

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
103rd NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

[SUMMARY OF MINUTES]



Nashville, Tennessee : : : August 24 - August 30, 2002

PROCEEDINGS

of the

103rd ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

OF THE UNITED STATES

(SUMMARY OF MINUTES)

Nashville, Tennessee

August 24-30, 2002



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

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
December, 2002

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Nashville, Tennessee August 24-30, 2002, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,



JOHN J. SENK, JR.
Adjutant General

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

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

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

* indicates deceased

American Veterans of Foreign Service

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

American Veterans of Foreign Service

(Eastern Branch)

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

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

Army of the Philippines

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

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

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

1962-1963	Byron B. Gentry*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1963-1964	Joseph J Lombardo*	Elected at Seattle, Washinton.
1964-1965	John A Jenkins*	Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1965-1966	Andy Borg*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1966-1967	Leslie M. Fry*	Elected at New York, New York.
1967-1968	Joseph A. Scerra*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1968-1969	Richard W. Homan	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1969-1970	Raymond A. Gallagher*	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1970-1971	Herbert R. Rainwater*	Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1971-1972	Joseph L. Vicites*	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1972-1973	Patrick E. Carr*	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1973-1974	Ray R. Soden	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1974-1975	John J. Stang	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1975-1976	Thomas C. Walker	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1976-1977	R.D. Smith Jr.....	Elected at New York, New York.
1977-1978	Dr. John Wasyluk.....	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1978-1979	Eric Sandstrom	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1979-1980	Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1980-1981	T.C. Selman*	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock.....	Succeeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock.....	Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1982-1983	James R. Currieo.....	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1983-1984	Clifford G. Olson Jr.....	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1984-1985	Billy Ray Cameron	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1985-1986	John S. Staum.....	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1986-1987	Norman G. Staab.....	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1987-1988	Earl L. Stock*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1988-1989	Larry W. Rivers.....	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1989-1990	Walter G. Hogan	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1990-1991	James L. Kimery*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1991-1992	Robert E. Wallace	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1992-1993	John M. Carney	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1993-1994	George R. Cramer	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1994-1995	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent.....	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1995-1996	Paul A. Spera	Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
1996-1997	James E. Nier	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1997-1998	John E. Moon.....	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1998-1999	Thomas A. Pouliot.....	Elected at San Antonio, Texas
1999-2000	John W. Smart	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri
2000-2001	John F. Gwizdak.....	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin
2001-2001	James N. Goldsmith	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin
2002-2003	Raymond C. Sisk	Elected at Nashville, Tennessee

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2001-2002

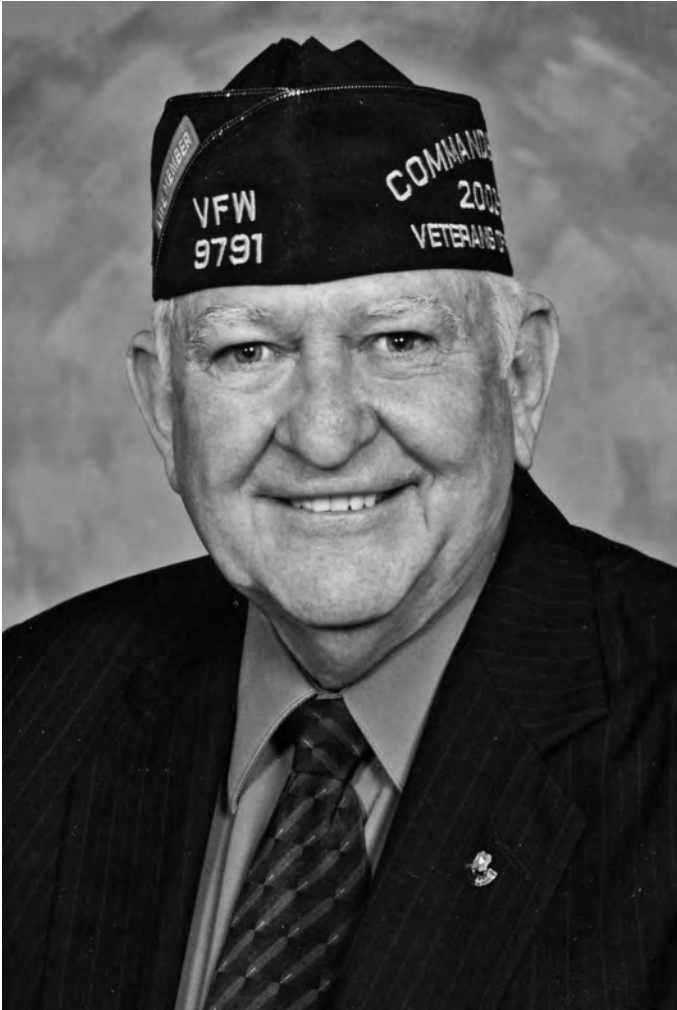
Commander-in-Chief	James N. Goldsmith
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Raymond C. Sisk
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Edward S. Banas Sr.
Adjutant General	John J. Senk, Jr.
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	Victor W. Fuentealba
Surgeon General	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr.
National Chaplain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

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS,
2001-2002

DISTRICT 1	(ME, NH)	Paul J. Chevalier
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	William L. McCarthy
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	Joseph F. Rosetta
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	Robert A. McGowan
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	Charles F. Thrower, Jr.
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DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	James A. Van Hauter
DISTRICT G	(California)	Steven D. Jacobs
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	William D. Bell
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	Richard J. Fitzgerald
Past Commander-in-Chief		John F. Gwizdak



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



Ray Sisk
Commander-in-Chief
2002-2003

VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2002-2003

Commander-in-Chief	Raymond C. Sisk
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Edward S. Banas, Sr.
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John Furgess
Adjutant General	John J. Senk, Jr.
Quartermaster General	Joe L. Ridgley
Judge Advocate General	Donald Pierce
Surgeon General	Cornelio R. Hong, MD
National Chaplain	James D. Marrs, Sr.
National Chief of Staff	George C. Berthiaume
Inspector General	Darrell F. Bencken
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Director Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration	Lawrence LeFebvre
Assistant Adjutant General, Membership	James R. Rowoldt
Assistant Adjutant General, Programs/Special Projects	Michael J. Gormalley
Assistant Adjutant General, Development	Ronald G. Browning
Assistant Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General- Operations	Robert Crow
Director, Buddy Poppy & Member Services	Thomas L. Kissell
Director, Communications	Jerry Newberry
Director, Emblem & Supply Department	M.L. "Bud" Cale
Director, General Services	David L. Swindler
Director, Life Membership & Dues Processing	Robert A. Crider
Director, Military Assistance	Bud Haney
Director, Publications & Editor, VFW Magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director/Chief Information Officer- Information Technology	Robert B. Greene
Director, VFW Properties	Billy R. Weissend
Director, VFW Programs, Youth Development, Scholarship & Recognition	Gordon R. Thorson
Director, Administration, Washington	Edward L. "Leo" Andrew
Director, Public Affairs, Washington	William G. Smith
Director, Employment Service	James N. Magill
Director, National Legislative Service	Dennis Cullinan
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs	
National Service Officer & Director, National Veterans Service	William Bradshaw
Manager, Information Technology	Alan F. Jones
Manager, Meeting and Events	Vanessa Kane, CMP
Manager, Member Benefits	Kris Keller

REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION
MEMBERS, 2002-2003

DISTRICT 1	(ME,NH)	Paul J. Chevalier
DISTRICT 2	(MA, VT)	Samuel R. Haskins
DISTRICT 3	(MD, NJ)	Joseph F. Rosetta
DISTRICT 4	(DC, DE, EU)	Peter J. Mascetti, Jr.
DISTRICT 5	(IN, MO)	Charles F. Thrower, Jr.
DISTRICT 6	(VA, WV)	Paul T. Moore
DISTRICT 7	(TN, KY)	Jeff A. Phillips
DISTRICT 8	(GA, AL)	Richard Branson
DISTRICT 9	(SC, NC)	William C. Cox
DISTRICT 10	(OK, AR)	John Dilbeck
DISTRICT 11	(WI, IA)	Robert C. Peters
DISTRICT 12	(SD, ND, WY)	Larry L. Scudder
DISTRICT 13	(CO, KS)	Richard N. Weston
DISTRICT 14	(MT, WA, ID)	Larry H. Longfellow
DISTRICT 15	(NM, AZ)	Tyrone M. Benson
DISTRICT 16	(LAT AM/CAR, PAC, AK, HI)	Frank S. Lamson
DISTRICT 17	(UT, NV, OR)	Johnnie B. Janes
DISTRICT 18	(CT,RI)	Robert A. Stevens
DISTRICT 19	(LA, MS)	Landry E. Saucier
DISTRICT 21	(MN, NE)	Louie Mrozek
DISTRICT A	(Pennsylvania)	Neale H. Deibler
DISTRICT B	(Illinois)	Donald L. Porter
DISTRICT C	(New York)	Jack I. Simons
DISTRICT D	(Ohio)	Daniel N. Long
DISTRICT F	(Michigan)	James A. Van Hauter
DISTRICT G	(California)	Steven D. Jacobs
DISTRICT H	(Texas)	Jimmie D. Cantrell
DISTRICT J	(Florida)	Richard J. Fitzgerald
Past Commander-in-Chief		James N. Goldsmith

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 103RD NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
AUGUST 24-30, 2002

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 2002

(The Memorial Service of the 103rd Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Delta Ballroom of the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith, 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 GOLDSMITH: You may be seated, and good morning. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the hall for the posting of the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Please be seated.

(Whereupon, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was sung by Juanita Bohlman, National Soloist for the Ladies Auxiliary.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Juanita. Will you, please, stand for the Invocation by Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Ron Lowery.

INVOCATION

LIEUTENANT COLONEL LOWERY: Let us pray. Our Father, this dawn we gather in this great hall and we praise you for this day. This dawn the oceans freely splash against our serene shores. The mountains stand as granite symbols, the waves of the fields show the abundance of harvest grain. You give daily all of these blessings and we praise you.

We praise you for pioneers who sacrificed longevity for liberty, and by

toil and hardship created homes and communities. We praise you for military powers that forged a nation, united under law and order, peace and justice and equality kept alive by hope.

This dawn, we thank you for that long line of noble comrades who marched at Trenton and Georgetown, Gettysburg and Shiloh, for those who fought in and over the fields and cities of Europe, the islands of the Pacific, the mountains of Korea, the jungles and river valleys of Vietnam, the deserts of Kuwait, and the desolate places in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

This dawn we remember those who make their bivouacs in the tents of eternal plains and rest beside the still waters, whose ships sailed into the harbor of heaven and whose final flights took them face-to-face with your holy presence.

This dawn there are no longer the dark shadows and dust of last September. Today we gather as a stronger people determined to use Liberty's torch not only to brighten the corners of our United States but to let Liberty's light shine everywhere the human spirit bids it welcome. This dawn, come our Father, come now and fill us anew of the breath of freedom, hearts beating of lasting courage, spirits rejoicing in our triumphs, and the boldness to be your people and to continue to be the people who trust in you as our

God. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the opening ceremonies have been performed per your order.

RECOGNITION OF MRS. TED C. CONNELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Please be seated. At this time I would like to acknowledge the presence of Mrs. T. C. Connell, widow, and the family of Past Commander-in-Chief Ted C. Connell who passed away on September 16, 2001.

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 Veterans of Foreign Wars Ritual provides the audience will refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see there is no disturbance during these ceremonies.

COMRADE JOHN HARROW, JR.: Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I request that the National Chaplain, Brother Moody, preside.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am at your service and shall endeavor to perform this solemn duty in the spirit of faith, hope and charity. Comrades, sisters and friends, please stand and join in singing "Nearer, My God, To Thee."

(Whereupon, the assembly sang "Nearer My God To Thee.")

MEMORIAL RITUAL

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Please be seated. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, to whom should the true soldier look for help in the battles of life?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Our help is in the name of the Lord who maketh heaven and earth.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, what assurance do we have of prolonged stay among the seasons and activities of earth?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: For we are strangers before and the sojourners as were all our fathers. Our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Comrade Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, have you a message of condolence for those bereaved?

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BANAS: I have. The book of life tells us that like a father to pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth for those that fear him, so he knoweth our frame and he remembereth that we are dust.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: What message has the Chaplain of the Ladies Auxiliary?

LADIES AUXILIARY CHAPLAIN JO ANNE OTT: I have a message of hope that should inspire our comrades in this solemn moment and all through life. The message is from the captain of our salvation. He says, "I am the resurrection and the life and he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Comrades, we are thankful for these inspiring thoughts. Let us learn the lesson of the hour which is that we, too, are nearing the end of life's pilgrimaging and sooner or later these services may be held in our memory. Let us so live that when our summons comes we may depart with a good conscience in the comfort of a sincere religion, belief in God and perfect charity towards all mankind. Let us pray.

Most gracious Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity that is ours. We thank you for the chance that we have to foster those great beliefs in the nobility of the men and women who have died for this country and for freedom's cause.

We pray that you will help us in our endeavors to secure their place in our memory as we continue through this service today, and may we always be faithful to the laws of our land and the laws of God and the fellowship and comradeship of our order. We pray in the name of our Lord. Amen.

(Whereupon, National Soloist of the Ladies Auxiliary Juanita Bohlman sang "Sleep Soldier Boy.")

SYMBOLIC TRIBUTE

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Comrades, in commemorating the virtues of our departed heroes who served their country in time of need, we now offer our symbolic tributes. Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, what tribute have you to offer?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN GWIZDAK: These white flowers I place as a token of the purity of affection we have for our departed comrades.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, have you a tribute to offer upon the sacred shrine?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The blue of our national standard symbolizes truth and fidelity. Therefore, I place these blue flowers from nature's bosom in token of our sincere respect for all departed comrades.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Ladies of the Auxiliary, will you offer a tribute to the memory of our departed comrades?

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT: I place upon our sacred shrine this wreath as a symbol of eternity. Its color bespeaks life everlasting, thus do we say that the deeds of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, on land, on sea and in the air are immortalized in the hearts of a grateful people.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Will you please listen attentively as the great voice of Juanita Bohlman offers her tribute.

(Whereupon, National Soloist of the Ladies Auxiliary Juanita Bohlman sang "Amazing Grace" at this time.)

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Thank you, Juanita. Today's service is a little bit different. I will be making some changes. After the Benediction, which will be in just a few moments, will you please remain seated while we arrange for the further part of this service.

I would like to introduce a friend of mine, Buddy Merrick. Buddy is not his real name. His first name is Meredith. He was named after a great person in our history in the military. Buddy is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He has a great history of music. To me, he is the greatest patriotic soloist in our country today. This is my soul brother. I love him so much. He is going to thrill your heart at this time with the words that you all know, "God Bless the USA."

(Whereupon, Comrade Buddy Merrick sang "God Bless the USA.")

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: That is just a sample, folks. We are about to have the concluding part of the Memorial Service in just a moment, though, we will have the Benediction for this part of it. I would

like for you to remain in your seats.

A memorial takes on many shapes and forms. Sometimes it is similar to what we do here today or it may be a private matter in one's thoughts. It may be expressed in a visible monument. In our organization, the memorial service holds a very significant place of long-standing.

It matters to us and our legacies places squarely upon our shoulders the solemn responsibility of perpetuating the memory of our fallen comrades. That is what this service is about. That is our comrades, those who are missing from our numbers today. That is all it is about.

To this National Chaplain, I feel that responsibility. This one-time opportunity at a National Convention to lead in the honoring of those who most deserve it is so special. I decided I would not fail them or you by making a long speech.

The inspiration of their memories, feeling their pain and inspired by the greatness of this great land, our tokens that I offer you today. I know you will be inspired by the images so familiar to you. I warn you that some of the sounds you will hear will be painful for some of you. I know they are to me. But remember, that pain is testimony to your own love and service to our nation.

Our National Soloist, Juanita Bohlman, will help us move through some of that with the calming spirit of her rendition of the Lord's Prayer. The great voice of America's beloved Colonel, Life Member Buddy Merrick, will make you so proud to have marched under the banner that we call Old Glory.

Listen, watch, remember and be very proud.

We call at this time on the gentlemen to lead in our
Benediction, Deacon Milton Von Mann.

DEACON MILTON VON MANN: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, you are the real foundation of nations, raising them up to serve and care for the people who dwell in their boundaries. I thank you for making me a citizen of this land, of freedom and unlimited opportunity, these United States of America.

Send forth your spirit to this country. Make it a source of wisdom and strength and order and integrity throughout the world, and bless us, Lord, with your peace.

And, Lord, make us an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us so love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. And where there is despair, hope. And where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, O, Lord, rejoice our hearts.

O, Divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand, for it is in loving that we are loved. It is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Let us remember our value dead and remember this thought that they would say to you this morning. "We serve our nation best when we serve the Lord best." And God bless the United States of America and God bless

all of you. Amen.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: At this time we will ask those who are on the stage to please retire to the seats for you down on the floor. For those who are responsible for changing the stage, if you will proceed to do that now. I will ask you to be patient, please, for just a moment while we set up the last part of our service.

Whereupon, the Memorial Images presentation was had at this time followed by Comrade Buddy Merrick singing "America.")

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Commander-in-Chief, this completes our service.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you very much. Let's give a round of applause. (Applause) Please be seated. We did something a little bit different and I hope you enjoyed it. It was kind of touching, wasn't it? (Applause)

I have a couple of announcements for tomorrow. As many of you know, the Vice-President of the United States will be here. The doors will open at 6:30. You must go through a metal detector, you must have your credential badge on. If you do all those things, then we should move along real smoothly.

John Senk, do we have any other announcements? The committee meetings are at 2:00 o'clock. All you people that got a check from us, be sure to be at the meeting at 2:00 o'clock or you are going to give the check back to us. Any questions about that? (Laughter) Enjoy the rest of your morning.

RETIRING OF COLORS

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

NATIONAL SERGEANT BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrades and Sisters, please stay in place until we escort the Gold Star parents and Gold Star wives from the auditorium.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Now, the Memorial Service is concluded. If that is the only mistake I make all week, we will have a very successful convention. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Memorial Service was recessed at 9:35 o'clock a.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2002

(The Joint Opening Session of the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 89th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary, was called to order on Monday, August 26, 2002, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., in the Delta Ballroom of the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee, by Adjutant General John Senk.)

DEDICATION OF 2002 VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am John Senk, Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Welcome to Nashville. At this time we would like to dedicate the 2002 VFW National Convention to the men and women currently serving in our country's military in the war against terrorism.

We salute former Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown, who passed away. Jesse was a champion for veterans and he will be sorely missed. He wasn't the first Secretary of Veterans Affairs, but he was certainly the first for veterans affairs. Please join me as we observe 60 seconds of silence in memory of Jesse Brown.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was held in memory of Mr. Jesse Brown.)

ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS AND
OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE POSTS

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

This year, 183 Commanders have earned the right to be called All American. Accompanying our All American Commanders are the Ladies Auxiliary Outstanding Department Presidents. Please show them all our appreciation for a job well done as they enter the hall. (Applause)

Following these distinguished members are the 2001-2002 Outstanding Community Service Posts represented by their Commanders and Auxiliary Presidents.

Comrades and sisters, as they enter the hall you may be seated if you so desire. It will take a couple of minutes to get everybody in.

