Marcella. They started me out on the County Council level. At the time, our children were small and my husband stayed home with the kids, and it was Joe, Carl and Ed who taught me the ropes, so to speak.

They took me to my first Council meetings, my District meetings, and they escorted me to the Conventions. When it came time to start the National Conventions and the Washington Conferences, when my husband could not be there, they were always there and they were called my bodyguards or my baby sitters.

I thank them for that. I owe a great deal to my Department of Pennsylvania and many, many people who have been behind me from day one. Also the many members of the Eastern States Conference. Especially, I would really like to say thank you to Past Commander-in-Chief Joe Scerra and to Paul Spera, who have been

doing a great deal to ensure that this day arrived. I would like to pledge to Gunner Kent that I will do all possible to be on the "First To Serve."

At this time I would like to introduce my family without whom I would never be here. My husband Al, my daughter Edith, her friend Mark; my daughter Alice, and my son-in-law, Donald. And the light of our lives, as most of you know, because most of you have one, Joshua Edward McKnight.

Comrades, thank you very much. It is really a great honor to be given the opportunity to serve on the National level of this great organization, and I will do my best to deserve that honor. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I will now open the nominations for National Chaplain. Father Neville has been previously nominated. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations once, twice, three times? The nominations are closed.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN (Post 2149—Illinois): I move that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the man who will lead us spiritually in our beloved organization next year, Father Thomas Neville.

COMRADE ED GRIFFITH (Post 1301—Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ed Griffith, Department of Illinois, hereby seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades, you have heard the motion and the second. On the question. Hearing nothing, all those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

Comrade Assistant Adjutant General.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: Commander-in-Chief, as instructed by the delegates attending the 95th National Convention, I cast one ballot for the National election of Father Thomas W. Neville for the office of National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the 1994–'95 term.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, I give to you your newly-elected Chaplain, Father Thomas Neville.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT NEVILLE: Commander-in-Chief Kent, Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief James, Past Commander-in-Chief George, and all the other comrades, men and women of the VFW:

The scripture says that the last shall be first and that is what, of course, has happened this time, the last has come to the occasion of being among the first to serve. We are all called upon to serve and be leaders of society, and those leaders of our Posts, our Districts and our nation.

It is an honor to be part of the team and it is also with humility, which has been expressed by all the other candidates. So many things were said, that I will just repeat and reiterate everything that they have said about the organization and the pledge they made to the organization.

There is always the danger of forgetting people. I can liken this to an ordination when I was called to be a priest. I was given that

privilege, that honor, that responsibility. At the reception, I forgot to introduce my sister and, of course, that was one of the big faux pas of the day.

So one could forget easily someone, but I hope to remember and that all of those of the Posts, the District, the Department and the National level, particularly outgoing Chaplain Dr. Edwards. He has been very kind and gracious and gave me a list of all the duties that the Chaplain is supposed to perform along with updated prayers.

I will use his version of the prayers for the closing of the Convention and for the opening of the Council of Administration. A special thank you, Dr. Edwards, for his work and his inspiration to me. I have known him for nearly nine months.

As our state motto is "Just Do It", so after talking with Dr. Edwards and some of the other members of the Posts, the State, when the call came and said "Just Do It", I did, and I thank you for the call. I pledge, Gunner, my willingness to be "First To Serve." Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Thank you. If I may, I would like now to ask our new Commander-in-Chief to go down to the front, and while he is doing that, I will call upon our Assistant Adjutant General John Senk to read the role of the newly-elected National Council Members.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Commander-in-Chief, as your name is read, would like you to proceed to the front to receive your cap and badge.

Representing District No. 2, Edward S. Banas, Sr.

Representing District No. 4, Benjamin Pernol, Jr.

Representing Regional Council District No. 6, George E. McCracken.

Representing Regional Council District No. 8, Charles B. Stephenson.

Representing Regional Council District No. 10, James E. Newman, Sr.

Representing Regional Council District No. 12, Charles E. Fresorger.

Representing Regional Council District No. 14, Randall E. Russell.

Representing Regional Council District No. 16, Norbert E. Enos.

Representing Regional Council District D, Terry A. Roan.

Representing Regional Council District E, Dean E. Means; and Representing Regional Council District H, Manuel O. Rivas.

As provided in the National By-Laws, the Commander-in-Chief-Elect will now read his appointments.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT KENT: I appoint Larry W. Rivers, Post 1736, Louisiana, Adjutant General.

As National Chief of Staff, Tyrone M. Benson, Post 7686, New Mexico.

The Inspector General, Raymond E. Stelmachuk, Post 7564, North Dakota.

The National Sergeant-at-Arms will be George Sarver, Post 402, Department of Pennsylvania.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Before we go into the Installation of Officers, I would just like to make a few brief remarks, if I may. First of all, I would like to say the most wonderful song in the world was repeated several times this morning.

You know, of course, everyone is very proud of their association with their own branch of the armed forces of the United States. Last year, I had the opportunity to be with Gunner on the birthday of the United States Marine Corps, and I made the mistake, I guess you could say, of saying that they still are looking for a few good men.

I realize what pay-backs are all about in this organization. I want you all to know having the opportunity to serve with this gentleman, this comrade the last couple of years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has found a great man to lead this organization this year.

On behalf of my family, I want to thank you very, very much and sincerely for the many courtesies that you have given us since we have traveled to your great Departments, and I thank you humbly for having the opportunity to serve with you these past three years.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.]

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I will now recognize the Installing Officer for the 1994-'95 officers, Past Commander-in-Chief James R. "Bob" Currieo from Arizona.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, and it is a special privilege. I would like to offer my congratulations to the Commander-in-Chief-Elect Allen Kent and his officers selected for this coming year and to all the Department Commanders, Post Commanders, District Commanders, and everyone who is going to assume the responsibilities in the coming twelve months.

To you, George and Linda, we thank you very, very much for your kind friendship and your expert leadership. As we say it in Arizona, "You've done good."

Commander-in-Chief, the term for which you have and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed will now expire. Before we proceed with the installation ceremony, I must ascertain the following. Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: Have the books of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: Do you have the National Charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I do.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: You will now surrender it to me. Now, Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer, you are now relieved of your duties as Commander of this organization.

You will assume the Chair of Past Commander-in-Chief, and it will be your duty and your privilege to assist your successor with all the Council and experience that you gained in your term of office. You will now take your position to my right.

Will the Assistant Adjutant General call the role of all the officers elected and appointed, and the Sergeant-at-Arms will escort those officers to the alter to receive the Obligation.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL SENK: The Commander-in-Chief has invited all the National Council Members to join in the installation.

Commander-in-Chief, Allen F. Kent.
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Paul A. Spera.
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, James E. Nier.
Adjutant General, Larry W. Rivers.
Quartermaster General, James D. Bowden.
Judge Advocate General, Charles A. Whiteacre.
Surgeon General, Patricia S. Potter.
National Chaplain, Reverend Thomas W. Neville.
National Chief of Staff, Tyrone M. Benson.
Inspector General, Raymond E. Stelmachuk.
National Council Members: District No. 1, John J. Zuba.
District No. 2, Edward S. Banas, Sr.
District No. 3, Norman H. Geisel.
District No. 4, Benjamin Pernol, Jr.
District No. 5, James D. White.
District No. 6, George E. McCracken.
District No. 7, W. J. Cannon.
District No. 8, Charles B. Stephenson.
District No. 9, Harlan C. LaBar.
District No. 10, James E. Newman, Sr.
District No. 11, Roger D. Schwieso.
District No. 12, Charles E. Fresorger.
District No. 13, Robert J. Sander.
District No. 14, Randall E. Russell.
District No. 15, Ernesto E. Melendez.
District No. 16, Norbert E. Enos.
District No. 17, Johnnie A. Baugh.
District No. 19, Norman J. Ledet.
District No. A, Franklin R. Fisher.
District B, Maurice H. Kerchhove.
District C, Melvin Garrett.
District D, Terry A. Roan.
District E, Dean E. Means.
District F, Dale J. Brubaker.
District G, Judge Brown.
District H, Manuel A. Rivas.
District I, Edward Fischer.
District J, Peter Puentes.
Past Commander-in-Chief, George R. Cramer.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Installing Officer, the officers are in their respective positions.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms.

Everyone please rise. To the officers elected and appointed of the National Organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will now administer to you the Officers' Obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country and extend your left hand to the comrade directly 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, money, or other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control. All this I freely promise upon my honor, as a loyal citizen of our great Republic. So help me God."]

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: As you were.

Comrade Chaplain, you will deliver the prayer.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN EDWARDS: Almighty God, our God and divine protector, give your blessings upon these, our comrades, who now become National Officers. We beseech you, O Lord, to be ever present among us and to grant wisdom unto them so that in their given deliberations they may continue to favor you and glorify our country and to better our organization.

May your strength sustain them and may your power preserve them, and may your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of all of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: Officers, you now occupy positions of honor to which you have been elected or appointed. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake. The Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your offices.

By virtue of the confidence placed in you through your election or appointment, we trust you will thoroughly acquaint yourself with those duties.

Sergeant-at-Arms, escort these officers to their stations.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Yes, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: The Commander-in-Chief will be installed at the podium here in just a few seconds. Everyone, please, get in position and we will install the Commander-in-Chief. You may be seated at this time.

Commander-in-Chief-Elect Gunner Kent, before we proceed with your solemn Obligation, it is proper to remind you of your duties. As National Commander-in-Chief of this organization, you will be responsible for the Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and at the end of your term of office surrender it to the officer to install your successor.

It will be your duty to see that all National Officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You must keep yourself informed of all proposed legislation which may affect, or potentially

affect, the welfare of members of our organization, and strive for the adoption of only those things that will be beneficial.

It will be necessary for you to devote time to the many duties of your office and to make a special study of the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of our organization so that you may render fair and impartial decisions on the important questions referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief of this organization, you will be regarded by our comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership of our organization.

Comrade Gunner Kent, may all your accomplishments in the next 12 months bring credit to yourself, to your administration and honor to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Are you ready now and willing to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT KENT: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER CURRIEO: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left and announce your name as I touch your head.

[Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Kent received the following Obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, Allen F. Kent, 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 this organization in my possession or under my control.

"I 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 CURRIEO: Comrade Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent, I now present to you the National Charter and this gavel. As you assume office, use it firmly but with discretion.

Will all National Officers, comrades, guests in the hall, stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me: "To you, Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent, I pledge my sincere allegiance."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, retiring Commander-in-Chief George Cramer, Officers and Delegates of this Convention, I now proclaim the officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States duly installed and our great organization is in working order for the ensuing year. Congratulations.

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Past Commander-in-Chief Cramer, will you please come forward. Commander-in-Chief, it is a great honor for us to present to you your Past Commander-in-Chief's Pin at which time we will ask that your lovely wife, Linda, to please pin it on your lapel. Also we present you with your Gold Life Membership Card.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: I want to say thank you. Gunner, I have been saving it for you the last year, and I would like to call upon Vickie to place your Commander-in-Chief's Pin on your lapel.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: This is like high school. You keep passing your pins from one to another.

[Whereupon, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief's Pins were presented to the newly-elected Senior and Junior Vice Commanders-in-Chief.]

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: Thank you all very, very much. To Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier, and to my Installing Officer, Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Currieo, I would like to thank you very, very much for that outstanding job.

To the young VFW National Officers in the audience in attendance here this morning, the American heroes in both war and peace, the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary, I would like to thank you very, very much for this high honor.

Never did I ever imagine that I would receive your applause and stand up here as your Commander-in-Chief of the greatest veterans organization in the world. For that, I am truly, truly humbled and I will be in your debt forever. Thank you very, very much.

You have given me a great opportunity and I will do the best that I possibly can working tirelessly on behalf of the American veterans during my term of office and beyond. Of course, many people have helped and supported me during these long years.

As our Surgeon General stated, nobody gets to this position without an awful lot of good comrades and sisters being behind them and helping. This morning I would just like to thank VFW Post 9972 and its great Ladies Auxiliary, in Sierra Vista, Arizona, that have backed me for the last six years, both during the hard campaign and also as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

I would like to also tell all of you comrades and sisters, and this is a little bit of bragging, but when you are Chief they said you could do what you wanted to, Post 9972 in Sierra Vista, Arizona, is the only Post in the history of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that has ever had two Commanders-in-Chief from the same Post.

I would like to thank my many friends from District No. 7, Cochise County, Arizona, which sometimes when I go to some of the Eastern Conferences, I can take three states and put it in that one county. I would like to thank them very, very much for all their great and hard work.

Of course, to the greatest Department in the land, the Department of Arizona and its outstanding Ladies Auxiliary, I would like to thank you for all of your hard work and your support, because without your dedication I would not be serving as your Commander-in-Chief.

Of course, to my Conference, the Western Conference, two years ago I came before you and asked for your endorsement as Junior

Vice Commander-in-Chief, and you graciously gave me that endorsement. I will never, ever forget that. I thank you very, very much.

Finally, let me take just a moment to thank my family and introduce the ones that are here to share this special day. My daughter, Kim Short, who is a special education teacher in Belleair, Florida; my son, Allen F. Kent, Jr., who is a senior at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, and my mother-in-law, Jeanne Godwin, from Anthony, Florida.

Last but certainly not least, let me now introduce the person who has been very, very special to me for many years, 32 to be exact. Although she is my best friend, she is also my hardest, hardest critic. When you are going through these chairs, I have found out that if you are Junior Vice or Senior Vice, when you say something, everybody says that sounds good to me, Gunner. It doesn't quite work with my wife for some reason.

I came in off a road trip once, and I had been gone for about 30 days, and I got out of the car, and I went in the house and she said, "Well, what about your luggage?" I said, "Well, I forgot it. I usually have someone to bring my luggage in." She said, "If you think I am going to bring your luggage in the house, you have another thing coming."

She has worked very hard and supported me these past years. She has been home alone an awful lot. She is working very, very hard for the veterans of this country in her own right through the Ladies Auxiliary in the Department of Arizona. I love her very, very much and I would like to introduce to you my lovely wife, Becky.

[Whereupon, the assembly gave a rising ovation.]

To the rest of my friends and all my supporters, I thank you very, very much. My remarks this morning will be intently brief, quite frankly little is left to say. We have spent the last week debating the issues that came before this Convention.

We have passed the Resolutions for the 1994–'95 year. It now becomes my duty as your Commander-in-Chief to move quickly to ensure that we inform and educate our members, Legislators and friends of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States on these important issues.

Before I move on, let me pay proper respect to our magnificent Ladies Auxiliary. It is perhaps our greatest asset and without question the best partner any organization could hope to have. During the coming year, the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will continue to play an important role in the work we do for America and her veterans. To the Ladies Auxiliary, you have our thanks, our admiration and our most profound respect.

The environment in which we operate today, my fellow comrades, is much more difficult than the previous environment in the past we have worked in. Despite this new environment, I believe our members want results and expect them. I have talked with thousands of you members the last two years and one message comes through to me loud and clear.

You want action, you want us to produce concrete results. You are fed up with long-winded speeches and rosy promises. To steal

a verse from a popular Country and Western Song, "Let's do a little less talking and let's do a little more action."

In these regards, I would like to inform you of a couple of steps that we are now taking to do just that, do a little less talking and a little more action. In this upcoming year, we have set aside $450,000 which will be used for service work of the veterans of this country.

With this money, we are going to place a fax machine in every Department Service Office. We are also going to purchase the hardware and software that our Service Officers need so they can have a direct link with the VA Regional Offices so that we can make sure that the claims of our fellow veterans are done as fast as we possibly can.

In addition to the Service Officers in the field, we are going to completely computerize our Washington office, and all of our field representatives will take laptop computers with them so they can do the work as they are in the field. I am tired of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Service Officers going to the field with a pen and pencil like it was 1899. This is 1994 and it is time we got with the times.

We are also this year creating a Veterans Service Officer Endowment Fund, and to start this Service Fund we have committed $500,000 that will be used as needed for the veterans work throughout the many Departments we have in this great organization.

You have also asked and requested that we do more as far as advertising. At the first incoming Council of Administration Meeting this afternoon, we are going to ask the Council to set aside this year a sum of $4 million so that we can look at some ideas and areas that we can get the message out concerning the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary. These are two things that you wanted us to do. My fellow comrades, these are two things that we will immediately do. [Applause]

I believe that you elected me to do what I could to change the way things have been done, not talk things to death, but show you action. God willing and with your help, I intend to do just that.

During the coming year, the Kent/Spera/Nier team will speak forcefully for the VFW on a wide range of important issues. It is absolutely essential that our organization address conventional, as well as unconventional issues. We must do a better job of addressing the homeless situation, where on any given night in the United States of America there are over 250,000 veterans that honorably served this country are on the streets.

I would also like for you to remember, comrades, that except for the grace of God there could go you or I. We must look at the unexplained illness that has decimated many of our Persian Gulf veterans, the health effects of herbicides that still haunt our Vietnam veterans, and so many others.

At the same time, we must not neglect our unfinished agenda, improvement in the VA health-care, reform bill and the long-term care, compensation and pensions for our veterans. Be assured that we will not be overwhelmed by the number or the complexity of the issues that confront us. As a matter of fact, I kind of like to fight. I hope you like to fight, too.

Perhaps no issue has the potential to more profoundly affect the veterans of this country and the non-veterans of this country than the need to keep our military a strong and viable force. America has always had brave young men and women who are willing to fight and die for this great land.

If we ask them to serve, to stand in harm's way, we must be prepared to back them up. We must give them resources they need to carry out their noble and dangerous mission, and we must make sure that no United States of America troops ever, ever serve under any United Nation's commander.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is alarmed that individuals in positions of responsibility in our government are today putting forth misguided and short-sighted solutions to issues that affect life and death and war and peace.

Our national defense budget is far short of the amounts needed to maintain that magnificent force that fought in the desert just so many short years ago. It is not the dedication and the skill of the men and women in uniform bringing this erosion about, rather, it is the almost daily raid on an already inadequate defense budget by the politicians in Washington trying to please one special interest group or another.

I say to you, my fellow comrades, the only special interest there is is a strong national defense, because without the strong national defense there is going to be no country for special interests to worry about.

Let me reaffirm our commitment to always stand with the men and women that served this country in uniform. It is the least we can do and we expect those Washington politicians to do the same. We do not need now to educate another generation on maintaining a strong national defense.

We would have hoped they learned the lesson of history, but we will do so if we must. We will always proudly stand with the men and women who served in uniform just as we proudly stood with their mothers and fathers in wars gone past.

I would like to take just a moment this morning to offer comments and observations regarding our POW/MIAs. It is an issue that has consumed a great amount of my time over the last two years. I have worked to gather all the facts and information that I possibly could concerning the fate of our POWs and MIAs in Vietnam, in Korea and from World War II.

During the last two years, I have traveled to Vietnam and Laos on four different occasions. I have met with our Joint Task Force teams in Korea. I have met with the North Koreans in the U.N., and I have met with our Joint Task Force—Full Accounting teams in Moscow, Russia.

I have met with government officials, U.S. Government, Korean, Vietnamese, Laotians, and I have met with POW activists. I have met with our military officials. I have met with the members of the House and Senate, and I have met with numerous others.

I have shared all of the information that I have gathered through these contacts and through these meetings by the periodical reports that I have sent to each of the Departments of this great organization.

Someone said we are entitled to our own opinions, but we are not entitled to our own facts. With this statement, I concur. The reports I have sent to you have only contained the facts and the facts only. I feel the membership of this organization should receive the facts as the facts are presented.

Perhaps no issue has been so mishandled as was the POW/MIA issue. It is a sad chapter in the history of our nation and one that we must never, ever repeat again. The conclusions I have reached are based on the facts as I have found them.

I am convinced that our own government can and should do more to account for our missing. I also firmly believe that the facts point to the conclusion that the answers we seek will come only if we follow a course that encourages other governments to do more than they have done in the past.

Both we and they must move faster and cooperate more. The governments must give us information and access that only they can provide. Our government must be prepared to move quickly and to seize on new opportunities as they present themselves. I am convinced the men of good will working together can solve this humanitarian issue.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars will continue to seek reliable information, and we will continue to make it available for all to see. To that end, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera just recently returned from a trip to Southeast Asia, and I have asked Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier to return to Vietnam in April of next year and report his findings and recommendations to you, the members of this organization.

My pledge to all of you, to the families and all veterans is during my watch of the Veterans of Foreign Wars we will continue to do everything we possibly can to bring about the fullest possible accounting for all of our POWs and MIAs, and that will remain an important viable issue with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

There are many other important issues, many important decisions that will directly affect the community of veterans that will be made in the coming months. Veterans health care, compensation and pension, and so many others will be addressed by the Congress over this next year.

We have a very diversified community of veterans and we must work to ensure that the needs of one group do not suffer for the needs of another group. While we press for long-term care, needed by our oldest segment, we will also address the needs and concerns of Korean, the Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, and indeed all veterans to the Resolutions passed by the delegates to our 95th National Convention.

Your positions have been made very, very clear. There is no need to repeat them here this morning. You have told us what you want us to do, and beginning today I promise you we will move quickly and forcibly to see that the mandates are acted upon and we succeed in making them into law.

Let me talk just a minute about our great organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and we are all proud to be members of this great organization. I will only say this once,

and once only. We all know what the eligibility to become a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is.

We are not a social club, we are the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are veterans working for veterans. We are not a social club, we have never been a social club, and we never will be a social club.

As we accept the challenges of the 1990's and prepare for the 21st Century, we are a strong and vibrant organization. We will build on our strengths and improve the areas where we may be weak. With your help, we intend to do that and more during the coming year. We were first among veterans organizations and we will, during 1994–95, again be the "First To Serve."

My fellow comrades, you have asked me many, many times in the last two years, "Gunner, exactly where are you going to take this organization?" Comrades, I am not going to take this organization anywhere. You are, because you are the organization. You are the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary.

You are the ones in the trenches day in and day out working the membership, doing the community activity reports, working with our homeless veterans, working with the youth of this country, and working with our hospitalized veterans in the VA Hospitals.

You are the ones that make everything happen. You have chosen me as your leader, as your Commander-in-Chief, and I will always be grateful for that. But you are the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you are the organization.

When this organization was first formed 95 years ago, we were formed with one purpose, and one purpose only, and that was to protect the rights and entitlements of every veteran who has honorably served his country. I feel very, very confident that as long as we have members such as yourselves with your dedication and professionalism that we will continue to honor the dead by helping the living, the veterans and their families of today and the veterans and their families of tomorrow.

Again, I would like to thank each and every one of you for this high, high honor that you have bestowed upon me. I am honored that you call me Chief, but I am more honored that I am able to call you my friend.

May God bless each and every one of you and may God bless the United States of America.

[Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged rising ovation.]

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much. One more round of applause for our great Commander-in-Chief, Allen Kent. [Applause]

Commander-in-Chief, the next thing on the agenda is the Parade of Transmittals. Would the states begin to line up here in the middle of the room in alphabetical order so we can move on.

Let me also remind you that the Commander-in-Chief and the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary will have a reception beginning at 7:00 p.m. in Ballrooms A, B and C here at the Las Vegas Hilton, and the Commander-in-Chief has asked me to invite all of you to join him at 7:00 o'clock.

Immediately following the adjournment of this Convention, we will have the Council Meeting in Ballroom C here at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Commander-in-Chief Kent, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I am pleased to report to you 76 new Posts Charters have been received in the National Headquarters as of this morning, with 10 additional restructured Posts. It is a very good start as we begin to work to our goal of 282 new and reinstated Posts.

At this time, we will have the $1,000 drawing. As you know, each Department receives one chance for each new Post reporting to the National Headquarters as of today. Also one chance for every existing Post that was restructured by July 31, 1994. The first drawing will be for $200, and the second one will be for $300, and the last one will be for $500.

Commander-in-Chief, our Membership Director, Larry LeFebvre has the capsules. If you can step over by the edge and draw this first capsule, we would appreciate it. The first capsule is for the $200 drawing.

COMRADE LARRY LEFEBVRE: New Post 7609, Seven Hills, Ohio.

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: The winner of the $300 drawing is VFW Post 11543, Osceola, Minnesota.

We have one last capsule, Chief, for $500. The winner of the $500 drawing is Post 9790, Jackson, Tennessee.

We would ask the Department Commanders to please come back to the stage area after you give your Membership Reports to pick these up for your Departments.

PARADE OF TRANSMITTALS/REPORT OF NEW POSTS

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: At this time I would like to call on our Membership Director, Larry LeFebvre, so we can move into the Transmittals. For your information, we will have the Parade of Transmittals and have our Closing Ceremonies, and Retire the Colors and adjourn, and move right to our National Council of Administration Meeting that will be held, as I said, in Ballroom C immediately following the adjournment of the Convention.

[Whereupon, each Department Commander presented the Membership Transmittal to the Commander-in-Chief.]

ADJUTANT GENERAL RIVERS: That concludes the Parade of Transmittals/Report of New Posts, and as the Chief makes his way back to his station we will prepare for the Closing Ceremonies.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 355—New Jersey): Commander-in-Chief, there being no further business to come before this Convention, and the officers having been duly installed for the ensuing year, I move the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed, sine die.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I have a motion on the floor. Do I have a second?

COMRADE GEORGE SARVER (Post 402—Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander, George Sarver, National Sergeant-at-Arms, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: We have a motion duly made and seconded. Any questions on the motion? Any questions on the

motion? Any questions on the motion? Hearing no questions, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carries. It is so ordered.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room for the Closing Ceremonies.

[Whereupon, the Honor Guard Retired the Colors at this time.]

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I will call on Father Neville, our National Chaplain, for the Closing Prayer.

[Whereupon, National Chaplain Neville gave the Closing Prayer from the Ritual.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS SARVER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for the 95th National Convention have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I now declare the 95th Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States closed.

[Whereupon, the Convention was duly adjourned at 11:40 o'clock a.m., sine die.]

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

Chairman: Robert E. Wallace, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Jersey

Vice Chairman: John J. Stang, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kansas

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Charles Stephens	3128
Alaska	Edward G. Frank	9978
Arizona	Bernard P. Fabritz	7401
	Donald E. Maynard	7968
Arkansas	J. P. Cockrill	5225
California	Paul E. Goins	10964
	John T. Melban	3787
	Kenneth L. Stevens	9223
Colorado	Donald A. Nikkel	1
Connecticut	Edward S. Banas, Sr	10004
	Edward L. Burnham	1724
	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Delaware	Paul R. Phillips	2863
District of Columbia	Paul E. Wampler	284
Europe	Clarke D. Knox	3885
Florida	James W. Carlisle	10097
	Niel R. Ramsdell	11146
Georgia	T. D. Culpepper	5032
	John F. Gwizdak	5080
Idaho	Edward W. Holt	889
Illinois	John Powell	805
	Vernon Soukup	8081
	Jack Vrtjak	1612
Indiana	James M. Leavitt	5782
	Audie W. Rainbolt	1693
Iowa	Virgil E. Freese	2349
	Elmer Liebhart	2271
Kansas	Robert R. Whipple	846
Kentucky	Larry Sexton	5839
Louisiana	Joseph Guidry, Sr	3121
Maryland	Francis V. Dziennik	6506
Massachusetts	Anthony B. Piscopo	529
	Leroy Williams, Jr	6189
Michigan	Norman Folson	5120
	Arnold Huuki	6507
	Elmer Wurster	7546
Minnesota	Calvin D. Ferber	612
	Robert J. Larson	6206
Mississippi	Hollis Smith	1983
Missouri	C. Gene Fee	1003
	Lawrence M. Maher	7356
	Fred Philipps	4219
Montana	Tom A. Pouliot	1116
Nebraska	John DeCamp	131
	Erwin A. Klabunde	2503
	Dwaine D. Wilson	1652
Nevada	William L. Breen	1002
New Hampshire	Daniel J. Loud	483
New Jersey	George J. Lisicki	2314
New Mexico	Lloyd E. Vanderhoof	3370
New York	Charles J. Schnobrich	3068

Department	Name	Post No.
North Carolina	Fred Y. Sigmon	6513
North Dakota	Paul S. Aaberg	6139
Ohio	Robert W. Bishop	1031
	James Comedy	3383
Oklahoma	Jack E. Naifeh	577
Oregon	Norman Baugh	1383
	Doyle Souders	2807
Pacific Areas	Leon R. Vileo	9951
Panama Canal	Richard A. Gilman	3822
Pennsylvania	Ricky DiLoretto	3614
	Frank J. Zenzer	676
Rhode Island	James R. Ross	6342
	John Sivo	2396
South Carolina	F. D. Williamson, Jr	8760
South Dakota	Walter F. Joynt	1273
	William L. Peyton	750
Tennessee	Otha J. Kerr	5266
Texas	Charles L. Cannon, Jr	6796
	Glen M. Gardner, Jr	3359
	James E. Nier	8919
	F. G. Warden	8552
Vermont	Joseph E. Kearney	792
Virginia	James L. Booth	2216
Washington	George F. Riedel	969
	John Uram	10018
West Virginia	Ralph W. Honaker	1064
Wisconsin	Edward Stockel	7896
Wyoming	Gary K. Mathisen	221

COMMITTEE ON AMERICANISM AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Chairman: John S. Staum, Past Commander-in-Chief, Minnesota

Vice Chairman: Ted C. Connell, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Thomas B. Dean	2760
	Oliver W. Dial	924
	Jack F. Ivy	2702
Alaska	Alfred Berry	4352
	Gene A. Corbin	9365
Arizona	Joel Hoffen	720
	Vincent J. Mitchell	9972
	Billie E. Stuart	549
Arkansas	Wendal Gills	7516
	John A. Haynie	2413
	Clifford E. Turner	4554
	Charles O. Wilkison	4554
California	Gloria Bosco	1622
	George D. Branch	9791
	Thomas L. Martin	1468
	Masaomi J. Mita	1961
	Oren D. Robinson	85
	Robert Stout	8398
Colorado	George Palmateer	4171
	Emil Pischel	4171
	Wayne J. Thompson, Jr	5061
Connecticut	Russell H. Smith	7330
	William B. Watson	3263
Delaware	Robert A. McGowan	3257
	William G. Schaen	475
District of Columbia	Flora V. Moore	284
Europe	George W. Eby	10692
	Julian R. Johnson	10810
Florida	Robert A. McDade	7631

Department	Name	Post No.
	John Scott	4353
	Roger G. Thomas, Sr	6925
Georgia	J. W. Bohanan	5290
	Charlie B. Stephenson	5290
	James T. Wood	5257
Hawaii	Louis Balasanos	10276
	Manuel P. Cabral	2875
	Edward K. Kaopuiki	1540
Idaho	Jean L. Holt	889
	Randall Russell	2136
	Robert N. Taylor	3886
Illinois	Thomas Morgan	1592
	Kenneth R. Morrow Sr	755
	Russell Villwock	3579
	John Waltrip	1379
Indiana	George R. Ensley	10006
	William N. Hedge	1167
	R. L. Johanningsmeier	1257
	Omar Kendall	673
Iowa	Muriel Allan	3633
	John G. Hanson	788
Kansas	Charles Cook	2864
	Richard Hill	7437
	Denny Lawson	1186
	Jay Ritchie	1022
	Tom G. Sanko	1714
Kentucky	Larry E. Bowling	10017
	Jeff A. Phillips	1181
Louisiana	Wilbert Kilchrist	9822
	Gerald Schneider	8973
Maine	Charles F. Coty	6859
	Clifton Deringer, Jr	3381
	Donald R. Libby	832
Maryland	Tomas F. Bunting	2562
	Thomas V. Kimball	10159
	Joseph L. Yurkanin	9619
Massachusetts	Antone Andrews	697
	William H. Crowley	2578
	William J. Curran	1526
	Jere L. Hill	2425
	Thomas R. Pierce	9566
Michigan	William P. Bennett	7573
	Norman Haskins	3941
	Valentino Lemoncelli	552
	James E. Reynolds	5670
Minnesota	David L. Adams	1782
	Michael D. Brainard	6587
	Merlin O. Hanson	1639
Mississippi	Kenneth W. Boggs	6731
Missouri	Charles Bellemere	2171
	Eugene L. Hoeltge	5077
	William D. Merideth	5366
	Clarence W. Reed	6337
Montana	Virgil T. Ray	2252
Nebraska	Norbert Koenig	247
	Gary C. Krause	2503
	Dennis R. Niemann	1347
	Earl Stinger, Jr	3421
Nevada	Hal C. Morton	10053
	Michael H. Musgrove	2350
	Herbert Tellkamp, Jr	2313
New Hampshire	Harry L. Clough	8836
	James McKinnon, Jr	8270
	Reginald R. Wright	8942
New Jersey	Harry D. Crane	6255
	Domenic Lombardelli	809

Department	Name	Post No.
	Hugh McNulty	1439
New Mexico	Felix J. Coca	2951
	James H. Ferguson	7686
	Levi O. Wirta	7686
New York	William E. McGarr	6196
	Vincent J. Siesta	546
	Harry C. Wurth	5253
North Carolina	John J. McGraw	9133
	Betty H. Rowland	9100
North Dakota	George A. Jahner	3444
	Erling O. Rolfson	3696
Ohio	Clifford E. Bauer	3360
	Norman Eckhart	1079
	Raymond E. Mallet	3760
Oklahoma	Robert B. Thomas	1098
Oregon	James L. Abbott	4108
	Lester Beecroft	4015
	Alton Christenson	2807
Panama Canal	Aurora Toth	100
Pennsylvania	William C. Allen	7213
	Patrick Cooney	3577
	Carmen DeSanti	129
	Thomas Millhouse	2435
	Patricia Potter	5424
	Reverend Archie T. Roberts	154
Rhode Island	John J. Barone	8955
	John A. Bucci	10011
South Carolina	Bill E. Lark	4262
	Frasier Wall	10420
South Dakota	James E. Fortin	750
	Donald L. Ruby	628
	Lorne F. Ruzicka	3312
Tennessee	C. F. Bearden	1289
	John Furgess	1970
Texas	James R. Clark	6873
	C. W. Kinson	9299
	E. J. Krenek	8787
	George B. Sparkman	9181
Utah	Duane Hall	5560
	Boyd W. Winterton	4355
Vermont	Denis B. Backus	2571
	Irvin C. Tifft	1332
Virginia	Paul W. Bolen	9478
	James E. Higgins	7059
	Charles A. Webb, Sr	2239
Washington	Tom Asaif	2995
	George A. Berthiaume	969
	Edwin Rasmussen	9430
	Delbert Underwood	9476
West Virginia	Albert M. Legg	9738
	Eugene W. Walker	4484
Wisconsin	Max Collins	3143
	Gordon Harmon	2534
	Kenneth Munro	2534
	Joel P. Walker	1904
Wyoming	Robert W. Miller	3511

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: Arthur J. Fellwock, Past Commander-in-Chief, Indiana

Vice Chairman: Joseph A. Scerra, Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

Department	Name	Post No.
Alaska	Robert S. Green	1685

Department	Name	Post No.
	George A. Pikus	7056
Arizona	Fred Chapman	1760
	James R. Currieo	9972
	Ernesto E. Melendez	426
	James L. Montgomery	10308
	William J. Silva	836
Arkansas	Arthur Armstrong	2283
	Raz T. Munholland	4548
California	Leonard W. Bartels	8547
	Rhett W. Daverio	3928
	Alphonse C. DeBaca	7138
	Cedric I. Gould	2563
Colorado	Robert C. Gifford	4663
	Robert F. Honeywell	1
	Phil E. Phillips	6411
Connecticut	John J. Grogan	254
Delaware	Clarence Burris	8801
	Walter J. Kula	3257
	Charles D. McGuire, Sr	8801
	Benjamin Pernol, Jr	3792
District of Columbia	Ronald L. Foo	2979
	George A. Lange, Jr	2400
	John F. Murphy	833
Europe	Harold Hedges	9334
	Norman J. Hirschman	10592
Florida	Bobby L. Booth	1590
	Ronald G. Lee	7987
Georgia	Bennie B. Chastain	5257
	Rance J. Taylor	4830
	Don Ziegler	6447
Hawaii	Zoilo Kupukaa	4951
	Gary I. Masumoto	1540
	Bernard E. Teves	1540
Idaho	Gray I. Clawson	3012
	Donald G. Riegel	889
Illinois	Edward Jarnell, Jr	8081
	Vincent R. Long	1756
	Earl McMahon	2838
	Thomas Neville	2327
	Dwight E. Tanner, Jr	9759
	John Von Guerard	2955
Indiana	Roger Baker	6841
	Richard L. Jordan	2067
	James D. Voelker	1114
Iowa	Edward Leopold	1973
	Patrick Shanahan	788
	Arthur A. Weber	1623
	Frank Weier	3159
Kansas	Wayne Bushell	1714
	Larie O. Davis	6654
	David Jones	56
	Robin Ray	6957
	Kenneth L. Wescott	12345
Kentucky	Eddie Akers	5839
	John Hofstetter, Sr	3205
	Billy G. Lyons	10017
Louisiana	Tom W. Byrd	3619
	Hausey Wilson	6640
Maine	Thomas Lussier	6859
	Robert E. Phillips	1761
	Walter D. Simmons	9459
Maryland	Nicholas T. Bassetti	9083
	Thomas J. Hercek	467
	John P. Matthews	10113
	Robert L. Miedzinski	2632
Massachusetts	William J. Ferrantino	6907

Department	Name	Post No.
	T. George Kotros	1526
	Kevin Lynch	864
	Cornelius Sharron	9566
Michigan	George D. Kosnick	2645
	Donald Mrdjenovic	7573
	Joseph O. Racine	5670
Minnesota	Patrick T. Bohmer	246
	Harold W. Genrich	1222
	Lester G. Orton	363
Mississippi	Leslie C. Blanchard	6731
	William H. Long	6473
Missouri	Ralph Fiehler	4219
	Tom Hartman	35
	John McGhee	4107
	Paul O. Stoneman	7900
	James D. White	1003
Nebraska	Lee Andrews	5289
	Carl L. Eby	2503
	Ronald Lachenauer	2243
Nevada	Ronald A. Kruse	8583
New Hampshire	Michael S. Annis	2860
	Paul J. Chevalier	168
	Francis W. Ryder	4368
New Jersey	Robert Hacker	6590
	Curtis G. Jackson	1297
	Arthur M. Williams	7679
	Casey Wolferse	7925
New Mexico	Jimmy R. Cogdill	11384
	Margarito Maes	1547
	William D. Wilson	7686
New York	August Abel, Jr	1975
	Raymond E. Coxon	6142
	Philip C. Schiffman	8691
	James A. Wilson	9132
North Carolina	Edward L. Bookhardt	7339
	William Boykin	7315
North Dakota	Arnold W. Maier	1326
	Theodore Will	1326
Ohio	Raymond E. Burdine	9943
	Lucian Esposito	4237
	Lawrence Krugman	1079
	Roy Welder	6519
Oklahoma	Charles T. Johnson	3669
Oregon	Patrick L. Jordan	4248
	Jerry M. Swanson	2302
	Edwin L. Williams	10644
Pacific Areas	Robert W. Joyce	9723
Panama Canal	Marion H. Lasater	3876
Pennsylvania	Michael J. Bullister	456
	Robert E. Durovey	7842
	Franklin E. Lopes	92
	Ronald G. Tyler	1462
	Larry Wilver, Jr	1665
Rhode Island	Benjamin Pezza	4651
	Samuel Wolstencroft, Jr	8955
South Carolina	Melvin L. Emore	3034
	John Simmons	8738
South Dakota	James Becker	6481
	Ralph J. Haas	791
	William J. Radigan	3061
	Larry L. Scudder	1273
Tennessee	Bill Davis	3382
	Joe A. Murphy	1289
Texas	Charles S. Pearson	1533
	Bruce Stephens	9191
	Donald L. Wright	8134

Department	Name	Post No.
Utah	Aaron Crossman	7398
	Frederick E. Peyton	3586
	Melvin T. Richeson	7442
Vermont	Curtis E. Brown	758
	Robert H. Dean	9653
	William T. Myette	9653
Virginia	Otis N. Berry	637
	John R. Peters	4809
	Harry H. Spielman	2123
Washington	Roger Brazier	11329
	James W. King, Jr	3067
	Richard Petersen	10018
	Jack Phelps	6929
West Virginia	John F. Bennett	3081
Wisconsin	Gerald Burkel	5373
	Steven D. Lawrence	10272
Wyoming	Charles E. Fresorger	579

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: John M. Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida

Vice Chairman: Norman G. Staab, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kansas

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Harold Robertson	3492
Alaska	Gerald J. Dorsher	5559
	John P. Guinn	10041
Arizona	Forrest E. Baker	1796
	John M. Beeler, Sr	2364
	Wilbur L. Brotton	720
Arkansas	Clyde Overall	5225
	Odell Stricklin	10442
	Leslie F. Thone	3141
California	Gerald D. Anderson	2835
	David B. Greaney, Jr	7420
	Steven D. Jacobs	5944
	Roland E. Lex	9223
	Art Napiwocki	1614
	T.H. Smith	7283
Colorado	James A. Hartford	8661
	John R. Lewis	4061
	Terry Schafer	1166
Connecticut	John W. Ledwith	2849
	William Martin	10004
	Henry P. Milum	2096
Delaware	Louis R. Walls, Jr	5447
District of Columbia	Kenneth J. Allen	341
	James R. Brooks	2979
Europe	James R. Boyt	10312
	J.R. Lewellen	3885
Florida	John J. Clark, III	5968
	Leroy A. Zigmund	4209
Georgia	Glenn E. Mitchell	5290
	Robert K. Nelson	3200
Hawaii	Julian A. Fernandez	3855
Idaho	Takeshi Hanami	3886
	Henry Vanderhoef	10444
Illinois	John Buettner	1699
	Rick Frank	1461
	Eugene Lewandowski	4737
	Willard Livingston	1308
	Joseph W. Ruyle	4168
Indiana	Thomas V. Burks, II	7119
	John L. Dahman	1421

Department	Name	Post No.
	Glendon R. Hinshaw	1111
	Michael V. Smith	2999
Iowa	Larry Bender	788
	Stephen L. Ivey	9664
	Robert Mathiesen	8486
Kansas	Dan P. Dollison	1186
	Larry Graham	7521
	John Kent	1650
	Robert McChesney	7253
	Alonzo McClinton	8773
	Charles L. Shoemaker, Sr	56
Kentucky	Lawrence Henderson	5484
	James Watson	1913
	Hardy B. Watson	3636
Louisiana	Gervous Lambright	3619
	Stanley J. Plessala	4222
Maine	Ralph T. Danby	832
	Joseph L. Duguay	8835
	David E. Watts	6859
Maryland	James Lohman	9619
	Joseph W. Nassar	5627
	Lester A. Rule	6506
	Hugh F. Shelton	482
Massachusetts	Thomas M. Brennick	7284
	Walter G. Gansenberg	834
	Roy Luppino	1645
	William J. Madera	1702
	John Martin	5737
Michigan	Mike Fineis	3306
	Colon P. Laney	1071
	Eugene Poker	2358
Minnesota	Francis Ginther	210
	Ted B. Theodorsen	6320
Mississippi	David Grimes	4057
	Rodney G. Wilkinson	2539
Missouri	Roger P. Beckerman	5331
	Robert Lyons	8100
	David L. Roath	5606
	Charles F. Thrower, Jr	3838
Montana	John M. Hoyt	3107
	Allen L. Kirkeby	1116
Nebraska	Vern E. Hoffart	131
	George Lee	1652
	Hugh Morris	3606
	Bobby Nickels	3704
Nevada	James E. Inman	9211
New Hampshire	William Champagne	1698
	John Lilly	1698
	Robert W. Madigan	483
New Jersey	Frank S. Candeliere	2619
	Harry W. Morecroft	6061
	H. Raymond Skinner	1838
New Mexico	Daniel V. Ortega	7686
	C.H. Thornton	7686
New York	George S. Smith	53
North Carolina	WIlliam J. Hendren	2031
	Lester A. Melton	891
	Cecil Sanders	891
North Dakota	Andrew A. Johnson	760
	Ted A. Krogen	2328
	Rhiney L. Weber	2764
Ohio	Thaddeus H. Baker	9630
	James W. Dickens	5532
	Howard Robinson	8850
	Edward B. Roppel	1863
	Ralph Ruhe	9294

Department	Name	Post No.
Oklahoma	William P. Beane	4977
	James E. Newman, Sr	4876
Oregon	Harold Goin	2468
	Martin J. LeDoux	4273
	K.O. Towery	4273
Pacific Areas	Luther W. Harmon	1509
Panama Canal	Dannie Cooper	3822
	Robert H. Reynolds, Sr	7405
Pennsylvania	Glenn Dashner	464
	Charles Feltenberger	2435
	George A. Maxwell	7213
	Ronald Radmore	5958
Rhode Island	Charles W. Rogers	329
South Carolina	John A. Buck	9539
	Arthur D. Mann	10420
South Dakota	Kenneth L. Jorgenson	750
	Patrick E. O'Neill	1273
	Tom Sherman	3342
Tennessee	Willis B. Grice	1970
	Kendall Ickes	7175
Texas	N.F. Layne	3990
	Duane G. Shriver	8919
	John F. Simmons	6796
Utah	Joe Lauter	4355
Vermont	Leroy A. Dupree	6471
Virginia	Herman R. Fitzgerald	2216
	Julian H. Taliaferro	1827
Washington	Kenneth M. Harrison	1135
	Jack E. Hartloff	2329
	Miles S. Irvine	379
West Virginia	Thomas N. Caldwell	3518
	Paul E. Nealis	1101
Wisconsin	Martin A. Schultz	7852
	Mello Stapelton	8483
	Bruce Wiese	8057
Wyoming	Lars Quinnell, III	7756

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: Ray R. Soden, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

Vice Chairman: Patrick E. Carr, Past Commander-in-Chief, Louisiana

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Gerald Brock	2702
Alaska	Lee G. Lewis	5559
	Larry J. Patch	2509
Arizona	Gerald R. Goist	7401
	David E. Hurst, Sr	720
	Ronald L. Slater	9829
Arkansas	Verlin F. Williams	1991
California	H. John Flanery	2073
	Robert G. Houchins	1123
	Doctor S. A. Kopp	3255
	Harry H. Shishido	9938
	Raymond C. Sisk	97
	Harry H. Tanabe	9879
	Joe Velasquez	5059
Colorado	Theodore G. Argys	3820
	Harold B. Hathaway	501
	James E. Mauck	6624
Connecticut	Burdett P. Flynn	10060
	Chester J. Minski	10004
	William T. Sheffield	10688
Delaware	LeRoy J. Rench	3238

Department	Name	Post No.
	Harry C. Steelman	3420
District of Columbia	Mitchell A. Mabardy	346
	William S. Saunders	7284
Europe	Richard F. Kennedy	9534
	Marvin L. Snyder	3885
Florida	Lester W. Davis	10093
	Richard J. Fitzgerald	7721
	Ray L. Ford	3064
	Eugene R. Manfrey	6827
	Charles A. Whitacre	10208
Georgia	Sammy L. Cates	5290
	Robert W. Pickins	4706
	Olin C. Wright	7331
Hawaii	Anthony Hubahib	3855
	Allan Lee	3845
	Donald Raven	2432
	Fred Wong	1540
Idaho	Roy E. Decker	3043
	Charles Griggs, Jr	7019
	Ralph Hollingsworth	3296
Illinois	Barry Colbank	6502
	Eugene Karban	7980
	Irvin McDougall	981
	William R. Moran	2240
	Dennis Richey	1592
	Michael Spagnoletti	6869
Indiana	George A. Magurany	802
	Lawrence Miles	266
	Leo R. Reller	2366
	Lenas G. Weisheit	1114
Iowa	Ronald R. Petersen	9128
	Russell D. Truax	5240
Kansas	Wilmer Dreiling	9139
	John Fridley	1254
	Roland Robitaille	11255
	Charles Stephens	1432
Kentucky	Johnny Harris	7101
	Kenneth E. Krebs	2921
	Joe C. Oliver	4075
Louisiana	William M. Procter	1736
	J.B. Robertson	8107
Maine	Roger D. Blanchette	3459
	Donald W. Linscott, Jr	832
	Donald P. Lockwood	9787
	Alan M. Winter	9459
Maryland	Clayton A. Deaver	1858
	Charles P. McConville	521
Massachusetts	Theodore R. Eaton	2104
	Edward A. Fogarty	9566
	John F. Leonard	639
	Gardner McWillians	2425
	John W. Mowatt	662
	Tyler Thomas	144
Michigan	Francis C. Burkman	6507
	James N. Goldsmith	5666
	John Harrow, Jr	372
Minnesota	Daniel Bartholomew	3144
	Joe J. Mach	210
	William J. Manor	3871
	Dean E. Means	1642
Mississippi	Charles Garrett	4877
	Raymond A. Toy	4057
Missouri	Ken Mountjoy	280
	James R. Mueller	5077
	Joseph L. Thomas	2171
	Calvin Vogelsang	3838

Department	Name	Post No.
Montana	James C. Aho	2252
Nebraska	Vernon Fleshman	3755
	Dan G. Petersen	131
	Cecil A. Reichstein	10562
Nevada	Earl W. Lewis	2288
	Charles R. Shetter	1002
New Hampshire	Frank E. Casey, Jr	816
	John Smith	2520
New Jersey	Vincent Brinkerhoff	335
	Charles J. Frederick	2648
	Pierre Lamereaux	7164
	Vincent J. Tamburino	2319
New Mexico	Tyrone M. Benson	7686
	Walter Crawford	7686
	Albino B. Fajardo	4293
New York	Anthony Ferrarese	16
	Clifford E. Galbraith	7127
	Father Albert G. Salmon	6912
	Harriett Williams	1384
North Carolina	Dennis R. Barnhardt	6480
	Gene Edwards	4309
	Arthur Shull	2843
North Dakota	Dean Bayer	6833
Ohio	Gary B. Bentfeld	2799
	Robert C. Cockrell	1082
	John E. Moon	2873
	Terry D. Opperman	8445
	Charles Popke, III	2529
Oklahoma	George M. Nelson	1335
Oregon	Raymond Kennedy	3473
	Byron E. Pullen	4273
Pacific Areas	Paul T. Gasperson	10269
	William J. Penn	1509
	Michael L. Sullivan	8180
	Donald O. Webster	9957
Panama Canal	John R. O'Keefe	3822
	Johnnie L. Scott	3876
Pennsylvania	Thomas Dougherty	3474
	Dale Haswell	4653
	Donald Lehman	8298
	Almon J. Long	283
	Anthony Longo	5205
Rhode Island	Joseph C. D'Abrosca	916
	Antonio L. Pellegrino	8955
South Carolina	William S. Boan	11251
	Jesse Childs, Jr	10595
South Dakota	Thomas A. Henle	628
	Duane Starkey	2969
	Harold O. Weber	1273
Tennessee	William H. Berkley	1291
	Kenneth R. Houston	1294
Texas	Donald L. Harwood	6794
	Robert J. Lyons	8246
	Earnest G. Mudd	8541
	Manuel O. Rivas	8782
	Robert Speake	1922
Utah	Benito G. Russo	3586
	Alan B. Sparks	8307
Vermont	Fred F. Fenn	10038
	Frederick F. Ladue	792
Virginia	David L. Duncan	1827
	George E. McCracken	609
	Clifford Williford	3160
Washington	Robert Berleen	9430
	Clay Hoffman	2329
	Ed Krels	1474

Department	Name	Post No.
	Thomas Schuster	969
West Virginia	Samuel P. Baldwin	1212
	Wesley Thomas	573
Wisconisn	Donald Cunningham	7591
	Robert E. Reinke	721

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Cooper T. Holt, Past Commander-in-Chief, Tennessee

Vice Chairman: R. D. Smith, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Clarence A. Gardner	3407
Alaska	Robert A. Anderson	10252
	Donald L. Kilmer	4352
	Gary L. Kurpius	10221
Arizona	Kenneth A. Buckley	9400
	John M. Knowles	2364
Arkansas	John S. Bostic	7769
	Grady L. Brown	4548
	Mark Cybulski	9095
California	Paul Gonzalez	2967
	William G. Kelley	5985
	Robert C. Poulin, Sr	6945
	Jerome A. Watson	1744
	Jerry A. Williams	7636
Colorado	Henry F. Sexauer	1
	Warren Tellgren	8661
Connecticut	John D. Burns	2097
	Benjamin T. Lord	5095
Delaware	William T. Robbins	3420
District of Columbia	A. Leo Anderson	284
	Claudio B. Pedery, Jr	5471
Europe	Wesley E. Boyt	10312
	Bruce A. Withers	10436
Florida	Elijah L. Summerfield	6180
	James DePass	10068
	William R. Kirsop	4256
Georgia	Richard Branson	5080
	General Crumley	7720
	Johnnie Shiver	4830
Hawaii	Jacob Akiona	2875
	Norbert K. Enos	2875
	Francis X. Roddin	2875
	John Rouse	1540
Idaho	Roy Harmon	10444
	Lyle Longhurst	5840
	Alvin R. Mason	6399
Illinois	Carlo DiGrazia	6870
	Walter Luksta	9115
	Leo Olah	7452
Indiana	Paul D. Curtice	1257
	William Hays	7119
	James J. Thiel	717
Iowa	Dowd J. Brandt	9662
	Leslie Portwood	817
	Daryl Shinker	2349
Kansas	Morris Brazda	3111
	Tom Montgomery	112
	Rudolph Negrete	1650
	Lawrence Tholen	2864
Kentucky	Aaron N. Cardwell	4075
	Wilford O. Dismore	1191
Louisiana	Jack Coursey	5951

Department	Name	Post No.
	James W. Ritchie	4224
	James E. Westbrook	3784
Maine	Arthur A. Baker	832
	Wallace C. Berard	1285
	Erlon B. Rose	3335
	Herbert Schindler	9935
Maryland	Joseph M. Coppinger	2562
	John F. Noble	5627
	Alfred N. Simmons	8509
Massachusetts	John J. Burnett	697
	William T. McCarthy	3439
	John T. Tynan	561
Michigan	Raymond G. O'Neill	147
	Edward S. Skiba	2358
	Donald St. Aubin	5670
	Barry Walter	4005
Minnesota	Thomas L. Hanson	1636
	Richard A. Zierdt	6587
Mississippi	Jerry W. Fletcher	4970
Missouri	Chester A. Doile	6272
	Dennis Flynn	2866
	Ronald Wooderson	8220
Montana	James J. Bertrand	1579
Nebraska	Clarence Koch	6219
	John R. Liebsack	2503
	John Olson	3704
	James J. Pacas	4836
	Billy C. Smith	7028
Nevada	Claude A. Brown	10057
	Donald L. Mason	3547
New Hampshire	Donald R. Caron	7015
	John Kisielewski	8179
New Jersey	Dennis Clark	1743
	Charles A. Duffett, Jr	62
	Donald L. Scott	7247
	Donald Stippel	9503
	George T. Van Allen	7504
New Mexico	Johnnie Bollinger	3015
	Manuel G. Evaro	4384
	Michael E. Schweitzer	9515
New York	T. William Bossidy	7466
	Ralph DeMarco	885
	Mary A. Gamba	542
	John Sanford	8160
	Domenick Volpe	546
North Carolina	James E. Flanders	6018
	Glenn P. Milliman	2401
North Dakota	Jerome M. Bixby	9069
Ohio	Harold M. Blosser	108
	Edward H. Marzec	3483
	Terry A. Roan	3124
	Samuel Schaffner	3761
Oklahoma	Charles Harding	2270
Pacific Areas	Charles A. Clay	1576
	Paul T. O'Dowd	9957
Panama Canal	James E. Cook	3822
	Leonardo R. Hylton	3835
Pennsylvania	Theodore G. Hasulak	315
	Joseph M. Salvo	5267
	John J. Thomas	128
	John Wojtowicz	4789
Puerto Rico	Jose Folch	11103
Rhode Island	Frank E. Lightowler	6342
	Manuel V. Oliver	329
South Carolina	Richard L. Mayhew	641
	George M. Pullie	6091

Department	Name	Post No.
South Dakota	William A. Hollmann	7319
	Kenneth L. Nelson	1273
	Albert A. Reidinger	17
Tennessee	Bobby Collins	1990
	Kenneth R. Perkins	8778
Texas	Felix Longoria	6719
	R. Earl Lord	10351
	Lavern H. Terbl	9168
Utah	Thomas M. Kennedy	3568
	Theodore B. Rimpau	2355
Vermont	Bradley F. Reynolds	758
Virginia	John E. Saunders	4809
	Charles B. Wilkerson	9808
Washington	Charles Hunt	2329
	Andrew Martin	10018
	Fred McDaniel	7392
West Virginia	Robert B. Kesling	573
	John F. Payne	3466
Wisconsin	Tony Eulo	6498
	Raymond Ortmann	6498
	Arthur H. Schultz	305
	Thomas Tradewell	6498
Wyoming	Ray B. Taylor	3511

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Chairman: Richard Trombla, Post 1174, Kansas

Department	Name	Post No.
California	Edwin L. Myers	9814
Delaware	Elwood B. Rickards	7234
Illinois	James L. Mascola	3580
Minnesota	James H. Kennedy	3877
Missouri	James H. Willis	534

COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

Vice Chairman: Eric Sandstrom, Past Commander-in-Chief, Washington

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS

B–1 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 104—ADMISSION FEES AND DUES

Amend Section 104, National By-Laws, by adding to the end thereof the following paragraph:

"Admission fees and dues collected for the Department and National Organization are, and become, the property of the respective Department or the National Organization upon receipt by the Post." [Adopted]

B–2 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 210—SURRENDER OR FORFEITURE OF CHARTER

Amend Section 210, National By-Laws, by deleting the first and second paragraphs and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Voluntary Surrender. A Post may voluntarily surrender its charter only upon a vote of its members conducted in accordance with the procedures herein set forth. If any ten (10) members vote against surrender of the charter, the charter shall not be surrendered. A proposition to submit surrender of the charter to a vote of the membership shall be made at a regular meeting of the Post at least four (4) weeks before the time of the vote, and due notice of the proposition and the time and place of the vote shall be given in writing to every member of the Post and to the District Commander, County Council Commander and the Department Commander. At least fifteen (15) days prior to any vote to surrender or forfeit the charter the Post Commander shall provide the Department Commander with a list describing all of the money and other property of the Post. The Department Commander should be notified immediately after the meeting, in writing, of the outcome of a proposition to surrender the Charter of a Post. In the event that ten (10) members do not vote to continue the Post, the Department Commander shall, within thirty (30) days, request that the Commander-in-Chief cancel the charter, unless during such thirty (30) day period, the Department Commander receives a demand in writing from at least ten (10) members in good standing in said Post to continue it. Pending such cancellation the Post shall not dispose of any money or property.

Disposition of Property. In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, all of the property of the Post, including all real property, personality and money, and the Post's books and records, shall immediately become the property of the Department, in trust. The Department Commander shall take all appropriate measures to secure possession and control of such property. Post officers shall execute such deeds and other documents as are appropriate to effect transfer of any such property to the Department. Disposition of such property shall be as directed by the Department Commander of Administration for those purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter." [Adopted]

B–3 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 213—ARREARAGES

Amend Section 213, National By-Laws, by deleting the first sentence and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Any Post in arrears for National, Department, County Council or District dues, poppy money, supply money, or other financial obligations, or failing to have the office of Quartermaster properly bounded in accordance with Section 703, or failing to submit properly completed quarterly Post Trustees Report of Audit or Post Election Report shall be deprived of all representation in County Council meetings, District, Department and National Conventions." [Adopted]

B–4 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 222—DELEGATES-COUNTY COUNCIL, DISTRICT, DEPARTMENT AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Amend Section 222, National By-Laws, by inserting the following after the word "Conventions," and before the word "shall" in subsection (b):

", who shall serve until the next Post election of delegates," [Adopted]

B–5 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 321—VOTING

Amend Section 321, National By-Laws, by inserting the following after the second sentence:

"The delegate strength for a Post shall be one (1) delegate for each fifteen (15) members based on the membership strength of the Post at the time of the County Council meeting."

Amend Section 321 further by adding to the end thereof the following paragraph:

"A roll call vote may be required and entered upon the record at the call of any three officers or delegates representing three different Posts." [Withdrawn]

B–6 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 419—VOTING

Amend Section 419, National By-Laws, by inserting the following after the second sentence:

"The delegate strength for a Post shall be one (1) delegate for each fifteen (15) members based on the membership strength of the Post at the time of the District meeting."

Amend Section 419 further by adding to the end thereof the following paragraph:

"A roll call vote may be required and entered upon the record at the call of any three officers or delegates representing three different Posts." [Adopted]

B–7 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 615—NATIONAL COMMITTEES

Amend Section 615, National By-Laws, by deleting subsection (d)(1) and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"(d) Political Action Committee.

(1) Composition: The Political Action Committee shall consist of a Director, a Treasurer, and a seven (7) member Board of Directors.

Six (6) members of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Commander-in-Chief. Two members shall be appointed each year for a three-year term. The seventh member shall be appointed by the Commander-in-Chief upon the recommendation of the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. The Director and Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by the Board of Directors." [Disapproved]

B–8 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 617—REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS—HOW ELECTED

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting the third paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Each Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, except those bearing alphabetic designations, shall be entitled to membership on the National Council of Administration for a consecutive period of two years in the order listed above. If a Department attains membership in excess of 70,000 total members before July 1, it shall constitute a regional district. If any Department previously constituting a regional district fails to reach a total Department membership of 70,000 members before July 1, the Department shall no longer constitute a regional district. In the event any Department changes status as the result of a change in membership, the Commander-in-Chief shall submit a proposed amendment to Section 617 of these By-Laws assigning Departments to respective numerical or alphabetical regional districts as appropriate. Notwithstanding paragraph two (2) of Section 1301 of the National By-Laws, such amendment shall take effect immediately upon passage at the National Convention." [Adopted]

B–9 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 709—CONTROL OF UNITS

Amend Section 709, National By-Laws, by deleting the fifth paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"In addition to other legal requirements under existing local laws, no Post, County Council or District shall purchase, sell or otherwise transfer title or interest in any real estate unless written notice of such proposal has first been given to each member of said unit and the Department Commander ten (10) days prior to such regular or special meeting at which the proposal is to be considered, and then only by two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval of those members present and voting at such regular or special meeting." [Adopted]

B–10 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 710—INSPECTION

Amend Section 710, National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"The Commander-in-Chief or any Department Commander may require, within his respective jurisdiction, the inspection of any Department, District, Country Council or Post, or any holding company or corporation subordinate thereto, whenever he may believe the best interests of the Organization will be served to insure compliance with the National Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, lawful orders of the National Convention, the National Council of Administration and the Commander-in-Chief and the laws and usages of the Organization. For this purpose he may detail any officer of the National Organization of the Department whose duties shall be prescribed by the appointing power." [Withdrawn]

B–11 Recommended by National By-laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 714—CONTROL OF MAILING LISTS

Amend Section 714, National By-Laws, by deleting the second paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the VFW from soliciting or authorizing solicitation of its membership to benefit the purposes of the organization or soliciting its membership in support of the activities of a political action committee duly authorized and organized by the VFW." [Adopted]

B–12 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 1101—FORMATION, CONTROL AND DISBANDMENT OF AUXILIARIES

Amend Section 1101, National By-Laws, by deleting the first sentence of the third (3) paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"The Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may issue charters to Department, District, County Council, and Post Auxiliaries, provided that the establishment of such Auxiliary shall have been approved by the respective Department, District, County Council or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control." [Adopted]

B–13 Recommended by National By-Law Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 1201—FORMATION AND CONTROL

Amend Section 1201, National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"(a) The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States is a national Honor Degree membership association separately constituted as a subordinate and an auxiliary order chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be governed by and subject to the control of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration. Grand Pup Tents (Department units) and Pup Tents shall be governed by and subject to control of the respective Department Convention, Commander and Council of Administration or Post.