Comrades and Sisters, it is now time to officially open the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Please welcome Past VFW Commander-in-Chief, former Executive Director of the VFW Washington office, and this year's National Convention Chairman, from the great state of Tennessee, Cooper T. Holt.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT: Thank you, Adjutant General. Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, National President of our Ladies Auxiliary Diana Stout, our National and State Officers of our VFW and our Ladies Auxiliary Distinguished Guests, Members and Delegates to this great Convention: On behalf of myself and all who are working so hard to make this convention a great success, I welcome you to the Volunteer State of Tennessee, to the Music City USA, Nashville, Tennessee. And believe me, we sincerely hope the time you spend with us will renew your pride in our nation, rededicate your commitment to America's veterans, and most importantly, bring new excitement to your work as a member, as a leader of the VFW and our Ladies Auxiliary.

Please rise as we officially open this 103rd National Convention with the advancement of our colors.

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

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Sergeants, advance the colors.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the National Honor Guard advanced the Colors at this time.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT: For this morning's Invocation, we have the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, William B. Moody.

INVOCATION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN WILLIAM MOODY: Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this occasion that brings many of like mind and like heart together. We thank you for the privilege of having served our country, and we praise your name for those who today stand in harm's way to protect the causes of our great nation.

We ask you to bless us as we begin this convention. May our thoughts and our hearts be directed by your presence that we might bring honor and glory to you and to our organization and to our great nation, and to the veterans that we serve. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrades and Sisters, ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of this great nation and the playing of our National Anthem.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given at this time.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT: At this time the National Anthem will be sung by Andy Griggs, and then we will have the posting of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the National Anthem was sung by Andy Griggs followed by the posting of the Colors by the Honor Guard.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT: You may be seated. We will now have a video presentation.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

(Whereupon, a video presentation on Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith's year was presented at this time.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT: For those of you who are wondering, that is what you call the VFW and our Ladies Auxiliary in action.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES N. GOLDSMITH

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure and my honor to introduce a gentleman who has served the Veterans of Foreign Wars for many years, and was elected to the position of Commander-in-Chief at its 102nd National Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 24, 2000.

As an Army Engineer, he served in Vietnam from April, 1966, to August, 1967. He was awarded the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Medal, and believe it or not, the Army Good Conduct Medal, and the Rifle Sharp Shooter Badge. Jim, I just had to add that. Okay?

Following his military service, he joined VFW Post 5666 in Flushing, Michigan, in 1967. He quickly became active and went on to become an All-State Post Commander and soon afterwards All-State and All-American District Commander.

In 1978, he was selected Michigan's "Young Veteran of the Year." In 1980, he became the first Vietnam veteran to be elected Department Junior Vice Commander in Michigan, and in the 1982-1983 year Jim Goldsmith received recognition as an All-American Department Commander.

At the National level, he has served on the Americanism, Youth Activities and Community Activities Committees. He also served as Vice-Chairman on the POW/MIA and the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committees. He was Chairman of the Legislative Committee in 1993-1994.

While serving as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Goldsmith was selected to travel to Vietnam as part of a presidential fact-finding committee. On an earlier trip to Vietnam and Laos as VFW Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, he participated in field efforts to recover the remains of missing U.S. service personnel.

As everyone in this hall is well aware, Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith has been an incredible asset to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. His energetic and tenacious pursuit of justice on behalf of those who served is a legacy for future generations of VFW to emulate.

In a difficult year that will be forever etched in our hearts and in our minds, Jim's leadership and compassion gave him the vision and the

strength that was needed to guide us through the dark hours into a new day. Our leader gave us as VFW and Auxiliary members a clear path to follow, one that has enabled the VFW to be a beacon of patriotism, community service and a positive example to the entire nation and, yes, to the world.

In short, he has “carried and delivered the mail.” As our Chief, Jim Goldsmith has been a champion and defender for those who deserve it most. His positive manner and effective style of communicating with government, not always diplomatic, believe me, our leader has left no room for doubt or misunderstanding as to what veterans need and what veterans deserve and what veterans will get. He has spoken to them and they have everything he does, he serves his fellow veterans and his community.

Please, ladies and gentlemen, welcome a great American, a true patriot, a veterans’ advocate, a man of action, our Commander-in-Chief, James N. Goldsmith.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF COOPER HOLT: Commander-in-Chief, it is my pleasure to present to you the official 103rd National Convention badge to wear as you see fit. Also, the official bell of this Convention and the official gavel of this 103rd Convention. I would suggest you use it firmly, and as you usually do with discretion. Thank you very kindly, sir. (Applause)

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Good morning. Before I start with my remarks, may I ask how many people in this room have gotten lost in this facility in the last couple of days? Well, don’t feel too bad. There are five individuals still roaming around this facility from three conventions ago, so they are still looking for them.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to take a moment to acknowledge a special group of veterans who are with us today. As all of you know, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is deeply involved in the Korean War commemoration events that started on June 25, 2000, and continues through November 11, 2003.

Over 1,500 VFW Posts are official partners in the Department of Defense Commemorative Partner program, and if there are any Post representatives interested in signing up as a partner, you can do so at the DOD Commemorative Partner Program booth located in the Exhibit Hall.

At this time, I would invite all Korean War veterans to please stand and be recognized. (Applause) Thank you very much for your service back then, and I thank you for your service today and your service in the future.

I would like to recognize another group, and I have started doing this the last couple of times when I have been on an event and they seemed to have a pretty good response. I would like all of the first-time comrades and

sisters who are attending their first National Convention to please stand. (Applause) Thank you, and I hope you enjoy your convention.

I want to take a few moments to talk to all of you about some of the perspectives I have gained over the past year; what we have collectively accomplished, and about the future of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. But first I want to thank each and every one of you for your dedicated service to the world's finest organization and to those we serve. I am grateful, deeply grateful, for having had the rare privilege of serving as your Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A year ago, during the 102nd National Convention, I stood at the podium and delivered my acceptance remarks to you in a setting similar to this one. I remember conveying to you that I was humbled to have been elected to the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

One year later, I stand before you with an even greater sense of humility. This past year has given me a greater appreciation of your constant efforts to improve the lives of those who deserve it most; our nation's veterans, their families and the military. (Applause)

I have a deep and abiding respect for your sense of duty, your passion for service and your willingness to contribute countless, countless hours of your life, and a majority of your time for the greater good. After the National Convention had adjourned, we thought we had a clear and concise plan, a set agenda to follow. We knew what needed to be accomplished and how we were going to accomplish it.

But the events of September 11 changed this country and changed the world never to be the same again. When our nation was attacked, it became apparent that we had new and additional priorities. Our nation was suddenly at war, and it became our duty to rally the organization behind the President, his administration, our military forces and our government leaders.

The rest of the country seemed to suddenly comprehend many of the things we had talked about and stood for for so many years: The love of country, duty, service and honor.

The VFW stepped forward and some of the things this organization immediately accomplished were outstanding. We had the "United for Liberty" patriotic rally in New Jersey. And I can remember when I called John Senk up, our Adjutant General, and I told him we were going to do this. He said, "Chief, we have never done anything of that magnitude."

I had confidence in the National Organization and I asked, "Do we have the resources and do we have the people to do it?" He said we did, and we did it. Oh, it was a cold blustery good morning on October 27th. People froze, but you know what, it was a good thing and it was the right thing for us to do.

Because of what we did, we didn't do it for that reason, corporate America came to us. SBC, American Telephone Company gave us a check for \$250,000 for Operation Uplink calling cards. FedEx came to us, the

CEO, Mr. Smith, a Vietnam veteran, has mailed many of our items free of charge, saving us a substantial amount of money.

We never had a relationship with Hallmark. They came to us. We solidified our relationship with Wal-Mart and the list goes on and on. It was the right thing to do for the right reasons. We established the "Attack on America" Trust Fund, and distributed funds directly to the surviving family members of the Pentagon victims killed on 9/11.

I had the pleasure, if you want to call it a pleasure, of delivering six of those checks myself to widows and women in their early twenties, to mid-thirties, with four or five children at home, a very, very emotional time. But I can tell you this, they appreciated what the Veterans of Foreign Wars did for them.

I went into the Pentagon because of you, not because of the Commander-in-Chief but because of you, and I delivered five checks, one to each branch of the military for \$25,000 for their special needs. We donated thousands of Operation Uplink calling cards. Over 300,000 calling cards went out since September 11th.

Let me give you another staggering figure. Since the concept of that program some five years ago, we have given out over 255 million minutes of free calling time to active reservists, National Guard and hospitalized veterans. (Applause) And, my friends, that is because of you, not the Commander-in-Chief.

Our Military Assistance Program kicked in high gear. You know, we never should have needed September 11th for that to have happened. We should have been doing that all the time. I also tell the story about my sister up front, and she is going to kill me after I get done with this story, too.

You know, the young men and women over there are no different than what you and I were when we served. They want the packages, they want the letters, they want that communication. I can remember when I was in Vietnam my young sister, Barb, used to send me fudge in a coffee can with a spoon, because the fudge never got hard. I don't think she ever made a batch of fudge that ever got hard. (Laughter) You know what, my friends, that was the best fudge we ever had.

Cookies, remember when you got cookies, they didn't look like cookies, they were cookie crumbs, but they were the best cookies you ever had. We have got to keep doing that. We have got to keep doing that and Bud Haney and his MAP program just sent out 40,000 cases of cookies that were donated to us.

That is the right thing to do and you have to do that as a Post and adopt these units and do what you should be doing. We did all of these things and did them for a good reason, a very good reason. But most of all, it was the right thing to do.

The events of September 11 changed the way we do business. Everything we do as an organization now has even more significance than it did before. While our nation is at war, we have an even larger obligation to fulfill, a higher duty to perform.

Let me say one other thing about September 11. I said this in a couple of places. I, for one, am sick and tired of listening about all the moaning and groaning how the detainees are being treated in Guantanamo Bay. Let me say this. Where was the world's concern during the Bataan Death March during World War II?

Where was the concern when our men were being executed at the Chosen Reservoir in Korea? Where were the bleeding heart liberals when our men were held in cages and beaten and tortured in Vietnam? And as far as I am concerned, the al Queda and the Taliban being held on Guantanamo Bay are exactly where they belong and they are probably being treated too good. And if you don't believe me, ask the victims of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. (Applause)

It has been a rewarding year. It has been a challenging year, and also a very frustrating year in some ways. The frustration comes with the part where I must feel compelled to address the issue of declining membership. During the past year, membership has declined by 55,000 members. And since it happened on my watch as Commander-in-Chief, I am not going to stand up here and offer any excuses or alibis.

In my mind, there isn't any good reason for this to happen. We can make all the excuses that we want, we can say this happened or that happened and something else happened, but the bottom line is we are not recruiting members like we once did.

I am going to give you a little analogous of what I think, and some might not agree, and that's okay. I feel we have to open our Posts back up again. There is nothing worse than going by a Post that had 200 people on Tuesday night and it is dark. It costs you just as much to heat it as if it is full.

We have to get the young people back in our halls again. (Applause) You know, I can remember very well when I was Senior Vice Commander of my Post and some say up on this level we are so removed that we have forgotten that. I have not forgotten that.

A very significant thing happened when I was Senior Vice Commander of my Post. My son was born, James, who is sitting right down here in the first row. I can remember later I became an All State Commander, my Post did, and we were followed by ten Vietnam veterans in a row as Post Commanders in that Post. We were all raising our kids.

I can remember one time after a fish fry drinking a Brewsky, if you can imagine that, and there was something like 16 or 17 kids running around that place. They don't walk when they are in a big hall, they run. Everybody is hollering at them to quit running, they are going to fall and break their chin, but they never fall and break their chin. Do you see what I am coming to? We have to get the youth back in these halls.

Let me say this, too. If there is some old grump sitting there saying get the kids out of here, kick the grump out, don't kick the kids out. (Applause)

Well, let me tell you about the other programs. Mike Gormally, and his Americanism, Youth Activities, and Gordon Thorson and all these other programs, we did two million more hours of community service than we

did last year. That is two million hours more.

The Ladies Auxiliary, when I called Diana Stout, your National President, I said, "Diana, I need help with Operation Uplink." You ladies were there. For the fourteenth consecutive year, you have raised over \$3 million for cancer aid research.

You have not only made a difference in people's lives, you have saved people's lives over the years. There is a foundation that has been made and it has been made for a couple of years. I hope when this convention is over that you can say that the organization is just a little bit better than it was when I came in. That is your decision, not mine.

I truly believe, and make no mistakes about it, I truly believe this, our best days are a head of us. We might not be the single largest veterans organization again, but I will say this, we sure in heck will remain the very best. (Applause)

I thank you for your dedication, your commitment and all the work that you do for this organization. It has been a great year for me. But most of all, my friends, I thank you for your friendship. May the good Lord continue to watch and bless each and every one of you. Let the convention begin.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you so very much. I would like to introduce the people on the stage at this time. If you would stand and hold your applause until I get them all introduced, except the first one.

The National President of the Ladies Auxiliary from the great state of West Virginia, Diana Stout. Let's give her a good welcome. (Applause)

The Senior Vice President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Betty Morris, and her husband Garnett Morris. The Junior Vice President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Evelyn McCune and Donald McCune, her husband. The National Secretary-Treasurer for the Ladies Auxiliary, Celia Davis, and her husband, Ken.

Cooper T. Holt and his wife Betty Holt. My Chief of Staff, John Harrow from the great state of Michigan, and his wife Sandra. My Inspector General, Tom Tradewell, from the great state of Wisconsin, and his wife, Sharon. And our Voice of Democracy winner, and I hope I don't butcher her name — she says it has really been butchered a lot — Allegra Guarino.

How did I do? (Applause)

Raymond Sisk, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and his wife, Joan Sisk. Our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas, and his escort Sandra Robichaud. Adjutant General John Senk and his wife, Madelyn Senk. I have got on my list the Secret Service. I don't know if he is here or not.

Joe Ridgley, Quartermaster General, and a person's name I am not going to butcher anymore, I have got it down, Victor Fuentealba, the Judge Advocate General, and his wife, Vi. The Surgeon General, Walter Dybeck

and his wife, Elva. Bill Moody, our National Chaplain, and his wife, Bobbie. Let's give them a good round of applause. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE BILL PURCELL,
MAYOR OF NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: This is the first time the Veterans of Foreign Wars has held the National Convention in Nashville. I am sure you will agree that we chose well. No doubt we will all leave this great city with a host of great memories and sore feet. We have all been shown great hospitality and friendship, and we will be forever thankful to all of the people of Nashville.

Here to greet us today is the Mayor of the magnificent city of Nashville, the Honorable Bill Purcell.

GREETINGS - THE HONORABLE BILL PURCELL,
MAYOR, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

MAYOR PURCELL: As the Mayor of Nashville, I am so very pleased to participate in the opening of the 103rd National Convention of the VFW and the 89th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary. Chairman Holt, and especially Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, I salute you and your members and wish for this gathering a successful and productive convention, and I personally thank you, the leadership of both organizations and everyone in this room, for coming to Nashville this year. I know you are looking forward later today to hearing from Vice- President Cheney.

This organization has a special place in my heart as my father is a World War II veteran and was a POW in Germany. I grew up understanding what you represent from him, both those men and women he served alongside and those who came later to liberate him.

The dedication of this gathering to honor the young men and women currently serving our country in the war against terrorism is particularly timely and appropriate. Our nation's appreciation for those who served our nation, past and present, has taken on a renewed importance in our lives since the horrible events of September 11, 2001.

As we approach that anniversary, we continue to feel the impact of a new threat to our daily lives. Almost a year later we live with the fact, as your Commander-in-Chief said, that our lives are changed. We still enjoy the liberties and freedoms of our nation, but our guard is up and our trust levels are down.

We are also reminded of the service and sacrifice of each of your members and the service and sacrifice that that meant to our nation, and we thank you for it. It was a little over 30 years ago this month on a hot windswept prairie land of South Dakota that friends and family of a fallen soldier gathered in a small rural cemetery to bury a son and comrade.

The young Marine aviator on his second tour in Vietnam as a forward air observer was shot down from the sky. The moment was particularly difficult for those gathered as the missing man formation of aircraft flew overhead and taps began in the distance.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Marine's father turned to a young man who had grown up with his son and remarked, "Whatever he done, he done good, didn't he?" We do not honor the wars that your service represents, but rather we honor the peace that those wars have granted us.

Our nation is reminded today that you and your colleagues, past and present, "done good," just as that young Vietnam veteran did. And we thank you for it. We thank you for your service, we thank you for your own recognition of the young men and women today who have followed you in service. God bless you and God bless America. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSIONER JOHN MOGAN, TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Retired Colonel John Mogan was appointed as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs in July, 2002, and continues to serve as Deputy Director, Office of Homeland Security, a duty he assumed in October, 2001.

Colonel Mogan completed a 30-year career with the United States Army. A decorated Vietnam veteran, he has served in a number of command and staff positions. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy as well as a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College.

Colonel Mogan is a Life Member of the VFW, as well as Past President of the Middle Tennessee Retired Officers Association and a member of the 101st Airborne Division Association. He currently serves as a member of the State Veterans' Home Foundation.

Join me in welcoming John Mogan. (Applause)

GREETINGS - COMMISSIONER JOHN MOGAN, TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMRADE JOHN MOGAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. It is a distinguished honor for me to be here today on behalf of Governor Don Sundquist, the Department of Veterans Affairs and also our over one-half million veterans in the State of Tennessee, to welcome all of you wonderful people to our state, the Volunteer State.

We hope that you enjoy your stay and that you take advantage of the proud traditions that we have in this state, especially with respect to military service. We got the name of the Volunteer State from our commitment to service and our dedication as far back as the War of 1812 when Tennesseans participated under the command of Andy Jackson, and the Mexican War and the Volunteers at the Alamo under David Crockett.

Other familiar names are those of Admiral Dave Farragut, Alvin C. York,

Medal of Honor winner from the First World War. Many distinguished Tennesseans have forged the way and handed off that baton of military service, and we are proud of that fact.

If you have the opportunity, visit our Bicentennial Mall, the wonderful museum to the World War II veterans, and also our War Memorial Plaza where we have memorials to the Korean War veterans and those of my comrades in the Vietnam conflict.

We have all done our deployments and we have fought on foreign shores for those things that we hold sacred with respect to our nation. That mission today is passed on to the younger warriors that are currently deployed.

Our National Guardsmen, our Reservists who are ready for the call, and especially those fine troopers scarcely an hour up the road from us, the 101st Airborne Division, who are on constant deployments to hot spots around the world. We honor their service, but we also remember that we as veterans and members of veterans organizations have a new mission today.

Because of the unique challenge that faces our country, we fight a war on two fronts. The young warriors are deployed overseas, but we are still manning the trenches at home. It is just as serious a challenge as we have ever faced in the Pacific or in the European Conflict, or on the Korean Peninsula, or in Vietnam or in the Gulf War.

It is just as serious a conflict today and maybe more so. But we are relying on each other to be constantly vigilant. We are often asked in the Office of Homeland Security, one of the greatest vulnerabilities around the State of Tennessee.

It is easy for us to enumerate the many precious pieces of infrastructure that we are blessed with as a state that could be potentially terrorist targets. But I often say that the greatest vulnerability we face would be our tendency as a nation, as an American people, to forget what happened to us almost a year ago.

We must maintain our resolve and our vigilance, and that is the greatest deterrent to terrorism that could strike us here at home. So I ask all of you, I thank you for your service, and not only your past service, your commitment to the VFW and other veterans to their respective veterans organizations, but I ask you to be part of the home team, the homeland security team, to remind people that the freedoms that you fought for before are not free and we continue to fight today to protect them at home.

United we stand and we protect our country to preserve that way of life for our children and grandchildren to come. Thank you so much for your service. I am proud to be a part of you, and enjoy your stay in our great state and our great city of Nashville. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SETS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It is now my pleasure to

introduce Francisca Guilford, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, presenting flag sets to Mayor Purcell and Commissioner Mogan.

NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR
FRANCISCA GUILFORD

NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR GUILFORD: Good morning. The American flag has become unique in its significance of its message to the world, a message of independence, freedom and unity. It is a tribute to Old Glory, "My Flag, My America", by B. F. Pike.

"She is my flag, my America, my red,
white and blue. She was born in freedom by
blood that was shed for me and you.

"She has grabbed the beautiful waver,
this symbol of blood that soldiers gave.
She is my flag, my America, forever she will
stand and wave.

"She is a brotherhood of nations, my
flag, and she is stronger than she has ever
been. My fighter of justice and peace, for
all women and children and men.

"She is old and tired and worn, she is
soiled, and tattered and torn, but she is my flag,
my American, never, no, never to be forlorn.
I will never give her up, not my flag; "My American stars
and stripes, not my home, my freedom or my hope.

"For these I will always fight. No, no one can take
her away. She stands stronger forever and a day, because
she is our flag, our America, and no one can
take that away."

All of America has focused on our flag in this hour of darkness because it speaks volumes without saying in words, and further and proud it gave we, the people, a common focal point, a sense of unity and community. We put flags in our windows, our porches, on cars and trucks. Everywhere we look we saw the American flag, the unifying symbol of a proud and freedom-loving nation.

Today, nearly a year later, we are still seeing a continuance of celebration of Old Glory. It is a whole new generation of Americans that have come to understand the meaning of our flag, and why so many have always revered it. Unquestionably, it is the most beloved and recognized symbol of freedom in the entire world.

On behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we present these flags of our country to Commissioner John Mogan, Department of Veterans Affairs, representing Governor Sundquist,

and to Bill Purcell, Mayor of Nashville. May she fly proud over this glorious state of Tennessee. (Applause)

COMMISSIONER JOHN MOGAN: Thank you so very much. I have a quick presentation to commemorate this occasion. On behalf of the Governor of the State of Tennessee, Don Sundquist and our Department of Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs, I have a Certificate of Appreciation to our Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith. Commander-in-Chief, thank you so much for your service and for this opportunity today.

I also have a presentation for Madam President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you also for your wonderful contributions to our efforts.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT: Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Diana Stout was elected National President of the 700,000-member Ladies Auxiliary at its 88th National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 24, 2001.

During her term of office, Diana has advocated the programs of the Ladies Auxiliary. During her acceptance speech, she introduced her theme, "Liberty And Justice For All." Her background in law enabled her to greatly assist her organization in achieving one of the Auxiliary's main goals, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and equal rights and justice to all men and women. During her term she has demonstrated exceptional strength and commitment as she led the Ladies Auxiliary to new heights of patriotism and service.

Diana Stout has an outstanding record of service to the Auxiliary on all levels of the organization. She has held numerous appointed as well as elected positions within the Auxiliary. Diana leaves a legacy of firm commitment and dedication to those we serve

I am pleased to have had the chance to work with her during her year as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. It has been an experience both of us will always remember. And I can say this, any time I have called on Diana to assist the Veterans of Foreign Wars she has answered that call.

And for her service to the Auxiliary, we honor her today. Please welcome, from the great state of West Virginia, a terrific lady and the recipient of the VFW Gold Medal of Merit, the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Diana Stout.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: "Gold Medal of Merit and this

Citation awarded to Diana Stout, National President, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 2001-2002, in sincere recognition of her dedication to our country and in appreciation for her leadership of the Ladies Auxiliary, as evidenced by their contributions to the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Her theme of 'Liberty and Justice For All' epitomizes what our nation should represent and the goal all of us must strive for as citizens of our great republic.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the Official Seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 26th day of August, 2002." This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT STOUT: Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, Jim, Officers and Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Guests:

It is indeed my honor and I am deeply honored to accept this. Thank you. I am proud to have served as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, particularly with such a wonderful man as Jim Goldsmith in the position of Commander-in-Chief.

Our convention, this right now marks the end of the 88th year that the Ladies Auxiliary has partnered with the VFW to serve our veterans and our communities throughout this great country of ours. The events of this past year brought home to all of us with blinding clarity why it is necessary to have a Veterans of Foreign Wars and Ladies Auxiliary.

We need to be there for our active military, we need to be there for them when they return, and we need to be there for those of you in the audience and all veterans of all walks of life who have helped us preserve our freedom. One excellent way to help them right now is Operation Uplink, and I want to thank the Commander-in-Chief for his kind words about the Ladies Auxiliary and our support for this program.

If the Commander-in-Chief would please step forward. I would like to make a couple of presentations. On behalf of the 671,501 members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I am proud to present you with a check in the amount of \$10,000 for Operation Uplink.

In addition, this year, I created a new type of award basically for members of the VFW and for people who support the Auxiliary, called the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Advocate Pin. So in lieu of the money that is normally spent for gifts as I traveled, I would like to present you a check in the amount of \$1,750 for Operation Uplink. This brings the total donations from the Ladies Auxiliary to Operation Uplink in excess of \$280,000 this year. (Applause)

I would like to also present you with another check, and this is a donation for your very special project, the American Diabetes Association,

in the amount of \$2,500.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you so very much.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT: Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary, I wish for you a very, very successful convention. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: There are some in the Veterans of Foreign Wars that say that we could do without the Ladies Auxiliary. Now, let me say this, too, they are not the brightest people that we have in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I can say this, that with the Ladies Auxiliary we are a much, much better organization, and wasn't that just proven? Thank you so much, Diana, for your leadership and also for your friendship.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT: Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL LEE SANG-HOON, KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: This year we are midway through the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. Please allow me the opportunity to honor not only American veterans, but also the Korean veterans who stood beside us 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 fiber of a nation. Today, Korea, through the sheer dynamics and energy of its people, has emerged as an economic power. It is an achievement in which we share the pride of the Korean people.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce General Lee Sang-Hoon of the Korean Veterans Association. Please join me in giving General Lee Sang-Hoon a warm VFW welcome.

GREETINGS - GENERAL LEE SANG-HOON, KOREAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

GENERAL LEE SANG-HOON: Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On the occasion of the 103rd Annual National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I would, first and foremost, like to extend my sincere congratulations to you for holding such a magnificent convention.

It is my great honor to say greetings before you on behalf of 6.5 million members of the Korean Veterans Association. I am deeply impressed at the progress made by the Veterans of Foreign Wars under the leadership of Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith and many of its works for the world peace.

Dear members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, you are the veterans who once participated in many kinds of wars, such as the First and Second

World Wars, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War and many recent wars.

You were determined to sacrifice even your precious lives for the world peace and the progress of mankind. There must be Korean War veterans here today. I would like to take this opportunity, together with all the 47 million Korean people, to express our heartfelt respect to those Korean War veterans.

The words "Freedom Is Not Free", "Forgotten No More" that are inscribed in the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C., are remembered by hearts of all the Korean people.

Thanks to your unselfish support, Korea has become one of the advanced countries in the world holding '88 Seoul Olympic and 2002 World Cup Games. All the Koreans are so glad that we were able to prove ourselves by showing developed Korea today your commitment and sacrifice were not in vain.

Unfortunately, however, there are still tensions and conflicts on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea has continued to produce weapons of mass destruction and never abandoned its hostility of Communizing the entire peninsula. On June 29th, a North Korea Naval ship fired guns illegally across over the Northern Limit Line against the South Korean ship. This provocation has made United States-Korea relations even stronger, and let us reaffirm our commitment for maintaining world peace.

There is no doubt in my mind that not only the South-North dialogue but also the United States-North Korea talks are vital for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. I hope that the Bush administration will pursue the United States-North dialogue in a more active manner, making North Korea give up its hostility and the day of unification come nearer.

Dear members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I love this place, the beautiful city of music, and I want to let you know most Koreans, including myself, are music-loving people, and those who love music also love peace and freedom. Your warmest hospitality endowed to my party is superb and it will be remembered forever. May God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars and God bless its 2.1 million members. Thank you. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, General Lee. I found out something about General Lee yesterday. He was the Battalion Commander of the Marine Rock Division in Vietnam. Many of you might have recognized him. Another coincidence, he was Defense Minister at the same time our Vice-President of the United States, Dick Cheney, was Secretary of Defense, and they know each other very well. Thank you for your service.

GENERAL LEE SANG-HOON: At this time as the Chairman of the Korean Veterans Association would like to present a plaque of appreciation to Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith. James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in grateful recognition of your dedication and contributions to the support of national security of the Department of Korea and to the promotion of

family relations between the two organizations, Veterans Association. (Applause)

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT: General, if I could ask you to return here for a moment. I would just like to say that when I visited your country it was absolutely amazing the hospitality. You made me feel so warm and welcome I really appreciate that. I am sorry you were unable to attend the dinner that evening, but I thank you so very, very much.

PRESENTATION OF THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER AWARD
TO GENERAL ANTHONY C. ZINNI

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: General Zinni served as former Commander-in-Chief of the United States Central Command and as a Fellow of the Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group. He commanded U.S. forces in a 25-country region, ranging from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, through parts of the Soviet Union.

From 1994 to 1996, Zinni served as the Commanding General of the First Marine Expeditionary Force. In early 1995, Zinni commanded the Combined Task Force for Operation United Shield, protecting the withdrawal of the United Nations forces from Somalia.

He joined the United States Central Command in September, 1996, as Deputy Commander-in-Chief. Following Desert Storm, he served as Chief of Staff and Deputy Commanding General of Combined Task Force Private Comfort, a Kurdish relief effort in Turkey and Iraq. He was also the Military Coordinator for Operation Provide Hope, the relief effort for the former Soviet Union.

During 1992-1993, he directed the Unified Task Force Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. Also in 1993, he was the Assistant to the United States Special Envoy to Somalia during Operation Continue Help. From 1992 to 1994, General Zinni was Deputy Commanding General of the United States Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Quantico, Virginia.

Zinni was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1965 upon graduation from Villanova University. Serving in Vietnam as a Company Commander in 1970, Zinni was wounded and evacuated. He then went on to hold a number of command and training positions within the Marine Corps.

From 1987 to 1989, Zinni served on Okinawa as the Regimental Commander of the 9th Marine and the Commanding Officer of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, which was twice deployed to the Philippines to conduct emergency security operations and disaster relief operations.

Zinni's military decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" and Gold Star in lieu of a second award, and the Purple Heart.

Please welcome the 2002 recipient of the Dwight D. Eisenhower

Award, General Anthony C. Zinni.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The citation being presented reads, "Dwight David Eisenhower Distinguished Service Medal presented to General Anthony Zinni, United States Marine Corps (Ret.) in special recognition and sincere appreciation for four decades of distinguished and exemplary military service in the United States Marine Corps. As the Chief of the U.S. Command with responsibility for troops in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, sensitivity and a clear understanding of the Gulf's geo-political situation. His commitment to his troops, his country and his Corps earns the respect of a grateful nation in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 26th day of August, 2002. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by James N Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - GENERAL ANTHONY C. ZINNI

GENERAL ZINNI: Thank you for this great honor. It is humbling to be receiving an award for service from people who define service and sacrifice. I grew up in a home full of veterans. When my father came to the United States, not long after he was drafted and he fought in the First World War.

As a result of his service to his new country, he was given his citizenship. That has meant a great deal to him. It touched him deeply. He told us in our family we had to honor our new country and we had to fight for our flag. He told us that family, faith, friends and freedom in the flag are what we had to put it on the line for.

My brother served in Korea, the 25th Infantry Division, during the Korean War. My cousin served in the European and the Pacific theater in the Second World War. Many of them were wounded and honored with decorations. It was an easy decision for me to go to Vietnam and to stay in the Marine Corps.

My son is already a veteran. He recently joined the Marine Corps and has already participated in Operating Enduring Freedom. Before he left for Enduring Freedom, he called me and he said, "Dad, do you have any advice?" I thought about my father's words, which were always so deep and meaningful, and I knew I had to give him some words that were deep and meaningful.

I told him, "Yes, I have got some advice for you, Lieutenant. Listen to your Sergeants. Come back safe and sound." I want to thank all of you Sergeants out there that get us all back safe and sound from all of us Second Lieutenants. Thank you for all you do for your country.

Your voice is important and it must be heard. It is never more important than now. I worry about not having enough veterans voices where it counts. Be heard. We need you.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause) I was so ordered to introduce my wife, Debbie.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you very much. This is your show now, Buddy.

INTRODUCTION OF 2002 DISTINGUISHED ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Thank you, Chief. Now, we are going to present the All Americans their due honors. If the officers will please take their stations and, Jim, move them smartly because we have to be ready when the Vice-President comes.

From the great state of Alabama, Robert J. VanCleave, Post 924; Paul W. Calhoun, Post 1762; Lawrence O. Sepanski, Post 4190; Wesley L. Tidwell, Post 4850; Alton S. Jones, Post 5797; Richard H. Kizziah, Post 6022; Oliver E. Prothro, District 4, Post 4638; Robert L. Littrell, District 5, Post 1701; and George A. Ganey, District 9, Post 5660.

From the great Department of Alaska, Gary Kurpius, Department Commander, Post 10221.

From Arizona, Ronald D. Gage, Post 8242; Charles R. Price, Jr., Post 9972; Donald R. Snyder, District 1, Post 769; Lawrence E. Reinhardt, former Commander of Post 9972; and Charlene Kozakiewicz, Department President of the Year, Group V, Arizona.

From Arkansas, Thomas K. Williams, Post 9095; Michael K. Nuckolls, District 5, Post 3543; and Harold Harris, Department Commander, Post 2952.

From the great state of California, Jose Limas, Post 52; Michael C. McCoy, Post 1744; Garry L. Overby, Post 4647; Arthur L. Harris, Post 5179; James G. Elliott, Post 5948; William E. Pfeifle, Post 9009; Walter S. Pynn, Post 9223; Raymond H. Fairbank, District 3, Post 2924; and Wallace R. Max, District 13, Post 2922.

From the Department of Delaware, Lawrence K. Hittinger, Post 11197; Jesse E. Kitson, Department Commander, Post 6921; and Kathryn Minutola, Department President of the Year, Group II, Delaware.

From the District of Columbia, Catherine Davis, Sykes Department President of the Year, Group 1, District of Columbia.

From the Department of Europe, Ronald J. Robinson, Post 2566; Peter H. Luste, Post 8862; John J. Regan, Post 9845; Billy D. Barber, Post 10436; Donald K. Wells, Jr., Post 10557; Charles W. Cofield, Post 10810; John C. Neilson, District 1, Post 2566; Robert E. Mann, District 3, Post 10692; Stephen A. Ward, District 5, Post 9781; and Peter J. Mascetti, Department Commander, Post 10658.

From the great Department of Florida, Robert M. Krepp, Jr., Post 3270; Donald G. Eckerdt, Post 4781; William A. Anderson, Post 10097; Glenn E. Hosmer, Post 10132; Edward R. Noll, Post 10209; Billy B. Moore, District 6, Post 8255; John F. Fogarty, District 21, Post 8681; Eugene Leshore,

Department Commander, Post 10174; and Lucille Plant, Department President of the Year, Group IX, Florida.

From the Department of Georgia, Ronald R. Maher, Post 649; Carl L. Hunter, Post 665; Bobby G. Wise, Post 2938; and Billy W. Smith, Department Commander, Post 4904.

From the Department of Hawaii, Ralph E. Moore, Post 970, and Paul Schoener, Department Commander, Post 3850.

From the great state of Idaho, James M. Mariman, Post 63; Robert R. Willis, District 5, Post 5423; and Ken Pitcher, Department Commander, Post 10043.

From Illinois, Tiger Miller, Post 1059, and Dean A. Gard, District 7, Post 9961.

From the State of Indiana, Jack L. Pope, Post 972.

From the great state of Kentucky, James T. MacDonald, Post 1170; Robert O. Hendrickson, Post 1181; James F. Basham, Post 10281; and Brian J. Duffy, District 6, Post 1170.

From the Department of Louisiana, Richard L. Cook, Post 3106; Thomas J. Kijak, Post 5951; and Enola Kilchrist, Department President of the Year, Group V, Louisiana.

From the State of Maine, Thaxter S. Sedgewick, Department Commander, Post 2499.

From the Department of Maryland, Joseph A. Winner, Post 6506

From the State of Massachusetts, Lawrence E. Christianson, Post 529.

From Michigan, Kenneth L. DeBoer, Post 1146, and Susan Jacobs, Department President of the Year, Group X, Michigan.

From Minnesota, James R. Hein, Post 2701.

From the Department of Mississippi, James E. Slayton, Post 79; James E. Gordon, Department Commander, Post 4100; and Judy Patterson, Department President of the Year, Group IV, Mississippi.

From the great state of Missouri, Dennis L. Turner, Post 1000; Harlan P. Hager, Post 3838; David A. Wright, Post 3944; Randall Conaway, Post 4541; and Paul Jones, Department Commander, Post 2866.

From the State of Montana, Jackie Scott, Department President of the Year, Group III, Montana.

From Nebraska, Roger T. Hector, Post 10616.

From Nevada, Stephen P. Gibbs, Post 1753; John W. Stroud, District 6, Post 10047; and James R. Parsons, Department Commander, Post 10047.

From the State of New Jersey, Joseph Vermette, District 12, Post 5698.

From North Dakota, Casper R. Scholl, Post 126.

From the State of Ohio, Emil A. Soltesz, Post 2133; James D. McAlpin, Post 6560; Melvin B. Deems, Post 6846; John V. Coey, Post 7174; William K. Seagraves, Post 9582; Roger H. Weltch, District 3, Post 6560; John A. Halter, District 7, Post 5137; Harry Crabtree, District 12, Post 8402; and Mary Miller, Department President of the Year, Group XI, Ohio.

From the Department of Oklahoma, Darrell R. McGee, Post 5263, and Harold R. Spooner, Post 11194.

From Oregon, we have James F. Hand, Post 5233, and Harold C. Jordan, Department Commander, Post 293.

From the Pacific Areas, Ronald D. Teets, Post 10033; Robert Henault, District 3, Post 8180; and William R. Wichmann, Department Commander, Post 727.

From South Carolina, George E. Watts, Post 5208, and Lawrence Verraneault, Post 10420.

From Tennessee, Thomas E. Ferrell, Post 11160.

From the great state of Texas, Ronald E. Johnson, Post 2195; Earl Baumann, Post 4372; Pedro L. Guerra, Post 6873; Oscar G. Gonzalez, Post 7475; Nick B. Herrera, Post 8936; Lonnie Garza, Post 9186; and Joe Diaz, District 20, Post 2059.

From Vermont, Ronald J. Gascon, Department Commander, Post 792

From the State of Virginia, Kim A. Deshano, Post 392; James K. Martin, Post 1503; Michael J. Hoiness, Post 4809; and Wesley W. Flora, District 2, Post 9382.

From the State of Washington, Martin H. Spani, Post 1040; Karl R. Rosbach, Post 2200; Robert G. Leroy, Post 2995; Carlos L. Almeda, District 11, Post 1263; H. Rae Jones, Department Commander, Post 10018; and Patricia Rasmussen, Department President of the Year, Group VIII, Washington.