(b) The Military Order of the Cootie shall be governed by such by-Laws and Ritual as may be adopted by it, and by the lawful orders issued by its national officers, provided such By-Laws, Ritual and Orders do not conflict with the Con-

gressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or 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.

(c) The Military Order of the Cootie may issue charters to Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents, provided that the establishment of such Grand Pup Tents or Pup Tents shall have been approved by the respective Department Convention or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control. Formation, control and disbandment of Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents, as well as suspension or cancellation of charters, shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

(d) Auxiliary. The Military Order of the Cootie is authorized to establish an Auxiliary for adult females and establish eligibility for such Auxiliary, provided that membership shall be limited to members in good standing in the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be subject to the control of the Supreme Scratch (National Convention), Supreme Commander and Supreme Council of Administration of the Military Order of the Cootie. Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents may authorize the establishment and discontinuance of corresponding Auxiliaries in accordance with the By-laws of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, provided that an Auxiliary to a Pup Tent shall be chartered only after approval by the Post with which it is affiliated." [Adopted]

B–14 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE XII—MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

Amend Article XII, National By-Laws, by adding thereto new Sections designated Sections 1202, 1203 and 1204 as follows:

"SECTION 1202—ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for membership in the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States shall be limited to those members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (1) who, at the time of application, have been a member in good standing of his or her Post for the preceding six (6) months and (2) who have (a) completed satisfactory service on a major Post committee; or (b) satisfactorily performed Post duties or participated actively as a leader of Post functions, and (3) who have been approved for membership by a majority vote of the members present at a meeting of the Post. Application for membership and certification thereof will be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

SECTION 1203—BY-LAWS, RITUAL

The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States may adopt such By-Laws and Ritual as are deemed necessary and may authorize Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tens to adopt By-Laws. In the event any part of the By-Laws and Ritual 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 and Procedures of the respective Department or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

SECTION 1204—INCORPORATION

(a) The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States is authorized to incorporate under appropriate not for profit corporation laws, provided such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed and approved by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by a two-thirds vote of the National Scratch (National Convention) of the order and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.

(b) The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States may, by duly approved amendments to its By-Laws, authorize Grand Pup Tents and Pup Tents 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 such incorporation, which approval shall be in the same manner as for the initial formation of a Grand Pup Tent or Pup Tent, and approves the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto and, provided further, that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Should any state law prohibit the provisions specified in the Manual

of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the provisions sufficiently to conform to state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Manual of Procedure provision. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the charter." [Adopted]

B–15 Proposed by Department of Michigan

SECTION 101—ELIGIBILITY

Amend Section 101, National By-Laws, by deleting the first paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Anyone who has served honorably as an officer or enlisted person, whether on active duty, discharged under honorable conditions, released to inactive duty or retired, shall be eligible for membership:

1. Who is a citizen of the United States.
2. Who has served honorably outside he continental limits of the United States with the Armed Forces of the United States.
3. Whose service in the Armed Forces of the United States in any foreign war, insurrection or expedition is recognized as campaign medal service and governed by the authorization of the issuance of a campaign badge (medal) by the government of the United States of America." [Disapproved]

B–16 Proposed by Department of Europe

SECTION 1102—ELIGIBILITY

Amend Section 1102, National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence of the first paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Members must be not less than sixteen years old." [Disapproved]

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

M–1 Recommended by National By-Law Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 103—ELECTION, NOTIFICATION, OBLIGATION

Amend Section 103, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the first two paragraphs and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"After the applicant has filled out and signed the application card, giving in detail the pertinent information required, the member proposing the applicant shall certify that he has reviewed the applicant's bona fide proof of eligibility and it should be handed to the Post Adjutant or Quartermaster, together with the admission fee and dues. The fee and dues are held by the Post Quartermaster and credited to the applicant until such time as the Post shall vote on the application. A temporary receipt shall be issued to the applicant.

The application will be referred to a Post investigating committee of three members. The member proposing the applicant shall not be a member of the committee. The committee shall make a careful investigation of the facts set forth on the application card. After the committee shall have completed its investigation, the members thereof shall recommend the applicant's election or rejection by affixing their signatures on the application card."

Further amend Section 103, Manual of Procedure, by adding to the third paragraph the following:

"The original application of every member shall remain permanently on file in the Post's records." [Adopted]

M–2 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 714—CONTROL OF MAILING LISTS

Amend Section 714, Manual of Procedure, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the National Organization or any Unit from soliciting its membership in a legitimate fund-raising enterprise in which it is financially interested; provided, however, that such enterprise has been approved by vote of members or delegates present at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

Mailing lists provided by the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the use of subordinate units in contacting their own

members shall remain under the control of the Commander-in-Chief and shall be used only for such purposes as he may authorize." [Adopted]

M–3 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 1001—RULES OF ORDER GOVERNING ALL MEETINGS

Amend Section 1001, Manual of Procedure, by inserting as rule number 24 the following:

"24. The presence, dispensation, and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages in VFW meeting rooms during VFW meetings is unacceptable and is prohibited." [Adopted]

M–4 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE XII—MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

Amend Article XII, Manual of Procedure, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"SECTION 1201—FORMATION AND CONTROL

(a) Formation and Control.

(1) Pup Tents. Pup Tents may be formed and chartered in accordance with the National Constitution and By-Laws of the Military Order of the Cootie provided that no Pup Tent shall be formed by less than fifteen (15) members in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and, provided further that no Pup Tent shall be chartered unless the Post with which such Pup Tent is to be affiliated has consented to the chartering thereof. Consent shall require two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular or special meeting, provided that 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. Each pup Tent shall be assigned a number by the Military Order of the Cootie.

Each Pup Tent shall be subject to the control of the Post with which it is affiliated. It shall also be subject to the control 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 within their authority.

Each Pup Tent shall function in accordance with the National By-Laws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie and lawful orders issued by Supreme (National) and Department officers of the Order, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the By-Laws of the Department in which it is situated or 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.

(2) Grand Pup Tents (Department units). Grand Pup Tents may be formed by a vote of the Department Convention. Each Grand Pup Tent of the Military Order of the Cootie shall be governed by and under the control of the Convention, Council of Administration, and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, who shall decide questions of law and usage for the Grand Pup Tent subject to an appeal to the Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration; but the Grand Pup Tent shall function in accordance with the Supreme (National) By-Laws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie and lawful orders issued by National and Department officers thereof, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and By-Laws of the Department with which the Grand Pup Tent is affiliated or the lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief and/or National or Department Council of Administration and the Department Commander.

(b) Suspension and Discontinuance.

(1) The Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may suspend the Supreme (National) Charter of the Military Order of the Cootie for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, for conduct of the organization, its Convention, National officers or National Council of Administration which may be detrimental to the best in-

terest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may, by two-thirds vote, cancel the charter of the Military Order of the Cootie.

(2) The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or the cancellation of the charter of any subordinate unit (Grand Pup Tent or Pup Tent) of the Military Order of the Cootie, upon recommendation of the Commander of the Department wherein such unit is located, 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.

(3) Disbanding of Pup Tent by a Post. A Post may, by vote of eighty percent of its members present at a meeting following 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 Pup Tent. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Pup Tent, 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 recommendation. If 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 Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie to cancel the charter of the Pup Tent.

(4) While the charter of the Supreme (National) Organization of the Military of the Cootie, or a subordinate unit thereof, is suspended said unit shall not be permitted to function and the 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; and in the case of suspension of the charter of the National Organization, an appeal may be made to the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(c) Suspension of Officers. The officers (elective and appointive) of the Military Order of the Cootie or of subordinate units thereof may be suspended by action of the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, subject to review by the National Council of Administration. While so suspended, the offending officer or officers of the Military Order of the Cootie shall be without authority, and if it is found that the conduct of an officer or officers thereof is detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may order the removal of such officer or officers.

(d) Disposition of Property. In the event of a surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a charter of a subordinate unit of the Military Order of the Cootie, all official records, money and other property shall be surrendered to such officer or officers as is provided in the Supreme (National) By-Laws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie.

(e) Reports.

(1) The Supreme (National) Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into officer, submit to the Commander-in-Chief an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the National Organization of the Military Order of the Cootie for his information and for submission by him to the National Council of Administration.

(2) The Grand Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Department Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Grand Pup Tent (Department unit) of the Military Order of the Cootie for his information and for submission by him to the Department Council of Administration.

(f) Liaison. The Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall appoint a committee who shall meet with a committee appointed by the Supreme (National) Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie. This combined committee shall meet at intervals between National Conventions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to consider all matters affecting the welfare of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States insofar as the activities of the Military Order of the Cootie are concerned. The purpose of this committee shall be to coordinate the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the activities of the Military Order of the Cootie so that there shall be full compliance with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and best interest of both the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Military Order of the Cootie are furthered.

(g) Auxiliary Approval by Post. No Pup Tent Auxiliary shall be chartered unless the Post with which such Pup Tent is affiliated has consented to the chartering

thereof. Such consent shall be given in the same manner as consent to the chartering of the Pup Tent as provided in this section.

SECTION 1202—ELIGIBILITY

An application for membership in the Military Order of the Cootie must be accompanied by a certificate verifying satisfaction of the requirements for membership specified in the By-Laws. The certificate shall bear the endorsement of the Post Commander attested by the Post Adjutant.

SECTION 1203—BY-LAWS, RITUAL

(See Sec. 1203 By-Laws)

SECTION 1204—INCORPORATION

(a) The Articles of Incorporation of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must have the following provisions:

(1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(2) This incorporated organization shall be and remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure and the By-Laws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie.

(3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, or the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and the forfeiture of the charter issued to it by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, title to all of the assets shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be disposed of according to its By-Laws. At no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.

(4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property. (b) The Articles of Incorporation of any Grand Pup Tent or Pup Tent, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:

(1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the (Grand Pup Tent, Military Order of the Cootie, Department of , Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Pup Tent, Military Order of the Cootie, Post , Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States).

(2) This incorporated organization shall be and at all times remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Supreme Commander and National Council of Administration of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the (Department of , Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) and subject to the By-Laws and Ritual of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States and the Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation or the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and loss or forfeiture of its charter, title to all assets shall pass to the Grand Pup Tent of , Military Order of the Cootie of the United States to be disposed of according to the By-Laws. At no time shall the assets of this corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.

(4) The Articles shall, in addition,contain a provision specifically excluding from the power of the corporation the power to own or hold real property." [Adopted]

M–5 Proposed by Department of Michigan

SECTION 101—ELIGIBILITY

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the following in the first paragraph thereof:

"(2) Honorable service in the Armed Forces of the United States;" and inserting in lieu thereof the following "(2) Honorable service outside the continental limits of the United States with the Armed Forces of the United States;" [Disapproved]

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

R–1 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars under the heading "INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS" on page 49 by deleting the second sentence, "The installing officer first reads warrant aloud and then says." [Adopted]

R–2 Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars under the heading "INSTALLATION OF OFFICER (National and Department)" by inserting the following after the fifth (5) line on page 59:

"*Installing Officer:* Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

Commander-in-Chief: He has.

Installing Officer: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time that the By-Laws prescribe you must, within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of your proof of eligibility." [Adopted]

R–3 Proposed by Department of New York

Amend the Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars under the heading "Chapel Service" by inserting the following after the tenth (10) paragraph following the word "Air Force" on page 94:

"Our departed comrades of the Marines no longer look toward beachhead landings, dense jungles or tours on foreign soil." [Adopted]

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON AMERICANISM AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

No. 101 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

U.S. FLAG DESECRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that all VFW Posts and Auxiliaries promote a CITIZENS PETITIONS DRIVE requesting that the U.S. Congress propose to the states an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which prohibits the physical desecration of the United States flag; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all VFW Posts and Auxiliaries institute programs to educate our youth and adults in the area of proper flag respect through our Americanism and Citizenship Education Programs. [Adopted]

No. 102 Submmitted by many Departments

SUPPORT AND PROMOTE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we highly commend and endorse the annual Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program and that we urge our members through the sponsorship of the respective units to support and promote increased participation opportunities and student involvement in an unparalleled Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program during the 1994/95 year thereby contributing invaluably to the understanding of freedom and democracy by today's youth in keeping with the patriotic, historical and educational objectives of our organization. [Adopted]

No. 103 Submitted by many Departments

COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE YOUTH, SAFETY AND PATRIOTIC PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we recognize this relationship and extend sincere appreciation to each of these organizations for their cooperation in the development and promotion of youth, safety and patriotic programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That during the year ahead, we urge our Posts, Districts, County Councils and Departments to maintain and to strengthen their ties with the American Academy of Achievement, Youth American Bowling Alliance, American Youth Soccer Organizations, Boy Scouts of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Further Farmers of America, 4–H Clubs, Freedoms Foundation, Na-

tional Rifle Association of America, National and State Association of Broadcasters, State Superintendents and Commissioners of Education, all ROTC chapters and recruiting commands, Special Olympics, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Chapters and all other groups, associations and organizations of similar character and interests. [Adopted]

No. 104 Submitted by many Departments

OPPOSE ANY ACTION TO CHANGE OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reaffirm mandates of previous conventions to oppose any legislation introduced in either the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate which initiates action to change our National Anthem. [Adopted]

No. 105 Submitted by many Departments

OPPOSE ANY EFFORT THAT WOULD BAN THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly oppose any effort that would call for banning the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in the American school system. [Adopted]

No. 106 Submitted by Department of Washington

CENSOR/REMOVE HENRY B. GONZALEZ

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States to invoke Article 1, Section 2, Clause 5 and Article 14, Section 3 of the United States Constitution and either officially censure Henry B. Gonzalez and/or remove the man from office, for his despicable seditious attestation, that the "Pledge of Allegiance" given by our elected representatives resembles "a good herd of Nazis" giving some sort of repugnant "Hitliarian Seig Heil". [Disapproved]

No. 107 Submitted by Department of Delaware

ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the adoption of legislation establishing the English language as the official language of the United States of America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent both to the Representatives and Senators, requesting their support in the enactment of laws proclaiming English as the official language of the United States of America. [Adopted]

No. 108 Submitted by Department of Vermont

MEMORIAL DAY

[Disapproved]

No. 109 Submitted by Department of Louisiana

PROPER RESPECT TO OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

[Disapproved]

No. 110 Submitted by Department of Nebraska

HUNTER SAFETY

[Disapproved]

No. 111 Submitted by Department of Montana

MEMORIAL DAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the Congress of the United States to reestablish May 30th as Memorial Day. [Approved]

No. 112 Submitted by Department of Oregon

AS AMENDED NATIONAL FLAG CELEBRATION WEEK

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge now and forever the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the week in which June 14 occurs shall be declared as "National Flag Celebration Week," during which citizens shall be encouraged to display the flag of the United States of America to study it's history and the ideals it represents, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President also sign a proclamation supporting a National Flag week. [Adopted as Amended]

No. 113 Submitted by Department of Indiana

A TRIBUTE TO THE FLAG

[Disapproved]

No. 114 Submitted by Department of California

IN CELEBRATION OF AMERICA WEEK

[Disapproved]

No. 115 Submitted by Department of Michigan

"MEET YOU AT THE POLE"

[Disapproved]

No. 116 Submitted by Department of Texas

FLAG ETIQUETTE

[Disapproved]

No. 117 Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania

SUPPORT SENATE RESOLUTION #132 (RETURN MEMORIAL DAY TO MAY 30)

[Disapproved]

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

No. 201 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and many Departments

AMEND CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we direct the Commander-in-Chief to take such steps as are appropriate to cause the Congress to amend Section 5 of the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to make eligible for membership veterans that have served within the territorial limits of Korea. [Adopted]

No. 202 Submitted by Department of Connecticut

LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD DESIGNATING COMMANDERSHIP ON ALL LEVELS OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

[Disapproved]

No. 203 Submitted by Department of Kentucky

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AMERICANISM AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SONS OF THE VFW

[Disapproved]

No. 204 Submitted by Department of Kansas

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF 1994–95 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

[Disapproved]

No. 205 Submitted by Department of New Jersey

SALE OF VFW BUDDY POPPY

[Disapproved]

No. 206 Submitted by Department of Nebraska

AMEND CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER

[Disapproved]

No. 207 Submitted by Department of Colorado and Michigan

100TH ANNIVERSARY 1999 NATIONAL CONVENTION

[Disapproved]

No. 208 Submitted by Department of New York

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AMERICANISM AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES ELIMINATE AGE REQUIREMENT FOR SONS OF VFW

[Disapproved]

No. 209 Submitted by Department of Minnesota

SAFE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION AWARD

[Disapproved]

No. 210 Submitted by Department of Tennessee

POSTS TO ESTABLISH FUND TO SUPPORT KOREAN WAR ASSOCIATION

[Disapproved]

No. 211 Submitted by Department of Michigan

PROVIDE VFW CANCER INSURANCE PROGRAM

[Disapproved]

No. 212 Submitted by Department of Michigan

AMEND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

[Disapproved]

No. 213 Submitted by Department of Illinois

"BUDDY POPPY"

[Disapproved]

No. 214 Submitted by Department of Illinois

PRINT CONSTITUTION, BY-LAWS, RITUAL AND PODIUM EDITION IN LOOSE-LEAF FORM

[Disapproved]

No. 215 Submitted by Department of California

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AMERICANISM AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES ELIMINATE AGE RESTRICTION FOR SONS OF THE VFW

[Disapproved]

No. 216 Submitted by Department of Virginia

ABOLISH THE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE PROGRAM

[Disapproved]

No. 217 Submitted by Department of Minnesota

CHANGE OF WORDING IN RESOLUTIONS TO BY-LAWS, RULES, RITUAL AND MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

[Disapproved]

No. 218 Submitted by Department of Minnesota

PROPONENT AT RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEES

[Disapproved]

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

No. 301 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

VETERANS DAY OFF FOR ALL MILITARY VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the President and Congress to issue a joint declaration encouraging business and industry leaders and government agencies to honor those employees who are bonafide military veterans with an excused absence from the work place on Veterans Day, beginning on November 11, 1994, and continuing in each year thereafter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each VFW Department request a similar joint declaration from their respective governors and state legislatures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars honor three employers each year at its National Convention, who have granted their veteran-employees a holiday from work on Veterans Day. (Adopted)

No. 302 Submitted by Department of Maine

ISSUE COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP HONORING POW/MIA'S

[Disapproved]

No. 303 Submitted by Department of Maine (as amended)

ISSUE COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP TO HONOR 2ND LIEUTENANT AUDIE MURPHY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress for a commemorative stamp to honor the memory of this great American, 2nd Lieutenant Audi Murphy, whose patriotism and sacrifice for his country will not be forgotten. [Adopted]

No. 304 Submitted by Department of Missouri

ENDORSE 50TH ANNIVERSARY TRUMAN PRESIDENT BY TRUMAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as supporting the 50th Anniversary commemoration of the Truman Presidency and the events being sponsored by the Truman Library and Museum. [Adopted]

No. 305 Submitted by Department of Nevada

ENDORSE SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

[Disapproved]

No. 306 Submitted by Department of Washington

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL NAMES—"THE WALL"

[Disapproved]

No. 307 Submitted by Department of Wyoming

OPPOSING GUN CONTROL BY HANDGUN CONTROL, INC.

[Disapproved]

No. 308 Submitted by Department of Kansas

COMMENDATION FOR REFURBISHING AND THE DISPLAY OF THE ENOLA GAY

[Disapproved]

No. 309 Submitted by Department of Nebraska

EXPANSION OF THE HEARTLAND MUSEUM OF MILITARY VEHICLES

[Disapproved]

No. 310 Submitted by Department of Louisiana

OPPOSE D.C. STATEHOOD

[Disapproved]

No. 311 Submitted by Department of Colorado

SUPPORT FOR MILITARY VETERANS IN OBTAINING UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we actively assist and support our comrades in obtaining U.S. Citizenship; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States attempt to persuade the United States Government to expeditiously process and approve the applications of foreign nationals, who have served and been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States, for U.S. Citizenship. [Adopted]

No. 312 Submitted by Department of Colorado

REMOVE COPYRIGHT PROTECTION IN PUBLIC LAW 99–652

[Disapproved]

No. 313 Submitted by Department of New York

ISSUE POW/MIA STAMP

[Disapproved]

No. 314 Submitted by Department of New York

A POW/MIA STAMP

[Disapproved]

No. 315 Submitted by Department of New York

U.S. MEMORIAL IN MEMORY OF U.S. SERVICE PERSONNEL BURIED IN AMERICAN CEMETERY AT MANILA

[Disapproved]

No. 316 Submitted by Department of Oregon

GUN CONTROL

[Disapproved]

No. 317 Submitted by Department of Tennessee

SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT OF THE ENOLA GAY

[Disapproved]

No. 319 Submitted by Department of Illinois

ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS ON GUN CONTROL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the efforts of government should be directed to the enforcement of existing laws rather than the regulation of the purchase, licensing, registration, taxing, banning and possession of firearms by the millions of our citizens who desire hem for traditionally legitimate purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the nation's press, television and radio commentators and government agencies be urged to cease seeking a panacea for this problem by the enactment of more laws but instead, the media should urge that the government provide the funds and manpower for more effective enforcement of present laws directed against criminal actions, assure speedy trials unencumbered by technical defenses, forbid plea-bargaining in violent crimes, impose safeguards against unwarranted probation and parole of convicted persons, and initiate long overdue reforms of our penal system so that it securely incarcerates enemies of society while rehabilitating young wrong-doers who are not yet hardened criminals. [Adopted]

No. 320 Submitted by Department of California

PERPETUATE THE MEMORY AND HISTORY OF OUR DEAD IN WWII

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) of the Federal Government to authorize the design and construction of a World War II Memorial Cenotaph in Area I of the District of Columbia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cenotaph contain memorial walls listing the names of these fallen American Hero's. [Adopted]

No. 321 Submitted by Department of California

U.S. POSTMASTER GENERAL DESIGNATION OF A POW/MIA POSTAGE STAMP

[Disapproved]

No. 322 Submitted by Department of California

POW/MIA RECOGNITION WEEK/DAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Congress of the United States to cause a law to be enacted whereby the third (3rd) week of September of each year, and the third (3rd) Saturday of September of each year be set aside as POW/MIA Recognition Week and POW/MIA Recognition DAy respectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such law requires the accepted version of the POW/MIA Flag be flown for the entire scheduled week, at every government agency and military installation where possible so as to honor and assure these veterans that THEY WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. [Adopted]

No. 323 Submitted by Department of California (as amended)

REFUGEE STATUS FOR MAJOR NGUYEN QUY AN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to grant Major An and his daughter refugee status. [Adopted as Amended]

No. 324 Submitted by Department of California

PRIOR MILITARY SERVICE CREDIT BY PUBLIC RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly advocate the granting of retirement credit for prior military service by all publicly financed retirement systems at a reasonable cost to active and retired members (such as the employee/retiree paying the normal employee share). [Adopted]

No. 325 Submitted by Department of California

THE ACQUISITION OF BUILDING ON DEACTIVATED MILITARY BASES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that every consideration be given to requests made by either the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, or other congressionally chartered veterans service organizations for the government to donate excess military base properties for the purpose of serving our Nation's veterans. [Adopted]

No. 326 Submitted by Department of Texas

UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES AT CLOSED MILITARY INSTALLATIONS TO HOUSE CRIMINAL INMATES

[Disapproved]

No. 327 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

LEGISLATION BY THE CONGRESS TO AWARD MEDAL OF HONOR TO COLONEL JOHN W. MITCHELL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reaffirm our support for the Congress to adopt this legislation to award the Medal of Honor to Colonel Mitchell and that we call upon our Legislative Services in Washington, D.C. to continue its efforts to secure the passage of H.R. 3017 in the House and S1836 in the Senate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we ask each of our Departments to call upon their respective Congressmen and Senators to both support and co-sponsor these Bills. [Adopted]

No. 328 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

PROUDLY DISPLAY THE ENOLA GAY

[Disapproved]

No. 329 Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania

CONCERNING CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we concur with this resolution and to withdraw all support, moral and financial from the Chapel of Four. [Adopted]

No. 330 Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania

PREVENT DESECRATION OF MEMORY OF BRAVE & HONORED FALLEN COMRADES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to the effect that the use of any National Cemetery, War or Veterans Memorial, or other such property or edifice, being publicly owned, for any political purpose whatsoever, excepting those to be commonly accepted as being patriotic or memorial in nature be prohibited under force of law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the use of any bunting, streamers, symbols or other decorations of any type other than those commonly accepted as being patriotic in nature be banned. [Adopted]

No. 331 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

OPPOSE THE ENOLA GAY SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to exercise the necessary oversight to immediately review the plans for this exhibit and deny all federal funds because it lacks historical accuracy and does not comply with either the spirit or intent of Sections 77a and 80a of Title 20 cited above. [Adopted]

No. 332 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief

NATIONAL CONVENTION PARADE ALTERNATIVE

Be it Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that a patriotic rally be held as an alternative to the Annual Military Parade at the 96th National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the National Council of Administration be empowered to decide annually if a military parade or an alternative form of patriotic salute will be held during the next National Convention and that such decision be made at the October meeting of the National Council of Administration and promptly promulgated throughout the organization in the General Orders and the VFW Magazine. [Adopted]

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

No. 401 Submitted by many Departments

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

Be it Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Organization will:

(a) ensure routine distribution to the field of pertinent, credible and responsible information on a routine basis and, as requested, to provide such information about other POW/MIA organizations as may be needed by the Departments;

(b) encourage participation in the program by veterans' groups of other friendly nations such as our NATO and Far Eastern allies;

(c) encourage exchange of information among State POW/MIA Chairmen, to include publishing up-to-date address lists; and

Be it Further Resolved, that each Department exercise maximum initiatives to maintain the vitality and thrust of the POW/MIA program at Department levels by encouraging such actions as:

(a) display of the black POW/MIA flag, as appropriate, at any function at which it is proper to fly the U.S. Flag;

(b) work closely with family and reputable POW/MIA organizations at all major events and render cooperation and support to them;

(c) encourage support of information exchange at Post levels;

(d) appoint an interested member at the Post level to act as the POW/MIA Project Officer; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the National Organization of the VFW supports the annually announced POW/MIA Recognition Day. [Adopted]

No. 402 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO RESOLVE THE KOREAN WAR POW ISSUE

Be it Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW remains determined to resolve the status of Americans still unaccounted for in Korea; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the VFW urges the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments to increase their contact with the North Korean and Chinese governments and thus seek new opportunities to resolve this humanitarian issue as soon as possible; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the VFW, in keeping with United States laws and in consultation with the Korean and U.S. governments, will continue its active efforts to resolve the issue of Korean War POW/MIAs. (Adopted as Amended)

No. 403 Submitted by many Departments

THE LESSONS OF THE COLD WAR

Be it Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the lessons of the Cold and Gulf Wars taught us that our peace, our freedom and our security can best be achieved by remaining united in common purpose with our many allies and friends whereby we share both the danger and security burden and by maintaining a national defense which in combination with our allies and friends, is equal to those 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 political 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. (Adopted)

No. 404 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

LIMIT FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. BUSINESSES AND PROPERTIES

Be it Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of 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 or processes which could become vital or sensitive to the national defense of the U.S. and which will protect the economy of the United States. [Adopted as amended)

No. 405 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

STOP ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AT THE BORDER

Be it Further Resolved, that, as appropriate, military resources be employed to assist in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country; and

Be it Further Resolved, that the President and the Congress should carefully consider new legislation which would incorporate the results and recommendations of the recent bipartisan review of the 1986 Immigration Act. [Adopted as amended]

No. 406 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

IT'S TIME TO PUSH CASTRO OUT

Be it Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that urge the U.S. Government to continue its present policy of no trade with Communist Cuba and no diplomatic recognition of that communist state and to increase the economic and political pressure on Castro; and

Be it Further Resolved, that we urge the U.S. Government to use all measures short of violence and/or invasion to increase the pressure on Castro which, in conjunction with his isolation, to hasten the time until Castro's dictatorship is overthrown and Cuba can regain its freedom. (Adopted as Amended)

No. 407 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

PUNISH TERRORISTS NOW

Be it Further Resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to urge that the U.S. take decisive action against the Qadhaffi regime to bring justice to those responsible for the destruction of PanAm Flight 103 and to serve as a warning that all terrorists—no matter what country gives them refuge—will be hunted down and brought to justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to urge decisive action in the war on terrorism by:

(a) remaining on the offensive against terrorists rather than passively remaining on the defense;

(b) instituting a quarantine of those "outlaw countries" guilty of harboring or aiding terrorists; and

(c) holding all countries accountable for the security of American citizens traveling within their borders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congress should authorize and the President should declare a quarantine against the outlaw Qadhaffi regime of Libya until the Libyan intelligence officers are turned over for trial. (Adopted as Amended)

No. 408 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

STRATEGIC DEFENSE SHOULD BE A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly endorse and urge others to endorse the deployment of a defense against ballistic missiles before the end of this century as a first priority defense requirement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and the Congress to reverse their priorities and to reestablish strategic defense as a strategic priority for this country with appropriate levels of funding to assure this is accomplished as soon as possible. [Adopted as amended]

No. 409 Submitted by many Departments

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that our Government increase its surveillance against the dangers of continued Cuban subversion and the drug cartels to ensure that neither communists nor hostile dictatorships ever again pose a threat to the region and that Congress appropriate necessary funds to support this requirement as well as to provide assistance to the free governments of the region. [Adopted]

No. 410 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

ADD THE B–2 BOMBER TO OUR ARSENAL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we endorse, support and urge others to support the production and deployment of the B–2 Stealth Bomber as a vital part of a stronger strategic triad. [Adopted as amended]

No. 411 Submitted by many Departments

PROTECT OUR TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRIAL BASE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Government to institute support for and protection of new technology to prevent the erosion of our national economy and national security; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. industrial base which is absolutely essential to a fully capable military not be allowed to erode and that it be protected from foreign domination. [Adopted]

No. 412 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

OPPOSE LIFTING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BAN ON HOMOSEXUALS IN THE ARMED FORCES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally oppose the efforts of the President and of homosexual organizations to force the military service to accept and/or retain homosexuals and urge that this matter be taken before the Supreme Court to seek financial judicial reaffirmation of the homosexual exclusion policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the aforementioned Code should be rewritten in an effort to dismiss any possible question of the denial of civil rights based on moral, religious or ethical behavior, as it is not the intent to inflict that upon said persons, rather a just concern for the good order, discipline, stability and readiness of our Armed Forces and its operations. [Adopted as amended]