From Wisconsin, Gundel M.E. Metz, Post 1318; John H. Swanson, Post 6498; and Thomas R. Lemmer, District 2, Post 6377.

And from the State of Wyoming, Herb Carstens, Department Commander, Post 579.

INTRODUCTION OF THE 2001-2002 ALL AMERICAN COMMANDERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The 2001-2002 Honor All American Commanders are as follows:

From Alabama, Elwood Sergent, Post 6020.

From Alaska, Jack A. Cowan, Post 9365, and Joseph J. Simms, Post 10252.

From California, Linda J. Fairbank, Post 385; Robert D. Abrams, Post 3795; and Edward J. Ketcham, District 1, Post 7907.

From Colorado, Ray Bustos, Jr., Post 2643; William R. Myers, Post 4061; William L. Duncan, Post 5812; Frank Martinez, Post 8898; John R. Lewis, District 2, Post 4061; and Phil Phillips, Department Commander, Post 322.

From Florida, Bruce L. Bahneman, Post 8108; David J. Guy, District 12, Post 8108; and Ronald C. Kerr, District 13, Post 10097.

From the State of Georgia, James R. Coggins, District 16, Post 5080.

From the great state of Kansas, Michael S. Clark, Post 56; Kendal G. Hower, Post 1714; McKinley Smith, Post 8773; and Richard Clutts, Department Commander, Post 7271.

From Kentucky, William J. Apple, Department Commander, Post 1170.

From Louisiana, Clarence L. Woods, District 6, Post 3106.

From Mississippi, Joseph W. Clark, Post 2539.

From Nebraska, Lorenz Montoya, Post 1581; Richard E. Morrison, Post 8334; Richard P. Doty, District 10, Post 247; and John Gollihare, Department Commander, Post 1504.

From Nevada, Marvin Alig, Post 10047.

From New Mexico, George A. Martinez, Sr., Post 401;

George B. Prudencio, Post 7686; and Allen W. Kuchinski, Department Commander, Post 7686.

From the great state of North Carolina, Thomas W. Taylor, Post 2057, and John W. Shelander, District 8, Post 670.

From the Pacific Areas, Laurence L. Lyons, Post 11016, and Sammy R. Skipper, District 1, Post 11435.

From South Dakota, Patrick R. Condon, Post 1273, and Kenneth J. Jorgenson, Department Commander, Post 750.

From the great state of Texas, Robert L. Carter, Post 2034; Dennis M. Barber, Post 3892; Ted P. Mikkelsen, Post 6796; Charles F. McGrath, Post 8577; and Donald Hollingsworth, Sr., District 14, Post 8577.

From Virginia, James E. Tucker, Department Commander, Post 10654, and Mary Richards, Department President of the Year, Group VII, Department of Virginia.

From Wisconsin, Mark A. Weber, Post 5158; Walter G. Hogan, District 5, Post 6498; and Steven D. Lawrence, Department Commander, Post 10272.

While the Commander-in-Chief is making his last presentation, we were handed a check this morning from the Southern Conference Commanders for 2000-2001 for Operation Uplink in the amount of \$200.

PRESENTATION OF MEMBERSHIP RECRUITERS AWARDS

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith wants to stress the importance of recruiting as well as rewarding those individuals who worked so hard to recruit new, reinstated or MIP members into the VFW.

The recipient on the National Recruiter of the Year Award for 2001-2002, for recruiting the most new or reinstated members, excluding MIP, is J. R. Weber, member of Marshall-Johnson Post No. 5158, Hartland, Wisconsin.

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

John has distinguished himself by recruiting over 1,500 members this past year.

We are proud of three individuals who are the recipients of the National Convention Recruiter Award. The first award is presented to Leslie I. Raper, Commander of Lone Memorial Post 8254, located in Lone,

California.

The second award is presented to Bruce A. Withers, a member of Kitzingen VFW Post No. 10436, located in Kitzingen, Germany. These two individuals recruited over 300 new or reinstated members to win this award.

The last award is presented to Donald G. Eckerdt, a member of Angela S. Stone VFW Post No. 4781, located in Ocala, Florida. Comrade Eckerdt is one of many individuals who signed up 25 new or reinstated members and had his or her name entered in a drawing for this award.

INTRODUCTION OF VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER - ALLEGRA GUARINO

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Let's get settled down here. We are going to get back to the program. Over the past 55 years, the Voice of Democracy Contest has enabled high school students from across the country and overseas to think, write and speak out for freedom and democracy. These students compete for more than \$141,500 in national scholarships, not to mention the more than \$2.5 million in awards and scholarships given by Posts, Districts, Departments and their respective Ladies Auxiliaries.

These VFW scholarships enable many young Americans to continue their education in colleges and universities of their choice. We are pleased to have with us today the 2002 First Place National Winner in the Voice of Democracy Contest. She is a junior at Marlboro High School in Marlboro, New York, and was sponsored by VFW Post 8645 and Ladies Auxiliary in New Paltz, New York, when she entered the contest.

Here to present her award-winning essay, "Reaching Out To America's Future", the 2002 First Place National Voice of Democracy winner and recipient of the \$25,000 T. C. Selman Memorial Scholarship, Allegra Guarino. How did I do there?

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER - ALLEGRA GUARINO

MS. ALLEGRA GUARINO: You did good. Someone said there were 18,000 people here. Whoever put these lights on, I am really glad you did because I can only see about the first 10,000. Where is New York? Yes. I would like to thank the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the opportunities they have given me this past year.

Not only did I have the amazing opportunity to meet President Bush with 53 other students on the steps of the White House, but I was invited to attend the Freedom Summit there which was another incredible experience that I will never forget.

Of course, my parents are extremely, extremely excited that the veterans will be helping to pay for my college education. Really, I can't tell you how wonderful it is to be able to look at colleges now and say, "Yes, I can really go there," and to be able to say, "Yes, this can be a school for

me.” So I would like to present my essay. I hope you-all enjoy it. I never thought when I wrote it that it would do so many great things for me. It is a story and I hope you enjoy it.

When I read the phrase “Reaching Out To America’s Future,” I think of an Outreach trip that I took this summer to Harlan County, Kentucky. Harlan County is one of, if not the poorest county in America. The people here don’t have running water, some of them don’t have electricity, and what is even more shocking is that some of them don’t have a sewage system. They live in the hills of the Appalachian Mountains in conditions that many people wouldn’t dream exist in our great country.

One of the volunteers on the trip found a beautiful stone on the ground and gave it to a little girl that he met.

He told her that it was a dream stone; and that if she held on to it when she was dreaming of the future, it would hold inside of it all of her hopes and her dreams.

The little six-year-old girl looked up at him with questioning eyes and said, “But I don’t know how to dream.” How do you teach a child to dream. Most people don’t have to be taught, because they are lucky enough to live in a part of our country where the reach of their dreams has no limitations.

Another child I met in Kentucky is named Bailey. She is a four-year-old who loves to play on the swing-set, so on the third day of the trip I decided to teach her how to butterfly swing. I sat down on the swing and placed her on my lap so that she was facing me.

I kicked off from the rocky soil and we began swinging. I told her to be sure and watch the shadow that we were casting on the ground. I watched her eyes light up as she saw the butterfly-shaped shadow on the ground. As we pulled away from each other and then back towards each other the shadow was an image of a butterfly flapping its wings.

I told her that she might not be able to fly like the butterfly but she could do lots of great things in her life. She thought about the butterfly and what I had said and then she looked at me with these big blue eyes and said, “You can be the wings.” I know that she didn’t mean it as deeply as I took it. She was probably only referring to the shadow that we were making on the ground. But to me it meant something more. Today our country is at war and once again many brave people have gone off to fight in defense of freedom. They are truly the wings of the butterfly. Just as I picked up Bailey and placed her safely on my lap, the troops fighting now and the troops that have fought for us in the past picked up America, and started to fly

In order to start us swinging, I had to push hard off the rocky ground. The American soldiers don’t have an easy task ahead of them. We are just now kicking off of the rocky ground. But I have no doubt that we will fly. A butterfly has two wings, each equally important. The soldiers will no doubt put 110 percent into flying our country to the freedom of the open skies.

But we, the American people, must put equally as much effort into flying the country higher. All of us as a team must reach out to America’s future. Without knowing us, people have laid down their lives so that we

would be able to enjoy these very freedoms that are now being threatened.

America, too, has a dream stone. Only it comes in a different form. It is tri-colored in red, white and blue. Red for the blood shed yesterday, White for the pure freedoms we enjoy today and Blue for the endless clear skies of tomorrow. Our flag is our dream stone holding inside of it the very hopes and dreams of our Nation.

We held tightly to it as it was proudly carried through World War I, World War II, Desert Storm, Vietnam and Korea. While we were enjoying a time of great prosperity, we tucked our stone away in our pocket. On September 11th, we pulled it out of our pockets when fire fighters proudly raised it high at Ground Zero, athletes displayed it on their jerseys, and average Americans flew it from their cars and homes.

My generation knows how to dream. Will the generation after us be able to say the same? We must reach out and place the knowledge of the past into the hands of the future. When we empower the future generations with knowledge, our country is sure to thrive.

It is estimated that over one million men and women have died in service to our great country. Let us, America's present, take pride in our history and reach out to the future by passing along our knowledge in our great American dream stone. Because without a doubt, America's future is whatever America dreams it to be.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: While the people here on stage will be going back to welcome the Vice-President, I would ask the Uniontown Band to entertain you and invite you to stretch, but I would suggest that you stay in place so that we can bring the Vice-President on at the appointed time.

INTRODUCTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT RICHARD B. CHENEY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Ladies and gentlemen, before I introduce our honored guest, Vice-President Richard B. Cheney, I would like to welcome his wife, Lynne Cheney, and their daughter, Liz, who have also joined us today. Give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

Vice-President Dick Cheney has had a distinguished career as a businessman and public servant, serving four presidents. As an elected official, he served six terms as a congressman in the United States House of Representatives from the great state of Wyoming.

Mr. Cheney also served a crucial role when America needed him. As Secretary of Defense, from March, 1989, to January, 1993, Mr. Cheney directed two of the largest military campaigns in recent history, Operation Just Cause in Panama, and Operation Desert Storm in the Middle East. He was responsible for shaping the future of the United States military in an age

of profound and rapid change as the Cold War ended.

Today as our nation wages war on terrorism and faces issues of homeland security, Mr. Cheney continues to provide invaluable service to the nation and to the President. Ladies and gentlemen, the Vice-President of the United States, Richard B. Cheney.

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

REMARKS - VICE-PRESIDENT RICHARD B. CHENEY

VICE-PRESIDENT CHENEY: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Jim. I appreciate your introduction and your strong leadership for the VFW. And I especially appreciate your warm welcome.

I have been looking forward to this opportunity to visit the historic city of Nashville and to being with members of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary. I see many good friends here in the audience this morning. I know I have attended your convention in the past.

It is a special privilege to stand before you today, for the first time, as Vice-President of the United States. (Applause) And it is my great honor to serve with a Commander-in-Chief every soldier and every veteran can be proud of, President George W. Bush. (Applause)

I am grateful to Jim Goldsmith and Diana Stout for their hard work on behalf of the nation's veterans and military personnel. I also want to thank Bob Wallace, your fine Executive Director who runs the Washington office. And permit me to be among the first to wish great success to Ray Sisk of California who will succeed Jim this Friday as the VFW Commander-in-Chief, and Betty Morris of Maryland, the incoming National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. I know Ray and Betty will both do a superb job. (Applause)

As members of the VFW, you are united by common experiences and shared commitments. In the military, you devoted yourselves to a cause above self-interest, served with a firm sense of duty and developed personal standards that make you an example for your families and your fellow citizens.

The daughter of an Army Air Corpsman described growing up with her father, and the values she learned from him without even knowing it. As she recalls, "Honesty, integrity, hard work, personal responsibility, and perseverance were all around me and I absorbed them almost imperceptibly." Our veterans have had a similar effect on the entire nation.

Those values are embodied in this organization. In the VFW our nation sees a continuing ethic of service, shown in the time, talent and money you have given to citizens in need. Last year alone, VFW members gave more than 16 million hours to worthy causes.

Your Operation Uplink has allowed service members and hospitalized veterans to make free calls home. I know they and their families are deeply

grateful to all of you.

The VFW also serves the nation by leading on a range of important issues, such as health care and education, employment opportunities and homeland security, military readiness and the quality of life for our service families. The VFW stands firm for protecting our country's flag and for defending the right of every American to pledge allegiance under God. (Applause)

Our administration is proud to have strong ties with the leadership and the membership of the VFW. We believe that in dealing with the federal government, every veteran deserves a response that is fair, respectful and prompt. We are working every day to improve the level of service to our veterans.

On taking office we found a large claims backlog, numbering in the hundreds of thousands. The backlog is falling steadily, as is the average time for processing each claim. But there is a lot more to be done and America's veterans can now be certain that someone is doing it. The President has put a solid, results-oriented veteran in charge of the department, Secretary Tony Principi. Under our administration, you won't receive excuses, you will receive action. (Applause)

To further improve health-care services to veterans, President Bush has established a Veterans Health Task Force which Bob Wallace is an influential member. And although we are holding most discretionary spending to two-percent increases, the President has asked Congress for an eight-percent increase for veterans' health-care, and a seven-percent increase for veterans' programs overall. (Applause) The money is necessary to meet pressing needs, some of which have gone neglected in recent years.

We will continue working with VFW leaders and members on homeland security, drawing upon your experience in military and civilian life. And we share common cause on the matter of servicemen whose fate is still undetermined. For all the uncertainties that remain, the basic issue is clear: thousands of brave Americans, last seen doing their duty, remain unaccounted for. The nation remembers these men, and this government will persist in the effort to account for every last one of them. (Applause)

As we meet all of these commitments, our administration is moving forward on an agenda to build a safe and prosperous future for the American people. We have laid the foundation for greater prosperity and opportunity with the most significant education reforms in 35 years, with free trade legislation to open up markets to American producers, with tough new laws to ensure corporate integrity and honest accounting, with spending discipline in Washington and with the largest federal tax reduction in 20 years.

There is a full agenda for the fall, and beyond. Yet, the President and I never for a moment forget our number one responsibility: to protect the American people against future attack, and to win the war that began last September 11th. (Applause)

The danger to America requires action on many fronts all at once. We are reorganizing the federal government to protect the nation against further

attack. The new Department of Homeland Security will gather under one roof the capability to identify threats, to check them against our vulnerabilities, and to move swiftly to protect the nation. At the same time, we realize that wars are never won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy. We will take every step necessary to make sure our country is secure, and we will prevail. (Applause)

Much has happened since the attacks of 9/11. But as Secretary Rumsfeld has put it, we are still closer to the beginning of this war than we are to its end. The United States has entered a struggle of years, a new kind of war against a new kind of enemy. The terrorists who struck America are ruthless, they are resourceful, and they hide in many countries. They came into our country to murder thousands of innocent men, women and children. There is no doubt they wish to strike again, and that they are working to acquire the deadliest of all weapons.

Against such enemies, America and the civilized world have only one option: wherever terrorists operate, we must find them where they dwell, stop them in their planning, and one-by-one bring them to justice.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban regime and al Qaeda terrorists have met the fate they chose for themselves. And they saw, up close and personally by the new methods and capabilities of America's armed services. (Applause) May I say, as a former Secretary of Defense, that I have never been more proud of America's military. (Applause)

The combination of advantages already seen in this conflict, precision power from the air, real time intelligence, special forces, the long reach of naval task forces, and close coordination with local forces represents a dramatic advance in our ability to engage and defeat the enemy. These advantages will only become more vital in future campaigns.

President Bush has often spoken of how America can keep the peace by redefining war on our terms. That means that our armed services must have every tool to answer any threat that forms against us. It means that any enemy conspiring to harm America or our friends must face a swift, a certain and a devastating response. (Applause)

As always in America's armed forces, the single most important asset we have is the man or woman who steps forward and puts on the uniform of this great nation. Much has been asked of our military this past year, and more will be asked in the months and the years ahead.

Those who serve are entitled to expect many things from us in return. They deserve the very best weapons, the best equipment, the best support, and the best training we can possibly provide them. And under President Bush they will have them all. (Applause)

The President has asked Congress for a one-year increase of more than \$48 billion for national defense, the largest since Ronald Reagan lived in the White House. And for the good of the nation's military families, he has also asked Congress to provide every person in uniform a raise in pay. We think they have earned it. (Applause)

In this war, we have assembled a broad coalition of civilized nations

that recognize the danger and are working with us on all fronts. The President has made it very clear that there is no neutral ground in the fight against terror. Those who harbor terrorists share guilt for the acts they commit. Under the Bush doctrine, a regime that harbors or supports terrorists will be regarded as hostile to the United States.

The Taliban has already learned that lesson, but Afghanistan was only the beginning of a lengthy campaign. Were we to stop now, any sense of security we might have would be false and temporary. There is a terrorist underworld out there, spread among more than 60 countries.

The job we have will require every tool at our means of diplomacy, of finance, of intelligence, of law enforcement, and of military power. But we will, over time, find and defeat the enemies of the United States. In the case of Osama bin Laden, as President Bush said recently, "If he is alive, we'll get him. If he's not alive, we've already got him." (Applause)

But the challenges to our country involve more than just tracking down a single person or one small group. 9/11 and its aftermath awakened this nation to danger, to the true ambitions of the global terror network, and to the reality that weapons of mass destruction are being sought by determined enemies who would not hesitate to use them against us.

It is a certainty that the al Qaeda network is pursuing such weapons, and has succeeded in acquiring at least a crude capability to use them. We found evidence of their efforts in the ruins of the al Qaeda hideouts in Afghanistan. And we have seen in recent days additional confirmation in videos recently shown on CNN, pictures of al Qaeda members training to commit acts of terror, and testing chemical weapons on dogs. Those terrorists who remain at large are determined to use their capabilities against the United States and our friends and allies around the world.

As we face this prospect, old doctrines of security do not apply. In the days of the Cold War, we were able to manage the threat with strategies of deterrence and containment. But it is a lot tougher to deter enemies who have no country to defend. And containment is not possible when dictators obtain weapons of mass destruction and are prepared to share them with terrorists who intend to inflict catastrophic casualties on the United States.

The case of Saddam Hussein, a sworn enemy of our country, requires a candid appraisal of the facts. After his defeat of the Gulf War in 1991, Saddam agreed under the U.N. Security Council Resolution 687 to cease all development of weapons of mass destruction.

He agreed to end his nuclear weapons program. He agreed to destroy his chemical and his biological weapons. He further agreed to admit U.N. inspection teams into his country to ensure that he was, in fact, complying with these terms.

In the past decade, Saddam has systematically broken each of these agreements. The Iraqi regime has, in fact, been very busy enhancing its capabilities in the field of chemical and biological agents. And they continue to pursue the nuclear program they began so many years ago.

These are not weapons for the purpose of defending Iraq; these are

offensive weapons for the purpose of inflicting death on a massive scale, developed so that Saddam can hold the threat over the head of anyone he chooses, in his own region or beyond.

On the nuclear question, many of you will recall that Saddam's nuclear ambitions suffered a severe setback in 1981 when the Israelis bombed the Osirak reactor. They suffered another major blow in Desert Storm and its aftermath.

But we now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Among other sources, we have gotten this from the firsthand testimony of defectors, including Saddam's own son-in-law, who was subsequently murdered at Saddam's direction. Many of us are convinced that Saddam Hussein will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.

Just how soon, we cannot really gauge. Intelligence is an uncertain business, even in the best of circumstances. This is especially the case when you are dealing with a totalitarian regime that has made a science out of deceiving the international community.

Let me give you just one example of what I mean. Prior to the Gulf War, America's top intelligence analysts would come to my office in the Defense Department and tell me that Saddam Hussein was at least five or perhaps even ten years away from having a nuclear weapon. After the war we learned that he had been much closer than that, perhaps within a year of acquiring such a weapon.

Saddam also devised an elaborate program to conceal his active efforts to build chemical and biological weapons. And one must keep in mind the history of U.S. inspection teams in Iraq. Even as they were conducting the most intrusive system of arms control in history, the inspectors missed a great deal. Before being barred from the country, the inspectors found and destroyed thousands of chemical weapons, and hundreds of tons of mustard gas and other nerve agents.

Yet Saddam Hussein had sought to frustrate and deceive them at every turn, and was often successful in doing so. I will just cite one instance. During the spring of 1995, the inspectors were actually on the verge of declaring that Saddam's programs to develop chemical weapons and longer-range ballistic missiles had been fully accounted for and shut down.

Then Saddam's son-in-law suddenly defected and began sharing information. Within days the inspectors were led to an Iraqi chicken farm. Hidden there were boxes of documents and lots of evidence regarding Iraq's most secret weapons programs. That should serve as a reminder to all that we often learn more as a result of defections than we learn from the inspection regime itself.

To the dismay of the inspectors, they in time discovered that Saddam had kept them largely in the dark about the extent of his program to mass produce VX, one of the deadliest chemicals known to man. And far from having shut down Iraq's prohibited missile programs, the inspectors found that Saddam had continued to test such missiles, almost literally under the noses of the U.N. inspectors.

Against that background, a person would be right to question any suggestion that he should just get inspectors back into Iraq, and then our worries will be over. Saddam has performed the game of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception. A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatever of his compliance with U.N. resolutions. On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow "back in his box."

Meanwhile, he would continue to plot. Nothing in the last dozen years has stopped him, not his agreements; not the discoveries of the inspectors; not the revelations by defectors, not criticism or ostracism by the international community, and not four days of bombings by the U.S. in 1998. What he wants is time and more time to husband his resources, to invest in his ongoing chemical and biological weapons programs, and to gain possession of nuclear arms.

Should all his ambitions be realized, the implications would be enormous for the Middle East, for the United States and for the peace of the world. The whole range of weapons of mass destruction then would rest in the hands of a dictator who has already shown his willingness to use such weapons, and has done so, both in his war with Iran and against his own people.

Armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror, and seated at a top ten percent of the world's oil reserves, Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East, take control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies, directly threaten America's friends throughout the region, and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail.

Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us. And there is no doubt that his aggressive regional ambitions will lead him into future confrontations with his neighbors, confrontations that will involve both the weapons he has today, and the ones he will continue to develop with his oil wealth.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no basis in Saddam Hussein's conduct or history to discount any of the concerns that I am raising this morning. We are, after all, dealing with the same dictator who shoots at American and British pilots in the no-fly zone on a regular basis, the same dictator who dispatched a team of assassins to murder former President Bush as he traveled abroad, the same dictator who invaded Iran and Kuwait, and has fired ballistic missiles at Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel, the same dictator who has been on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism for the better part of two decades.

In the face of such a threat, we must indeed proceed with care, deliberation, and consultation with our allies. I know our President very well. I have worked beside him as he directed our response to the events of 9/11.

I know that he will proceed cautiously and deliberately to consider all possible options to deal with the threat that an Iraq rule by Saddam Hussein represents. And I am confident that he will, as he has said he would, consult widely with the Congress and with our friends and allies before deciding upon a course of action.

He welcomes the debate that has now been joined here at home, and he has made it clear to his national security team that he wants us to participate fully in the hearings that will be held in Congress next month on this vitally important issue.

We will profit as well from a review of our own history. There are a lot of World War II veterans in the hall today. For the United States, that war began on December 7, 1941, with the attack on Pearl Harbor and the near-total destruction of our Pacific Fleet. Only then did we recognize the magnitude of the danger to our country.

Only then did the axis powers fully declare their intentions against us. By that point, many countries had fallen. Many millions had died, and our nation was plunged into a two-front war resulting in more than a million American casualties.

To this day, historians continue to analyze that war, speculating on how we might have prevented Pearl Harbor, and asked what actions might have averted the tragedies that rate among the worse in human history.

America in the year 2002 must ask careful questions, not merely about our past, but also about our future. The elected leaders of this country have a responsibility to consider all of the available options. And we are doing so. What we must not do in the face of a mortal threat is give in to wishful thinking or wilful blindness.

We will not simply look away, hope for the best, and leave the matter for some future administration to resolve. As President Bush has said, time is not on our side. Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network, or a murderous dictator, or the two working together constitutes as grave a threat as can be imagined. The risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action.

Now and in the future, the United States will work closely with the global coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction. We will develop and deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and our allies from sudden attack. And the entire world must know that we will take whatever action is necessary to defend our freedom and our security.

As former Secretary of State Kissinger recently stated: "The eminence of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the huge dangers it involves, the rejection of a viable inspection system the demonstrated hostility of Saddam Hussein combine to provide an imperative for preemptive action."

If the United States could have preempted 9/11, we would have, no question. Should we be able to prevent another much more devastating

attack? We will, no question. This nation will not live at the mercy of terrorists or terror regimes. (Applause)

I am familiar with the arguments against taking action in the case of Saddam Hussein. Some concede that Saddam is evil, power-hungry and a menace, but that, until he crosses the threshold of actually possessing nuclear weapons, we should rule out any preemptive action. That logic seems to me to be deeply flawed. The arguments come down to this: yes, Saddam is as dangerous as we say he is, we just need to let him get stronger before we do anything about it.

Yet if we did wait until that moment, Saddam would simply be emboldened, and it would become even harder for us to gather friends and allies to oppose him. As one of those who worked to assemble the Gulf War Coalition, I can tell you that our job then would have been infinitely more difficult in the face of a nuclear-armed Saddam Hussein.

And many of those who now argue that we should act only if he gets a nuclear weapon would then turn around and say that we could not act because he has a nuclear weapon. At bottom, that argument counsels a course of inaction that itself could have devastating consequences for many countries, including our own.

Another argument holds that opposing Saddam Hussein would cause even greater troubles in that part of the world, and interfere with the larger war against terror. I believe the opposite is true. Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region.

When the gravest of threats are eliminated, the freedom-loving peoples of the region will have a chance to promote the values that can bring lasting peace. As for the reaction of the Arab "street", the Middle East expert Professor Fouad Ajami predicts that after liberation the streets in Basra and Baghdad are "sure to erupt in joy in the same way the throngs in Kabul greeted the Americans."

Extremists in the region would have to rethink their strategy of Jihad. Moderates throughout the region would take heart. And our ability to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process would be enhanced, just as it was following the liberation of Kuwait in 1991.

The reality is that these times bring not only dangers but also opportunities. In the Middle East, where so many have known only poverty and oppression, terror and tyranny, we look to the day when people can live in freedom and dignity, and the young can grow up free of the conditions that breed despair, hatred and violence.

In other times the world saw how the United States defeated fierce enemies, then helped rebuild their countries, forming strong bonds between our peoples and our governments. Today in Afghanistan, the world is seeing that America acts not to conquer but to liberate, and remains in friendship to help the people build a future of stability, self-determination, and peace.

We would act in that same spirit after a regime change in Iraq. With our help, a liberated Iraq can be a great nation once again. Iraq is rich in natural

resources and human talent, and has unlimited potential for a peaceful, prosperous future. Our goal would be an Iraq that has territorial integrity, a government that is democratic and pluralistic, a nation where the human rights of every ethnic and religious group are recognized and protected. In that troubled land all who seek justice and dignity, and the chance to live their own lives, can know they have a friend and ally in the United States of America.

Great decisions and challenges lie ahead of us. Yet we can and we will build a safer and better world beyond the war on terror. Over the past year, millions here and abroad have been inspired once again by the bravery and the selflessness of the American armed forces.

For my part, I have been reminded on a daily basis, as I was during my years at the Pentagon, of what a privilege it is to work with the people of our military. In whatever branch, at whatever rank, these are men and women who live by a code, who give America the best years of their lives, and who show the world the finest qualities of our country.

As veterans, each of you has a place in the long, unbroken line of Americans who came to the defense of freedom. Having served in foreign wars, you bore that duty in some of our Nation's most difficult hours. And I know that when you come together, your thoughts inevitably turn to those who never had the opportunity to live to be called veterans.

In a book about his Army years, Andy Rooney tells the story of his childhood friend Obie Slingerland, a decent, good-hearted, promising boy who was captain of the high school football team. Obie later went on to be the quarterback at Amherst before entering the Navy and becoming a pilot. Still a young man in his early twenties, he was killed while flying a combat mission off the Carrier Saratoga.

Andy Rooney writes: "I have awakened in the middle of the night a thousand times and thought about the life I had that Obie never got to have."

Many of you have known that experience. The entire nation joins you in honoring the memory of your friends, and all who have died for our freedom. And the American people will always respect each one of you for your standing ready to make that same sacrifice.

On the nation's behalf and for myself and President Bush, I thank you for the service you gave to your fellow citizens, for the loyalty you have shown to each other and for the great honor you have brought to your uniform, to our flag and to our country. Thank you very much.

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

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: I would like to recess this 103rd National Convention at this time.

(Whereupon, the Convention was duly recessed at 11:30 o'clock a.m.)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS BANQUET
AUGUST 26, 2002

(The Distinguished Guests Banquet of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Delta Ballroom of the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee, was called to order at 7:00 o'clock p.m., by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Raymond Sisk.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrades and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I would ask that all rise, please, and acknowledge the distinguished head table guests for tonight's activities. National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms, escort the distinguished guests.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SISK: Comrades and Sisters, if you will, please remain standing. We will now ask our National Chaplain, Reverend Bill Moody from the great state of Texas, to give our Invocation. Chaplain Moody.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Almighty God, our Father, we thank you for this occasion that gives us the opportunity to do that which we love to do most, to recognize achievement, to award those who have been very special in our history this past year, and we pray now that you will bless the food we are to take that our bodies will be strengthened and help us to use that strength to serve you.

We pray your blessings now upon this program tonight that it will bring inspiration and joy to all of us. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. If you would, please, give the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: You may be seated and dinner will be served.

(Whereupon, dinner was served at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Ladies and gentlemen, if I could have your attention, please. We have a wonderful group for your entertainment this evening, and I would like to give them a proper introduction because you are going to really enjoy this particular group.

For more than 50 years this Grammy-award winning quartet has entertained audiences worldwide. They provided vocal and instrumental music for Elvis on his first RCA recording sessions and with virtually every recording he has made through 1970. Let's, please, give a warm VFW welcome to the Jordanares. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Jordanares entertained the assembly at this time.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Ladies and gentlemen, the Jordanares, let's give them a VFW wonderful departure. (Applause) They say Nashville is one of the greatest cities in the world and I believe it.

Again, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Welcome to the 103rd

VFW National Convention Banquet. I am Ray Sisk, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the VFW and your Master of Ceremonies for the evening. I hope all of you have enjoyed your day here in Nashville, and we are pleased to have you with us this evening, especially the VFW National and Department leaders and our VFW Ladies Auxiliary leadership and members.

We are honored by the presence of our distinguished guests, and I will introduce them. It is my honor now to introduce our distinguished guests at the head table. If you would, please hold your applause until all the guests are introduced. I shall begin at the upper tier and to my left.

Please stand and be recognized and remain standing until all the guests are introduced.

Our Senior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Betty Morris and her husband Sarnoff, from the great state of Maryland. We are pleased to have with us this evening the Chief Executive Officer of the Air Force Aide Society. May I present Lieutenant General Michael McGinty, United States Air Force, Retired.

I am sure you will all agree that our next guest has done an outstanding job as Chairman of the VFW 103rd National Convention. I am pleased to present Past Commander-in-Chief Cooper T. Holt and his wife, Betty, from Tennessee. I would now like to introduce our Adjutant General, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, John Senk and his wife, Madelyn, from New Jersey.

Now, it is my pleasure to introduce someone that I am particularly fond of, and, boy, I am not going to mess this one up. Let me introduce to you my lovely, wonderful bride of 31 years, my wife, Joan.

I am going to skip that next seat because he is up here and I am going to skip the next one, also, and I might get back to him a little later. Go ahead and be seated, please. A big round of applause. (Applause)

Now, I will introduce those seated on my right. Again, please remain standing until all are introduced and again please hold your applause — I know you are going to do that — until all guests have been recognized.

Our next guest is the Commander of the Joint Task for Full Accounting, it is my honor to present Brigadier General Steven Redmann, United States Air Force.

It is certainly my pleasure to introduce our next guest, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Defense Prisoner of War and Missing Personnel Office, the Honorable Jerry Jennings.

Our Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Joe Ridgley, and his wife, Judy, from the great state of Missouri.

Our next guest received the VFW Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award during our Joint Opening Session this morning. It is my distinct privilege to present Anthony C. Zinni, United States Marine Corps, Retired, and Mrs. Zinni.

Our National President for the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of

Foreign Wars, Ms. Diana Stout, from the great state of West Virginia.

We are certainly honored to have with us tonight the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. It is a distinct honor to present to you the Honorable Leo McKay.

Our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Ed Banas, accompanied by Sandra Robichard from Connecticut. I will skip our next guest. Please now give them a round of applause and be seated. (Applause)

I shall now introduce those seated at the lower tier, beginning to my left. Audience, again, please hold your applause. You are doing wonderful.

Our National Chaplain, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, who gave you such an outstanding Memorial Service Sunday morning, William Moody, and his wife, Bobbie, from Texas.

Our Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Victor W. Fuentealba, and his wife, Viola, from Maryland.

Our Inspector General, of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Tom Tradewell, and his wife, Sharon, from Wisconsin.

Our National Secretary-Treasurer of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Celia Davis, and her husband, Kenneth, from Missouri.

Our National Junior Vice-President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Evelyn McCune, and her husband, Don, from Missouri.

I am pleased to introduce the candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the Southern Conference, Hugh Long, and his wife, Marilyn, from Mississippi.

We are certainly pleased to have with us tonight the Vice-Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China, Lieutenant General Chi-Liang Wu. We are so pleased to have him.

I am pleased to present the Director, Overseas Liaison, Veterans Affairs Commission, from the Republic of China, Han Song.

Our next guest is the Executive Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission. I am pleased to introduce Colonel Kenneth Pond, United States Army, Retired.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs, John Mogan, and Mrs. Mogan.

Our next guest received the National Recruiter of the Year Award this morning at the Joint Opening Session. It certainly is a pleasure and privilege to introduce J. R. Weber from the great state of Wisconsin.

The Chief of Staff of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, John Harrow, and his wife, Sandra, from Michigan.

Our Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Walter Dybeck, and his wife, Elva, from Nevada. Now, let's give them that big round of applause. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES N. GOLDSMITH

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: It is my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has served America's veterans for many years. It has been a privilege for me to be a part of his "Reach Out" leadership team for the past year. He has been a source of pride and inspiration to all of us. I know that many others share in their gratitude for a man who has done so much for so many.

Jim Goldsmith is a man who has dedicated his entire adult life to the service of others. He is a staunch veterans advocate, a tireless worker and is passionate in his beliefs. And, as we all know, he isn't too doggone shy about speaking his mind when it comes to taking care of the nation's veterans and their families.

He was elected to the position of VFW Commander-in-Chief at the 102nd National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 24, 2001. Jim served in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1967, with duty in Vietnam as an engineer from 1966 to 1967. He received a Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, and a Rifle Sharp Shooter Badge.

Jim joined the VFW in 1967 and is a Life Member of VFW Post 4139, Lapeer, Michigan. From Post level to national positions, he has served with distinction. He was an All State Post Commander in 1974. In 1977, he earned recognition as an All State and All American District Commander.

In 1978, Jim was selected as Michigan's "Young Veteran of the Year," and in 1980 became the first Vietnam veteran to be elected Department Junior Vice Commander. He went on to earn All American status as Department Commander in 1982-1983.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in proudly welcoming our Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, James N. Goldsmith.

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

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Ray. Thank you very much. Thank you, Ray, for that very kind introduction. Let me say this, I will keep my remarks brief if you can believe that.

You know, this morning I asked how many had been lost in this convention. Two-thirds of you raised your hand. Probably all of you would raise your hand now if I asked that. But now I want to know how many need new soles or new heels on their shoes because they wore them off walking all over the place trying to find your rooms?

You know, this morning I honored a group of veterans that were at the Opening Session. There is another group in this room today that have done so much for this country. I think President Clinton said it so very well when he stood on the beaches of Normandy during the 50th commemoration of

World War II.

He said something to this effect: "They might not walk as upright as they once did. Their eyesight might not be as sharp as yesterdays gone by. Their hearing may not be as keen as it once was, but when they were young they saved the world." Will all the World War II veterans please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

Once again, I thank you for what you have done in the past, what you do today and what you continue to do in the future. I couldn't help but see the young lad that was on stage and the response that he got from this audience. What did I tell you? You have got to get those kids in the Posts, and it paid off, didn't it? Did any of you see the response? We have got to do that.

Looking back over the past year, I am amazed at how quickly it has gone by. Everyone should have a dream. Some people manage to achieve the goals they set for themselves and some don't. I count myself as among one of the fortunate ones in the world who have had their dreams fulfilled.

I can tell you that being elected as the National Commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and having the opportunity to act as a representative of the greatest organization in the world is an experience I will always treasure and cherish.

This past year has been like no other year in our nation's history. It brought unique challenges to the nation, to our organization and to all of us. In that respect, I have been privileged to serve because I have had more opportunity than most to witness and experience the collective greatness of our membership.

Make no mistake about it; they are an amazing and noble group of people who continuously strive for the best. While our nation mourned the loss of life that occurred on September 11, our members worked courageously and tirelessly to do what they could to assist the victims and the families who were traumatized as a result of the attack on America. They set their own grief and emotions aside, rolled up their sleeves and went to work.

And you know, our members are just everyday people who are made exceptional by the special things they do. Our members bring new meaning to the words compassion, generosity, caring and honor. And for that I thank each and every one of you.

As leader of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I have met with our President and other leaders of our nation and with foreign heads-of-state. But frankly speaking, none of that compares to the experience of meeting and visiting members of our military forces.

I have sat down and shared meals with the men and women who are defending our nation. I have listened closely to them as they shared with me their hopes, their dreams and their ambitions. I have been inspired by their sense of purpose and their unwavering commitment to guard our nation and our way of life against those who would seek to destroy us.

I have been moved by their unflagging enthusiasm while facing the danger of combat. I don't have to tell you that we are extremely fortunate

because we have the best of the best serving in our military forces today. (Applause)

They are able to do their jobs knowing that the Veterans of Foreign Wars is absolutely committed in its support of them. And I have made it a point to let them know, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is here for them today, tomorrow and for as long as it takes. We will be here for them. Spending time with them was priceless.

As my year as Commander-in-Chief comes to an end, and I can tell you I will not miss the bright lights up here any more, I am deeply grateful to each and every one of you. I thank you for your gracious support and assistance and for making this year a very memorable one. Thank you, and may the good Lord continue to watch over us and bless each and every one of you.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY TO THE VFW DIANA STOUT

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

Diana Stout was President of the 700,000-member Ladies Auxiliary at its 88th National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 24, 2001.