No. 413 Submitted by many Departments

CONCERNING THE GRANTING OF ASYLUM OR RESIDENCE, TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT, IN THE UNITED STATES OR ITS TERRITORIES TO ANY LEADER, PRESIDENT, MONARCH OR DICTATOR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge our United States Senators and Representatives and the President of the United States not to allow the granting of political asylum to former heads of state who are guilty of such acts of inhumanity against their people. [Adopted]

No. 414 Submitted by many Departments

MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE U.S. COAST GUARD

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to provide the funding necessary for the Coast Guard to carry out its numerous duties including, but not limited to, drug enforcement, military readiness, pollution control, maritime safety, search and rescue missions as well as their many other duties and missions. [Adopted]

No. 415 Submitted by many Departments

STANDING FIRM FOR FREEDOM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we stand firm for freedom and in furtherance of the ideals of freedom and democracy, we support a foreign policy that nourishes the newly won freedoms in Europe and elsewhere and remain firm against both the possibility of the reversal of Europe's freedom and the threats to other important regions of the world. [Adopted]

No. 416 Submitted by many Departments

NATIONAL STRATEGY OF PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of 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) helping our friends and allies defend themselves against aggression;

(c) helping formerly communist controlled countries in their process of converting to freely elected democratic governments;

(d) maintaining effective security and intelligence capabilities to prevent strategic surprise from any quarter;

(e) maintaining such strategic, nuclear and conventional military forces (including Active, Reserve and National Guard components) equipped with such high technology weapons and equipment which in the judgement of our military leaders are more than equal to the current threats and adequate to our current defense requirements; and

(f) maintaining the leadership necessary to inspire, focus and unite the national will and international unity to further our goal of peace and freedom. [Adopted]

No. 417 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

A COMMON SENSE MILITARY BALANCE IN EUROPE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that while we continue to support military withdrawals and reductions as agreed to by the NATO Alliance, the changing circumstances in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States require the residual presence of such combat ready ground, air and naval forces as the NATO military commander recommends and NATO's political authority have approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such U.S. forces remain based in Europe and that the United States retain such land, sea and air bases as necessary to support military operations in Europe and elsewhere; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States reaffirms our support for the continued existence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its military structure and strategy in Europe for the foreseeable future. [Adopted as amended]

No. 418 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

KEEPING OUR EYES ON THE POW/MIA GOAL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the goal of the fullest possible accounting of our missing men and that this issue will remain for us a non-negotiable matter of honor and a duty to be fulfilled not only for those lost in Southeast Asia but also those lost in World War II, the Korean War and the Cold War; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in consideration of the increasing cooperation by Vietnam, the VFW recognizes that at some point in time, but only after significant results have been achieved through Vietnam/U.S. cooperative efforts, we should lift the constraints of the economic embargo and move towards normalizing diplomatic relations thereby encouraging even greater cooperation toward our goal of the fullest possible accounting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any VFW decision to change our strategy regarding the pace and scope of establishing economic and diplomatic relations with Vietnam be guided by our own opinions, factual findings and judgements based not only on our findings during periodic visits to the countries of the region but also on the best information available; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that during VFW periodic visits to Southeast Asia, our representatives attempt to open dialogue with and contact such humanitarian, social and fraternal organizations as may exist and to use such dialogue/contacts to further pursue our POW/MIA goal of the fullest possible accounting. [Adopted as amended]

No. 419 Submitted by many Departments

MILITARY SERVICE: AN HONORED PROFESSION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW calls on all elected and appointed officials to publicly recognize the major contributions and sacrifices made by those in military service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our elected and appointed officials acknowledge the professionalism of our servicemen and women by ending the erosion of entitlements and expanding the benefits of service and by so doing, show that this nation cares for those who have served and sacrificed. [Adopted]

No. 420 Submitted by many Departments [As amended]

SUPPORT FOR START TREATIES I AND II

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties I and II which promise to increase U.S. security and stability in the U.S.-Russian nuclear relationship; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should credible evidence be uncovered of cheating or deception on the terms of the Treaties or their verification regimes, the Veterans of Foreign Wars will take such action as necessary to promote and preserve a strong national defense. [Adopted as amended]

No. 421 Submitted by many Departments

STRENGTHEN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES TO PREVENT STRATEGIC SURPRISE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the expansion of our national intelligence agencies to be better able to cope with the rapid changes in the world and to ensure that we will have adequate warning 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. [Adopted]

No. 422 Submitted by many Departments

LIMIT U.S. ROLE IN YUGOSLAV CIVIL WAR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that while we are seriously concerned about the Yugoslavian civil war and its effects on the people of Yugoslavia, and in consideration of the views of our military leaders, rather than playing a direct role in this conflict, we urge the President and Congress to support the active role of the United Nations to bring about an early end to the conflict, to provide relief for those still suffering, and to enforce such truce agreements and peace treaties as may be required to terminate the conflict; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that U.S. forces not be employed in any combat role or mission and that U.S. military forces employed in support of the UN only be placed under a U.S. military commander and authorized to defend themselves if attacked; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that at the termination of this conflict, those reports of atrocities be investigated by an international tribunal of the United Nations and those accused of such atrocities be brought to trial and justice. [Adopted]

No. 423 Submitted by many Departments

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge 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, sustain her development, and promote the Pacific and Asian regions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States provide a strong, flexible military force in the Republic of Korea to vigorously respond to any military and/or political aggression by North Korea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States in concert with its allies bring pressure to bear on North Korea to immediately cease its efforts to develop nuclear weapons and comply with the safeguard accord of the International Atomic Energy Agency. [Adopted]

No. 424 Submitted by many Departments

SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and 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 as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capabilities to provide for a military balance and stability in the area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President of the United States to proceed on schedule with the previously approved sale of the F–16 aircraft to the Republic of China; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to support any bid by the Republic of China on Taiwan to rejoin the United Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support the continued promotion of commercial, technological, educational and cultural relationships and exchanges between the United States and the Republic of China on Taiwan. [Adopted]

No. 425 Submitted by many Departments

SUPPORT THE EXCLUSION OF IRAQI POWS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the bipartisan request from the mem-

bers of the U.S. House of Representatives and urge the Secretary of State, Secretary of Health and Human Services and the President to withdraw the refugee status to be granted to these former Iraqi soldiers. [Adopted]

No. 426 Submitted by many Departments

TAKE ACTION NOW TO PREVENT FUTURE POW/MIA TRAGEDIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we believe that prior to the conclusion of any future hostilities, the U.S. Government insist and ensure that there are ironclad guarantees in any truce, peace or surrender agreements to provide for the fullest possible accounting of all our POW/MIAs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Congress of the United States must vigorously exercise oversight responsibility over the Executive Branch Departments and their policies, priorities and procedures to ensure the fullest possible accounting is achieved at the earliest opportunity and the Congress undertake a review of existing laws, regulations and procedures to prevent such future POW/MIA tragedies. [Adopted]

No. 427 Submitted by many Departments

GRANT THE AFEM TO VETERANS OF EL SALVADOR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that in light of the successful campaign and resulting democratic peace recently achieved in El Salvador, we urge the Department of Defense to award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to those U.S. military personnel assigned to the U.S. Military Group in El Salvador between January 1979 and December 1991, and whose assignment to the unit consisted of 60 days or more and entitles them in Imminent Danger Pay. [Adopted]

No. 428 Submitted by many Departments

OPPOSE U.S. FORCES UNDER FOREIGN COMMAND

[Disapproved]

No. 429 Submitted by Department of Georgia

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

[Disapproved]

No. 430 Submitted by Department of Kansas

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL NAVY MEDICAL AUGMENTATION TEAM OPERATION URGENT FURY (GRENADA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Joint Chiefs of Staff to recognize the direct support and participation by the U.S. Navy Medical Augmentation Response Team in Operation Urgent Fury and thereby ensure that members of the team are awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal in recognition of their participation. [Adopted]

No. 431 Submitted by Department of Colorado

SUPPORT PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

[Disapproved]

No. 432 Submitted by Department of Louisiana (as amended)

SURRENDER OF U.S. SOVEREIGNTY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to reject any effort to surrender the United States military, our independent foreign policy and supreme sovereignty to the United Nations. [Adopted as amended]

No. 433 Submitted by Department of Europe

SUPPORTING A KOREAN SERVICE MEDAL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request Congress to take action to award a prop-

er service medal to military personnel who have served in Korea assigned to units along the DMZ from July 1, 1954 to September 30, 1966 and from July 1, 1974 to a date yet to be determined. [Adopted]

No. 434 Submitted by Department of Oregon

UPHOLD CURRENT BAN ON HOMOSEXUALS SERVING IN THE ACTIVE, RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

[Disapproved]

No. 435 Submitted by Department of Virginia (as amended)

AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING IN ACTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that in order to display our national unity we urge the President of the United States and every member of the United States Congress to continue to speak out forcefully on this issue concerning missing U.S. Servicemen. [Adopted as amended]

No. 436 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

NO TO U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN HAITI

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose the use of U.S. troops in Haiti to bail out failed diplomatic initiatives and economic embargoes designed to support misguided moralistic policies not in the nationl self-interest. [Adopted]

No. 437 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief (as amended)

OPPOSE U.S. FORCES UNDER FOREIGN COMMAND

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of 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.

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. [Adopted as amended]

No. 438 Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania

CONGRESS URGED TO REEXAMINE ALL-VOLUNTEER MILITARY SERVICES

[Disapproved]

No. 439 Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania

KEEPING OUR EYES ON THE POW/MIA GOAL

[Disapproved]

No. 440 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

NO WOMEN IN COMBAT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as opposing the assignment of women within the Armed Forces to jobs that call for them to aggressively seek out, close with and kill or capture the enemy forces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the United States Congress to exercise its responsibility and examine these personnel assignment policies of the Defense Department with the view of passage of legislation restricting the assignment of women from direct combat positions. [Adopted]

No. 441 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

DEMAND IRAQ ACCOUNT FOR KUWAITI MISSING

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Government to take such action as necessary, either unilaterally or through our allies or the United Nations, that will force Iraq to account for those Kuwaiti citizens still missing. [Adopted]

No. 442 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES NAVAL TRAINING

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support and emphasize the need for our Nation's leadership to provide whatever funding, equipment and physical plant facilities as may be required to ensure continuance of the best and most professional training and education on the world for our sailors, Marines and Cost Guard personnel which will enable our deployed fleet Naval and Marine forces, albeit reduced in size and numbers, to maintain the combat edge and superiority which will continue to guarantee free and open maritime commerce and ensure America's ability to respond quickly to any global crises which threaten our national interests and security from the sea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support the consolidation of military training in combat systems mutually agreed upon by all services by strongly maintaining the integrity of each service to train its own personnel in service-unique specialties such as helicopter training, carrier aircraft and others where the demands of Navy-Marine-Coast Guard operations at sea are uniquely different from those of other land-based services. [Adopted]

No. 443 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

SUPPORT RETENTION OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW goes on record as supporting the ongoing existence of the Selective Service System in its stand-by status and urges the United States Congress to provide the funds necessary to maintain the Selective Service System. [Adopted]

No. 444 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. ARMY'S SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby go on record in full support of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia and urge the U.S. Congress to fully fund the continued operation of this important instrument for influencing and strengthening democracy in Latin America. [Adopted]

No. 445 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

SUPPORT FOR A REINVIGORATED MERCHANT MARINE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we believe a Merchant Marine fleet and a viable ship building industrial base are necessary to our national security and our global economic competitiveness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support legislative initiatives to preserve a modernized U.S. flag merchant fleet and an economically viable ship building industrial base capable to support future military requirements. [Adopted]

No. 446 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

REVISED THE 1942 MISSION PERSONS ACT TO BETTER PROTECT OUR POW/MIAS AND THEIR FAMILIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to revise the 1942 Missing Persons Act to make what changes are necessary to address those already missing and assist any that may follow in the years ahead. [Adopted]

No. 447 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

SECURITY OF THE PANAMA CANAL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and the Congress to closely monitor conditions in the Republic of Panama and to be prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the Canal and to ensure continued freedom of passage through it. [Adopted]

No. 448 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY TUITION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to adopt legislation to prohibit the charging of tuition at any federal academy. [Adopted]

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

No. 601 Submitted by many Departments

ADEQUATELY FUND THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress in its annual appropriations, to realistically fund the Department of Veterans Affairs construction need to allow it to carry out a planned program of modernization or replacement of aging facilities, which includes a sound system for setting construction priorities, which in combination will ensure the continued provision of quality health care to our nation's veterans. [Adopted]

No. 602 Submitted by many Departments

APPROVE ONE-MEMBER DECISIONS AT THE BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

[Disapproved]

No. 603 Submitted by many Departments

AUTHORIZE RETENTION OF THIRD-PARTY AND MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENTS BY VA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Administration to take appropriate action to ensure that third-party collections by VA remain with the Department of Veterans Affairs and not be offset from its annual appropriation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars supports Medicare reimbursement to VA for care provided to veterans without any offset from its appropriated funds. [Adopted]

No. 604 Submitted by many Departments

CHAMPUS FOR LIFE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation to provide the CHAMPUS program to those retirees of the U.S. Armed Forces who are age 65 or older. [Adopted]

No. 605 Submitted by many Departments

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF RETIREMENT PAY AND VETERANS DISABILITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly advocate legislation be enacted to permit the concurrent receipt of longevity military retirement pay without reduction of Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation. [Adopted]

No. 606 Submitted by many Departments

ELIGIBILITY REFORM FOR ACCESS TO VA HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Congress enact legislation bringing order to the present chaos affecting eligibility for VA health care by using the considerations raised in this resolution as the basic building blocks and providing all veterans with mandated access to full continuum of VA health care. [Adopted]

No. 607 Submitted by many Departments

EXCLUSIVE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW petitions the Congress to establish separate appropriations subcommittees exclusive to the Department of Veterans Affairs in both the House and Senate. [Adopted]

No. 608 Submitted by many Departments

FULL APPROPRIATION SUPPORT FOR VA MEDICAL CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the obligation and requirement to adequately fund veterans health care shall be acknowledged and properly met through appropriations actions which provide requisite funding to support all veterans medical services and programs authorized by the Congress. [Adopted]

No. 609 Submitted by many Departments

GUARANTEED U.S. ARMED FORCES MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure that retirees of the U.S. Armed Forces receive guaranteed medical support by requiring each branch of the Armed Forces' health services organization to provide the needed medical support as a secondary mission to providing medical support for personnel on active duty. [Adopted]

No. 610 Submitted by many Departments

MILITARY HOSPITAL CLOSURES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record opposing the closure of any military hospital unless the required cost-effectiveness study, as authorized by the Base Closure and Realignment Act, of PL 100–526, considers all the facts outlined in this resolution. [Adopted]

No. 611 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE IMPACT ON VA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Department of Veterans Affairs be given the authority to be fully competitive within any national health care plan advanced by the U.S. Congress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we will oppose as "anti-veteran" any national health care plan that does not adequately fund VA or that would reduce/abolish the VA health care system. [Adopted as amended]

No. 612 Submitted by many Departments

NEW LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Congress of the United States to adequately fund all new legislative initiatives and not eliminate or reduce existing veterans' entitlements or programs. [Adopted]

No. 613 Submitted by many Departments [as amended]

PEACE DIVIDEND

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the reduction of needed financial resources saved from defense expenditures be dedicated, on a first priority basis, to providing sorely needed benefits and services to United States military veterans and their families. [Adopted as amended]

No. 614 Submitted by many Departments [as amended]

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget and appropriation for the Department of Veterans Affairs which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of the benefit and entitlement programs and an enhanced Department of Veterans Affairs hospital and medical care system. [Adopted as amended]

No. 615 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

VA HOME LOAN GUARANTY PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that legislation be introduced that will serve to maintain the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program as the most viable and desirable means of home financing for veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars opposes any effort to further increase the VA funding fee. [Adopted as amended]

No. 616 Submitted by many Departments

VA PHARMACY PROGRAM FUNDING

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress and the Administration maintain fair drug pricing for VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that funding to fully meet VA pharmaceutical needs be provided. [Adopted]

No. 617 Submitted by many Departments

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment, as provided by a grateful nation, and oppose any effort to reduce this preference. [Adopted]

No. 618 Submitted by many Departments

REVIEW VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES AND DEVELOP MORE STRINGENT STANDARDS FOR ENFORCEMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), and Congress to review current enforcement procedures being employed with regard to compliance with the Veterans' Affirmative Action provisions of Section 4212, Chapter 42, Title 38 United States Code; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that following such review of enforcement methods and procedures, we urge DOL, OFCCP, and Congress to take appropriate steps within each agency or body to ensure that the Veterans' Affirmative Action provisions of the above cited law is vigorously enforced in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of existing laws. [Adopted]

No. 619 Submitted by many Departments

PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS PREFERENCE IN ALL JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States to amend the Job Training Partnership Act (Public Law 97–300) to provide for veterans' preference in all programs as is now the case under employment and training programs operated under Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38, United States Code. [Adopted]

No. 620 Submitted by many Departments

JOB LISTING COMPLIANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Congress to enact legislation repealing all references to the $25,000 threshold with respect to the listing of job openings in conjunction with the Veterans Affirmative Action effort, and that appropriate language not referencing a salary cap, be inserted in its place. [Adopted]

No. 621 Submitted by many Departments

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE TO STAY WITHIN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support the present organizational structure of the Veterans Employment and Training Service within the U.S. Depart-

ment of Labor, and remain opposed to attempts to transfer Veterans Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs. [Adopted]

No. 622 Submitted by many Departments

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of State and the Department of Defense to ensure the protection of veterans' employment benefits in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments or adjustments of any nature. [Adopted]

No. 623 Submitted by many Departments

MAINTAINING THE MILITARY HEALTH SERVICES SYSTEM (MHSS)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that MHSS should remain a viable entity ensuring members, retired members of the armed services, their dependents and their survivors continue to have access to quality health care under the health care delivery system of the armed services regardless of age or health care status of the beneficiary seeking health care. [Adopted]

No. 624 Submitted by many Departments

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF AGE IN PENSION CLAIMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress enact legislation to provide special consideration of age in pension claims by reducing the disability requirement to 60 percent at age 55 and to 50 percent at age 60, and that a 10 percent disability requirement be established for those age 65 and older. [Adopted]

No. 625 Submitted by many Departments

MAINTAIN INTEGRITY/HISTORIC MISSION OF VA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to maintain the integrity and historic mission of the Veterans Health Administration by reaffirming the collective commitment of successive Congresses and Administrations that VA was especially created for the administration of laws relating to relief and other benefits provided for veterans, their dependents, and their beneficiaries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we remind both the current Congress and Administration that accepting non-veterans for medical treatment by VA before all veterans are accommodated is in our view a clear abrogation of a contract made in recognition of those who devoted prior honorable service in defense of the nation. [Adopted]

No. 626 Submitted by many Departments

CONTINUE PROMOTING AND PUBLICIZING SPECIAL HIRING PROGRAMS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Office of Personnel Management to promote and publicize these special hiring programs for the noncompetitive appointment of eligible veterans. [Adopted]

No. 627 Submitted by many Departments

ENTITLEMENT TO HOUSEBOUND BENEFITS FOR PARENTS IN RECEIPT OF DIC

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support a change to Title 38, United States Code, to allow for parents who receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation to receive housebound benefits if so qualified. [Adopted]

No. 628 Submitted by many Departments

EXTEND PRESUMPTIVE PERIOD FOR MALIGNANT TUMORS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that legislation be enacted to extend the one year pre-

sumptive period for malignant tumors to three years under Title 38, United States Code, Section 1112. [Adopted]

No. 629 Submitted by many Departments

TINNITUS

[Disapproved]

No. 630 Submitted by many Departments

HERBICIDE EXPOSURE

[Disapproved]

No. 631 Submitted by many Departments

INCLUDE THE LOSS OF ONE LUNG AND ONE KIDNEY TO TITLE 38, USC

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to amend Section 1114(k) of Title 38, United States Code, to add the loss of one lung and/or one kidney to the list of anatomical loss or loss of use disabilities, which now includes creative organs, feet, hands, buttocks, sight, organic aphonia and hearing. [Adopted]

No. 632 Submitted by many Departments

AS AMENDED PROVIDE REFUNDS FOR CAUSE FOR THE MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to allow refunds for proper cause. [Adopted as amended]

No. 633 Submitted by many Departments

RESTORE ELIGIBILITY AND INCREASE BURIAL AND PLOT ALLOWANCE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that legislation be enacted to (1) increase both the VA burial and plot allowance to a level reflecting the inflationary impact of the intervening years, (2) restore entitlement to the VA burial allowance to those categories of veterans eliminated by Public Law 97–35, and (3) restore entitlement to the VA plot allowance to those categories of veterans eliminated by enactment of Public Law 101–508. [Adopted]

No. 634 Submitted by many Departments

VA PRESUMPTIVE CARE FOR PERSIAN GULF VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to provide, on a presumptive basis, appropriate medical examinations and treatment, including follow-up treatment, to all veterans of the Persian Gulf War who report signs or symptoms that may be associated with diseases endemic to that war region and other conditions related to that experience; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to expand the registry of Persian Gulf veterans who seek such treatment to be used in case service connected presumptions are later established. [Adopted]

No. 635 Submitted by many Departments

VETERANS' VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND RETRAINING PROGRAM

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Congress to enact legislation that modifies Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Title IV–C to establish a Veterans' Vocational Training and Retraining Program that will:

1. be administered by the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, United States Department of Labor; and
2. facilitate veteran workers adjustment to relocation and new occupational skills; and
3. provide temporary income support during training and retraining; and
4. stimulate employer participation through tax credits for employee training programs and incentives that the cost of training; and
5. provide flexibility to the service provider to tailor program assistance to the need of the veterans. [Adopted]

No. 636 Submitted by many Departments

VA PER DIEM FOR STATE VETERANS NURSING HOMES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact specific legislation to amend Section 1741 of Title 38, United States Code, to provide that per diem subsidies paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the care of veterans in State homes shall not be used to offset payments that are made under the Medicaid program for the purpose of assisting eligible veterans. [Adopted]

No. 637 Submitted by many Departments

ELIMINATE THE OFF-SET OF MILITARY SEPARATION PAY TO RECEIVE VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to change that portion of Title 10, United States Code, that requires the VA to deduct for any disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of separation pay a veteran may have received for the same period of service that the disability occurred. [Adopted]

No. 638 Submitted by many Departments

TAX EXEMPTION FOR ALL PAY WHILE SERVING IN A COMBAT ZONE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to immediately amend Section 112 of the Internal Revenue Code so all members of the Armed Forces are equally excluded of all pay while serving our country in a combat zone, and to make the amendment retroactive to cover the period of the Persian Gulf War. [Adopted]

No. 639 Submitted by many Departments

ELIMINATE SOCIAL SECURITY LAW INEQUITIES KNOWN AS THE "NOTCH"

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to introduce and support legislation to fund a more equitable solution to the rising cost of maintaining Social Security benefits for all recipients of Social Security and eliminate the current "year of birth" discrimination. [Adopted]

No. 640 Submitted by many Departments

PROVIDE FOR AN OPEN NATIONAL CEMETERY IN EVERY STATE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation which would provide at least one national cemetery in each state to ensure that all veterans may be buried reasonably close to their families. [Adopted]

No. 641 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

ELIMINATE THE GOVERNMENT OFFSET PROVISION FOR SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES WHO ARE IN RECEIPT OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to introduce and support legislation to eliminate the Government Pension Offset Provision of the Social Security Act as amended affecting veterans and their spouses. [Adopted as amended]

No. 642 Submitted by many Departments

GUARANTEED ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to so amend Section 1710 of Title 38, United States Code, as to mandate the provision of nursing home care for those now entitled to inpatient care. [Adopted]

No. 643 Submitted by many Departments

EXPAND VIETNAM ERA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek legislation in the Congress of the United

States that will provide for recognition by the Department of Veterans Affairs, under the provisions of Title 38, United States Code, subsection 101(29), by changing the dates of the "Vietnam Era" now beginning August 5, 1964 and ending May 7, 1975, to July 1, 1958 and May 7, 1975. [Adopted]

No. 644 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

COMPENSATION FOR SURGICAL REMOVAL OF MALIGNANT TUMORS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs be called upon to exercise his authority under Section 1155, Title 38, United States Code, to amend the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a rating of 100 percent for one year following post-surgical treatment of all malignant growths, of all major organs, irrespective of location. [Adopted as amended]

No. 645 Submitted by many Departments

ENSURING A GUARANTEED ENTITLEMENT TO MEDICAL CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend Section 651 of Title 2, United States Code, to expand the meaning of the term "entitlement" to recognize an obligation and a requirement to adequately fund programs to a class of individuals, i.e., veterans, who meet eligibility requirements for a service provided by the government and established in law as an entitlement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this obligation and requirement to adequately fund programs be construed to mean that specific appropriation support must be established for any medical programs directed by the Congress to be provided to veterans, both now and in the future. [Adopted as amended]

No. 646 Submitted by many Departments

STAFFING INADEQUACIES IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose this ongoing budgetary fantasizing and we urge that the imposition of productivity increases be recognized as arbitrary and inappropriate, and that personnel staffing for patient care be established based upon the mandate to treat all of those eligible under Public Law 99–272 and, further, that staffing projections recognize the fact of an increased demand to be generated by aging veterans and the downsizing of the military. [Adopted]

No. 647 Submitted by many Departments

MILITARY RETIREE PAY AS COMMUNITY PROPERTY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to amend Public Law 97–252 in order that all military retiree's pay *not* be considered community property in divorce settlements. [Adopted]

No. 648 Submitted by many Departments

RESTORATION OF DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek to restore the rights to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation in the event of dissolution of a subsequent remarriage even through this event takes place after November 1990. [Adopted]

No. 649 Submitted by many Departments

DAY CARE CENTERS FOR ALZHEIMBER'S PATIENTS IN VA MEDICAL CENTERS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to actively establish and implement Alzheimer's Day Care Centers in VA Medical Centers. [Adopted]

No. 650 Submitted by many Departments

HEALTH CARE REFORM REGARDING VA AND DOD HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support more joint use sharing agreements between VA and DOD medical facilities where it would be feasible. [Adopted]

No. 651 Submitted by many Departments

SUPPORT FOR PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to increase the funding for research into the causes, detection and treatment of prostate cancer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Veterans Affairs make prostate cancer research as well as its early detection and treatment a matter of great urgency and high priority. [Adopted]

No. 652 Submitted by many Departments

MILITARY CEMETERIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek assurances from the United States Government that these base cemeteries not be abandoned, and if there is no other Military Base in the area to assume the upkeep and care of them, they be assumed into the VA Cemetery System. [Adopted]

No. 653 Submitted by many Departments

OPPOSE THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS ON SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to oppose any legislation that would enact such a law that would require the VA to collect third party payment for any service connected disability. [Adopted]

No. 654 Submitted by many Departments

COLLOCATION OF VA REGIONAL OFFICES WITH VA MEDICAL CENTERS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will only support collocation of VA Regional Offices on VA Medical Center grounds when it is clearly shown that it will enhance services to the veterans using that facility. [Adopted]

No. 655 Submitted by many Departments

AMEND INTERNAL REVENUE CODE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Congress of the United States be urged to amend Paragraph 4 of Section 143(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to read: "(4) Qualified Veteran—For purposes of this subsection, the term qualified veteran means any veteran who meets such requirements as may be reimposed by the State law pursuant to which qualified veterans' mortgage bonds are issued." [Adopted]

No. 656 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

AMEND TITLE VII USC TO RESTORE COMBAT DUTY PAY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States, through the Department of Defense, to introduce or amend legislation to provide payment of funds under the Combat Duty Act of 10 July 1952; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that widows and survivors of the combatant, through proper verification, be eligible to receive such payment which otherwise would have been paid to the combatant had he survived. [Adopted as amended]

No. 657 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

OPPOSE ABOLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that there should not be any change in the Senate and House regarding the Veterans Affairs Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, with a membership in excess of 2.2 million, urge every member of the Congress of the United States to insist that the Committees of Veterans Affairs remain as standing committees in both the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives. [Adopted as amended]

No. 658 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

VA HIRING OF RELEASED MILITARY MEDICAL PERSONNEL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to actively recruit medical personnel who have been released from the armed forces. [Adopted as amended]

No. 659 Submitted by many Departments

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to reject any proposed intention to "streamline" government that would reduce or diminish VA's ability to properly serve and care for our nation's veterans. [Adopted]

No. 660 Submitted by many Departments

HELP THE VICTIMS OF AGENT ORANGE AND OTHER DEFOLIANTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to vigorously support liberalizing the criteria for approval of herbicide related claims, including placing burden of proof for the award of disability compensation on the U.S. Government and not on the individual veteran, as it is now. Hence the U.S. Government is responsible for providing needed medical attention, examination, care and treatment, as required by sound medical attention, and where appropriate, making proper service connected compensation awards now; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that those veterans now carried on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Agent Orange Registry be given the opportunity for a prompt examination by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs unit to ascertain dioxin levels, and to determine whether shared medical conditions exist among them.[Adopted]

No. 661 Submitted by many Departments

OPPOSING VETERANS STATUS FOR PEACE TIME MERCHANT MARINES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we are opposed to expanding veterans status to merchant seamen who served after August 15, 1945. [Adopted]

No. 662 Submitted by many Departments

COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR VA BENEFICIARIES AND MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide annual increases in an amount at least commensurate with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Department of Veterans Affairs' beneficiaries and military retirees.[Adopted]

No. 663 Submitted by many Departments (as amended)

OPPOSE THE TRANSFER OF VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE TO THE EMPLOYMENT TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose the recommendation by the Secretary of Labor, and urge Congress to oppose legislation that would remove the Veteran Employment and Training Service as a separate agency of the Department of Labor and which would remove the Veterans Employment and Training Service from its oversight role to ensure veterans receive preference in all services provided by federally funded employment and training providers. [Adopted as amended]

No. 664 Submitted by many Departments

VETERANS' REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS PROTECTION

[Disapproved]

No. 665 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

TERMINATION OF BENEFITS UPON THE REMARRIAGE OF FORMER SPOUSES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we ask Congress to amend Public Law 97–252(USFSPA) to terminate payments of retired pay upon remarriage of the benefiting former spouse; and, terminate current payments to those already remarried former spouses not more than 180 days from the date of enactment of amended legislation.[Adopted]

No. 666 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief (as amended)

MAINTAIN THE VA CHAPLAIN SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Department of Veterans Affairs insure that hospitalized veterans be guaranteed the ministry of a professionally trained corps of chaplains extant within VHA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees be urged to fund a full-strength Chaplain Service. [Adopted as amended]

No. 667 Submitted by Department of Nevada and Oregon

IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF QUALITY OF VA MANDATED PSYCHIATRY SERVICES AT LOCAL VA FACILITIES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress for the functions of the Vietnam Veterans Centers be integrated with and made subject to the administrative control of the corresponding local VA medical facility and the Chief of Psychiatry Services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the budget appropriations obligated for Vietnam Vet Center functions be made available to the corresponding local VA medical facility, and in particular be made available to the psychiatry services to support the mandated delivery of a high-quality, high-volume professional service. [Adopted]