During her term of office, Diana has advocated the programs of the Ladies Auxiliary. During her acceptance speech, she introduced her theme, "Liberty and Justice For All." Her background in law enabled her to greatly assist her organization in achieving one of the Auxiliary's main goals, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and equal rights and justice to all men and women.

During her term she has demonstrated exceptional strength and commitment as she led the Ladies Auxiliary to new heights of patriotism and service. Diana leaves a legacy of firm commitment and dedication to those we serve. I am pleased to have had the chance to work with her during her year as National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. It has been an experience both of us will always remember.

Please welcome, from the great state of West Virginia, the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Diana Stout.

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

REMARKS - NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY TO THE VFW DIANA STOUT

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT: Good evening, Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, Officers, Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the special guests with us this evening:

Tonight I want to take a moment to thank all of you for what you have again achieved and for what you did when America needed you. Members from the Auxiliaries and Posts around the entire country and the world, in reality as well, held hundreds of fund-raisers to help the victims of the September 11 attack. Your response was tremendous and much needed.

Once again, you made me very, very proud to be the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. For 88 years, the members of the Ladies Auxiliary have tried to be good citizens by being there to help, whether it is sponsoring cancer research, writing letters to our Congressmen, donating blankets to the homeless, sending care packages to our troops, or cheering hospitalized veterans.

All of us are very proud of the tradition of service that is the joy of service.

This year the Auxiliary achievement elevated that service to new levels all because of all of you. I want to thank all of our special guests this evening for being here to help us celebrate such an outstanding year of service to America, to our veterans, to our families, to our country.

Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much. It has been an honor to serve with you and it has been an honor to serve as your National President. God bless America. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We forgot to do something this morning. The individual that received our VFW Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award, we forgot to give to General Zinni his honorarium. So, General, if you will come up here I will be more than pleased to give you this. This is your honorarium of \$15,000.

GENERAL ANTHONY ZINNI: I thank you again for honoring me twice in one day, but I would like to take this honorarium and return it to Jim and ask him to put it toward Operation Uplink. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHI-LIANG WU, VICE-CHAIRMAN, VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Gene. I will tell you, there will be thousands of young men and women who are going to thank you every day when we just tell them to call home and tell somebody you love them. Thank you so very much.

One of the things that makes the Veterans of Foreign Wars unique is our close relationship with our veterans organizations around the world. Perhaps none of these relationships is warmer than our relationship with the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China. The Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China has been successful in creating employment and development programs that have provided immeasurable benefits to the military veterans of that nation. For more than 20 years, the VFW is proud to have been a part of encouraging those programs. We are pleased to reaffirm our pledge of brotherhood and comradeship with this outstanding group.

Please join me in welcoming the Vice-Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, Lieutenant General Chi-Liang Wu. (Applause) While they are coming up here, let me say this. They are one of the most hospitable groups that you will ever want to associate with.

I can only tell them once again thanks for all the hospitality, kindness and courtesies they have extended to myself as we traveled to Taiwan.

RESPONSE - LIEUTENANT GENERAL CHI-LIANG WU

LIEUTENANT GENERAL WU: Good evening. Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, National President Stout, Members of the VFW, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my great honor to have this opportunity again to come to your 2002 National Convention on behalf of General Yang, Te-chih, the Chairman of my organization, the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China, and extend greetings to you-all in this beautiful city of Nashville, Tennessee.

Last August, I stood on the stage of your Milwaukee National Convention. I brought you greetings and thanks from Taipei. It was mid-August. Less than a month after, terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Over 6,000 lives were claimed, the whole free world mourned for them, and we will never forget this tragedy in our lifetime.

The terrorists attempted to collapse America, but thank God, with his help, the United States of America rises up again fast from the attack and become even more united and consolidated. The American spirit of "duty, honor and country", and the allegiance you pledged every time at your convention have made Americans unbeatable. On the contrary, you always stand firm.

Your National Commander-in-Chief, on behalf of all VFW members, sent your strong supports to President Bush and asked that the terrorists be punished. In addition to the quick reaction forces of fire fighters and security personnel, your fellow countrymen, including veterans organizations, pulled in all possible assistance to the sit really very touching and respectable, especially when we, in Taiwan, saw that people from all walks in the states were joining all sorts of donation functions, and American flags were flying everywhere. Dear friends of the VFW, our two organizations entered into brotherhood relations in 1980. We are brothers and we care about you. We are always on your side. We thank you for passing resolutions in your National Convention to render support for our country, the Republic of China. We, in turn, pledge to you that this brother of yours on Taiwan, "the unsinkable aircraft carrier" will always remain your faithful ally.

In closing, I thank you again for the invitation to attend this great get-together, and we wish you all good health and a successful National Convention. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. HAN SONG: Since 9/11 last year, America has won great respect from the Chinese on Taiwan, and we respect especially the veterans, the Veterans of the Foreign Wars of the United States, to which the President of

my country, Mr. Chen Sui-bian, would like to present a Medal of Clout and Banner to show appreciation for all the efforts of the VFW, led by James Goldsmith, National Commander-in-Chief, in the promotion of the welfare of all veterans for the United States as well as for the veterans of the world.

Now, here comes the medal and the citation goes as follows. The certificate accompanying the Award of Merit, Cloud and Banner, No. 2002-04331, Mr. James Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between the United State of America and the Republic of China.

“In appreciation of his meritorious assistance, Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith is presented the Merit of Clout and Banner with Cravat by the government of the Republic of China in accordance with Article XI of the Armed Forces Declaration.” This has been signed by President Chen Sui-bian, Premier Yu-Shyi-kun, the Minister of National Defense General Chi Haotian. (Applause)

From the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, we also want to show appreciation to the Commander-in-Chief with a plaque which reads: “Presented to Mr. James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the enhancement of friendship and cooperation between Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China.” This has been signed by General Chi-Liang Wu, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China, on this date, August 25, in the year of 2002.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you very much. I told you they were great people. (Applause) I didn't know that was coming. It was a very pleasant surprise. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD TO GENERAL THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: This evening, we have the privilege of recognizing a man who has dedicated his entire career to the defense of our nation. General Thomas A. Schwartz assumed command of the United Nations Command, Republic of Korea/United States Combined Forces Command, and United States Forces Korea on December 9, 1999. Prior to that, he served as Commander, United States Army Command.

A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, he graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1967 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry in the regular army. His military schooling includes the Infantry Officer Basic Course, Ranger School, Armor Officer Advanced Course, Armed Forces Staff College, and the Naval War College.

General Schwartz served as a platoon leader and Executive Officer with the 508th Infantry at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, in 1968, and as a platoon leader and company commander in Vietnam with the 82nd Airborne

Division in 1969. Later he served three years as a tactical officer at West Point, followed by a tour in the Republic of Korea as Battalion S-3 of the First Battalion, 31st Infantry, Mechanized.

From 1978 to 1981, General Schwartz served as a Personnel Management Officer in Washington, D.C. He then served as the Executive Officer, First Battalion, Sixth Infantry, at Illsheim, Germany. After graduating from the Naval War College in 1986, General Schwartz served as Chief, Infantry branch, and then Chief, Combat Arms Division, United States Military Personnel Center.

Oh, my goodness, I have just started, too. You have a long distinguished career. In June, 1988, he then took command of the First Brigade, Fourth Infantry Division (Mechanized), Ft. Carson, Colorado, and in May, 1990, he assumed the position of Division Chief of Staff.

General Schwartz then served as Chief of Staff, Combined Field Army, Republic of Korea, and in July, 1992, he became the Assistant Division Commander, Second Infantry Division.

On October 22, 1993, General Schwartz took command of Ft. Carson and the Fourth Infantry Division where he served until taking command of III Corps and Ft. Hood on December 6, 1995. On August 31, 1998, General Schwartz assumed command of the United States Army forces command at Ft. McPherson, Georgia.

His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Purple heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, National Defense Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and we might as well add the Good Conduct Medal on top of it.

Please join me in welcoming the recipient of the VFW National Armed Forces Award, General Thomas A. Schwartz.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The citation reads, "National Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to General Thomas A. Schwartz, in special recognition of his exemplary military career spanning over three decades, beginning with his graduation from the United States Military Academy to his duty as Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command.

"General Schwartz has served his nation around the globe with integrity and distinction, and in the finest traditions of the United States Army and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 26th day of August, 2002. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: General, there is an honorarium of \$5,000.

RESPONSE - GENERAL THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ

GENERAL SCHWARTZ: Good evening, everybody. Thank you so much for having me. First, let me take care of business. I am going to throw this in with General Zinni, so now we have got \$20,000 for Operation Uplink. (Applause) You great Veterans of Foreign Wars, I am honored to be standing here.

I feel emotionally high being in front of you this evening. I have spoken — they gave me a CD when I retired and they said, “Here are all the speeches you gave, 2,500,” like I am ever going to use them. The fact of the matter this was the hardest one because I had to write it. I was at home here and there is no staff.

There is no aide, there is nobody to help you. I told my wife as I was writing this, will you type it for me? She said, “I will not. I am not your secretary.” So here it is handwritten. The nice part about this is, you know, I am only going to use about half of it so we will get along here.

I will tell you that the Chief of Staff of the Army called me just before I got up here. He said, “Tom, do me a favor.” This doesn’t have anything to do with what I am going to talk about, but it has to do with a great man that I want to pass a message from our Chief to you.

Mr. Bill Mauldin, some of you World War II great veterans that stood up a while ago, you recognize that name Bill Mauldin, because he was one of you. He served with you, and then he went on to be a great cartoonist that we all know and love, and he is seriously ill right now. He is in California. He is in a home where he is being cared for. But he said, “There is one thing that he wants more than anything in the whole world is to hear from his buddies, his war buddies,” the veterans like you. So we are going to leave an address where you can write him. We will leave it with the Publications Division here at the headquarters. Inquire about it and please drop him a line. It will be most welcomed, there is no doubt about it.

I am a new retiree, but I hold in my heart a special place for veterans. I always have. I think that is why they asked me. I worked hard to champion. In every community that I served, the veterans, we had to bring them into the fold, not really as much for the veterans as it was for the young soldiers.

For them to see the veterans, to meet the veterans, to be around the veterans, and every time we did that, these young men and women would come to me and say, “Sir, I got so much out of that. I loved every minute of it.” So you are giving and you are the role model for these young people that they want to have, they need to have. We praise you for that and we thank you for that very much. You are making a big difference, let me tell you. (Applause)

This whole retirement gets kind of permanent. I remember at the retirement ceremony at Ft. Hood, I went into the personnel guy there, and he said, “Sit down here, sir, and I will take care of you. Give me your active duty I.D.” So I handed him the active duty I.D. and he took a pair of scissors and cut it into about 20 pieces. I was kind of looking at this thing, wait a minute, did I make the right decision? I want to stick around for a while.

Don't cut me up so fast. The fact is the big changes in lifestyle. I have to focus my energy and efforts, and I can see that one of the things I want to do, as I move by being here with you is to try the best I can to dedicate the life that I have left to the kind of cause and replicate the things that you do here.

I am motivated by you and I will dedicate myself to serve you, but serve alongside of you to try to do the same good that I see you doing every day. My father served in the military. He had one picture on the wall that he loved, and it was a picture of him in his Ike jacket, PFC Schwartz.

When he died, I took that picture and I have got that picture at home. I get motivated by it. I am proud of him. I have five brothers, six boys in the family, all five of them served their country. I am the only guy that was a careerist. In fact, they used to ask me all the time, "When are you going to get out and come on back home? We need you back home."

But I was called, a special call, and I served 35 years, the greatest years of my life serving our country just like you. I was kind of impacted by brothers and uncles and my father, because of the way they role modeled and the way they talked about service and what it meant to them.

I was a young man. The subtleties of what they were implanting in me were taking root and I can remember when my brother came home, I watched this kid, the older brother of mine, who was in the Navy, and he spent hours ironing out his whites, and the hat, he was starching his hat, and he was ironing it out.

Some of you will recall this was the '50s and he was going to wear that uniform downtown. He was going to wear that uniform around the neighborhood. He wanted people to see it. I was being impacted by this. Look at the pride this guy has. Look at the pride of my family of service. It motivated me.

I think it had a lot to do with my making the decision, because when I got out of high school I had to decide what to do. I had this PMS, Professor of Military Science, and he said, "Young man, I think you should go to West Point." I said, "West Point? I don't know anything about West Point."

He said, "Just fill out this application and send in your SAT scores and let's see if you get in." A few weeks later I got a letter back saying, "Tom Schwartz, thank you for your application but your SAT scores are not high enough and we can't accept you at West Point."

I kind of read this thing and I said, okay, if they don't want me I will have to move on and go somewhere else. About a week later, I came out first team All American football. One week after that, West Point wrote me a letter and said, "We made a mistake." (Laughter)

I found it absolutely amazing how smart I got in about one week. I got smart enough to get through that place. I have got to tell you I struggled at that place. It was hard for me. They were kind of right. I can remember writing my first English paper and I worked hard on the paper, and I got it ready and I turned it in, and I waited for about a week for this thing to come back.

We all got it back, we had a table something like this, and the guy on the right had a grade on his paper and the guy on the left had a grade, but my paper had no grade. So I started looking through my papers. What is wrong? Where is my grade? Every page had a lot of red ink. You know how those English teachers are. Every page got worse, more red ink.

On the last page of that paper in big read letters it said, "Is your native language English?" (Laughter) I was in trouble and I knew it. Walking around here yesterday, when I arrived, I found myself, I am not kidding, I went back to my room at least ten times and called my wife and said, "You have got to be here. I have got to get you here."

I wanted her to feel what I felt. I wanted my children, who happened to be there at the time, I wanted them to see this. I told them next year in San Antonio where this convention is going to take place, I live in San Antonio right now, and I am going to be there with my kids. I want them to see you. (Applause)

I feel your pride. It is a special pride that you have. I sense the camaraderie and the corps de esprit that is in the room. It is the same kind of camaraderie soldiers, war buddies, people who have done things together feel. You know, most people don't understand this kind of camaraderie, this corps de esprit. That is here.

I wish we could pipe it and send it out into America. In a way, a lot of them may not understand it because it is special. You have bonds that are special. In fact, I was talking to one of the veterans earlier today. I said, "What made you join this? What made you become a part of this organization?"

You know, he turned to his friends just to the right of him, about four or five of them, and said, "They did. They made me believe in myself. They made me believe that I could do this and do a great job in being a part of this organization."

I said, "That is what this is all about, it is about believing in each other and helping each other and standing by each other's side." That is what I see here today. It makes me feel so great. You know, there is a special character trait of the veterans.

You have a wonderful sense of compassion and a wonderful sense of patriotism that America needs to see more of, compassion, because of the tough things you have done, because of some of the suffering and heartbreak that you have seen.

You have shaped America by your service and your sacrifice, and I think you have molded America with your corps de esprit and your camaraderie, and through all this you have developed in yourself a wonderful sense of humility. You are humble.

You ask people from the veterans like you tell me your story, tell me about yourself. They are somewhat reluctant to tell their story because they know there are others that gave it all. They know their story might not be as great as the story of so many hundreds and thousands that have gone before and gave so much.

Your compassion towards others, it is so recognizable. Yes, you have been touched by war, you have been touched by the terror of combat, you have been touched by the heartaches of those that were left behind where you served, but you have imprinted this globe, don't think you haven't.

You have made a difference all over this globe. You have served the footprints of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen all over the globe, and the world knows it, and they recognize it. In fact, I will tell you just one quick story.

I was in Korea and I was serving, and this man came up to me. He looked at me. The admiration that the Koreans have that were there, and he said, "As long as the Americans are here everything is all right. Can I tell you what that means?" I said, "Sure."

He said, "Listen, when I was a young kid when the Korean War was going on, I was a young man and the Americans were guarding a prison war camp with North Koreans and Chinese." He said, "I used to crawl through those rice paddies to get as close to those Americans as I could. I wanted to see them. I wanted to hear their voices. It was different and I had never seen an American before.

"As I peered, one of the Americans motioned me over. I went to him. I was scared. I went up to him and he handed me something. I didn't really know what it was, but I ran home with it in my hand. I got home and we opened it. Do you know what it was? It was a chocolate bar. We broke it into pieces and I tasted the sweet taste of a chocolate bar I had never had before."

He said, "I will never forget that taste. Every day I would go back and try to find that same G.I." But he said, "I had a problem, you all looked the same to me." I wanted to say we have that same problem, too, but he wouldn't understand. The fact is he said, "I couldn't pick that guy out. Then there was another soldier, who he waved me on, that he told me to come, but he didn't have anything. I was hoping it was a chocolate bar. But he shook my hand and put his arm around my shoulder, and he gave me a hug, and I went home and I told my dad that night about the soldier who shook my hand, about the soldier who put his arm around my shoulder. And my dad said to me, 'Everything will be all right as long as the Americans are here.'"

You see, this is 50 years later and everything is all right because the Americans are here. I have got to tell you that is the same spirit of service, that is the same respect and reputation that you, the great Veterans of Foreign Wars have.

You have imprinted the globe with that kind of feeling, with that kind of respect, of service and sacrifice. It is noted all over the world. It is respected all over the world. Sometimes I wish somebody could make a painting of the veterans, a painting of America.

This is my own thought. How do you paint the prosperity, the power and the might of America? You can try, but if you take whatever you paint and you turn it around and you reflect it in the mirror, do you know what I think they will see? The faces of veterans, the faces, the smiles, the pain, the

agony of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I think that is what the painting would show.

You know, it was great to be Commander-in-Chief for the forces in Korea, to serve their 50 years of commitment by this country. There is no other commitment that we have made to any other country on this planet like we have made to the Koreans.

For 50 years we have served along their side. That is 2.5 million. Listen to that number, 2.5 million men and women in the uniform of The United States, all services, have served in the Republic of Korea. It is almost unbelievable. It is almost hard to believe that many.

They have come there and they have learned to appreciate these great Koreans and what they do, and they have learned to appreciate the service abroad, and it is enriched their lives, and they have gone out and they are proud of the fact that they served in that great country.

There are a lot of Korean War veterans here tonight. I am not going to ask you to stand, but I salute you because you went there between 1950 and '53. You went there to serve. You didn't know the name Korea, let alone the language, but you went because America called. You went because it was the right thing to do.

We went to Vietnam because America called, and that was the right thing to do. We didn't talk about it, we didn't debate it, we didn't intellectualize it, we served. That is what veterans like you do and we do. We serve our nation when it calls.

It is a trademark of greatness, of greatness of America, and that's you. Believe me, this Army of today needs you. We need you badly, because the Army and the other services, the Marines and all the services are changing. We are transforming.

You can see it, you read about it, you know it is happening. It is a little scary. It is hard and we are going to make some mistakes. It is easy to criticize this transformation, but I am asking, please, you great veterans stand by this transformation.

We are doing the right thing. We are struggling with what right looks like, but I am telling you we have great service chiefs. They are some of the greatest men I have ever been around. They won't let us down. We have a great country, we have great service chiefs, we are going through a tremendous transformation.

These young people are great. They are coming to serve their country for the same reason you did. They talk about education, they talk about money, they talk about different things, but the bottom line more of them talk about they joined whatever service it is, because they want to serve their nation.

That is just like you. They may be different, they listen to different music. It is kind of weird, the stuff they listen to, but the fact is they have that feeling of patriotism. They have it. It is there and I see it every day. It reminds me of a Sergeant at Ft. Bragg.