No. 668 Submitted by Department of Georgia

ESTABLISH AN EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT FOR VETERANS DISCHARGED FROM THE ARMED FORCES BETWEEN 1985–1988

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we ask Congress to enact legislation to allow veterans who had completed their full service obligation without any break in service prior to being discharged at any time between July 1, 1985, and june 30, 1988, to be eligible for benefits under Chapter 34/30, with a revised delimiting date for affected veterans. [Adopted]

No. 669 Submitted by Department of Utah

GUARANTEE FULL-STRENGTH CHAPLAIN SERVICE

[Disapproved]

No. 670 Submitted by Department of Kentucky

MILITARY FUNERALS

[Disapproved]

No. 671 Submitted by Department of Washington

ESTABLISH A FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN IN ALL 50 STATES

[Disapproved]

No. 672 Submitted by Department of Nevada [as amended)

VA COMPENSATION AND HEALTH CARE FOR ATOMIC VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs make a special study into the future effects of radioactive activity on military personnel; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that where additional health problems related to radiation exposure are uncovered, the Department of Veterans Affairs will provide medical treatment and compensation to such veterans. [Adopted as amended]

No. 673 Submitted by Department of Nebraska

ELIGIBILITY FOR NON-SERVICE CONNECTED PENSION BENEFITS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Government of the United States to formally approve the eligibility of all veterans participant in the military actions in Panama, Lebanon and Grenada for non-service connected pension benefits. [Adopted]

No. 674 Submitted by Department of Nebraska

REMOVE MEANS TEST

[Disapproved]

No. 675 Submitted by Department of Colorado

NATIONAL FUND EXPENDITURES SAVED FROM REDUCTION OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURES BE DEDICATED AND EXPENDED TO PROVIDE NEEDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO THE NATION'S VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

[Disapproved]

No. 676 Submitted by Department of Colorado

SUPPORT FOR THE OPERATION EXPANSION, IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF FITZSIMONS ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

BE IT resolved, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we ask for Congress' full support of the continued operation of Fitzsimons Army Medical Center. [Adopted]

No. 677 Submitted by Department of Colorado

MILITARY HOSPITAL CLOSURES

[Disapproved]

No. 678 Submitted by Department of Colorado

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE IMPACT ON VA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any national health care bill that would reduce or abolish the VA health care system. [Adopted]

No. 679 Submitted by Department of Iowa [As amended]

FUNDING OF PERSIAN GULF SYNDROME

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we fully back the decision to take care of those Persian Gulf Veterans, but that we strongly urge the Congress of the United States to provide a sufficient appropriation to the Department of Veterans Affairs to fund such a program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly support the provision of VA compensation to all veterans suffering from disabilities related to their Persian Gulf service. [Adopted as amended]

No. 680 Submitted by Department of Montana

VETERANS' REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS PROTECTION

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support and petition Congress for the strongest measures that secures reemployment rights for veterans and all other individuals called to serve in the U.S. Military while not placing an undue burden on the employers of America and with no limit to number of employees. [Adopted]

No. 681 Submitted by Department of Montana

PREVENT VA FUNCTIONS BEING FURTHER SPLINTERED

[Disapproved]

No. 682 Submitted by Department of Montana

NURSING HOME AT VA HOSPITAL FORT HARRISON

[Disapproved]

No. 683 Submitted by Department of Montana

NEED FOR ANOTHER VA DOMICILIARY FACILITY

[Disapproved]

No. 684 Submitted by Department of Montana

REINSTATE THE VA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

[Disapproved]

No. 685 Submitted by Department of Montana

ELIMINATION OF THE VA'S PAUPERS OATH AND HOSPITAL ADMISSION

[Disapproved]

No. 686 Submitted by Department of Europe

RENEGOTIATE STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENTS (SOFAS)

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to renegotiate the applicable Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) to protect the interests of American service members and their spouses, as well as the American spouses of foreign service members, as expected and specified under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, Section 703(a), allowing the on base employment of third country nationals if otherwise qualified. [Adopted]

No. 687 Submitted by Department of Europe (as amended)

OVERSEAS MILITARY PERSONNEL EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation allowing otherwise eligible service members access to the same Earned Income Tax Credit available to other taxpayers. [Adopted as amended]

No. 688 Submitted by Department of Europe

ESTABLISH A VA ASSISTANCE OFFICE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish an Assistance Office in Federal Republic of Germany to support the U.S. citizens in Europe. [Adopted]

No. 689 Submitted by Department of Europe

POST EXCHANGE AND COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES FOR U.S. MILITARY RETIREES RESIDING OR TRAVELING OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of State and the Department of Defense to ensure the protection of post exchange and commissary benefits for retirees of the U.S. Armed Forces in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature. [Adopted]

No. 690 Submitted by Department of Europe

TIMELY U.S. ARMY ENTITLEMENT PAYMENT TO SURVIVORS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ensure that each branch of the Armed Forces' Servic-

ing Finance Center releases the initial survivor's entitlement check immediately upon receipt of the SBP claim. [Adopted]

No. 691 Submitted by Department of Europe

POSTAL PRIVILEGES FOR RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of 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 restrictions. [Adopted]

No. 692 Submitted by Department of Europe

CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES STANDARDIZATION

[Disapproved]

No. 693 Submitted by Department of Europe

SHIPMENT OF REMAINS-RETIREES RESIDING OVERSEAS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to ship the remains of retirees residing overseas to home of record in CONUS at no cost to survivors. [Adopted]

No. 694 Submitted by Department of Europe

MILITARY PRIVILEGES FOR OVERSEAS RESERVISTS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress and all other appropriate government agencies to affect change in the current Agreement of the Status of Forces Agreement regarding U.S. Armed Forces Reservists and their PX and commissary privileges overseas. [Adopted]

No. 695 Submitted by Department of Europe

ENTITLEMENTS AND BENEFITS OF RETIRED U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL

[Disapproved]

No. 696 Submitted by Department of Europe

REINSTATEMENT OF U.S. VETERANS EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS AFFECTED BY CINCUSNAVEUR POLICY

[Disapproved]

No. 697 Submitted by Department of Europe

VETERANS FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCE BY GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE A PRIORITY

[Disapproved]

No. 698 Submitted by Department of Europe

COMMISSARY AND POST EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES FOR U.S. MILITARY RETIREES RESIDING OVERSEAS

[Disapproved]

No. 699 Submitted by Department of Alaska (as amended)

COMMISARY SURCHARGE (TAX) FOR RETIRED MILITARY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we continue to support the men and women who served their nation by petitioning Congress to find other means to reduce the DECA budget other than increasing commissary surcharges for retired military personnel. [Adopted as amended]

No. 700 Submitted by Department of Wisconsin (as amended)

AMEND H.R. 4050

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress to amend H.R. 4050 by removing any provisions allowing states to request a waiver eliminating DVOP/LVER positions. [Adopted as amended]

No. 701 Submitted by Department of Wisconsin

REEMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1994

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby go on record opposing the lack of specific provisions providing veterans preference in the "Reemployment Act of 1994." [Adopted]

No. 702 Submitted by Department of Wisconsin

SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES (LVERS) AND DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) REPRESENTATIVES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we hereby go on record to urge the Congress of the United States to appropriate sufficient funds to support the number of LVER and DVOP positions as required by Title 38; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars, does hereby urge the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET) to include in their budgets sufficient funds to support the number of LVER and DVOP positions required by Title 38; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Assistant Secretary of Veterans' Employment and Training. [Adopted]

No. 703 Submitted by Department of Oregon

RETAIN AND STRENGTHEN EMPLOYER SANCTIONS AGAINST EMPLOYMENT OF ILLEGAL ALIENS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the President and the U.S. Congress to retain and strengthen the employer sanctions which were enacted in 1986, against employment of illegal aliens and to increase the effectiveness of employer sanctions by enacting measures to prevent the use of fraudulent work authorization documents. [Adopted]

No. 704 Submitted by Department of New York (as amended)

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the many bases that are closing be renovated to accommodate homeless veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that adequate and proper health care be available to veterans. [Adopted as amended]

No. 705 Submitted by Department of New York

FUNDING FOR VA HOSPITALS

[Disapproved]

No. 706 Submitted by Department of New York

MAINTAIN HOSPITAL AND COMMISSARY FACILITIES

[Disapproved]

No. 707 Submitted by Department of Minnesota

ENFORCE COMPLIANCE OF VETERANS PREFERENCE LAWS

[Disapproved]

No. 708 Submitted by Department of Minnesota

ABOLISH THE MEANS TEST AS A CRITERIA FOR VA MEDICAL SERVICES

[Disapproved]

No. 709 Submitted by Department of Illinois

ESTABLISH A NATIONAL CEMETERY IN THE GREATER CHICAGO AREA

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support and aggressively pursue a National Cemetery in the greater Chicago area which will service all or at least the greatest number of resident veterans. We ask that the full force and power of our resources be exercised to pursue and accomplish the following programs listed in preference order, by all means at our disposal. We ask the following be notified of our position regarding this issue: Secretary of the Department of Defense, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of the Army Closure Director, the Congress and President Clinton.

We ask that one of the following options be considered and implemented without prejudice to the EIS Study of the Joliet Site now being considered:

Option 1 That the Secretary, or his equal, of the Department of Defense instruct the Army to expand the Fort Sheridan Army Cemetery now located at and on the grounds of Fort Sheridan, Illinois, by adding 200 acres of adjoining land and present this cemetery to the Veterans Affairs Department of National Cemeteries for Administration.

Option 2 That the Department of Veterans Affairs, vigorously pursue the creation of a State National Cemetery at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, according to the prevailing precedent established at Manteno, Illinois in cooperation with the Governor of Illinois.

Option 3 Create a National Cemetery at Vernon Hills Nike Site to provide honored burial space for the veterans residing in the area.

Option 4 Create a National Cemetery in cooperation with the State of Illinois as a State National Cemetery at the Vernon Hills Nike Site. [Adopted]

No. 710 Submitted by Department of Indiana

GUARANTEED U.S. ARMED FORCES MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR RETIREES

[Disapproved]

No. 711 Submitted by Department of Indiana (as amended)

VETERANS INSURANCE COVERAGE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we shall sponsor and support legislation mandating the Department of Veterans Affairs to give a veteran and his/her dependents health and accident coverage for a minimum of 180 days following the date of a honorable discharge from military service. [Adopted as amended]

No. 712 Submitted by Department of California

PRESERVATION OF THE NATIONAL SOLDIER HOME LOCATED AT THE V. A. MEDICAL CENTER, WEST LOS ANGELES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request the United States Congress to ensure adherence to the expressed wishes of the donors of said land, that the terms and consideration of the grant be adhered to, that the Pacific branch of the National Soldiers' Home for Disabled Veterans be maintained on said property, that an opportunity be offered to those who were displaced from said National Soldiers' Home to return thereto and that the admission requirements for entering the home revert back to the original status. [Adopted]

No. 713 Submitted by Department of California

ADDITION TO THE LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA NATIONAL CEMETERY

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request legislation to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to utilize a portion of this land to extend the present national cemetery boundaries at West Los Angeles, California, to provide a burial for those eligible veterans residing in this area. [Adopted]

No. 714 Submitted by Department of California (as amended)

FUNDING FOR VAMC AT TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we go on record as urging the Congress and the Administration to provide the funding necessary for the construction of the already approved VA Medical Center adjacent to the David Grant U.S. Air Force Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense. [Adopted as amended]

No. 715 Submitted by Department of California

REBUILDING/REINSTATEMENT OF COMPLETE INPATIENT/OUTPATIENT SERVICES AT SEPULVEDVA V.A.M.C.

[Disapproved]

No. 716 Submitted by Department of California

SAN FRANCISCO NATIONAL CEMETERY, PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Department of California reaffirm its commitment of VFW National Resolution 681, as listed above and seek legislative action to secure a minimum of eleven acres of property that adjoins the San Francisco National Cemetery located at the Presidio of San Francisco and that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the California Legislature seeking their legislative support; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the government agency (Department of Defense and/or Department of the Interior) provide this eleven acres of property to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery systems to be used for burial of our nations veterans and Armed Forces members; when ever appropriate funding may become available. [Adopted]

No. 717 Submitted by Department of Virginia

ELIMINATE SOCIAL SECURITY LAW INEQUITIES KNOWN AS THE "NOTCH"

[Disapproved]

No. 718 Submitted by Department of Virginia

ESTABLISH A NEW U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

[Disapproved]

No. 719 Submitted by Department of Virginia

TO HELP THE VICTIMS OF AGENT ORANGE AND OTHER DEFOLIANTS

[Disapproved]

No. 720 Submitted by Department of Ohio

AMEND ALLOCATION FORMULA FOR TITLE 38, SECTION 4103 PERSONNEL

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to amend the personnel allocation formula in Title 38 USC, Chapter 41, Section 4103(a) to allow for the appointment of one (1) Assistant Director for each 150,000 veterans and eligible persons residing in the state. [Adopted]

No. 721 Submitted by the Department of Pennsylvania (as amended)

AUTHORIZE NATIONAL GUARD TO CONDUCT MILITARY FUNERAL CEREMONIES FOR VETERANS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation that would authorize and fund the National Guard for performing burial ceremonies for veterans at State and National Cemeteries. [Adopted as amended]

No. 722 Submitted by Department of California (as amended)

GULF WAR VETERANS BLOOD BAN

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support national and state legislation to seek and support the immediate testing of Desert Storm veterans for biological, chemical and radiation exposure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States support a national policy and efforts to protect the public from exposure from Persian Gulf War veterans based on the findings of test results, and that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States support reinstating a ban on blood and body donations from this group of veterans until all medical and health questions on biological exposure are answered. [Adopted as amended]

No. 723 Submitted by Department of West Virginia

VA GRAVE MARKERS

[Disapproved]

No. 724 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

VA GRAVE MARKERS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to remove the words "unmarked graves" from the portion of Title 38, U.S.C. Section 2306, which restricts VA from providing headstones or grave markers to all honorably discharged veterans upon their demise. [Adopted]

No. 725 Submitted by Commander-in-Chief (as amended)

AMENDED TAX RETURNS FOR MILITARY RETIREES

BE IT RESOLVED, by the 95th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the IRS establish, through whatever means, an exception to the current law whereby a military retiree will be allowed to file amended tax returns back to the effective date of award of disability compensation, regardless of the number of years involved. [Adopted as amended]

REPORTS OF THE NATIONAL OFFICERS

REPORT OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

GEORGE R. CRAMER

VFW's 95th National Convention is an opportunity to remember past experiences, celebrate camaraderie and determine the organization's course for the upcoming year. Simply put, it is a time to take advantage of all we have to offer both from an individual and an organizational standpoint.

Crucial concerns confront America's veterans, which must be dealt with in a conclusive and timely manner. Most of these issues will be discussed at this convention. You can play a decisive role in determining how to deal with priority goals by attending the business meetings and making your voice heard.

PRESSING PRIORITIES ON CAPITOL HILL

VFW has been busy in the capital in dealing with a wide array of veterans issues. But with the number of veterans in Congress rapidly diminishing, VFW members must become more politically astute and involved. When the 1994 elections occur, get out and vote in candidates friendly to veterans.

Concerns range from disability compensation to who should serve in what capacity. Homosexuals serving openly in the military remains unresolved, though the issue has faded from the headlines. Women in ground combat units is another social matter that must be dealt with as part of our interest in defense.

Cost-of-living allowances (COLAs) and concurrent receipt of retirement pay and VA disability compensation are two perennial legislative issues that have to be debated each and every year.

Veterans of Operation Desert Storm, who are suffering from mysterious illnesses contracted in the Persian Gulf, are in desperate need of our help. While the VA has

moved quickly to remedy the situation, the Pentagon has been less than forthright in its answers.

On the brighter note, presumptive service connection was granted to Vietnam veterans suffering from five ailments associated with Agent Orange, the chemical defoliant.

And, of course, reliable health care is still an elusive goal for many veterans. We will continue to push for full staffing and funding of VA hospitals and other medical facilities within the context of national, comprehensive health care reform. Preserving an exclusive medical system for vets is the number one priority, followed by boosting the woefully inadequate VA budget.

Large-scale downsizing of the armed forces has forced thousands of former service personnel into the job market. America is presently witnessing the largest demobilization of troops since WWII. As they enter civilian society, the private sector must create meaningful employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, the VFW is positioned to extend a helping hand. With the Job Opportunity Board at the Post level, we have a network in place to ease the transition into an often highly competitive working world.

In the public sector, Veterans Preference must be maintained and the Veterans Employment & Training Service retained to facilitate hiring within the federal government.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Threats to national security remain as a result of international instability. But when GIs are committed overseas, it must be under U.S. command—not foreign or U.N. The lessons of Somalia, should by now, have sunk in. Haiti is a prime example of where not to deploy U.S. troops. Americans are already dangerously exposed on the ground in Macedonia, right in the heart of the Balkan powderkeg.

For those who never returned from past wars, the VFW is doing its utmost to obtain a full accounting of MIAs and POWs from WWII, the Cold War, Korea and Vietnam. Chair officers have been dispatched on several missions to investigate progress being made in Indochina. And we are pushing for North Korea to cooperate.

Yet only by exerting maximum pressure on the Communist regimes will the fate of the men lost in Southeast Asia ever be resolved. Lifting the trade embargo against Hanoi was not the move to make at this time. Any further concessions should be vehemently opposed until it is verified that the Vietnamese are fully cooperating with U.S. teams.

DEBT OF GRATITUDE

The VFW staff in the nation's capital ensures that members' views on these issues are made known. Likewise, the staff at National Headquarters enables the organization to operate and administer efficiently all its programs on a nationwide basis.

My tenure as Commander-in-Chief has been highly rewarding. Serving America's veterans and the nation they fought for is a very satisfying experience.

Those I worked with are deserving of the highest praise. Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief "Gunner" Kent and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera have been great confidants. Thank you both for the selfless work and endless hours that made this year so successful.

Backing from the entire membership, officers and the National Council of Administration was critical. Both the Kansas City and Washington staffs provided fabulous assistance. They were always on call when needed.

Howard Vander Clute, Jr., Jim Bowden, John Senk, Larry Rivers and Benny Bachand, to name only a few, gave advice, accumulated information and guaranteed that our other capable staff saw the programs through. Thank you all so much for your support and dedication

I must also express my gratitude to my own Department of Illinois—staff, leaders and members alike. A special thanks to those who made my homecoming such a unique and memorable event

To Juanita Crowe, Ladies Auxiliary national president, her officers and staff who made it so comfortable to work with the Auxiliaries, I say thank you.

In the end, it was you—the members—who gave me the opportunity to demonstrate to veterans, their families and the whole country that in the VFW we take our Commitment to Service seriously.

Report of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief

ALLEN F. "GUNNER" KENT

For many years I have been honored to serve the dedicated people who make up the VFW. This year, however, has been a particularly eventful one for me.

During the 94th National Convention in Dallas you elected me Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, making me a member of Commander-in-Chief George Cramer's Commitment to Service team.

The Chief's leadership, which emphasized the role of the VFW in protecting veterans' entitlements as well as compassion in treating veterans and their families, was geared to demonstrating that veterans continue to serve their country long after hanging up their uniforms.

Let me express my gratitude to Chief Cramer for his advice, thoughtfulness and assistance as we worked during our term in office to assure 1993–94 was an extra special year in the VFW's distinguished history.

Serving dedicated Americans who are VFW members and meeting personally with you in my trips to various parts of the country has shown to me again the caliber of the organization's stalwarts.

Time and again you have demonstrated devotion to your country by selfless service. You continue to do so daily by eagerly doing whatever it takes to make the VFW a success wherever Posts exist.

Consequently, my term in office has been highlighted by a succession of important events. In Washington, experiencing personally the legislative process at work gave me a new understanding of the need to keep up the fight for veterans' rights. Meeting with key congressional leaders also proved enlightening.

Numerous visits to National Headquarters provided me with an enhanced respect for the work done in Kansas City. And this applies to the entire staff there and in Washington, D.C., the nerve center of VFW legislative activity.

ISSUES ON THE AGENDA

During my trips to Europe, Vietnam and Korea, I was fortunate to meet with Post members in our overseas Departments. But more importantly, as part of the VFW team dispatched to those countries, I was able to see firsthand the fine troops America has on freedom's frontiers around the globe.

This was especially true in Korea, where GIs still stand guard against a hostile North. It is my goal to work for change in the bylaws to allow Korea vets not already eligible to become eligible for VFW membership. Along these same lines, active duty personnel of all campaigns must be made aware of their eligibility for the organization.

Equally important were my fact-finding missions to Indochina to check on the progress being made in accounting for Americans missing in action there. The bottom line is that lifting the trade embargo against Hanoi was premature. The Vietnamese have to do much more before further concession are made regarding normalized relations.

At home, the VFW also must renew its commitment to the spirit of volunteerism. Until we begin to show tangible contributions to the community, the VFW can expect little public recognition. A prime example is an issue of critical concern: homelessness among veterans. The VFW, at every level, should do whatever it can to help solve this tragic problem.

THANK YOU TO ALL

I am especially indebted to the members of my home state of Arizona for their encouragement this past year. My special thanks goes to Commander-in-Chief Cramer and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera. Adjutant Gen. Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr. has been tireless in providing aid as has Quartermaster Gen. James Bowden. Executive Director Larry W. Rivers of the Washington Office has been likewise generous in providing assistance.

Commitment to service has long been the hallmark of the VFW. As an organization and as individuals we have lived up to this motto. But there is much more yet to accomplish. With the firm foundation laid last year, we can make 1994–95 another banner year for the VFW.

Report of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief

PAUL A. SPERA

As Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars I have gained greater insight into the workings of the organization. Not only do I now have a better understanding of the VFW's mechanics, but I have been able to witness firsthand the dedication of all members in the field.

Visits throughout the nation as well as trips overseas have shown me how critical a role the VFW plays at home and abroad. Ranging from Posts in my home state to those in Central America like Panama and Costa Rica, the VFW is a natural part of society's fabric. As such, we must make our presence known on every occasion.

Paying homage to the deeds of comrades of 50 years ago is just such an occasion, as I found on my recent trip to Europe during the commemoration of the Normandy landings. Honoring the memory of the war dead is a noble gesture called for in the VFW's constitution.

Support for U.S. troops abroad also is critical in these turbulent times. We cannot afford to forget GIs stationed at lonely outposts in Kuwait and elsewhere. Somalia vets, for example, know the VFW cares and are apt to join our fraternity because of demonstrated concern during their recent deployment.

On a related subject, resolving the fate of America's MIAs from WWII, the Cold War, Korea and Vietnam is among my top priorities. Improved diplomatic relations with Hanoi must await further evidence that the Communist regime is genuinely making a full-fledged effort to cooperate with U.S. search teams.

In this regard, my July trip to Vietnam and Laos was most instructive. Two things are clear: the American field operatives assigned to Joint Task ForceFull Accounting are doing a fantastic job. And both regimes must do more unilaterally to account for our MIAs.

Seeing close up the instrumental part played by the U.S. throughout the world reinforces my determination to ensure that the VFW continues to make its views heard when it comes to formulating defense and foreign policies.

Domestically, the issues are equally challenging. Guaranteeing and advancing veterans rights is, of course, the VFW's prime objective. Many objectives in the areas of health care, disability compensation, VA accountability and the VA budget remain to be accomplished.

PUBLIC OUTREACH THE KEY

Visiting various Departments has renewed my faith in the determination of dedicated members across the nation.

Their spirit of volunteerism has made VFW programs successful in countless communities and in doing so assured membership growth. Dedication is apparent everywhere—and it is a positive for the long-term future of the VFW.

I sincerely thank my own Department of Massachusetts for its encouragement and support. My year as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief was made productive because of the leadership and counsel of Commander-in-Chief George Cramer and the guidance of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief "Gunner" Kent. I am especially grateful for the cooperation of Adjutant General Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr.; Quartermaster General James Bowden; and Washington Office Executive Director Larry W. Rivers; as well as their excellent staffs.

As we gather in Las Vegas for our national convention, let us dedicate ourselves to the successful pursuit of the many issues ahead and make the well-informed decisions required to increase awareness of our organization and its policies.

The prime means of doing so, of course, is reaching out to the public. If the VFW is to maintain and enhance its prestige, it must speak directly to the nation as a whole. "Preaching to the choir" will no longer do. Some 10 million eligible veterans do not belong to the VFW, and the only way we can spread the word is through an effective and aggressive public affairs campaign across the country.

You are the organization, and it has been an honor to serve as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Looking to the future, let our resolve be strengthened by the phrase, Commitment to Service.

Report of Adjutant General

HOWARD E. VANDER CLUTE, JR.

A host of new attractions will greet our delegates as we return to America's entertainment capital, Las Vegas, for the second time in five years. This great western

city has undergone a tourist transformation and stands ready to greet the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary.

In mid-August 1989, the 90th National Convention attracted a record number of VFW attendees. Our 95th National Convention promises to equal or surpass that record year.

The comrades and sisters of the Department of Nevada, our hosts, are prepared to answer the call from National Headquarters to assist with preparations for our week-long meeting and for the many special events that have been scheduled.

We are grateful for their dedication. Our staff at National Headquarters join together with them in extending to the delegates a cordial welcome, along with our gratitude for your attendance and your continued devotion.

National conventions provide for renewal of friendships made at prior meetings. For others, it is the self-satisfaction of having fulfilled the responsibilities of leadership and reaping the rewards for that performance before their fellow comrades assembled that stands out the most.

MAKING POLICY

But in a more general sense, it provides an opportunity for all delegates to take part in establishing VFW policies. This is done through the adoption of resolutions submitted by individual members, Posts, County Councils, Districts and Departments.

Regardless of their origin, these resolutions ultimately set the VFW's course for one year. Once policy and direction are in place, we are mandated to pursue the objectives established. That means committing whatever resources are necessary to satisfy the intent of the resolution's stated objectives.

The Clinton Administration poses a host of new concerns, such as submerging the Department of Veterans Affairs role in national health care plans, dangerously downsizing the U.S. armed forces to the degree that we will suffer a loss of respect around the world for our military capability, as well as seriously deteriorating future military deployments where national interests are concerned.

Our organization, in our advocacy role, is faced with many new issues. Veterans health care, inadequately funded for over a decade and now coupled with the prospect of national health care reform, could have its very existence threatened. The VFW cannot allow such a tragedy to occur.

We continue to expend our resources in pursuit of the establishment of a separate appropriations subcommittee in both houses of Congress in order to direct attention and advocacy to the need for adequate funding to improve the quality of veterans health care.

Other issues to be addressed at this convention concern eligibility reform so that all veterans can access the full continuum of the VA health care system, resolve the unacceptable backlog of veterans claims in the VA regional offices, support efforts to increase COLAs for veterans on compensation or pension, to continue to insist the VA provide comprehensive physical examinations for Persian Gulf veterans who have experienced illnesses attributed to their service in that region, and above all, be ever alert to any ill-conceived plan that would provide access to VA medical centers to non-veterans, such as proposed by the previous administration's Rural Health Care Initiative.

MEMBERSHIP

Our responsibility as a veterans organization extends to those troops who served in Somalia as well as the Persian Gulf. We must react to their needs if they exhibit unusual medical problems due to their service in East Africa. We also need to aggressively recruit these new overseas veterans who received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for their participation in Operation Restore Hope.

However, membership recruiting, as well as implementation of all sponsored community-oriented programs, falls to you—the individual member. And it is the effort put forth by the individual that in the past has brought spectacular success to our organization.

The "Train the Trainer" program for membership recruiting is now fully operational. It is a means of preparing our present members to communicate the reason why eligible veterans should join, as well as the many available benefits they can enjoy after they become members.

DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

Meanwhile, national officers and staff in Kansas City and Washington are responsible for daily administration, fiscal and accounting functions, development of new

sources of revenue, providing veterans services, preparation of congressional testimony and the editing of our publications.

Programs of the organization must be adequately funded if they are to be successful. A capable staff must be appropriately compensated for their industry and expertise. Veterans Service personnel must be professionally trained. Real estate must be maintained, postal rates continue to increase and national conferences and conventions require substantial financing. The list of financial requirements to meet current expenses is a long one. It demands we consider whatever alternatives may be available to use to generate additional income.

As you are all aware, National Headquarters, with the approval of the National Council of Administration, has been engaging in a variety of direct mail solicitations to certain segments of our membership, which have been extremely successful. Members have always been generous.

We have experimented with acquisition mail solicitations, retail marketing programs and using the services of reputable brokers, with VISA credit cards. We are preparing to test other fund-raising proposals a continuing search to meet future financial needs without the necessity of raising the member per capita tax.

SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

All programs for 1993–94 have concluded with outstanding participation:

Over 17,000,000 Buddy Poppies were sold;

$99,500 worth of national scholarships were awarded at the Washington Conference and over $2,456,000 were awarded in the "Voice of Democracy" program at Department District and Post levels.

Renewed interest and participation in Americanism and patriotic activities are evident; and

Youth and safety programs were expanded.

Credit belongs solely to the Post and Auxiliary members who dedicated themselves to their country, community and organization. Such programs are image-builders that draw attention to the VFW. In many cases, they have been the underlying reasons for veterans and their families to join the VFW and the Auxiliary.

NATIONAL STAFFS

Your National Headquarters, combined with its adjunct office in Washington, DC., employs 275 full-time, dedicated men and women who genuinely understand our mission. They have been trained to respond to the needs of our great volunteer force in the field.

That volunteer force consists of VFW and Auxiliary members who "toil in the vineyards" in support of a tradition of service to community, state and nation. Please look upon your Headquarters as a resource available to you at anytime to assist you in your VFW work.

Along with my staff, I wish to commend Commander-in-Chief George Cramer for his ability to forcefully articulate our legislative initiatives. This was never better displayed than during his testimony before a joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee meeting at our Washington Conference in March. The responses evoked from prominent members of Congress after delivering his testimony proved to all of us that is remarks were not only appropriate, but delivered in a sincere, uncompromising manner.

George Cramer can be proud of his performance—he represented his constituency well as did his predecessors. He will continue to have our undying respect for the leadership qualities he displayed during his term of office.

Thanks, too, to Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Allen "Gunner" Kent and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera, who performed tirelessly as capable surrogates of the Commander-in-Chief. They effectively carried the VFW message throughout the U.S. and around the world.

I must express my personal appreciation to Quartermaster General Jim Bowden and his staff who attend to the fiscal and accounting operations of our organization. They have provided a spirit of cooperation that is essential to ensure our continued success.

Next my gratitude must be expressed to my assistant adjutants general. John Senk, Administration, has a capable staff which addresses the day-to-day administrative functions of the organization. Benny Bachand, Programs, attends to, with his qualified staff, the image-building programs of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary. Washington Office Executive Director Larry Rivers provides a keen understanding of the nation's capital. His expert staff carries out the legislative and service mandates of the VFW.

IN THE FIELD

Thank you to the officers in Departments, Districts, County Councils and our more than 10,800 Posts, whose dedication, along with the individual Post members, causes our organization to meet its commitment to veterans and their survivors.

Congratulations to the super achievers who are attending this national convention as All American Commanders, and to the National Program award winners. Your dedication has polished our image and improved our established reputation as a potent force for what is good for America.

FAREWELL MESSAGE

Finally, as I prepare to retire from my office and my responsibilities as the Adjutant General, I feel obliged to express personal feelings of gratitude to the last 13 Commander-in-Chief for their trust and confidence in appointing me to that position. I sought membership in the VFW upon being released from active service and have spent my entire adult life actively involved.