I always went through and I asked these people, the soldiers in my

case, tell me why you joined. This one Sergeant, it was his turn, and he started to — actually, he broke down and started to cry. I said, “Hey, young Sergeant, I will tell you what I will do. I will skip over you right now and we will come back to you later.”

He said, “No, sir, don’t skip me. I want to tell my story. You know, when I was a young man my mother looked me in the eye and said you are worthless. You need to get out and do something with your life. You need to go somewhere and you need to make something of yourself. Right now you are worthless, young man.”

He said, “I searched my soul where I could go to make something of myself and I came to the conclusion I would join the service of my country.” In this case, this young man joined the Army. “I joined the Army and it changed my life. I joined the Army and it made me a man, it made me proud. It gave me discipline and it gave me direction, and it gave me purpose, and I went home,” and he is crying, the kid is crying crocodile tears, “I went home and my mother looked me in the eye and said, ‘I am proud of you, young man; I am proud of you.’”

That is the difference that serving your country makes on all of us. It changes us. Sometimes as young people we don’t understand, but when you get our age we understand.

One of the things we are most proud of, and one of the things that stands tall when people talk about it, we served our country proudly, honorably and you are great veterans of the greatest nation on earth.

God bless you and like Vice-President Cheney said this morning, “We must always remember our great country was built on it, In God We Trust.” God bless you and God bless America. Thank you very much.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: A great American. Thank you, Tom. We are right on schedule. I want to thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for attending the banquet this evening. It has been kind of a fun day. I hope you have enjoyed the convention thus far.

Tomorrow, at 8:00 o’clock, we go to work. The fun and the music is all over with. We have got to take care of business. Now, I will once again call upon our National Chaplain, William Moody, for the Benediction.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Will you join me, please, as we pray.

Our Father, we thank you for our
feeling of greatness among us tonight, from
our speaker, for the fellowship we have as
veterans; for that tie that binds us
together, may it be secure as we leave this
place tonight.

Inspire us by your presence as well
as by the conduct of those that we have learned
about this week already. Forgive us of all
of our failings and lift us up to be the
people you want us to be. Amen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: That concludes this evening's
program.

(Whereupon, at 9:30 o'clock p.m., the meeting was duly recessed.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 27, 2002

(The First Business Session of the 103rd National Convention of the

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, was called to order in the Delta Ballroom, Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Officer of the Day, prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance.

(National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance, and National Chaplain William Moody gave the Opening Prayer.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Good morning. Everybody is all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

At this time I call on Elwood Rickards for the Credentials report, the delegate report.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

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

Total delegates, 11,554. Total Department Commanders, 51. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 26. Total National Officers, 36 That is for a grand total of 11,667. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Elwood. At this time we will have the report on the Convention Rules by Chairman John Staum.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN STAUM: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith for this fine appointment. Your Committee on Convention Rules met Sunday afternoon, August 25th, and agreed on the following recommendations which are respectfully submitted for your consideration. I was assisted by my colleague, a very good friend, Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney.

1. That, in accordance with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, and with the exceptions noted below, Demeter's Manual shall be recognized as parliamentary authority for this Convention.
2. That when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or address the Convention, he shall rise, address the Chair as "Comrade Commander-in-Chief," and after being recognized, shall state his name, Post number and

Department, before proceeding.

3. A registered delegate shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject, or any pending resolution for a period of 10 minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present; provided, that the chairman of Convention Committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their Committees; and in the event of controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the resolution an opportunity five minutes of final rebuttal.
4. All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or in his absence the Department Adjutant. All resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to Committee no later than 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 28, 2002, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Convention for consideration.
5. All resolutions offered on the floor at the Convention, or otherwise, shall be in writing, and shall automatically, and without reading, be referred to the Adjutant General for assignment to the proper Committee.
6. Committee chairmen, in reporting on resolutions referred to their Committee, shall first read those resolutions on which favorable action is recommended. Specific resolutions shall be set aside for individual action at the request of any delegate, the others being voted upon collectively. After action has been taken on all such resolutions, the chairman shall read the number and title of those resolutions which the Committee has disapproved. A resolution disapproved by the Committee shall be automatically rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it be approved, in which case it shall be brought up for debate and Convention action.
7. This Convention will not consider any resolution dealing with race, creed or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. This Convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organization funds.
8. This Convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization, or requesting us to join with any other organization in

sponsoring legislation not expressly proposed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

9. No person not a duly accredited delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, on any subject before the Convention.
10. Unit rule of voting shall not be allowed in this Convention.
11. Voting strength shall be determined as those delegates registered as of the close of the credentials registration booth the previous day and as reported by the Credentials Committee each morning.
The Department Commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each Business Session, a list of Posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates representing those Posts listed on the report will be accorded voting privileges.
12. On roll calls, the Department Commander of each delegation shall poll his delegation's registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation.
13. Registered delegates of a delegation may arrive at a vote in any manner they see fit, but shall announce it in terms of full units and not in terms of a fractional part of a vote.
14. Reconsideration of a motion or resolution upon which final disposition has been made shall not be allowed after the session at which it was acted on has been recessed, unless the body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that session.
15. When the report of the Department Commander of the delegation is not acceptable to all registered delegates of the delegation and a poll of the Department registered delegates is demanded by three registered delegates of said Department, the Adjutant General shall poll the registered delegates, without discussion of question.
16. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by ten delegates representing Posts in ten separate Departments, or by order of the Commander-in-Chief.
17. Nominating speeches for the National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. Not more than two seconding speeches shall be made for any candidate and such speeches shall not exceed two minutes each. Nominating and election of National Officers will be held according to the National Constitution and By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, Article VI, Section 609.
18. Registered delegates and persons recognized by the

Chair shall be entitled to a respectful hearing, and the Chair shall have the authority to clear the gallery or the floor or have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the floor any person or persons who may create any disturbances which interfere with the orderly procedure of the Convention.

19. Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the Convention present is necessary for suspension of the rules of this Convention.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY (Post 4643- Florida):
I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded that we accept the report on the Convention Rules. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, we will call for a vote. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. It carried and is so ordered.

At this time we have some announcements from our Adjutant General, John Senk.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Thank you, Chief. Comrades, I just wanted to clarify to the Department Commanders, you all received a packet this morning that has listed all of your delegates and delegate strength of every Post within your Department.

Along with that, you should have received another sheet which shows which Posts have a delegate registered as of the close of business tomorrow. Now, you just adopted the rules of the convention, and what that says is that at the close of business yesterday that will be the voting strength if there need to be a roll call today.

Each morning, prior to the start of the meeting, you will given another sheet that will show the Posts that have registered and the number of delegates they have, so if it comes to a roll-call vote you know exactly where you are going with that. If there are any questions on that, or how the voting procedure will take place, please see me after the meeting. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: At this time we will have the report of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. The Chairman is Past Commander-in-Chief Arthur J. Fellwock.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: My name is Art Fellwock. I am a member of Evansville Post 1114, Evansville, Indiana, the Department of Indiana. First of all, I want to thank the Commander-in-Chief for the appointment. Then I want to pay tribute to Tom Pouliot, who is the Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

I will tell you, guys, he really kept the Committee moving. He did the

research ahead of time so when something came up he had that information and he was able to read it. He was one of the best Vice-Chairmen I have ever served with, Tom Pouliot.

Here is how we are going to do it. I am going to read the by-laws that have been approved, and I will make a motion to approve them, and then anyone who wishes to have one set aside can go to the mike and set one of them aside. If not, we shall vote on that.

Then I will read the by-laws that have been rejected, and anyone, again, can have one set aside. If none are set aside, a motion is not required, they are automatically rejected. We will go through the by-laws and then we will go through the Manual of Procedure and the Ritual.

So, I will start right out with them. We will start out with the Proposed Amendments to the National By-Laws, and I will read them and give you the action of those approved.

B-1, approved; B-2, approved; B-3, approved; B-4, approved; B-5, approved; B-6, approved; B-7, approved; B-8, approved; B-9, approved; B-10, approved; B-13, approved; and B-17, approved.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that those be adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THOMAS POULIOT (Post 1116-Montana): Tom Pouliot, a delegate from Post 1116, Montana, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion to adopt the following by-laws. Any questions on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Hearing none, we will call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. It is carried and so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: I shall now read those that have been rejected by the Committee. Again, if someone wants something set aside, they have to make that motion, otherwise, all of these will be rejected automatically.

B-11, rejected; B-12, rejected; B-14, rejected; B-15, rejected; B-16, rejected; B-18, rejected; B-19, rejected; B-20, rejected; and B-21, rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Does anyone want any of these set aside? Hearing nothing from the floor, these by-laws have been rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: We will go to the Manual of Procedure and the same procedure we will follow. I will again read those that are approved and then we will make a motion to approve them. Then I will read those that were rejected. We will start out with the Manual of Procedure.

M-1, approved; M-2, approved; M-5, approved.

Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that those be approved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THOMAS POULIOT: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Any questions on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Hearing none, we will vote on the approval

of them for the Manual of Procedure. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye". All those against. It carried and is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: In the Manual of Procedure, the Committee rejected M-3 and M-4. If anyone wants them set aside, they will have to, otherwise they will die automatically.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is there anyone who wants to set aside either of those two? Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Ron Rusko from Post 9460 in Stratford, Connecticut. I ask that M-3 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: M-3 has been set aside. The other one has been rejected.

Comrade Ron, I am going to have him explain it first.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: This particular Manual of Procedure M-3 has to do with eligibility. What it basically does is what we have heard many years that has come up. This is the National Defense Service Medal, which is consecutive for 30 days or 60 days non-consecutive outside the Continental limits of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of this Resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: There has been a motion to adopt the Resolution. Is there a second?

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been properly seconded. Is there any discussion on the motion? Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO (Post 7330 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, many years ago in the early 1940s, when I was stationed in Hawaii, I was granted the American Campaign Medal, which allowed me to be eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

If anyone knows anything about that, after December 7th, there was no hostilities in Hawaii and every single individual service person who was sent to Hawaii eventually was eligible to join the VFW. This amounted to millions and millions of people. We have been bringing up this Resolution for numerous years.

Finally, a few years ago, under Gunner's administration, they allowed these young men and women who served in Korea to be members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Very few hostilities have happened in Korea. I remember people from different Departments getting up and saying that Korea was nothing but a country club and these fellows didn't belong in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The simple truth is if you know anything about combat, you know that for every single person that is on the line there are 10 individuals behind

that line. Each one of them received the same medal regardless of whether they are in combat or not.

We had young men and women who were under atomic weapons in Eastern Europe after 1955, all during the Cold War, and not one of them is eligible to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I don't have to tell you that in 1899 when this organization was founded in Colorado, Iowa and Pennsylvania, that the name of this organization was the American Veterans of Foreign Service.

There are many, many, many individuals out there who would become eligible under this Resolution. These people went and they served where they were told to serve. The last thing I ever want is to have someone who didn't go overseas to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We have a lot of individuals out there that are in harm's way. All during the years, everybody who served in one way or the other has been in harm's way. I think it is about time we opened up our arms and welcomed all of the people who have earned the National Defense Service Medal and who went overseas into the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Any other comments? Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and my fellow comrades, it is true that we have been bringing this particular by-law amendment before this great delegation for a number of years. But I also remember another one that we brought before this great delegation for a number of years, and finally in your infinite wisdom you saw fit to approve it, and that was eligibility to the Veterans of Foreign Wars with service in Korea without a campaign ribbon.

I want to tell you I come from a Post of almost 1,000 members. We have not picked up a multitude of Korean veterans without a metal since then, but we have picked up some. But I do want to mention the name of Carl Vitale, because he joined our organization.

He is a member of the House Committee in our Post. He is on our Thursday morning work crew when we can't get people to work. But the saddest thing about that whole situation is that he couldn't join the Veterans of Foreign Wars years ago when his brother joined.

He is happy now and he thanks you for that. But he could have put an awful lot more years in this organization. It has been said over and over again since December 7th, 1941, on that terrible second day of our attack on America, most anyone who served in Hawaii received the Pacific Medal and is eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. There was never another hostile shot fired.

Dominic Romano just aptly pointed out that there are those that served from the United States of America, went out from Maryland, from Connecticut, from Massachusetts, from the Coast, 12 miles out at nighttime, looked for submarines, came back and ate dinner with their family, went to the movies, played with their kids, and got the American Defense Service Medal and are eligible for membership in this organization, and rightfully

so.

They did their part in this organization and they should be a part in working for their entitlements and their health-care. You know, comrades, I can't believe it, but I am getting close to that top rung of the big 60. I am a Vietnam veteran. I am a combat veteran.

I have the combat infantryman's badge, and what bothers me just a little bit is what we are saying and have been saying to all of those doctors, the nurses, all the personnel who make a hospital work at Clark Air Force Base, at the Air Force Base in Germany, where our good comrades came from Vietnam and they either put their pieces and their limbs back on them or had to take them off, but they saved many of our comrades' lives, and we are saying to them you only have the National Defense Service Medal and you are not good enough to join our organization. I say they are good enough for me. I watched our Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith on the film at the opening session and I watched him shake the hands of two veterans in the V.A. Hospital, and each and every one of you in this room who has attended a V.A. Medical Center and shook the hands and extended your friendships to our comrades in those hospitals, gave them cookies, gave them ice cream, gave them something that made their day just a little bit happier, there is one thing you didn't do: you didn't ask them if they served in an actual combat zone.

You didn't ask them if the only medal they had was the National Defense Service Medal, and you didn't do that because you don't care. The only thing you care about is that they are veterans, and they are. They served their country, they put the best gift that God could possibly ever give to anyone, their lives on the line for America, for freedom, for all of our children and their children.

Comrades, times change. I think the time has now come that we must follow as our Chief says, to use his words,

"It is the right thing to do." Now, everyone who served this great country and again put their lives on the line, and the most precious gift they received from God had knives in their mouth, 60-millimeter bullets wrapped around their torso and carried an M-16 of grenades on their belt.

We need these comrades. They should be a part of this organization, and I urge you to please support this By-Law Manual of Procedure amendment. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Any other questions? I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ROBERT WILLIAMS (Post 1137 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Robert Williams, VFW Post 1137, Department of Michigan. Comrades, along the side of my cap reads the name "Veterans of Foreign Wars." As I read this, if my brother goes to Canada and serves at the Embassy for 30 or 60 days, he is eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Am I correct?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Maybe and maybe not. If he received the National Defense Medal under this, I guess he would be.

COMRADE ROBERT WILLIAMS (Post 1137 - Michigan): Thank you.
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: But if he didn't, he wouldn't be. Any other questions? I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CONRAD AGRESTE (Post 3150 - Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Conrad Agreste, Post 3150, Arlington, Virginia. I have mixed emotions on this issue because right now I am working to identify Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal eligibility for some people who were in Thailand in 1974-'75, and assisted in a lot of the evacuations.

They have only got the National Defense Service Medal right now, but they most certainly were involved in a foreign war. However, the specifications in M-3 are not accurate. You don't need to serve anywhere for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days to receive the National Defense Service Medal. All you have to do is to be on active duty.

As the gentleman who preceded me just said, service overseas in, say, for instance, an embassy would count. I think that there are some merits in the argument that is being put forth. For instance, the individuals who served on the Polda Gap during the Cold War.

The Cold War, as we all know, is a lot hotter than its name indicates. However, I personally do not recommend adoption of this by-law because I just don't think it is written properly to account for the circumstance and exigencies that we desire as Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Any other questions on the motion?

Microphone No. 2.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: There has been a call for the question. The question is on M-3, with the new eligibility category that follows National Defense Service Medal, 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days outside the Continental United States. I need a second for the call of the question.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, there seems to be some misunderstanding from what the good comrade just said. We are not saying everyone who has the National Defense Service Medal can join this organization.

What we are saying is that in M-3 you must have the National Defense Service Medal and have served overseas for 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days. Comrades, please don't get confused on that, because I think the last thing you good comrades want to do is to throw the baby out with the bath water. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I have heard that comment before.

Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUNNER KENT (Post 9972-Arizona):

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gunner Kent, Post 9972, Department of Arizona. I second the motion on the question to throw the baby out.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We don't want to do that to the kids, Gunner. It has been moved and seconded for the call of the motion, so we are going to vote on ending the debate. All in favor will sign all those opposed. The "nays" have it. So we will continue to debate.

Any more questions on the motion? Any more questions on the motion? Seeing no more people at the mikes, we will call for a vote. All those in favor of adopting M-3, which would change our eligibility to National Defense Service Medal, 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The chair has no doubt. It has been defeated.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: In the Manual of Procedure, M-4, since no one has set it aside, it automatically has been rejected.

Then we will turn to Proposed Amendments to the Ritual, which was R-1, R-2 and R-3. All three were rejected by the Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Does anyone wish to set any of those three aside? Don't trip. I will wait for you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dean White, Department of Europe, Post 27, asks that R-2 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It is set aside. Stay right there at the mike. Any others that anybody might want to set aside? They have been defeated because no one wants to set them aside.

Go ahead, Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DEAN WHITE (Post 27 - Department of Europe): R-2 is part and parcel with — I will find it here.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: If I may, let the Chairman explain something here again, if I can, please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARTHUR FELLWOCK: Comrades, you rejected By-Law B-11. You rejected it, which has to do with that. That is why that was also rejected. You have already rejected B-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Then R-2 has been rejected. Arthur Fellwock, Past Commander-in-Chief, and Past Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, you have done a tremendous job.

Thank you for your service.

PRESENTATION OF "CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF MEMBERSHIP" CITATION TO DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is Larry Reinhardt in the room, from Arizona? Work your way up to the stage, will you, please.

For 35 years, the members of the Department of Arizona have worked together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the state.

Each member of the Department of Arizona can take pride in their

many years of dedication and hard work that went into reaching this significant milestone.

Now in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on Larry Reinhardt, the Immediate Past Department Commander of Arizona, to accept this "Consecutive Year of Membership Growth" Citation. Congratulations to the Department of Arizona.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: "Certificate of Commendation presented to the Department of Arizona in recognition of 35 consecutive years of membership growth, evidencing the attainment of three decades of continuous membership gain by the Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. "In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars this 26th day of August, 2002." This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Let's give a round of applause to Arizona. (Applause)

At this time we will have the report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization by Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Soden.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN (Post 2149-Illinois): Good morning. I am Ray Soden, a delegate from Tyler Post 2149, Illinois. First of all, I want to thank the Chief for this appointment and for giving me a great Committee to work with, and especially an outstanding Vice-Chairman, Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief from Texas.

I will proceed with the reading of the resolutions that have been approved. If you wish to have one set aside, please indicate.

Starting off with Resolution 204, adopted; Resolution 205, adopted; Resolution 207, adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Do you want to read the titles of those adopted?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: I will read the titles of those that were adopted.

Resolution 204, Requirement for VFW National Headquarters to Verify Recruit Eligibility.

Resolution 205, Ted C. Connell resolution to provide funding for a monument.

Resolution 207, Recognition Item for Post Members of All State Posts. Those three resolutions were adopted. I make a motion we approve the Resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JIM NIER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jim Nier, Post 8819, seconds the motion for adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion. Is there any discussion on the motion?

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Benny Bachand, a delegate from Post 4287, Orlando, Florida. I request Resolution 204 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Resolution 204 will be set aside.

Microphone No. 3. I guess they didn't want to talk. That is a good thing. You have heard the motion to adopt the other two resolutions and have 204 set aside. Any other discussion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. That passes and is so ordered.