I am indeed grateful to my comrades of the Department of New Jersey and the Eastern States Conference for providing the political support necessary to be elected to national office, ultimately serving as Commander-in-Chief in 1979–80. I am most grateful to Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock, who, when faced with the passing of then Adjutant General Julian Dickenson, appointed me to that position.

Two significant VFW successes have been recorded since April 1981: a 250,000 increase in membership; and Posts worldwide jumped from 9,676 in late 1980 to 10,886 by March of 1994. This in spite of over 100 Post charter cancellations annually.

During this period, National Headquarters also established the new Marketing Services Department with the responsibility of developing new sources of revenue for the organization.

A salary administration was adopted, thus establishing equitable means of compensating employees and new employee benefit programs.

Negotiations are under way with a corporation to market selected consumer products with a VFW label.

In spite of a shrinking veteran population and the graying of World War II and Korean War veterans, we have visions for a bright future. Our entire senior staff, with but two exceptions, are Vietnam and Desert Storm veterans.

It has been because of their enthusiasm, their flexibility, their willingness to work diligently and to automate that we have succeeded. Now it will be their experience and their maturity that will sustain the organization through and beyond our 100th anniversary in 1999.

Past Commander-in-Chief Larry Rivers, who presently serves as the executive director of our Washington Office, will become Adjutant General at the closing session of our 95th National Convention. He will bring a new dynamism to the office and will surely direct the day-to-day operation of National Headquarters effectively. I wish him well.

Although my retirement as Adjutant General will occur at this national convention, I do want to reaffirm my loyalty, my devotion and all of the industry I can muster to continue to serve this great organization in any manner or for any positive purpose.

I am proud of my membership, I am proud of my service, and I remain indebted to all my fellow members who made all of this possible.

God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all the good work we accomplish for those who served honorably and for their survivors. And God Bless America!

Report of Quartermaster General

JAMES D. BOWDEN

At the beginning of this fiscal year, the Quartermaster General submitted a tentative balanced budget to the Commander-in-Chief and the National Budget and Finance Committee. On October 2, 1993, the budget was approved by the National Council of Administration. A summary follows:

Estimated Income for the Year Ending August 31, 1994:	
Membership Dues	$11,480,160
VFW Magazine Commercial Advertising	2,875,000
Property Operation—Net	(800,000)
Buddy Poppy Sale—Net Income	425,000
Supply Department—Net Income	1,650,000

Interest on Investments	2,140,000
Group Insurance Program	3,750,000
Ladies Auxiliary Contribution	150,000
Solicitation Programs	2,235,000
Miscellaneous	108,500
Total Estimated Income	24,013,660
Budgeted Expenses for the Year:	
National Headquarters Fund	11,311,714
National Publication Fund	5,883,639
Community and Veterans Service Fund	6,813,552
Total Budgeted Expenses	24,008,905
Budgeted Surplus	$4,755

In addition, $3,824,262 is budgeted as the portion of 1994 dues applicable to the 1994–95 fiscal year, and $7,000,000 is budgeted as collection of restricted Life Membership fees. Pursuant to the National By-Laws, these funds are not available for operation of the 1993–94 fiscal year.

AUDIT REPORT

The financial statements for the nine months ended May 31, 1994, and the Independent Auditors' Report relating thereto, are presented as a part of this report. Audited financial statements for the year ending August 31, 1994, will be mailed to the National Council of Administration and the Department Commanders as soon as they are available.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

BALANCE SHEETS

MAY 31, 1994

	NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND NATIONAL PUBLICATION FUNDS	COMMUNITY AND VETERANS SERVICE FUND (Restricted)	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT FUND (Restricted)	LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND (Restricted)
ASSETS				
Cash and temporary cash investments	$ 1,405,608	$ 234,798	$200,000	
Securities held and managed by Fidelity — at cost (market value — $32,[illegible]) (at National Headquarters and National Publication Funds and $108,288,434 for Life Membership Fund)	33,457,461			$106,903,505
Accounts receivable	521,880	676,290		
Accrued interest receivable	574,087			1,947,767
Amounts due from other funds	543,228		146,195	26,562
Inventories	1,211,548	932,360		
Furniture, fixtures and equipment (net after accumulated depreciation of $3,422,524)	1,263,291			
National Headquarters property —				
Kansas City, Missouri				
Land	1,077,703			
Buildings and improvements (net after accumulated depreciation of $2,333,115)	1,753,256			
Other improvements-unamortized portion	1,145,121			
National Memorial Building property — Washington, D.C. —				
Land, building, and improvements	2,018,098			
Prepaid and deferred expenses	1,367,015	44,184		
TOTAL	$46,718,266	$1,887,632	$346,195	$108,877,834
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES				
Accounts payable	$ 750,302	$1,810,822		
Accrued liabilities	608,368			
Other liabilities	1,964,291	35,818		
Amounts due to other funds	172,757	543,238		
Deferred revenue:				
National dues allocable to subsequent periods	6,558,428			
Insurance programs		410,445		
Fund balances	36,664,120	(912,691)	$346,195	$108,877,834
TOTAL	$46,718,266	$1,887,632	$346,195	$108,877,834

See notes to financial statements.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States:

We have audited the accompanying balance sheets of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States - Office of the Quartermaster General (the "Organization") as of May 31, 1994 and the related statements of revenue, expenses and changes in fund balances for the nine months then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, such financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States - Office of the Quartermaster General as of May 31, 1994, and the results of its operations and changes in its fund balances for the nine months then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The supplemental summary of expenses is presented for the purpose of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. This additional information is the responsibility of the Organization's management. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects when considered in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

DELOITTE & TOUCHE
Kansas City, Missouri
June 27, 1994

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

STATEMENTS OF REVENUE, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

NINE MONTHS ENDED MAY 31, 1994

	NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND NATIONAL PUBLICATION FUNDS	COMMUNITY AND VETERANS SERVICE FUND (Restricted)	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT FUND (Restricted)	LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND (Restricted)
REVENUE:				
National dues				
Calendar year 1993	$ 3,553,334			
Calendar year 1994	4,663,[illegible]			
Solicitation revenue	14,043,69[illegible]	[illegible]		
Contributions from VFW Ladies Auxiliary	150,000			
Life Membership fees				[illegible]
VFW Magazine advertising	2,532,[illegible]			
Interest earned	1,657,76[illegible]			[illegible]
Net revenue (expense) from operating programs:				
National Insurance Program		52,[illegible]		
Supply Department	1,10[illegible],776			
Property Operations	(468,95[illegible])			
Poppy Department		[illegible]		
Outside addressing-net	26,49[illegible]			
Cash discounts on purchases	14,25[illegible]			
Miscellaneous-net	93,00[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
Total revenue	27,714,185	3,915,9[illegible]		[illegible]
EXPENSES	21,765,16[illegible]	5,7[illegible]	$152,805	[illegible]
NET REVENUE (EXPENSES)	5,949,0[illegible]	[illegible]	($152,805)	[illegible]
TRANSFERS AND OTHER CHANGES:				
Fund transfer	(2,000,000)	2,000,000		
Net amounts applicable to prior periods	49,[illegible]			
NET REVENUE (EXPENSES) AND OTHER CHANGES FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDED MAY 31, 1994	3,995,4[illegible]	205,102	($152,805)	[illegible]
FUND BALANCES, SEPTEMBER 1, 1993	32,065,7[illegible]	1,117,793	5,[illegible]9,6	[illegible]
FUND BALANCES, MAY 31, 1994	$36,694,12[illegible]	$ [illegible],912,89[illegible]	$346,195	$108,[illegible]

See notes to financial statements

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, NINE MONTHS ENDED MAY 31, 1994

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (the "Organization") was incorporated in 1914 and chartered by Congress in 1936 for fraternal, patriotic, historical and educational purposes. The financial statements of the Organization include the Office of the Quartermaster General which is independent of the various state departments and local posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The Organization is exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Organization follows the practice of fund accounting. Under this method, transactions and balances for various purposes are classified into fund groupings that are in accordance with specific activities or objectives as follows:

a. The National Headquarters and National Publication Funds are resources of the Organization that provide the funds necessary to operate the Organization and publish the VFW Magazine. Certain unrestricted net solicitation revenues received by the National Headquarters and National Publication Funds are designated by the Organization as restricted. These amounts are reflected as revenues of the restricted funds at the time the Organization designates the revenues as being restricted.

b. The Community and Veterans Service Fund (Restricted) consists of net revenues of the National Insurance Programs and the Poppy Department and expenses of the Organization's various community and veteran service activities. In addition, certain net solicitation revenues have been designated by the Organization as restricted for Community and Veterans Service Fund activities. Net revenues of the National Insurance Programs not expended or set aside for activities of the community and veteran service programs would be subject to Federal and state income taxes.

c. The Property Maintenance and Improvement Fund (Restricted) was established by the National Council of Administration and is to be used to restrict monies for future maintenance, repair, preservation and improvement of the properties of the Organization. The Fund records the related expenses for maintenance and improvements as the costs are incurred.

d. The Life Membership Fund (Restricted) includes investment income and the unexpended fees received from the life members of the Organization. All life member fees and all income earned from the investment of such fees are to be used solely for the payment of the annual National Headquarters, State Departments, and Local Posts dues of life members and the administrative expenses of the Fund. The actuarially determined amount, using a discount rate of 7.5%, required to fund future dues of $5 to each of National Headquarters, Departments and Posts for life members determined as of May 31, 1994 was approximately $111,000,000. Accordingly, a significant portion of the Life Membership fund balance is ultimately payable to the State Departments and Local Posts whose financial statements and operations are not controlled by or reflected in the financial statements of the Organization.

Securities consist primarily of obligations of the United States Government or its agents and are carried at amortized cost.

Inventories are valued at the lower of average cost or market using the first-in, first-out method.

Property and improvements are valued at cost and depreciated or amortized over the estimated useful life of the asset using the straight-line method. The provision for depreciation and amortization for the nine months ended May 31, 1994 was $453,703. The National Memorial building is not depreciated as the intent of the Organization is to perpetually preserve the historical value of the building.

A portion of the Organization's revenue is derived from annual dues paid by its members. Annual dues are collected on a calendar year basis and are reflected in revenue ratably over the year. Unearned portions of dues are deferred.

During the nine months ended May 31, 1994, the National Headquarters Fund transferred $2,000,000 related to its solicitation programs to the Community and Veterans Service Fund.

2. EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS

The Organization has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all of its employees who have completed certain minimum service requirements. The Organization's funding policy is to contribute at least the amount required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act ("ERISA"). Employees of several VFW State Departments and the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW also participate in the plan.

Contributions of $337,394 have been made for the nine months ended May 31, 1994. The following table sets forth the plan's funded status and amounts recognized in the Organization's financial statements at the measurement date, May 31, 1994 (in thousands):

Actuarial present value of benefit obligations	
Accumulated benefit obligation, including vested benefits of $9,404	$ 10,860
Projected benefit obligation for service rendered to date	$ (13,916)
Plan assets at fair value as of May 31, 1994	15,988
Plan assets in excess of projected benefit obligation	2,072
Unrecognized net gain from past experience different from that assumed	(1,528)
Unamortized prior service cost not yet recognized in pension cost	1,775
Unrecognized net asset as of June 1, 1987 being recognized over 15 years	(1,127)
Prepaid pension cost included in prepaid and deferred expenses	$ 1,192
Net periodic pension cost for 1994 included the following components:	
Service cost — benefits earned during the period	$ 668
Interest cost on projected benefit obligation	913
Actual return on plan assets	(665)
Net amortization and deferral	(532)
Net periodic pension cost	$ 384

The weighted-average discount rate and rate of increase in future compensation levels used in determining the actuarial present value of the projected benefit obligation were 7.5 and 5.0 percent, respectively. The expected long-term rate of return on assets was 7.5 percent.

The Organization also has a contributory savings plan (a 401-K plan) available to employees who have completed certain minimum service requirements. The Organization makes contributions to the plan based upon guidelines set forth in the plan. Total contributions made by the Organization for the nine months ended May 31, 1994 were $233,399.

3. POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Delegates to the 80th National Convention established the Veterans of Foreign Wars Political Action Committee (PAC). Contributions from Posts and Auxiliaries from inception to May 31, 1994 for payment of administrative expenses of the PAC totaled $1,273,561. Unreimbursed expenditures for administrative expenses from inception to May 31, 1994 totaled $1,297,096. The excess of expenditures over contributions received of $23,834 is included in miscellaneous receivables of the National Headquarters Fund. Contributions from individuals are recorded in the records of the PAC, rather than the records of the Office of the Quartermaster General.

4. SOLICITATION REVENUE

Solicitation revenue is derived from various fund raising activities sponsored by the Organization. The Organization incurs costs relating to the printing and design of mailings, postage and administrative costs associated with its program and supporting activities. Expenses of the National Headquarters and National Publication Funds and Community and Veterans Service Fund included approximately $9,487,000 and $603,000 of such costs for the nine months ended May 31, 1994. A significant portion of these costs relate to the acquisition and development of mailing lists used for solicitations.

5. COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

In connection with its magazine publication operations, the Organization has entered into a contract with a paper company to purchase a specified amount of paper in monthly installments. The price has been fixed for calendar year 1994 and will terminate on December 31, 1994. As of May 31, 1994, the estimated total future commitment is $993,000.

In connection with its Buddy Poppy program, the Organization has entered into a contract with a manufacturing company to purchase a specified amount of raw material each year at a fixed price through 1999. The estimated total commitment at May 31, 1994 is $1,780,000 payable in approximate equal annual installments through 1999.

The Organization has been named as a defendant in legal actions. Management of the Organization, based in part on advice from the Organization's legal counsel, believes that all such matters will be resolved with no material adverse effect to the financial statements.

6. ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

In June 1993, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FAS) issued statements number 116 (*Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made*) and number 117 (*Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations*). The Organization is currently studying these statements and intends to implement them on or before the required date which for the Organization is the year beginning September 1, 1995. The impact of adopting these statements is not presently determinable.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

SUPPLEMENTAL SUMMARY OF EXPENSES
NINE MONTHS ENDED MAY 31, 1994

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS FUND		
Commander-in-Chief and Staff Officers	[illegible]	
National Council of Administration	[illegible]	
National Convention Expense	[illegible]	
Congressional Dinner	[illegible]	
Department Adjutant and Quartermaster's Conference - K	[illegible]	
Department Commander's Conference - D.C.	[illegible]	
Department Senior Vice-Commander's Conference - K.C.	[illegible]	
Department Convention Travel	9,311	
Standing Committees	46,591	
Special Events	104,130	
Special Travel and Projects	64,744	
Adjutant General's Department	757,034	
Administrative Services - Adjutant General's Department	105,831	
Post Services	58,030	
Public Relations and Press Service	261,667	
Membership Program	1,669,465	
Post Development	827,072	
National Headquarters - General Services	273,876	
Washington, D.C. Office - Administrative Expense	356,559	
Public Relations - Washington, D.C. Office	124,687	
National Legislative Service	331,485	
Quartermaster General's Department	585,750	
Maintenance Expense - National Headquarters	25,632	
General Expense - National Headquarters	842,276	
Membership Reporting - Allocation of Data Processing Expenses	123,716	
Dues Receipts and Tax Forms	171,843	
Contingent Expenses	135,969	
Employee Vacation Expenses	61,428	
Retirement Plan	337,594	
Retirement Administrative Expense	127,561	
Tax Deferred Savings Program - Employer Contribution	233,399	
Employee Group Life and Disability Insurance	102,958	
Employee Medical Insurance	542,100	
Solicitation Expenses	9,486,768	
Other Expenses	165,577	$ 19,107,302
Expense Allocation — Community and Veterans Service Fund (Restricted)		(1,895,656)
		17,211,646
NATIONAL PUBLICATION		
Editorial	199,237	
Circulation — Allocation of Data Processing Expenses	120,560	
Advertising Promotion Expense	6,616	
Publication Expense	4,420,467	4,746,880
Expense Allocation — Community and Veterans Service Fund (Restricted)		(193,418)
		4,553,462
TOTAL		$21,765,108
COMMUNITY AND VETERANS SERVICE FUND (RESTRICTED)		
Community Service Programs:		
Voice of Democracy and Youth Activities Program	$ 463,883	
Americanism Program	189,692	
Community Activities Program	100,334	
National Security and Foreign Affairs	205,763	$ 959,673
Veterans Service Programs:		
Veterans Service Committee	6,137	
Washington, D.C. Office	820,432	
Payroll Taxes	76,227	
Service Officer Training Program	184,296	
V.A.V.S. Program	16,400	
Contingent Expenses	7,612	
Field Representatives	350,334	
Subsidies - Regional Offices	171,547	
National Service Officer Pilot Program	351,045	
Veterans Civil Service Employment Program	69,553	
Solicitation Programs	602,923	
Service Officer	5,608	2,662,114
Allocation From:		
National Headquarters Fund		1,895,656
National Publication Fund		193,418
TOTAL		$ 5,710,861

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

SUPPLEMENTAL SUMMARY OF EXPENSES

NINE MONTHS ENDED MAY 31, 1994 (Continued)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND (RESTRICTED):

1994 Annual Dues of Life Members		$12,334,785
Administrative Expenses:		
Salaries	$55,166	
Temporary Help	3,596	
Postage, Freight, and Express	39,462	
Stationery and Office Supplies	500	
Printing and Paper Stock	7,228	
Life Membership Plates	31,370	
Equipment Maintenance	2,554	
Credit Card Charges	23,128	
Allocation of Data Processing Expenses	75,373	
Professional Services	1,495	
Installment Plan Expenses	15,032	
Miscellaneous	382	255,286
TOTAL		$12,590,071

1993 NATIONAL CONVENTION FINANCIAL REPORT

The following is a summary of receipts and disbursements pertaining to the VFW's 94th National Convention which was held in Dallas, Texas:

CASH RECEIPTS:

Registration & Miscellaneous	$ 118,810	
Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW	15,000	
Dallas Convention Bureau	65,000	
Total Receipts		$ 198,810

CASH DISBURSEMENTS:

Salaries	74,142	
Travel	761,045	
Audio-Visual	22,726	
Awards Luncheon - Net	5,579	
Badges & Signs	25,961	
Convention Committee Expense	30,909	
Convention Program Booklet	23,007	
Distinguished Guest & National Officer Exp	25,045	
Distinguished Guest Banquet - Net	16,983	
Furniture and Equipment Rental	4,816	
Entertainment	24,588	
Meeting Halls and Set-Up	53,716	
Contest and Parade Expense	28,421	
Postage, Freight & Express	27,230	
Printing and Paper	40,367	
Miscellaneous	77,701	
Total Disbursements		1,242,236
EXCESS DISBURSEMENTS		$1,043,426

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

MEMBER BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Over the years, we have attempted to build an attractive member benefit package for our members. All of the individual benefit programs are optional with the member and cost him nothing unless he elects to use them. A variety of group insurance plans, a discount merchandise purchasing service, a travel service (hotels, motels, rental cars, airlines, etc.), the VFW [illegible]'s credit card, and other benefits presently provide a wide range of choices, but we are constantly looking at other programs that might benefit our membership. Whenever we find one that we feel will provide a quality benefit at an affordable price, the member benefit list will grow.

Details of our insurance programs, and the other member benefits, have been included in a "Member Benefit Handbook" which was mailed to all members this summer. Again, our insurance and other member benefit programs are available to our members at what we believe is a fair cost, but costs the member nothing unless, at his option, he wishes to utilize them.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Approximately one-third of the VFW's total membership is now comprised of life members, which greatly enhances the financial stability of the entire organization in addition to relieving some of the burden of annual membership retention. A total of 1,040,125 members have purchased a life membership since the inception of the program in 1950 through May 31, 1994. During the same period, 220,153 became inactive due to death, etc., leaving 819,972 names on the active list. During this past year, 65,653 members paid $7,731,567 to become life members.

Life Membership Fund - May 31, 1994

Fees Collected Jan. 1, 1951 through May 31, 1994		$120,474,662
Total dues paid Post, Department and National	$117,934,328	
Administrative Expenses since Jan. 1, 1951	3,790,617	
	121,724,945	
Income from Investments (Includes gains/losses from sale of securities)	110,125,119	
Excess of Disbursements over Income		(11,599,826)
Reserve for Future Dues Payments and Expenses		$108,877,834
Total Investments in Trust Funds		$106,903,505
Temporary Investments and Cash on Hand		1,974,329
Total Investments and Cash		$108,877,834

Note: The estimated Dues Payment due 8-31-94 is $12,613,350

Life Membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States continues to be a popular option for both new and continuous members. In 1989 another payment option was announced, called the "Life Membership Installment Plan." This program allows a member in good standing to purchase a Life Membership over a one year period with four quarterly payments and no interest charge. If you have questions about the Installment Plan or any other aspect of the Life Membership Program, please consult your Post Quartermaster.

SOURCE OF REVENUE

Budgeted income for the fiscal year ending August 31, 1994, is $24,013,660 compared to $23,942,525 for the previous fiscal year. The following schedule shows the proportionate composition of this year's budgeted income by department. Note that figures for the Group Insurance Program, Interest on Investments, the Emblem & Supply Department, and Property Operations are already reduced by applicable expenses.

	Percentage of Total Revenue
Dues	47.8%
Group Insurance Program (Net)	15.6
VFW Magazine Commercial Advertising	12.0
Marketing Services (Net)	9.3
Interest on Investments (Net)	8.9
Emblem & Supply Department (Net)	6.9
Property Operation (Net)	(3.3)
All other sources	2.8
Total	100.0%

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

Membership and National Dues

The current budget is based on dues income of 2,154,000 members, which includes 821,198 Life Members. As of May 31, 1994, dues have been paid on 2,112,956 members which is 4,717 less than last year on the same date. Dues are paid on a calendar year basis. Therefore, one-third of the dues collected is set aside in a reserve applicable to the next fiscal year.

VFW Group Insurance Program

The National Organization first sponsored a group insurance plan in 1962. Over the years, we added a variety of life, health and accident type plans. For the last several years now, net income from the Group Insurance Program has been our largest source of income after membership dues. National Headquarters receives an administrative expense reimbursement for handling the billing, collection of premiums, certificate issuance, etc. The administrative expense reimbursement we earn from the National Life Insurance Plan is distributed to VFW State Departments. Since 1971, VFW State Departments have received 2.9 million dollars for the assistance they give us in the advertising and promotion of that program.

For the nine months ended May 31, 1994, the net income from all VFW National Group Insurance Plans was just under $2.7 million. The decrease in net revenue the previous few years was primarily due to a continual high rate of claims being paid. Many of these claims are the result of our aging membership. Claim payments are, of course, why you purchase insurance.

Emblem & Supply Department

For the Nine months ending May 31,

	1994	1993
Net sales	$3,759,019	$3,838,498
Cost of Sales	1,870,937	1,851,426
Gross Profit	1,888,082	1,987,072
Expenses:		
Salaries	307,312	300,922
Advertising	52,182	44,462
Catalog Expense	84,886	98,168
Postage	220,006	242,419
Data Processing	85,280	76,510
Other	157,570	155,385
Recovery of Shipping & Handling Costs	(243,352)	(254,035)
Total Expenses	663,884	663,831
Net Revenue Before Commissions	1,224,198	1,323,241
Less Commissions to Departments	122,420	132,324
NET REVENUE	$1,101,778	$1,190,917

Section 715 of the By-Laws states that 10% of the net profits of supplies sold within a Department shall be paid to such Department within thirty days following the close of each fiscal year. The Quartermaster General will be mailing these payments to the Departments in September. The new Emblem & Supply Catalog will be mailed to Posts and State Departments in August.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

OVERVIEW

Net income from the Emblem & Supply Department, the Group Insurance Program, interest income earned from investments, and more recently, the Marketing Services Department, total approximately ten million dollars annually and help substantially in meeting the monetary needs of all VFW programs. While these sources of revenue are relatively solid, expenses for printing, postage, travel and our many other activities continue to rise. As a result of today's trend toward more frequent and larger law suits, and the need to keep ourselves as unencumbered as possible from litigation, our use of costly legal services continues to grow. Another particularly noticeable cost increase is our use of outside professional services necessary to keep our operations efficient and technologically current, and to assure that the marketing of ourselves is superior to the attention-grabbing multi-media campaigns of those against whom we are forced to compete. These and other factors make it extremely difficult to produce a year-ending surplus, to which we have grown accustomed over the past four decades.

Our financial statements as of May 31, indicate a surplus by year end. Our actual financial status at August 31, cannot be accurately predicted, and one of the biggest uncertainties is the cost of the National Convention, which will be enormous by any standard.

The Veterans of foreign Wars provides more and better benefits to our members at all levels of the organization than does any other veterans organization in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of other veterans, whether they belong to the VFW or not, are beneficiaries of many of our fine programs seeking such things as a strong and stable national defense, a firm, fair foreign policy, and the creation and protection of countless veterans benefits. In spite of these things, for which we can all be proud, there is no other major veterans organization with lower national dues than the VFW.

QUALITY PEOPLE

The quality of our people at all levels is one of the many reasons the VFW is the fine organization it is, carrying the respect and admiration of top government officials for many years. While I work diligently as your Quartermaster General to preserve the financial integrity of National Headquarters, I could not do so were it not for thoughtful groundwork laid by those having preceded me in this office, of the hardworking, quality staff I am privileged to have working with me in Kansas City and the Washington office. Adjutant General Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr., retiring this year after many fine years of toil for the VFW, has been a pleasure to work with and a credit to his office. His is another example of a life dedicated to the VFW above and beyond the call of duty. Likewise, the contributions of other dedicated workers from our National Officers to the Adjutant General's staff, State Departments and grass roots VFW members, provide that needed ingredient for success. Working together for a common case, these quality people of the past, present and future, will forever stand as one of the cornerstones in the foundation of the VFW.

I would like to express my thanks to this year's National officers, National Council of Administration and Budget & Finance Committee who have contributed to making this another very fine year. I hope this report gives you some understanding of the financial status of your VFW National Headquarters. A solid financial base is essential to support our VFW goal that are common to units at all levels of our organization. While there are many other things to be done, I urge you to pay close attention to the finances of your particular unit, and try to leave it in better shape than when you came on board.

Report of Judge Advocate General

JAMES J. PLICK, ESQ.

It has been a great honor to have served in the position of Judge Advocate General during this year of 1993–1994 with our Commander-in-Chief and staff officers.

Certainly, in all positions in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we are committed to service and it has been an extremely interesting learning experience for me regarding the workings of our great organization.

During my year as Judge, I have continued to serve both the Department of New Jersey, my District and my Post.

I wish to extend my best wishes and express my appreciation to all who have given me the opportunity to have served as Judge Advocate General.

Report of Surgeon General

HOWARD W. BRYANT, M.D.

It has truly been an honor and a privilege to be elected as the VFW Surgeon General for 1993–94.

The VFW has always been, to me, the leader in working for veterans benefits. "Commitment to Service" by Commander-in-Chief George Cramer and his officers and comrades has been evident this last year. It has been a great pleasure working with them.

There are many changes in medical service in the United States in both the governmental and private sectors, starting in 1994.

VA hospitals will see great changes they are supposedly going to cover all veterans and their dependents. They will be in competition with other public and private hospitals. The VFW will be one organization that will be ever alert and protective of the needs of the nation's veterans.

It has been a tradition to elect a medical doctor and/or a doctor of osteopathy to the office of the Surgeon General. Let's keep that tradition and ensure qualified individuals occupy this post.

Thanks to the officers and comrades of the VFW for their help this last year.

Report of National Chaplain

DR. CHARLES W. EDWARDS, JR.

Let us never abandon the time-honored principle—Commitment to service. American veterans will never stop serving. Service, to make America strong. Service, to keep America free. Service, to preserve America; the home of he brave.

America is a place where free men and women can hold their head high, proud of their country and the veterans who served in the past, the veterans who are serving at present, and those veterans who will serve in the future.

Indeed, I am thankful to have been elected to this wonderful marvelous office and to have had the opportunity to serve as your National Chaplain and be a part of the Commitment to service team.

As a new member of this organization 10 years ago, I asked myself, why should I join he VFW? After some indepth and careful thinking, I came to this conclusion: the VFW requires my service. Service is the key.

I threw myself totally into the idea—"how can I be of service or how best can I serve this organization?" The greatest thing in the entire world is the opportunity to be of service to others, especially veterans and their families.

And so, my personal motto as a VFW member is centered around learning to do, doing to earn, earning to live, and living to service.

I was privileged to serve as chaplain for:

Post 856, Austin, Texas;
Travis County Council, Texas;
District #28, Texas;
State Chaplain, Texas; and
Southern Conference (14 states) Chaplain.

Now, this 95th National Convention marks a new beginning, a new dedication, and a new spirit of service among us all. From this new beginning let us move forward together, maintaining a proper dedication in keeping the spirit of service alive.

Let us build courage, when many times courage seems to fall; let us regain faith, when there seems to be little cause for faith; let us create hope, when it seems that we are involved in an extremely difficult struggle or endeavor where there is so little hope.

May it be said of us all in the words of Tennyson: I am a part of all that I have met . . . Tho much is taken, much abides . . . that which we are, we are-one equal temper of heroic hearts . . . strong in will . . . to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Let us renew our determination, our courage, our strength. Let us renew our faith and our hope—to strive, to seek, to find, and never yield—let us be "First to Serve."

For all of us who care and who have special concern for service, I must say—the work goes on, the cause shall endure, the hope still lives, and the dream will never die. With the help of God and your encouragement, my service to the veterans of this nation will continue. God bless America, and God bless the VFW.

Report of Chief of Staff

DARREL W. MILLER

I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief George Cramer for appointing me his Chief of Staff. It was an honor to serve in the "Commitment to Service" year.

As we near the end of the year we are still working to attain our membership goals. The new and restructured Post program has played an important roll in membership, accounting for more than 12,300 new or reinstated members. Over 34 Department commanders have attained their fair share quota of new or restructured Posts.

I urge Department commanders to contact Post Development at National Headquarters for assistance in implementing their development programs.

I have had the opportunity to participate in numerous meetings and other activities during the year and would like to thank all the comrades and sisters for the kindness and courtesy shown me during my visits.

I would like to thank Adjutant General Howard Vander Clut, Jr., Quartermaster General James D. Bowden, Executive Director of the Washington Office Larry W. Rivers and their staffs for all the assistance given me.

I urge all comrades and sisters to continue to "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living."

Report of Inspector General

LARRY G. ZIEBARTH

It has been a privilege to serve the Veterans of Foreign Wars as Inspector General. I sincerely thank Commander-in-Chief George Cramer for the opportunity to gain a greater knowledge of our outstanding organization. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my years as a VFW member.

The opportunity to travel and represent the VFW and our great Commander-in-Chief has been most gratifying. I have had the opportunity to visit all the conferences and several Departments, renew old friendships and make many new friends. The many courtesies and warm hospitality extended to me throughout the year will be cherished.

It was a moving experience for me to place a wreath for Commander-in-Chief Cramer at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as the VFW representative to the annual Cootie Tomb Trek. I also had the honor to present the VFW awards to the top cadets at the U.S. Military Academy and the Air Force Academy.

The knowledge I have gained from the briefings received from the Pentagon, State Department, JTF–FA and CIL–HI will assist me in my work in the VFW in the ensuing years.

It was also rewarding to chair the VFW Homeless Veterans Committee as the national organization prepares to launch itself into this program.

To all the national officers and the staffs in both Kansas City and Washington, D.C., to Auxiliary President Juanita Crowe and her staff, many thanks for your support and friendship.

To serve under Commander-in-Chief Cramer, who is an inspiration to all who know him, is an honor I will never forget. Thank you for a memorable year.

Report of Assistant Adjutant General—Washington Office

LARRY W. RIVERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last year I took advantage of this forum to address the single most overriding issue confronting veterans today. I am speaking of the fate of VA health care in the face of national health care reform. Given that this issue has lost none of its urgency and is still far from resolved in favor of America's veterans, I will now further clarify the VFW's position.

The health care debate now taking place in Congress is of such magnitude and importance that it touches upon every U.S. citizen, especially this nation's veterans.

As a consequence, all of the major veterans service organizations have strongly engaged these deliberations. VFW is certainly no exception.

DANGEROUS AND COMPLEX

But having said this, it should be well understood that the VFW has not embraced the Administration's stance on this issue with the enthusiasm of some. The reason being that for America's veterans the national health care reform process is just as dangerous as it is complex.

Certainly no true veterans advocate could stand idly by and watch this process unfold without participation. The future mission and, indeed, the very existence of the veterans health care system hangs in the balance. But it is also certainly true that this is not specifically a veterans issue.

It has mostly to do with the provision of health care to those U.S. citizens who do not currently have access to care—primarily non-veterans. This plan would also establish how health care is to be provided to all Americans in the future. So the question that must come to mind is should the VFW be involved in building a national non-veteran health care system?

Would any of you reading this article choose to march up to your mother or aunt or any of your non-veteran relatives and proclaim that you not only chose their new health insurer but their doctor and hospital as well? I don't think so.

The fact remains, however, that the national health care process will go on whether we choose to participate or not. You all remember legislation introduced a few years ago to totally eliminate VA health care. I assure you that there remain many individuals in the nation's capitol who would not hesitate to pursue this course again given the opportunity. Like it or not, the VFW must become involved.

KEEPING IN FOCUS

Some in the veterans community are at least giving the appearance of enthusiastically endorsing the Administration's health care legislation, but the VFW is fighting to remain focused on the concerns of veterans.

While the Administration's health care plan seems, at least on its face, to address many of our concerns—it is offered only as a package deal. It is our view that this "package deal" approach is unfair and that it is clearly designed to force us to involve ourselves in the non-veteran side of the health care debate.

The Administration would have us deal with issues that reach far beyond our mandate to be aggressive advocates for veterans. Those backing this health care plan assert that in order to protect VA health care we must play a role in shaping the rest of the health care system in America. Perhaps this is true, but I have serious reservations.

If saving and preserving the VA system is truly the goal of Congress and the Administration, why have they refused to support our proposal of proceeding with VA health care eligibility reform independent of any national health care plan? Even with the installation of a national health care system in mind, it simply makes sense to open up the VA to all of America's veterans now rather than later.

National health care backers claim a strong VA is one of their objectives, so why not allow VA to proceed? In this way veterans would be better served now and the VA would be better able to prepare for the future.

FUNDING

Another point—if saving and preserving VA is truly the goal of the Congress and the Administration—is where is the funding for this year and the promise of adequate funding for future years showing a true commitment to America's veterans and their health care system?

The VA health care system has been grossly underfunded through the years and there would seem to be no remedy in sight. Because of this only a small minority of the veteran population have access to the system. This would seem to be more in keeping with a plan to eliminate the VA health care system rather than sustaining it.

VA REFORM LEGISLATION

It is clear in my mind, in any event, that what the VA system needs is "standalone" legislation providing for both adequate funding and liberalized eligibility criteria so that more veterans might use the system. There is absolutely no need to wait for the establishment of some national health care plan rather than pushing ahead with VA funding and reform today.

I honestly believe that we are at a crossroads in the veterans movement. Health care, a major issue for us over all these years, is now being shaped by events over which we have little if any control—events such as national health care reform, budget deficits and the downsizing of the military.

It is this, coupled with the VFW's firm conviction that national health care reform will not prove to be a panacea for all that ails VA, that compels us to continue to move against the grain by not completely endorsing the proposed national health care plan. For the VFW, it is the well-being of veterans that must remain first and foremost on our mind.

Report of Assistant Adjutant General—Administration

JOHN J. SENK, JR.

The Assistant Adjutant General—Administration assists the Adjutant General in conducting and managing the administrative and executive functions of the VFW. His responsibilities include supervision of Administrative Services and the Buddy Poppy departments at National Headquarters.

DIVERSE FUNCTIONS

The functions of this office are wide-ranging and include such diverse tasks as:

—monitoring and reviewing Department budgets and financial reports;

—reviewing bylaws and incorporation documents of subordinate units for compliance with the national by-laws;

—preparation of administrative pamphlets and forms required for internal and external use;

—composition and preparation of national awards, citations and letters of commendation;

—publication, annually, of the VFW Constitution, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual following the national convention;

—filing of statutory congressional and state reports;

—validation of requests for surplus military equipment;

—maintenance of historical and legal files;

—dissemination of summaries and preservation of proceedings of the national convention and Council of Administration meetings;

—establishment and maintenance of eligibility files of national officers;

—ensuring the proper recording of names and addresses of national, Department and Post officers; and

—all other established and administrative functions required for the proper and efficient operation of the organization.

SOUND MONEY MANAGEMENT

Department quartermasters have been observant in forwarding quarterly and annual financial reports and budgets required by the national bylaws. All reports are carefully reviewed and monitored by the administrative staff of the Adjutant General. Every effort is made to clarify any financial matters perceived to be unclear and to provide on-site assistance to quartermasters who request or need help.

Records show that most Departments have adopted sound money-management procedures and policies. Also, we are pleased to note that most quartermasters fulfill their responsibility to keep their councils of administration informed of their Department's financial status as the by-laws require.

Special briefings are conducted by the administrative staff at National Headquarters for beginning Department adjutants/quartermasters.

POLICY MATTERS

As statutory requirements of doing business increase in complexity, the need for maintaining records and up-to-date reviewed by-laws at every level becomes increasingly urgent. The Commander-in-Chief's Statement of Policy for the operation, management and control of Post canteens/clubs addresses these concerns and VFW requirements for such operations.

The wide acceptance of this policy has served to strengthen canteen/club operations. As financial responsibility laws become more restrictive, there is a compelling need for subordinate units to ensure that articles of incorporation have been submitted through channels to the Adjutant General. There they are reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief in accordance with the national by-laws and then properly recorded with the appropriate state authority.

Approved by-laws serve to smooth out internal Post operations, while articles of incorporation provide for the corporate entity of the Post and afford individual members protection from legal obligations of the Post. All Posts should have current by-laws and valid articles of incorporation reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief and filed with the secretary of state of their respective states.

ADDITIONAL DUTIES

Other administrative matters under the supervision of this office include the resolution of questions concerning membership eligibility, review of disciplinary hearings and appeals, research in the preparation of Commander-in-Chief rulings, handling questions concerning emblematic matters and the unauthorized reproduction and/or use of the VFW name and emblem and membership lists.

Credentials for the national convention, resolutions and proposed amendments to the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual submitted by national officers and Department conventions also are processed, printed and disseminated by this office.

My special thanks go to Commander-in-Chief George Cramer with whom it has been a pleasure to work. Also let me extend my thanks to Adjutant General Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr., Quartermaster General James D. Bowden as well as to the national and Department officers with whom I have worked this past year.

Report of Assistant Adjutant General—Programs

W. BENNY BACHAND

Commitment to Service is more than just a slogan, it is a way of life in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Service and volunteerism have always been hallmarks of the VFW, and what we have done, what we are doing or what we will accomplish have always contributed to the successes we have enjoyed as an organization.

Every day I witness the scope and magnitude of the many projects and services performed by the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary for the betterment of veterans, their families, our communities and our country.

As we continue our impressive work of volunteerism, we know firsthand that this program activity builds membership and that membership helps sustain our work. For every success VFW Post and Auxiliary, you will find a group of dedicated members carrying on the work that is so vital to the well-being of our organization.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has a long history of "people helping people." We have always been able to count on a large volunteer force to carry on the programs. Now, with our unstable membership, we face a manpower shortage that could affect our ability to serve America and her citizens. We must encourage each new member to take an active role in those issues and problems that affect veterans.

NEW PROGRAMS

During the past year, the VFW has become involved with several new programs. With national co-sponsorship of the Golden Age Games, we have made a commitment to assist in the rehabilitation of veterans in hospitals.

Our Job Opportunity Board program is an effort to get Posts and Departments involved in assisting veterans to get the permanent and full-time employment they need and deserve. Finally, we have initiated action to work with companies and agencies to find a solution to the growing "homeless veteran" population.

WWII COMMEMORATIONS

With all the emphasis on programs growth during the past year, we have contributed a tremendous amount of time, energy and other resources to promote the 50th anniversary of World War II celebrations.

As we enter the final year of reflection, Posts should ensure that we take every opportunity to recognize and thank WWII comrades for their service in time of war and their untiring and continuing service to our organization.

Overall, we can look at this year as another year of challenge and opportunity. It goes without saying that we could have done better, as there are millions of eligible veterans who have not joined and become part of this effort.

The future of our organization is unlimited. Proper initiation and planning can and will result in achieving new and higher goals in the years that lie ahead.

I am excited about the changes taking place in the VFW that will result in achieving new heights, not only in membership, but in service to veterans, their depend-

ents and the communities in which they reside. The call to be First to Serve will be one that propels our organization into success for the 1994–1995 year.

Report of Administrative Services

THOMAS L. KISSELL, DIRECTOR

Responsibilities assigned to Administrative Services continue to diversify in an ever-changing environment.

ADMINISTRATIVE INTEGRITY

Currently, the director of Administrative Services duties include assisting in reviewing and processing the by-laws and articles of incorporation for all levels of the organization. This is done to ensure compliance with the Constitution and By-Laws & Manual of Procedure & Ritual of the VFW.

The needs of subordinate units are varied and complex. They call for greater administrative oversight and coordination at all levels. The ever-present threat of litigation mandates the need for Posts, Districts and Departments to take appropriate measures to protect their membership and the organization from such actions.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

All units are urged to maintain adequate liability insurance coverage and to adopt by-laws, and incorporate in compliance with the national by-laws, as well as state incorporation laws.

Emblematic matters are also handled by this office. Cease and desist orders for the unauthorized use of the VFW name and emblem are processed and issued as required.

Removal orders for ineligibility originate here, too.

MISCELLANEOUS RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition, Administrative Services reviews, resolves and refers complaints and problems concerning subordinate units, their officers and members. On behalf of the Adjutant General and Commander-in-Chief, correspondence is prepared on such matters. Also, coordination and operation of the Adjutant General's word processing system falls under our purview.

Other essential functions include: compiling, publishing and maintaining records and proceedings of all National Council of Administration meetings; and maintaining certificates of compliance from the Departments requesting membership mailing lists for Department publications.

Besides minding the daily nuts and bolts operations of the organization, Administrative Services plays a vital role in serving as a link between National Headquarters and individual members in the field.

Speaking directly to officers and members on organizational, as well as more general veterans issues, is the primary means of doing so.

POINT MAN ON ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

And no issue is more important to the long-term future of the VFW than eligibility. By now, everyone is familiar with the demographics of our organization: Simply put, our members are rapidly aging. National attrition is increasingly cutting into our ranks. Projections regarding the potential pool of recruits among the WWII generation are not encouraging.

On the other hand, there is still vast potential in other sectors of the veterans community. Korean War and Vietnam War-eligible veterans number in the millions.

And let's not forget those who are eligible as a result of the 21 campaigns recognized by the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; the nine operations under the Marine Corps/Navy Expeditionary Medal since WWII; and the 657,000 who earned the Southwest Asia Service Medal.

Report on Americanism

JOHN MOON, CHAIRMAN

MIKE GORMALLEY, DIRECTOR

Across America, VFW members with the help of our Ladies Auxiliary continue the never-ending task of ensuring the continuation of our American way of life.

Emphasizing our Americanism projects is one of the best ways of accomplishing that tremendous task. Passing out patriotic literature, conducting patriotic ceremonies and parades, holding Flag presentations—all of these are ways of ensuring the proper education of the American people, and are investments in keeping our nation strong. In addition, the personal satisfaction gained makes all the effort, time and trouble worthwhile.

The VFW National Americanism program has been progressing throughout our nation. This year we have thirty-four 100% Departments.

In the conference race, the Western Conference leads with 98.8%. The Big Ten Conference is second with 97.8%. They are followed by the Southern Conference with 95.8. The Eastern Conference is enjoying a good year with 93.6%. The overall average of the Americanism program reporting is 96.9%.

The VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary have always been among the leaders in supporting a strong Americanism program that educates the general public. Our support of this program has been very important during this Commitment to Service year.

Report of Buddy Poppy

WILLIAM J. RADIGAN, CHAIRMAN

JAMES R. ROWOLDT, DIRECTOR

Carrying out the intent of VFW's objectives, found in Article I of the constitution of the VFW, together with the sale of Buddy Poppies, have allowed us to build a proud heritage of service to the disabled and needy veterans through our nationwide system of veterans service officers.

The memory and history of our dead is perpetuated through the proud display of the Buddy Poppy on our lapel, while our widows and orphans are aided by the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

DIVISION WINNERS

The Department of Illinois led in sales this year with 1,211,000 Poppies. Also joining Illinois in the Over One Million Sales Club were California, Texas, Minnesota and Ohio.

Divisional winners in 1993-94 are: Division 1, Department of South Dakota and its Ladies Auxiliary; Division 2, Department of Delaware and its Ladies Auxiliary; Division 3, Department of Montana and its Ladies Auxiliary; Division 4, Department of Vermont and its Ladies Auxiliary; Division 5, Department of Oregon and its Ladies Auxiliary; Division 6, Department of Arkansas and its Ladies Auxiliary; Division 7, Department of Pennsylvania and its Ladies Auxiliary; Division 8, Department of Utah and its Ladies Auxiliary; and Division 9, Department of Europe.

The achievements of this past year would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our "grass root" members—the comrades and sisters who diligently worked in the field. To all of you, we say "Thank you."

The National Buddy Poppy Committee members who worked exceptionally hard to promote this year's Buddy Poppy Program are: William Radigan, chairman, South Dakota; Western Conference, Donald E. Bracken, Washington; Eastern Conference, Joseph E. Kearney, Vermont; Southern Conference, George T. Kelley, Florida; Big Ten Conference, Dwight E. Tanner, Jr., Illinois; and Kaye Mellert, Buddy Poppy director, Ladies Auxiliary, South Carolina. Each performed with dedication and diligence throughout the year in our Commitment to Service.

Report on Community Activities

THOMAS CALDWELL, CHAIRMAN

MIKE GORMALLEY, DIRECTOR

The changing characters of our communities have created many ways in which Americans express concern for the needs of their fellow citizens. Volunteer efforts, most studies show, continue to increase and are widespread around our great nation. According to recent estimates, approximately 98 million Americans engage in some form of volunteer activity on a regular basis.

Working side-by-side with the Ladies Auxiliary, VFW members promote community projects which assist others and improve their towns and cities.

In 1993–1994, there were over 538,000 community service projects reported that accounted for 7.7 million in volunteer hours and $34.7 million in donated monies. Yet, the most important and frequently overlooked feature of these volunteer efforts is that the VFW relationship to their local community has given us better visibility and an image of caring.

Community Activities reporting has been very good this year. There are forty-one 100% Departments.

In the Conference race, the Western Conference leads with 99.8%. The Big Ten Conference is second with 99.7%. They are followed by the Southern Conference with 96.9%. The Eastern Conference is enjoying a good year with 96.1%. The overall average of the Community Activities program reporting is 98.1%

All over our country, VFW Posts and Auxiliaries are considered valuable and highly desirable assets in their community. VFW Posts and Auxiliaries are interested in and take an active part in the needs of their communities.

Continuing support of community service programs by the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary is an excellent example of the Commitment to Service theme.

Report on Membership

LAWRENCE LEFEBVRE, DIRECTOR

In order for any organization to grow, there must be a concerted effort in recruiting new members. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is no different than other large organizations in spearheading membership drives and offering incentives to members for their recruitment efforts.

Unlike other organizations striving for new members, however, the VFW is limited in the size of the pool it has to draw from. The Department of Veterans Affairs tells us there are approximately 24 million veterans in the United States. We estimate half of those are eligible for membership in our organization. If these figures are close to being correct, we need to do a better job of recruiting.

LACKING NEW MEMBERS

We often hear from new members that the reason it took so long to join is that no one ever asked them. When looking at this year's figures, it becomes evident that many eligible veterans were not asked to join the VFW. Our recruitment of new life and reinstated members is equal or better than last year, but in the category of strictly new members we are behind.

This points to the fact that we are not doing the job of selling the VFW and telling our story to those individuals who are eligible to join.

Unfortunately, too many Posts sit back and wait for the dues notices to bring in their membership. While this works well for the continuous members of our Posts, it does nothing to replace those who die or slip out the back door.

Dues notices are not sent to individuals you may work with who are eligible. Dues notices are not sent to people you socialize with who are eligible. Dues notices are not sent to the people you go to church with who are eligible. And dues notices will never be sent to these individuals until you ask them to join and sign them up as members.

PERSONAL CONTACT THE KEY

Our whole attitude regarding recruiting has got to change if we are to be successful.

The practice of door-to-door recruiting is a thing of the past as shotgun mailers do the "knocking on doors" for us. However, as successful as these mail recruiters are, there is no substitute for the original male and female recruiter.

Personal contact is still the answer for bringing in new members. When you can talk one-on-one, explaining the advantages of VFW membership, you have a greater chance of answering any questions that may arise and the opportunity to promote the activities of your own Post.

The "back to basics" approach must be resurrected and implemented by Posts, Districts and Departments. Our credibility as an organization and national stature depends on our membership strength. The recruitment and retention of new members is a critical part of whether we succeed or fail in our efforts to be a strong and viable voice for veterans in America.

RECOGNIZING COMMANDERS

During this 95th National Convention, distinguished commanders who earned recognition as "All American" will be honored. Department commanders who earned this coveted award during the past year are to be commended for providing outstanding leadership in their Departments, which enabled their Posts to reach new levels in membership and program activity.

Congratulations are also in order for the District, Post and County Council commanders earning All American honors.

These comrades are to be commended for their outstanding contribution to the 1993–94 membership year. Their tireless efforts, dedication and leadership will provide inspiration for years to come.

We cannot forget the members who, daily, provided support for the activities of their Post and served as relentless recruiters. The many who earned recruiter awards by signing up new and reinstated members can also take pride in their accomplishments and the effect they had on our organization. Those Departments which led their divisions or conferences are to be recognized for their persistence in the face of keen competition all year.

Last, but most certainly not least, a salute to Commander-in-Chief George R. Cramer for his tremendous leadership, endless enthusiasm and sincerity in the belief that the Veterans of Foreign Wars is an organization that will always have a strong Commitment to Service.

Report on National Civil Service & Employment

JAMES D. VOELKER, CHAIRMAN; SIDNEY DANIELS, DIRECTOR

In the employment arena, significant gains were made over the past program year in terms of assisting veterans to take advantage of scarce job opportunities. Throughout much of 1993–94, the economy was either in a slow-growth or no-growth mode and very few jobs were being created or filled. This problem has been a matter of heightened concern for many military personnel who just a short time ago were planning a long military career, but now, due to downsizing, must prepare to enter the civilian job market.

POST JOB BOARDS

Partly in response to the increased demand for assistance from veterans affected by downsizing, the VFW national offices for Employment and Community Activities worked together in devising a program that involves Post members in employment matters. This collaboration resulted in the creation of the Job Opportunity Board (JOB).

Under the JOB concept, participating Posts are encouraged to develop working ties with the state job service exchange in their community. Each office within a state job service system has veterans employment professionals on staff whose chief responsibility is to find jobs for veterans.

After a process of planning and coordination, the VFW Post sets up a special display board where job openings, job training information and contact persons at the job service are listed.

A job-seeker who visits the Post and sees a job opening for which he or she feels qualified, has only to contact the veterans employment specialist to arrange for a possible interview.

The JOB concept is ideal for most Post homes which operate during late evening and weekend hours. The concept works well for the job service which usually operates on an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule and is constantly looking for ways to advertise job vacancies and other services.

JOB allows more veteran-applicants to be exposed to available job vacancies. In some ways, it allows the Post to become an extension of the job service office.

Finally, the JOB concept is especially beneficial to many active duty military personnel and recently separated veterans who often visit local VFW Posts for social activities, but who may be unaware of the community resources available to help them find jobs.

OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING

Another program which focuses on newly separated veterans is the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act program (SMOCTA). This is a federal sector program that is designed to assist individuals being released from the service to obtain employment.

Veterans discharged on or after Aug. 2, 1990 are eligible for the program if they meet certain requirements pertaining to military service, unemployment, or severity of service-connected disability.

To be eligible, the veteran must meet one of three criteria:

Must be unemployed for at least 8 of the 15 weeks immediately before he or she applies for the program;

A separating service-person must have a primary or secondary occupational specialty (Job) that is not readily transferable to the civilian work force; or

Be entitled to compensation for a disability rated at 30% or more (or would be but for the receipt of military retired pay).

Participating employers who provide training will be paid an amount that is equal to one-half of the employee's salary. The total amount paid to the employer may not exceed $12,000 for individuals with a service-connected disability rated at 30% or more, or $10,000 for all others.

Certain types of work are not reimbursable under this program. Ineligible employment includes employment which is seasonal or temporary; employment dependent primarily on commissions; employment with the federal government; and out-of-state employment.

Eligibility determination and payments to employers will be centralized at the VA regional office in Muskogee, Okla. The SMOCTA program is now available in each of the 50 states. Since last September, approximately 1,500 businesses have begun training almost 3,500 recently released veterans. Over 25,000 veterans have been certified as eligible. As of last June, funding remained for only about 6,000 more jobs.

Local offices of the state job service will be responsible for working with employers to establish training programs for veterans.

The VFW advocated—at hearings—establishment of a training program such as SMOCTA as a replacement for the Veterans Job Training Act (VJTA), which operated for a limited period during the mid-1980s.

SMOCTA, of course, makes it possible for servicemembers in combat occupational specialties—which are not readily transferrable to train in an area that leads—to meaningful employment.

The program is funded at approximately $75 million for the first year and will provide training for between 8,000 and 10,000 vets initially.

Report on National Legislative Service

JAMES N. GOLDSMITH, CHAIRMAN, JAMES N. MAGILL, DIRECTOR

For 80 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has maintained a legislative service for the purpose of promoting legislation—which is beneficial to veterans, their dependents and survivors—and monitoring congressional activity on Capitol Hill.

From its inception, the National Legislative Service (NLS) has been a leader in the veteran's arena in Washington, D.C. and is currently respected and admired for its advocacy role on behalf of America's veterans.

Despite the high-profile, media-conscious environment in which it functions, the operation of the NLS is possibly not as well understood by the general membership as might be expected.

This, of course, is to a great extent attributable to the fact that a good 90% of its accomplishments are achieved in the form of old-fashioned hard work performed behind the scenes and away from the limelight.

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

Legislative victories in the area of increased VA compensation, liberalization of VA benefits programs and expansion of education and employment opportunities, all

called for by VFW resolution, attest to the effectiveness of your National Legislative Service.

Not since the GI Bill of Rights immediately following World War II has there been such a broad expansion of veterans legislation addressed and approved by Congress as during the last several years.

Because of the complexities involved in the function of NLS, it is important that VFW members have a solid knowledge of the operation of this essential component of our national organization. It is only through a better understanding by our membership that we may all develop greater strength and effectiveness.

Even though the NLS is relatively small compared to its counterparts in some of the other major veterans organizations, it is also one of the most highly regarded and sought out by members of Congress and their staffs when the welfare of America's veterans is at stake.

VFW ACTION CORPS

NLS has established the VFW Actions Corps in an effort to better inform our membership and involve them in the legislative process at the grass roots level.

To complement the Action Corps, NLS has acquired a computer system that will enable us to target individual members of Congress for mass mailing campaigns—by political party, committee assignment, or congressional district and state. It is becoming more and more apparent that individual contact by our members with their elected officials is the key to getting things done in Washington.

Probably the most visible aspect of NLS's job on Capitol Hill is testifying before committees and subcommittees of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate with respect to pending legislation.

It is extremely important that our concerns, as mandated by resolutions passed by the voting delegates at our most recent national convention, are articulated and acknowledged in congressional hearings where they become part of the public record.

With the many diverse issues a member of Congress must face, he or she may not always be aware of the nature or the impact an individual bill would have on his veteran constituent. Because of the good working relationship we have established with Congress, NLS is constantly being sought after for its advice and counsel and encouraged to contact congressional staffs on various veteran legislation. This is particularly true of members of Congress who do not serve on the Veterans Affairs committees.

NLS also makes "informal" recommendations to the appropriate committees of Congress concerning veterans issues. This involves working on a day-to-day basis with the Veterans Affairs, Budget, Appropriations and Labor committees, to name a few. Of course, we will appear before any congressional committee that is addressing an issue that is veteran-related.

COMMITTED MEMBERSHIP

Another essential NLS function is keeping the VFW membership informed of the activities of Congress and its efforts and progress in working with their elected representatives in Washington. In the final analysis, it is only the active participation of the strong, committed and well-informed VFW membership that has allowed for our numerous legislative victories for veterans on Capitol Hill.

NLS communicates with our membership through the VFW Magazine, the Washington Action Reporter, special publications and direct correspondence with individual VFW members.

The NLS staff works for you—the member. It brings many years of legislative experience concerning veterans and VFW matters. But in fighting for the good of veterans and the nation, however, it cannot stand alone.

There has been in the past, is now and must continue to be a strong and vital partnership between the NLS staff and the VFW membership. We must all stand together, united, ever vigilant and committed in implementing the principles of our great organization—to serve veterans and the nation.

Report on National Security and Foreign Affairs

HAROLD O. WEBER, NATIONAL SECURITY CHAIRMAN

RUSSELL R. RIEKE, NATIONAL POW/MIA CHAIRMAN

KENNETH A. STEADMAN, DIRECTOR

The VFW's National Security Committee and National POW/MIA Committee had an active year in pursuit of our priority goals.

With over 2,200 Americans still missing in Southeast Asia, over 100 Cold War unaccounted for, another 8,000 missing in Korea and 78,000 from World War II, the resolution of this heart rending issue remains a top priority goal of the VFW.

The VFW's national officers, committee chairmen and vice chairmen have stayed in close touch with the issue.

TRADE EMBARGO

When the President ended the trade embargo against Vietnam, Commander-in-Chief Cramer expressed his disappointment over this decision; "While there has been progress in the past year, we are not convinced that the results obtained warrant lifting the embargo."

VFW leaders also met with Vietnamese, Korean and Russian officials to convey our commitment to the fullest possible accounting of all our missing men. In meetings at the United Nations and with Russian officials in Washington, the VFW set forth its views on this humanitarian issue.

Acting on the Commander-in-Chief's instructions, Senior Vice Commander Vice Commander-in-Chief Allen F. "Gunner" Kent took the issue directly to Vietnamese, Korean and Russian leaders in back-to-back visits to these countries.

He conveyed the importance of the POW/MIA issue to the VFW and our concern for tangible results in resolving this priority issue. Later, the Chief sent junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera to represent the VFW as part of a presidential delegation returning to Vietnam and Laos. This included reviewing the effort between the U.S. Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF–FA) and the local governments. Their reports, based on meetings with Vietnamese, Lao and U.S. officials, were widely circulated within the VFW and the U.S. government.

WORLD HOTSPOTS

During visits to Korea, the VFW's leadership reviewed the tense situation with U.S. and Republic of Korea officials. This hotspot has remained tense since North Korea refused to permit full international inspection of its nuclear facilities. The VFW's National Security Committee was kept informed of this developing crisis in Korea throughout the year.

The VFW remained equally concerned over the situation in former Yugoslavia. There, the on-going civil war with both ethnic and religious overtones has defied solution. Although alarmed about the atrocities and concerned for the negotiating deadlock, the VFW remained watchful lest U.S. ground troops be introduced into this unstable region.

Haiti, where a military dictatorship refuses demands to restore democratic government, also defies simple solutions. While some argue that the United States is obligated to support democracy within the Western Hemisphere, to include the use of military force, the VFW has urged a more cautious view.

When Administration spokesmen and congressional officials urged military action to overthrow the Haitian dictatorship, the VFW's Commander-in-Chief noted that he had "serious doubts that the VFW or the American public would support such a move."

DOMESTIC CONCERNS

The VFW was also cautious about the bold moves to allow women to serve in military combat jobs. While recognizing the valuable role women played in winning the Gulf War, the Chief nonetheless urged the secretary of defense to be cautious as he approached the issue of women in combat.

The terrorist bombing of New York's World Trade Center last year reinforces the VFW's views that the widespread, growing danger of terrorism demanded decisive action to combat terrorism. The VFW went on record supporting action against terrorist groups and the conviction of four terrorists for the Trade Center bombing met with the VFW's praise.

The VFW also noted that in order to remain on the offensive against terrorists, the federal government needed to review and strengthen its procedures for screening and identifying terrorists. And to take whatever measures are necessary to improve U.S. security and safety.

Report on National Veterans Service

WALTER G. HOGAN, CHAIRMAN

FREDERICO JUARBE, JR., DIRECTOR

You established our mandate to "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living." The mission of the National Veterans Service (NVS) staff, and our nationwide service network, is to carry out that pledge in your name. A VFW service arm blankets the country, standing at the ready to serve you and others you may refer to us for help.

A highly visible sign of your service program is the VFW Guide for Service Officers. We take great pride in this publication which is much sought after. No other veterans service organization can look back to half a century of continuous publication of such a valued reference.

Currently, we are served by the 24th edition of this respected publication, which became available for distribution early in 1993. Individual copies can be obtained from the VFW Emblem and Supply Department in Kansas City.

SERVICE OFFICERS

Often the first point of contact with our VFW service program is the Post service officer (PSO). Armed with the VFW Guide for Service Officers, and in possession of a few basic government forms, the PSO can provide valuable assistance during the first steps toward claiming an entitlement. This important volunteer then hands the issue over to the VFW Department service officer (DSO) for further development. It is a team effort.

The work of your DSO assumes a heavy burden in terms of responsibility toward veterans, their dependents or survivors. He is at once a counselor, advisor and advocate.

His world involves considerations of due process, protection of privacy and suspense dates associated with appeals. His tools of the trade are title 38, United States Code, and the Code of Federal Regulations.

To keep current, DSOs join the NVS staff twice annually to participate in a demanding week-long training session. This training sharpens collective skills and improves qualifications to act on your behalf in seeking possible entitlement relief from problems posed by federal agencies.

COURTS AND BOARDS

Your NVS staff continues to assist in the preparation and presentation of formal and informal appeals, initiated by veteran-claimants before the VA Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). Claimants have available to them the services of a VFW medical and legal consultant.

NVS's final product takes the form of a written presentation to the BVA on the claimant's behalf, or they accompany the claimant to a personal hearing before the Board and the transcript of that hearing becomes the official record.

The VFW also continues to prepare and present briefs on potentially meritorious claims to the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals (CVA). Because this is a purely adversarial process, we must be cautious and not accept, for representation, appeals for that court which are frivolous. Neither can we practically represent appeals which fail to raise an appropriate point in law which would be acceptable for review by the court in accordance with the rules it has set for itself.

The military claims consultants of your NVS staff continue to appear routinely with ex-servicemen and women before discharge review boards of each of the armed forces. Also, each of the military services has a board empowered to correct inequities in military records. We are in continuous contact with these boards on behalf of veterans and active duty personnel who walk in, write to us and call us daily.

FIELD REPRESENTATIVES

Field representatives of your NVS staff have increased their round of surveys of VA medical centers, regional offices, Vet Centers and national cemeteries, with emphasis on the VA health care delivery system. The VFW is one of only two veterans service organizations performing this important function.

We have altered our approach to the conduct of VA medical facility surveys to try to ferret out the "hot spots."

Therefore, we rely increasingly on you, our membership, and others who may avail themselves of VA medical treatment to let us know when a problem is brewing. We will try to follow up every lead for you and keep the leadership of the VFW out front.

A simple telephone call or a short letter to the VFW Washington Office, to tip us off to medical facilities where things are not going well, will cause us to go into action. This is a cooperative effort which requires the attention of all of us.

VA MEETINGS

We continue to meet monthly with the under secretary for health. This is an informal exchange which gives VA the opportunity to share with us the obstacles it confronts which impact on the quality of health care. Plus, it gives us, as your representative, the chance to question the under secretary for health regarding failures by VA to measure up.

Similarily, we meet quarterly with the under secretary for benefits. These meetings give the VFW an opportunity to provide input into the policies and procedures under consideration by VA, and it permits us to encourage change from within which benefits veterans.

Additionally, it allows us to add a note of action when we think VA might be heading down the wrong track. We routinely touch base with all major elements of VA Central Office. We do this as surrogates for you.

Finally, volunteers are veteran-patients' lifeline to the community. The VFW's VA Voluntary Services contributes almost a million hours annually to veterans in VA facilities. Accordingly, we ask all of you who can to redouble your commitment to ensure that our vital volunteer effort is both maintained and reinforced.

VFW SERVICE IN THE FUTURE

As the VA continues to struggle with reductions in personnel, your NVS staff will remain vigilant that the needs of veterans are not compromised. To this end, all personnel in VFW service work need to double their efforts to ensure that every eligible veteran, dependent, and surviving spouse is made aware of, and assist with, obtaining any benefits they may be eligible for.

A trained, dedicated and hard-working cadre of VFW service officers remain the cornerstone of our Commander-in-Chief's Commitment to Service as we "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living".

Report on Post Development

DARREL W. MILLER, NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF

ROBERT CRIDER, DIRECTOR

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: DAN PESTINGER, RAY BAYLESS, JERRY WOOD, JIM FIELDLER, DAVE CLARK

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines development as: the act, process or result of developing.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, like all organizations, continues to go through an evolution in membership. Unfortunately, active involvement in membership recruitment is not the priority it once was. The main reason why people do not join the VFW is because "they have never been asked."

Success still awaits the old fashioned way—by opening and closing doors.

First and foremost, every member should make sure the front door of the Post home is open wide to all prospective members. New members, the lifeblood of any organization, should be made to feel welcome. You only have one chance for a good first impression.

Every year untold numbers of our comrades slip out silently, never to be heard from again. We fall that "losing them out the back door." The best way to stop the exodus is to slam it shut by making every member a vital part of the Post and to make the Post a vital part of the community.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

New Posts and restructured Posts give better local service to veterans and their dependents and the opportunity to further the VFW's goals and ideals. They give

the VFW an opportunity to introduce many outstanding programs as well as enhance its image in communities worldwide.

VFW members encourage Americanism, loyalty and Youth Activities in the local schools, promote community safety awareness, offer environmental assistance and expand exposure for participation in the Voice of Democracy scholarship program.

With new Posts come new faces, ideas and leaders.

SKILLED LEADERSHIP

Follow-up is the most important factor for the success of a new Post. The membership of a new Post must be well-informed on the VFW's basic aims, purposes and programs, and assisted until it is on a sound footing.

A member with proven leadership skills and well-versed in the VFW should be assigned as the Department representative. At least until the new leadership is confident in its ability to effectively service the community and properly represent the VFW.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Each Post is important to the VFW's overall success and its individual programs. Dedicated leadership is the key to solving problems. Cancellation of a Post charter is seldom the answer. Once an unfavorable situation is confronted, it can usually be overcome.

Proper attention from the District, County Council and Department is invaluable. Good leadership can rekindle member interest and inspire active participation. Loss of a Post means no community representation and in the process the local area is deprived of VFW service and programs.

New Posts are clearly vital to the overall growth of our great organization. That's why our efforts must continue unabated.

In 1993–94, Post Development recruited 13,764 new and reinstated members to join 229 new or 110 restructured Posts. As the VFW nears a century of service, they will be part of a unique fraternity.

NEW AND RESTRUCTURED POSTS AND MEMBERSHIP JULY 1, 1993 TO JUNE 30, 1994—BY DEPARTMENT

Department	Total new Posts	Total new Post membership	Total restructured Posts	Total restructured membership
Alabama	3	99	3	288
Alaska	0	0	0	0
Arizona	1	38	0	0
Arkansas	4	109	3	198
California	8	403	14	637
Colorado	6	230	1	50
Connecticut	3	223	1	47
Delaware	1	29	1	23
District of Columbia	0	0	1	36
Europe	3	340	7	240
Florida	11	395	4	254
Georgia	8	273	3	194
Hawaii	1	43	1	38
Idaho	1	36	2	115
Illinois	10	341	1	26
Indiana	1	27	1	34
Iowa	1	30	2	49
Kansas	3	117	1	135
Kentucky	6	236	3	165
Louisiana	5	143	1	124
Maine	9	114	3	202
Maryland	4	77	6	231
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0
Michigan	9	305	0	0
Minnesota	10	275	0	0
Mississippi	6	211	2	82
Missouri	7	204	4	143
Montana	1	26	0	0
Nebraska	2	57	2	67
Nevada	1	25	1	100
New Hampshire	4	148	0	0

NEW AND RESTRUCTURED POSTS AND MEMBERSHIP JULY 1, 1993 TO JUNE 30, 1994—BY DEPARTMENT—Continued

Department	Total new Posts	Total new Post membership	Total restructured Posts	Total restructured membership
New Jersey	3	86	4	394
New Mexico	1	25	2	161
New York	19	493	1	26
North Carolina	8	230	1	26
North Dakota	1	26	0	0
Ohio	11	493	1	42
Okahoma	3	61	0	0
Oregon	5	120	1	28
Pacific Areas	0	0	2	197
Panama Canal	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	4	242	2	71
Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	3	110	2	122
South Carolina	3	93	1	9
South Dakota	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	4	214	3	55
Texas	13	543	10	563
Utah	2	73	1	35
Vermont	3	108	0	0
Virginia	4	180	0	0
Washington	6	148	6	212
West Virginia	2	72	2	239
Wisconsin	4	126	3	78
Wyoming	1	31	0	0
Foreign	0	0	0	0
Total	229	8,028	110	5,736

Report on Marketing Services

RON BROWNING, DIRECTOR

ROBBIE FAZEN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Created just a few years ago, Marketing Services is the newest office within National Headquarters. The establishment of this department represents a continued commitment by the VFW's leadership to meet the issues of the future and the demands of today.

In the marketplace changes, we need to develop programs and strategies which allow for long-term success. This new office is an important first step in meeting the future in a way that translates into opportunities.

A staff is being developed to provide an effective level of service. Existing programs and projects have been integrated into the daily operations of the office and projects critical to the future of the organization have been identified and, in many cases, implementation is well on the way.

Here is a brief outline of some of the current projects now under the direction of Marketing Services:

NON-MEMBER PROMOTIONS

Projects are now under way to promote the VFW to non-members for the purposes of communication, education and fund-raising.

DEPARTMENT COOPERATIVE FUND-RAISING PROGRAM

A new cooperative program designed to improve the profitability of these traditional fund-raisers for VFW Departments. More than 50 Departments and Auxiliaries have now joined the program.

NATIONAL VETERANS SERVICE FUND

A host of projects that include: Veterans Service Fund and Past Commanders Club.

COORDINATED FUND-RAISING

More effective and coordinated fund-raising that communicates the importance of the project and the reason for the promotion. The result should yield improved returns with better understanding by the membership.

CONTINUITY IN COMMUNICATIONS

Developing member and non-member communications that provide a consistency of message, creating a stronger and more relevant story.

NEW MEMBERSHIP TOOLS

Continued oversight of new and more effective membership recruiting tools that will provide for our growth.

NEW PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

Development of new and more effective promotional vehicles for fund-raising.

As the future unfolds, these issues will change. Yet, they offer the organization a starting point from which to move forward.

With your help and continued support, this department will succeed.

Report on Post Services

JAMES R. ROWOLDT, DIRECTOR

The volume and scope of duties and responsibilities assigned to Post Services are ever-expanding and changing. These include assisting the Adjutant General and Assistant Adjutant General, Administration, in the day-to-day administrative functions of the organization.

One of the most important historical documents of a Post is its official charter. Once a Post is instituted, it becomes the responsibility of Post Services to correspond with the newly formed Post to ensure that the official charter is engrossed correctly and issued as expeditiously as possible. Complete and accurate records are maintained on microfilm and magnetic optical disk to facilitate the preparation of a replacement charter should the original become lost or destroyed.

Section 209 of the National By-Laws provides the authority and procedure for two or more Posts to consolidate. When this occurs, Post Services initiates the necessary paperwork to correct the records at National Headquarters to reflect the consolidation, and a Certificate of Charter is engrossed and issued reciting the facts of the consolidation.

Post Services is also responsible for issuing the Life Membership Perpetual Charter once the membership records are reviewed to verify that the Post has the requisite 25 life members. Once the membership figures are verified, Life Membership Perpetual Charter is prepared and mailed to Department headquarters for presentation.

Post Services has been assigned the responsibility of processing requests, preparing applicable orders and maintaining permanent files for the Adjutant General on all suspension and cancellation actions. It is Post Services' duty to keep the Adjutant General apprised of any and all corrective action taken during periods of suspension to return the Post to good working order.

In addition, the office of Post Services is charged with the responsibility for the collection, recording, maintenance and storage of the official records of over 10,800 Posts.

The annual Post Election Report is the primary source of information from which the Post officers' files are constituted and from which the roster of Post officers and the amount of annual dues for each Post are compiled and stored in electronic data processing.

The importance of the Post Election Report in the maintenance of the officer file is paramount. Without the information provided in the annual report of election, it is impossible for the Department or the national organization to communicate with the Post.

The Post Officer File is one of the most frequently used at National Headquarters so it is absolutely essential that the maintenance of the file be current at all times and that special attention be given to accuracy in storing and updating the records in data processing. The data processing file contains the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the commander and quartermaster, the amount of annual dues, the name, location, date of muster and status of each of our over 10,800 Posts.

Annual dues notices cannot be mailed until the election report is received because of the need to know the name and address of the Post quartermaster and the amount of the Post dues.

As the reports of election of Post officers for the 1994–95 year are received and processed, computer-generated acknowledgements will be sent to the Post quartermaster-elect to confirm the names and addresses of the Post commander and Post quartermaster and the amount of annual dues. Copies of these acknowledgements and any subsequent changes are sent to the respective Departments.

The acknowledgement is made on a pre-addressed and prepaid return postcard with space provided for corrections and/or changes in any of the information shown on the card. If the information is correct, the Post retains the card for use during the 1994–95 administrative year to report any changes in the amount of Post dues and/or in the offices of Post commander and Post quartermaster.

As corrections and changes are reported and made, these too are acknowledged so the Post quartermaster always has a return postcard in his possession to report changes during the year.

Another area of responsibility for Post Services is the Post Inspection Program. In recent years, the Post Inspection Program has taken on increased significance. This program provides Department commanders and other officers with important information concerning the operation of each Post under their jurisdiction. Post inspections ensure that financial safeguards are maintained and the Post is operating in accordance with the provisions of the national by-laws and regulations of the Department, as well as governmental statutes. All inspection reports are reviewed by the director of Post Services. Where possible or known discrepancies are reflected, copies of the inspection reports are returned to the Department commander asking for a review of the discrepancies and requesting corrective action be taken.

As a result of these review procedures, the inspection program has become more purposeful. When appropriately used, the results provide commanders with reliable indication of potential trouble areas and give early indication of those Posts in need of assistance. Department inspectors, along with their deputies who conduct inspections in a conscientious and concerned manner, can be assured this program will become a management tool of great value.

Other matters falling within the area of the responsibility of the director of Post Services include the preparation and dissemination of the Post Adjutant/Post Quartermaster Operations Manual, Special Orders, and the monthly issuance of General Orders and the National Headquarters Bulletin.

In our Commitment to Service the goal in Post Services is to ensure that the needs of our membership are better served.

Report on Publications and Public Affairs

ROBERT MCMAHON, CHAIRMAN

RICHARD K. KOLB, DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. SMITH, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, VFW WASHINGTON OFFICE

GARY L. BLOOMFIELD, VERN PALL, STEVE VAN BUSKIRK, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

PUBLICATIONS

It's the obligation of the editorial staff to set journalistic standards, uphold the magazine's credibility and preserve the editorial integrity of its articles. Part of this custodial responsibility entails judgment calls by the staff, based on expertise in this field, with regard to content.

Decisions regarding what goes into the magazine are based on the quality of writing, timeliness and potential interest to readers. Direction is taken from members as expressed in readership surveys, letters to the editor and resolutions on national issues. The staff's masters are membership interests, as well as journalistic integrity.

Reflecting these dictates, VFW Magazine's editorial mission statement is as follows:

It is the mission of VFW Magazine to offer fresh and varied perspectives, examine controversial issues and provide an open forum for balanced member opinions. At the same time, the magazine will report on veterans concerns, promote the VFW's positive image and serve as a vehicle for dissemination of VFW policy.

No endorsement of views of authors should be inferred unless specifically identified as the official policy of the VFW. A free exchange of ideas is intended to generate reader involvement and enhance the magazine's vitality.

In striving to inform, influence and interest readers, VFW Magazine will protect, preserve, promote, recognize, remember and respect all things sacred to veterans. That means a special focus on and coverage of four major subject areas: veterans rights/benefits, defense/foreign affairs, patriotism/volunteerism, and recognition/remembrance of military service abroad.

In order to accomplish these goals, VFW Magazine must have the unfettered ability, to communicate so as to compete in the advertising marketplace. Since raising revenues to support the organization's primary means of communication—the magazine—is a major function, projecting a professional journalistic image is essential.

NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS CONTEST TOP WINNERS

Department publications

Published 10-12 times annually: Wisconsin VFW News, Bill Bottoms, editor; Published 4–9 times annually: Pennsylvania VFW News, William C. Allen, editor.

District and county council publications

Letterpress/Offset: The Overseas Veteran, District 21(Texas), Charles Gulick, editor (deceased); Mimeograph: The Treaty, District 12 (Mo.), Terry A. Klasek, editor.

Post publications

Letterpress/Offset: The Messenger, Post 305, (Wis.), Carol Isaksson, editor; Mimeograph: Chandler Post Newsletter, Post 7401 (Ariz.), June Avery, editor.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Why should I join the VFW? We all hear that question. Most of us have good answers. The real problem is as we approach our 100th anniversary that question is still being asked.

VFW history is replete with great accomplishments for America and its veterans. Today, VFW members add to that legacy with their own good works. Alas, the VFW accomplishments of yesterday and today often go unnoticed.

Our story must be told—loudly, accurately and often. Public relations must be a priority from the Commander-in-Chief on down to the newest member of the smallest Post.

We must go beyond the walls of our Post home and tell people who we are and what we do. VFW membership and success grow only when potential members and the public see us as involved and relevant to the needs of America.

We must also take our message to those in uniform. They are the ones who will fill our ranks in the years to come.

We must reach out to other civic organizations and clubs. Their ranks include the other 10 million eligible veterans who do not belong to the VFW. We must tell them what we do and why they should be a part of it.

We must join hands with patriotic corporations and small businesses. We can use their resources and our reputation to achieve mutually beneficial goals for America.

Whatever your VFW position, good public relations must be your priority. Each plan and each decision at every level must be considered in the light of good public relations. Every effort must present and promote a positive image for the VFW, exclusive of internal politics, economic benefit or personal gain.

The mission of VFW's Public Affairs office is to ensure that all Americans, particularly those who serve or have served in the military, understand the VFW and how it makes America better.

To that end, we are planning better ways to reach our men and women in uniform, gain the attention of nonmember veterans and inform all Americans that the VFW is responsive and relevant to the needs of today's society.

Make yourself aware of the VFW's past and current successes on veterans issues. Take advantage of every opportunity to explain VFW's role and accomplishments for veterans and their families.

Effective public relations is simply communicating who we are and what we do for America and its veterans.

Report on Safety

FRANKLIN E. LOPES, CHAIRMAN

GORDON R. THORSON, DIRECTOR

Chairman Franklin E. Lopes and Director Gordon R. Thorson would like to thank all members of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary who actively participated in this year's Safety Program. We have had another outstanding year, thanks to the many hours of volunteer effort by the comrades and sisters throughout this great nation.

Interest in the National Safety Citation has grown to an extraordinary level. Thousands of Posts/Auxiliaries have qualified for the annual award by completing projects in all six categories.

The VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary have, for several years, supported, participated in and developed programs or events that promote safety.

Members have involved themselves in a variety of safety efforts that cover virtually every possible activity. This expanding and growing program interest deserves proper credit and national recognition.

The procedure used to report Safety Program activities will remain the same—completion of the VFW National Programs Report Form will be the accepted method of reporting activities. Please take note of the six-category system for reporting safety. This reorganization of the Safety Program allows for expanded reporting of individual Post/Auxiliary activities.

Basically, safety activities fall somewhere within six major categories:

Category 1—Highway Safety
Category 2—Pedestrian Safety
Category 3—Recreational Safety
Category 4—Home/Fire Safety
Category 5—Drug Awareness
Category 6—Recognition/Other

These general categories are listed on the VFW National Programs Report Form followed by a line to name (describe) the actual activity that qualifies the Post/Auxiliary within that particular category. For example:

- If a Post/Auxiliary sponsors a Lite-a-Tike program, it would report this activity under the Pedestrian Safety category.
- If a Post/Auxiliary conducts a Drive to Survive program, it would report this activity under the Highway Safety category.
- If a Post/Auxiliary officially presents a Life Saving Award (certificate) to honor someone in the community, it would report this activity under the Recognition/Other category.
- If a Post/Auxiliary actually sponsors a "DARE" program in its local school, they should report this activity under the Drug Awareness category.

Virtually any legitimate Safety Program activity conducted by a Post/Auxiliary can be reported somewhere within the six categories. Credit is given in only one of the six safety categories for each activity. The Post safety chairman should determine which category best reflects the activity performed, and then complete the National Programs Report Form.

NATIONAL SAFETY CITATION

Once a Post/Auxiliary has performed at least one legitimate activity within each of the six categories, that Post/Auxiliary will then qualify for a national citation, recognizing its outstanding effort (deadline for reporting is May 1 of each program year).

The six categories and a mall sampling of the numerous possible activities within each are listed below. The listing is provided to help chairmen determine which category is best suited for the activity performed:

Category 1—Highway Safety

Activity Ideas:

Drive to Survive
55 Alive/Mature Driving
Railroad Crossing Safety
State approved driving course
Any legitimate highway safety activity

Category 2—Pedestrian Safety

Activity Ideas:

Lite-A-Tike

Bicycle Safety
Lite-A-Bike
Any legitimate pedestrian safety activity

Category 3—Recreational Safety

Activity Ideas:
Hunter Safety
Outdoor Safety (camping, etc.)
Roller Safety (skateboards outdoor roller blades)
Numerous other recreational safety activities exist

Category 4—Home/Fire Safety

Activity Ideas
Home Protection (safety & security)
Fire Prevention (outdoor & indoor)
Any activity that protects homes or prevents fires

Category 5—Drug Awareness

Activity Ideas:
Veterans Against Drugs
DARE
National Crime Prevention Council's "McGruff" campaign
There are numerous other opportunities and programs

Category 6—Recognition/Other

Activity Ideas:
Life Saving Awards
Firefighter Awards
Police/Sheriff Awards
Recognize an outstanding safety effort and gain credit

Please note that this Safety program reporting procedure is more thoroughly described in the Safety Chairman's Guidebook. (The guidebook is available to Post, District and Department chairmen.)

Report on Voice of Democracy

JAMES MUELLER, CHAIRMAN

GORDON R. THORSON, DIRECTOR

Voice of Democracy is an audio-essay scholarship competition designed to give high school students the opportunity to express their thoughts on a patriotic theme, promote citizenship, and to convey their message via the broadcasting medium to America.

Students in grades 10 through 12 in public, parochial and private schools are eligible to compete.

This year's theme—My Commitment to America—focused on American achievements and pride in what this country represents.

More than 138,000 students participated nationwide. More than 5,000 Posts and over 4,000 Auxiliaries sponsored the program in over 8,000 high schools.

Scholarships, savings bonds and other awards totaled more than $2,364,000 on the Post, District, County Council and Department levels. National scholarships contributed another $106,500 for a grand total of over $2,471,000.

The contest is conducted in cooperation with the National Association of Broadcasters and its state affiliates.

State winners received, in addition to their scholarships, an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. in February. While there, they visited national monuments, the U.S. Capitol Building and met with State Department officials.

State winners, sponsored by their respective Departments, also attended the American Academy of Achievement's Salute to Excellence weekend in Las Vegas, Nevada in June.

Each winner received the Academy's Golden Scroll Award and was enrolled in the Academy's Hall of Fame for America's Young Captains of Achievement. The first place national winner received the Academy's Golden Eagle Award for the Promise of Greatness.

TOP TEN 1993/94 NATIONAL VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Place	Winner	Sponsoring Post	Location	Amount	Award
1	Nathaniel Bennett	1149	Minneapolis, Minn	$20,000	VFW T.C. Selman Memorial Scholarship.
2	Brenda Gilbert	4663	Clifton, Colo	15,000	VFW Scholarship.
3	Julie Willis	7428	Hoisington, Kan ..	10,000	VFW Scholarship.
4	Karen Rosenkoetter.	4323	Princeton, Ill	5,500	VFW Scholarship.
5	Jeremy McCarter .	710	Steelton, PA	4,000	VFW Scholarship.
6	Amy Bice	3012	Rexburg, Idaho	3,500	Minnesota Scholarship.
7	Bryan Venable	7328	Saltville, Va	3,000	Dept. of Indiana and its Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship.
8	Michael Martel	9459	Lisbon, Maine	2,500	Daniel Sean Wallace Memorial Scholarship.
9	Carrie Warner	1272	Belmont, Mass	2,000	Jesse A. Lewis Memorial Scholarship.
10	Russell DiSilvestro.	604	Bloomington, Ind	1,500	Joseph O. Hansen Memorial Scholarship.

Report on Youth Activities

BERNARD FABRITZ, CHAIRMAN

GORDON R. THORSON, DIRECTOR

VFW recognizes the importance of shaping America's youth. Providing wholesome activities that stress fair play and good citizenship has been the goal and guiding principle of the National Youth Activities Committee.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary have traditionally supported and developed programs and events that benefit our nation's youth. This long-standing commitment to youth has grown through the years to include almost every possible program or event associated with young people.

This expanding and growing involvement deserves proper credit and national recognition.

YOUTH ACTIVITY REPORTING

The procedure used to report youth activities will remain the same—completion of the VFW National Programs Report Form will be the accepted method of reporting activities. Please take note of the six-category system for reporting youth activities. This reorganization of Youth Activities allows for expanded reporting of individual Post/Auxiliary efforts.

Basically, all youth activities fall somewhere within six major categories:

Category 1—Sports/Athletics
Category 2—Scouting/Organizations
Category 3—Contests/Special Events
Category 4—Education/Instruction
Category 5—Recognition
Category 6—Projects/Other

These general categories are listed on the VFW National Programs Report Form followed by a line to describe the actual activity that qualifies the Post/Auxiliary within that particular category. For example:

- If a Post/Auxiliary sponsors a Teen Bowling Team, it would report this activity under the Sports/Athletics category.
- If a Post/Auxiliary conducts a Child ID/Missing Children program, it would report this activity under the Education/Instruction category.
- If a Post/Auxiliary presents an Eagle Scout Award (certificate) to honor Scouts in the community, it would report this activity under the Recognition category.
- However, if a Post/Auxiliary actually sponsors a Scouting Unit it should report this activity under the Scouting/Organizations category.

Virtually any legitimate youth activity conducted by a Post/Auxiliary can be reported somewhere within the six categories. Credit is given in only one of the six youth categories for each activity performed. The Post chairman should determine which category best reflects the activity performed and then complete the Programs Report Form.

NATIONAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES CITATION

Once a Post/Auxiliary has performed at least one legitimate activity within each of the six categories, that Post/Auxiliary will then qualify for a national citation, recognizing its outstanding effort (deadline for reporting is May 1 of each program year).

The six categories and a small sampling of the numerous possible activities within each category are listed below. The listing is provided to help the chairmen determine which category is best suited for the activity performed:

Category 1—Sports/Athletics

Activity Ideas:
- Track
- Basketball
- Softball
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Bowling
- Special Olympics
- Hockey
- Any sport or athletic sponsorship

Category 2—Scouting/Organizations

Activity Ideas:
- Boy Scouts/Explorers/Eagle, etc.
- Girl Scouts
- Cub Scouts
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Boys and Girls Clubs of America
- Naval Sea Cadets
- Sons of the VFW
- Future Farmers of America
- 4–H
- Any legitimate youth organization sponsorship

Category 3—Contests/Special Events

Activity Ideas:
- Parades
- Talent shows
- Picnics
- Dance
- Fishing derbys
- Walk-a-Thon
- Rifle/pistol competition
- Bike-a-Thon
- Be creative, support the youth in your community

Category 4—Education/Instruction

Activity Ideas:
- Ceramics
- Stamp collecting
- Model building
- Leather craft
- Missing Children (Child Id)
- Develop a youth education program

Category 5—Recognition

Activity Ideas:
- ROTC Achievement Award (medal and citation)
- JROTC Achievement Award (medal and citation)
- Eagle Scout Award (certificate)
- Honor certificate for students
- Trophy/plaque presentation ceremony
- Any youth recognition

Category 6—Projects/Other

Activity Ideas:
- Build or repair—
  - Baseball diamonds

Soccer fields
Playgrounds
Donate equipment
National Home construction
Use your imagination

Please note that this Youth Activities reporting procedure is more thoroughly described in the Youth Chairman's Guidebook. (The guidebook is available to Post, District and Department chairmen.)

Report on National Home

ALICE HUTTO, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SUSAN SHOULTZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The VFW National Home is a reflection of the commitment and pride VFW members have in their organization. With its silver anniversary approaching in the year 2000, this vital child caring agency, that has been a home to more than 1,500 children and grandchildren of America's veterans, is prepared to keep on serving children well into the next century and beyond.

The VFW National Home is growing in many ways. By June 1995, the on-campus population is expected to reach its licensed capacity of 98 children. A new referral system coupled with increased awareness among child care professionals have played a major role.

Another factor in the Home's growth spurt are the millions of dedicated VFW members who keep the Home alive with their generosity and support. The National Home does not receive federal money. Rather, its funding comes from the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary, and the charity of others—people who genuinely care about the children.

With 100,000 homeless children in America today, there are many in all areas of our country who can benefit from the full range of programs the National Home has to offer.

For referral information, contact the Home's toll-free referral information line: (800) 851–0238.

For more information on programs or funding, write to the VFW National Home, 3573 S. Waverly Road, Eaton Rapids, Michigan 48827–9799.

ENTRANCE ELIGIBILITY

Services for children are available at the VFW National Home when the child's parent or grandparent is (or if deceased, at the time of death was) a member in good standing of the VFW or Ladies Auxiliary, and the child's custodian cannot provide an adequate home for the child.

Children who come to the National Home are given refuge beyond high school graduation. The Aftercare Program affords young adults an opportunity to further their education through scholarship assistance. Graduates may continue to live at the National Home in independent living for up to four years as they begin life in the adult world.

At the Community Center, children enjoy a wide range of recreational activities. They also have ample opportunity to become involved with Eaton Rapids school and church groups, tutorial and enrichment programs within the Home's Education Department and a weekly chapel service. A full staff of counselors and support personnel are available to help them cope with problems and build for the future.

Other features of the National Home include 4–H and adventure experience, camping opportunities, a student training program, public school education, health awareness training, spiritual development and community service responsibilities.

Report on Political Action Committee

RAY SODEN, CHAIRMAN

BOB CURRIEO, DIRECTOR

The main concern of many politicians is to get re-elected. To get re-elected, it takes money and votes.

The belief there is strength in numbers is a myth and politicians know it. But, if an organization like the VFW can combine its enormous membership strength

with an ability to put money into a political campaign and even deliver votes, then that organization has unquestionable political power.

Delivering money and votes for a congressional campaign on behalf of the VFW is the responsibility of your VFW Political Action Committee (see VFW National By-Laws, Section 615 National Committees.)

The VFW–PAC tracks the actions of members of Congress on key issues that are important to veterans and our nation. These issues are mandated by our VFW national convention through resolutions adopted by the delegates assembled. Your VFW–PAC has no issues or agenda of its own. The issues come from you, the membership.

The VFW–PAC holds Congress accountable for its votes and supports members of Congress who support veterans. This support is in the form of endorsements and contributions to their campaigns.

Political action committees are the only legal way veterans' organizations can get involved in the political process.

Collectively, veterans have the least political strength of any group in America. Consider this: Of the more than 4,000 PACs—1,700 represent business, 350 labor unions, 80 health care and only one for that nation's 27 million veterans. That is your VFW–PAC.

If Post, Districts and Departments are truly concerned about the future of veterans' programs and the political battles that lie ahead, they must do their part and financially support the only veteran's PAC in the United States. Then our Commander-in-Chief will truly speak for veterans from a position of strength.

As chairman of the VFW Political Action Committee, I want to thank the following for their assistance and support: Board members John Ray, Bob Loftus, Chase Libby, Joe T. Wood, Assad Allie, Treasurer Doug Forrest and Ladies Auxiliary representative Florence Taylor.

Also, the Board thanks Commander-in-Chief George Cramer, Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent, Jr., Vice Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera, Quartermaster General Jim Bowden, Adjutant General Howard Vander Clute, Washington Office Executive Director Larry Rivers and the staffs in Kansas City and Washington, D.C., for their continued support.

The Board wishes to express its sincere thanks to all Posts, Districts, Departments and individual VFW and Auxiliary members who continually support the VFW–PAC with their generous donations.

Finally, let me congratulate PAC Director Bob Currieo for his dedication in running the VFW–PAC.

For more information about your VFW–PAC, or if you want copies of your representatives and senators' voting records, write to: VFW Political Action Committee, Inc., Suite 506, 200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

VFW Political Action Committee Financial Report

Cash and Assets on hand as of 6/30/93	$224,784.91
Income:	
Individual Contributions	141,307.90
Post/Auxiliary Contributions	161,532.95
Interest Income	3,139.09
Total	305,979.94
Expenses:	
Operating Expenses	282,715.06
Fundraising Expenses	27,822.99
Contribution to Candidates*	5,600.00
Total	316,138.05
Total Difference Cash and Expenses	214,626.80
Cash on Hand (after expenses)	121,602.80
Other Assets (Equipment)	93,024.00
Total Cash and Assets (10/31/93)	214,626.80

*1993–1994 was a non-election year. The VFW–PAC will make its election year contribution to candidates during September and October 1994.

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