Mr. Burnham just brought up an interesting point that I think we missed on 205. Our Convention rules say that we cannot adopt a resolution that would spend money on the National Convention floor.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: It was amended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Will you read the amendment?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: The amendment, in the Be It Resolved, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Organization support this resolution, and the amount of any donations to assist with the cost of this memorial will be determined by the Council of Administration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is everybody satisfied with that? No. 204 has been set aside.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 - Florida): I would like to move that Resolution 204 be rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Benny, a motion has been made to approve that and now we are debating it.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN LEWIS (Post 4061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John Lewis, Department of Colorado.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I recognized Microphone No. 1 first, and then I will get to No. 3.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 - Florida): Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, this membership-at-large program of our organization has been debated many times on this floor. It has been debated many times on the floor of the National Council of Administration.

Each and every time all of you have rejected the intentions to really ruin the most important program that we have recruiting-wise in this organization. If you look at the National By-Laws, there is adequate safeguards to prevent people getting into our organization.

Over the last five years, over 15,000 of these applications that have come in to the National Headquarters have been scrutinized and reviewed, and over 750 of those have been rejected as not being eligible for membership in our organization.

We continually harp on this issue, because many of those who are opposed to membership-at-large feel as though these people are not being scrutinized, their eligibility is not being looked at. That is simply not the case. I can attest that there are more even coming through ineligibles through the Post process than are coming through the membership-at-large process.

We have lost over 400,000 members in the last ten years, and the most successful recruiting program we have is membership-at-large. I can also tell you that our Department Headquarters readily accept those members-at-large that we send down who decide they want to be Department members-at-large.

These are eligible people, people who are willing and wanting to belong to our organization, and at the time that we are having a decrease in membership I don't see any reason why we should thwart our process and require the National Organization to do something that they are already doing for all of us to protect the eligibility of members who want to belong to our organization. I strongly urge you to reject Resolution 204.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Benny. Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN LEWIS (Post 4061 - Colorado): I am John Lewis, Department of Colorado, Post 4061, National MIP Recruiter of the Year for two years in a row. I have personally recruited 10,000 people from Ft. Carson. I drive 40 to 50 miles. I spend four hours a day and drive another 50 miles to get home.

Now, most of these people that I am talking to, I am talking to in the replacement battalion where they are coming in from Korea, Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. All of these people are eligible. Now, I speak to day one, day two and day three of the program that they have there, approximately a hundred or more people.

Out of this I am signing up probably 30 people, and they are eligible because they have just come in. Their records are right there. I cannot go over to a company office ever since September 11th. I have to be escorted around Ft. Carson where I go. There are very few places that I can go.

First of all, I had to go through the Judge Advocate General's office to prove the legality of our program. Then I had to go through the Provost Marshal to get on the base. Then I have to go through Community Affairs and Public Relations, and finally I wound up where I could do something.

Now, this is one of the best programs that we have ever had. We are getting our message out to our future, out to these soldiers, these men and women that are coming back from places that they have served in that are hostile. They can say that it isn't hostile in Korea, and they tell me they came off the DMZ and they have fire fights going on all the time.

These people that are serving over in Afghanistan, we have not recognized them yet. We have not recognized some of the people that were in the embassies years ago that were bombed that are wearing a Purple Heart that are not eligible for our organization.

I strongly urge everybody here to reject this. If you don't reject it, you are turning down the future of our organization. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Comrade Lewis. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Donald Linscott, Post 1603 from the great Department of Maine. It is amazing that I have to stand here after hearing this delegation vote down the National Defense Service Medal, and then tell me well, in effect, it doesn't make any difference if we get 10, 15 or 20 percent that are not eligible as long as we get the ones that are eligible.

We say we have lost 400,000 members. Yes, we have lost 400,000 members. Gee, this is not Arizona's fault; that is not Maine's fault because it has been 100-percent All American for nine of the last twelve years. My big question would be, what is wrong with the National Membership Program? Evidently, it hasn't done anything for twelve years except get some mail and tell us how we are to run our membership program.

Unfortunately, I served on the Council of Administration from 1999 to 2001. I say unfortunately, because I really didn't believe that there was a certain structure, and people are going to deny it, there is a structure.

In October, 1999, Mr. Rusko from Connecticut, and myself, and several of the Council voted on correcting one of three and saying in there basically that all you need to prove eligibility is any piece of paper other than the comrade's signature.

Okay. Three months later I am at the Army-Navy game, and I had just received from the National Organization what their interpretation of us saying that we need something more than the member's signature to say that he is eligible. Well, so what they did, they did a new member-at-large application, which is fine, but, you know, they finally put in there the fact that a member-at-large had to say I am very proud to submit proof of my eligibility.

That is after the first three words they put in there which were "While not required, I am proud to submit proof of my eligibility." I have had national officers stand up in the Eastern Conference, when we got into this discussion, and tell me, "Well, the Posts don't check eligibility."

Any national officers that tell me that, as far as I am concerned, they have never sat in a Post meeting, because you are not going to tell me that not every Post cares about whether people are eligible for our organization. As I said before, if all you want is membership, then let's join together with the American Legion and grow to three million or four million. We don't think that is necessary.

My Council, I took it out of my own pocket, I wrote letters to all of my councilmen and don't forget, the elected councilmen, not counting the officers, have the majority on your Council of Administration. It was brought up and unfortunately it was voted down.

It was okay for the National Organization now to take members in on

their word and their signature. Of course, the staff remembers probably a \$40,000 or \$50,000 case we lost when somebody is not eligible. But that is another story. That made me feel kind of bad.

The thing that really got me was after the present Council of Administration, it was brought up again that we should not have members running around and saying "Join the VFW, you don't have to prove your eligibility." You are not going to hear from all these masterminds about DD-214s and how we don't need them, and this and that, but we are not talking about DD-214s.

We are talking about not going around and telling the nation that you do not have to prove your eligibility. If anybody stands up and tells you they have not been members-at-large returns and drops. I know of one, for instance, who had three Purple Hearts, the Medal of Honor, had every medal going.

When I checked his DD-214 in the State National Guide, the guy was in the service for eight weeks and had been thrown out. Please, if you are proud of the organization and you don't care about the other ones, and you want to be known as Veterans of Foreign Wars, let's just require them to get a note from their wife saying they were over there. But they will lie.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Mr. Linscott. It is always good to hear from you, and I mean that sincerely, too. Is there any other question? Guys, you have to hold those banners up high. I have to see them.

Is there somebody at Microphone No. 1? I went 3, 2 and I am back to Microphone No. 1 now. Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JACK SIMONS (Post 9217 - New York): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates, I stand in favor of Resolution 204. Let's keep the information correct and not —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We need you to state your name and your Post number, please.

COMRADE JACK SIMONS (Post 9217 - New York): Comrade Jack Simons, Post 9217.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: What state?

COMRADE JACK SIMONS (Post 9217 - New York): New York.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Jack, I didn't mean to do that. I can't see you. That is why.

COMRADE JACK SIMONS (Post 9217 - New York): That is all right with me, Commander. You have got to do what you have got to do. We need to keep the information on this correct, and previous speakers said that this was a resolution that had been argued and argued and argued and all is rejected.

That is not the fact. The fact is that this almost identical resolution was brought before the National Convention in 1999 in Kansas City. National had at that time moved for rejection, and it came out of the Committee as rejected. It was set aside and on the floor that resolution was passed.

There wasn't any question but that the delegates were in favor of that

resolution. Now, let's get the rest of the things. The people that are supporting this resolution are not trying to kill the membership, they are not trying to tie the hands together of the National Organization to get members.

What we are saying is, and it is basically the membership application that comes in the mail where you take a mailing list, and if the guy is the right age or maybe it is the woman, you don't know it, you send them an application. It says in the application that I wish to join the VFW. I served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or whatever, and because it says on there, and I don't doubt that some of them say send it anyway, but it says on there "Proof of eligibility is not required." That resolution passed, and then at the next Council meeting in Kansas City, the Manual of Procedure was changed adding the words, "Any document attesting to eligibility will be accepted."

Then that was interpreted to mean that the applicant's signature, filling this out in his kitchen, saying I served in Korea and I want to be a member and I have my \$20 here that I am going to send it to you, and now he doesn't know when signing it he is attesting to anything.

He has no knowledge of that. All he knows he wants to be a member. That is the part that is really wrong. Those guys, there is no way to check them. There is no way to check them when they come into National, because there is nothing on there other than his signature and that he served in the Army or Navy or he served in Korea or Vietnam.

There is no way to check them. The only way you are going to know how to check them is if that guy goes to a Post and applies for membership, and they probably would take him in because he has a card from the National. What the hell, they must have checked him and we will take him in.

Then when he runs for office, he has to submit proof of eligibility, not his signature attesting to it. It has to be some acceptable proof of eligibility other than that, and then you have to tell him, "Oh, comrade, you are not eligible for the VFW. You want to be an officer, but we are not going to accept you now."

If we are trying to just build up our membership, and I am not opposed to membership, but if our idea of building up membership is doing it through mass mailings, mass marketing and signing up members and say you don't have to worry about these members because they don't vote and they can't hold office, and they pay us \$20, this is good.

Well, I would like to have this organization with a lot of members, but I have been a member for 39 years and I strongly believe that this is a unique organization because of our requirements for eligibility. Now, if we are going to bolster our membership by accepting through the mail not documented members and saying, "Hey, this is the best thing that ever happened," I would feel embarrassed sitting in a place and having somebody tell me they were a member of the VFW when they are not eligible and nobody ever checked them out.

So, I strongly recommend approval of 204.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Comrade Simons. Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE THOMAS DOHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I am Thomas Doherty, Post 3474, Dunmore, Pennsylvania. I am really appalled at the course of action. When I talked to the National Headquarters, I asked them one question. Who is the supreme power of this organization? Of course, I was told that it is the National Convention.

So it is beyond me how the National Council of Administration through their interpretation of this and the changing of the Manual of Procedure supersedes what was done in 1999. I don't think that that is appropriate and I don't think that it is right, and as they say, it is your interpretation of the by-laws.

It appears to me that what is happening with the National Organization, they are saying don't do as I do, do as I say. Now, you have heard a previous speaker here mention the fact that out of 15,000 applications they had 750 rejections. I submit to you that I was advised that in the same five-year period we had 800 rejections on the Post level.

Now, if you take the number of people in this organization and divide that into the 800 members, our figures are pale in comparison to the 750 divided by 15,000. So, there is no question in my mind that what is happening here is wrong just by accepting that signature.

When I went down to the Membership Department yesterday, I asked for an application for an at-large member. I was advised at that time that this regular application that was handed to me is the one that you use. Now, you have heard here this morning that there is a special application that has nothing on there in regards to where you have served, or anything else, just the signature and "I am eligible to belong."

This is wrong. The National Organization is supposed to lead by example. The Posts are supposed to do what is right by checking the DD-214s to get these people in. I grant you that there are some Posts that probably don't do that. But for us that do do it, we also expect the National Organization to do the same thing.

So I want to say to you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: No, don't say it to the Comrade Commander-in-Chief, say it to the convention floor, my friend.

COMRADE THOMAS DOHERTY (Post 3474 - Pennsylvania): I am going to say it to you, too, Commander-in-Chief, because you are the top executive of this organization. There are certain things in Section 603 of the by-laws, I think, that talks about your involvement and what you should do and be fair and impartial in all your deliberations, also. So I strongly recommend that this resolution be approved. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Comrade Doherty. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE THOMAS KEYES (Post 6471 - Vermont): Good morning, Chief. I am Tom Keyes, Commander from the Department of Vermont, Post

6471. I don't see why the National Organization does not want to change this and accept the piece of paper that proves they are eligible.

Maybe we ought to agree with what you are doing. Now, go back to the Departments and to your Chairman, go back to your Post Chairmen and change your by-laws, get in line with the National, and then we can all do the same. We don't need to ask for approval. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 335 - New Jersey): Commander-in-Chief, John Senk, a delegate from Post 335, Cranford, New Jersey. First of all, let me say that I take exception to the implications that have been made that our National Officers, both those serving now and those who have served since the membership-at-large program became in effect, that they are not doing their job.

I find it rather interesting to hear the previous speaker at Microphone No. 3, who talks about membership-at-large is no good, but that Department accepted 1,200 memberships-at-large. They never turned one down that I am aware of.

I find it interesting that we worry about the membership-at-large people who get nothing more for their \$20 than a magazine. They have no representation on this floor.

They can't hold an office, they simply get a magazine. Is that any different than associate members?

I have been taught since I have been in this organization there is one class of membership, and that is the one that you are entitled to by the by-laws. Yet we do have Posts that have associate memberships. Let me talk — that is not the issue, you are right. But let me talk to you about, the Posts.

This year, while I was at a convention, I had someone come to me with a young Desert Storm veteran and said, "Can you check this membership? His eligibility is being questioned." I looked at the documentation. I could find nowhere where he was eligible for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Very quickly, someone was quick to say, "Well, he became a member through the membership-at-large program."

Well, we can do something at National Headquarters that many Posts can't do. I can go back and pull every application that we have ever approved is on file in the National Headquarters. I pulled that application and had it faxed to me.

The gentleman put on there he had the AFD, he had attested to that fact. He served during El Dorado Canyon. In fact, he did not have it. Somebody says, "See, there is your membership-at-large, it doesn't work." But anyone knows the by-law that note that Section 107 says when you transfer in your Post, what are you supposed to do?

You treat them as a new member. Section 101 says it is the Post's responsibility to ensure that everyone who joins that Post is eligible. It is the member's obligation to provide that proof of eligibility. I think we have debated this question on membership-at-large for too long, like the previous speaker at this microphone, that we have talked about

membership-at-large. Yes, we did.

At the last Council meeting, it came up and it was defeated. The Council meeting before that, it came up and it was defeated. In the wisdom of those who serve you on that National Council of Administration, I urge you to reject this resolution once and for all and let's get on with the membership program. Thank you, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I am going to recognize two more mikes and then we are going to cut off debate.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 - Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wayne Thompson, Post 5061, Department of Colorado. I ask the delegates present here today to vote "no" and reject Resolution 204. You have heard Comrade John Lewis, from the great state of Colorado, talk about the MIP program and how it is so important to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our future to be exposed to the armed forces members of this great country, and recently as further evidence of the relationship we can have with the armed forces, the Department of Colorado was able to finally establish a Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Instead of a social worker in Human Resources, we now have a Two-Star General as an advocate for us. It is about time. The relationship with the armed forces in our state is a good relationship. The MIP program allows us, specifically Comrade Lewis and others, to go into the military bases, primarily Ft. Carson in our state, and to expose thousands and thousands of armed forces personnel to the VFW and the great things we do.

It is very beneficial and we should not do anything to diminish the opportunity to have this exposure and bring in members in the armed forces into the VFW. So, I ask for a "no" vote and that 204 be rejected. Thank you.

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

The last debate will be Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RON RUSKO (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Thank you very much. I am Ron Rusko from Post 9460, in Stratford, Connecticut. First of all, I totally concur with Don Linscott that this 204 should be approved right after we have got done rejecting the National Defense Service Medal.

Maybe you would want to reconsider the National Defense Service Medal. Let me just say, please, because this is being misunderstood. The first gentleman to speak, and I apologize, I did not catch his name, but he is a great recruiter for this organization.

He spoke about the military, that he goes to the military bases and signs up military members. Well, the by-laws provide that he can do that without any proof of eligibility at all as long as that person is still in the military. That is Section 102.

It also provides that you can sign up someone in the military who is overseas. With the knowledge of one of your members that that person is overseas, you can sign them up in your Post, and the by-laws provide that when that person comes back they will then sign the application and

submit their proof of eligibility.

But to clear this whole mess up, what we are talking about, I have never been in favor nor anyone I know in favor of dumping the member-at-large program. All we have been saying is that we want it to be fair and equitable. If we are going to be asked for the DD-214 in accordance with the by-laws in our Posts, then we should do the same on the National level.

We cannot have a don't do as I do, do as I say organization. Let me clear it up. I am the author, and Don Linscott said that, that change in the Manual of Procedure. Let me please read this to you and I think it will settle this question.

In Section 103, Election Notification and Obligation. It clearly reads, "The application will be referred to a Post Reviewing Committee of three members. The Committee shall make a careful review of the facts set forth on the application card and other bona fide evidence." It says "other bona fide evidence", not the membership application.

It goes on to say "other bona fide evidence of eligibility. Such bona fide evidence shall be any form or document of testing to honorable and overseas service, and the appropriate campaign ribbon, if applicable." So we are saying that the membership application cannot be used as eligibility requirements.

I think it is clear and says that somewhere in the front of the by-laws, I didn't pick out the page, but nobody wants to dump this program. We all think it is a great program. But if you want to keep this organization so pristinely clean that nobody, nobody who hasn't got an absolute positive campaign medal to join this organization, then we must check to make sure they do. Thank you very much, and I urge your support of this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Comrade. At this time, I feel that we have listened to the debate and —

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): A point of order.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Microphone No.3. This is the second time you have talked on it, Don. Are you speaking in favor of the motion again?

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): This is not the second time. This is a point of order. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I may have been sleeping through the opening, but I never heard anything in the Convention Rules that said that the National Commander-in-Chief shall arbitrarily suspend debate. I thought it had to be by a motion. Are we using some other sort of rules here for this one question?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You know, Don, I just said you weren't asleep because you never sleep, my friend. I said if there wasn't any objection, I was going to close the debate. If you have got something to add to this debate, I have no problem with that.

COMRADE DONALD LINSKOTT (Post 1603 - Maine): Okay. Well, good enough. I just didn't want everyone to think it was being closed, Commander-in-Chief. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as you may be aware I am for passage of this particular motion. I have been for it probably for

three or four years.

I can't understand some officers, they have been doing it to me for probably four years. You get really excited and mad because we dare to question what they are doing. Look at the member-at-large program. What was the biggest number of the members-at-large?

I think they were long before 1999, when we started putting on the application "while not required"? Is that correct? Did we have more members-at-large prior to '99 each year than we are getting now? Anyway, you know, if I was wrong all the time, I would really take offense, too. I don't take offense.

Hell, I have been thrown off committees and taken off the Finance Committee because I asked too many questions. That doesn't bother me. I have been there. Gentlemen, if you love this organization and you are proud of the fact that we are an organization of Veterans of Foreign Wars, then pass this resolution. I will volunteer, if they have problems, send them to me and I will write the 180s.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I am sure you would. Thank you, Don.

COMRADE MICHAEL NUCKOLLS (Post 3543 - Arkansas): I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is there a second on calling for the question? There is not a second on the calling for the question. Oh, here comes somebody just running up there.

COMRADE MIKE MUSGROVE (Post 2350 - Nevada): Commander-in-Chief, Mike Musgrove, Post 2350, Elko, Nevada. I second the motion and call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Are there any questions on the motion? If not, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye". That closes the debate. I didn't call for the "nays". Anybody against? Okay. That is carried. We have closed the debate. We are doing well. We are moving right along.

Now, the question is, the motion is to adopt Resolution 204. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried and is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: Moving right along, I will now read the resolutions that were rejected by the Committee. I will read the titles.

Resolution 201, Voice of Democracy Participation, rejected.

Resolution 202, Support American Jobs Through Purchase of American Made Goods, rejected.

Resolution 203, Rules Addition For Veterans Memorial Protection, rejected.

Resolution 206, Support the National Vietnam War Museum, rejected.

No. 208, Requirements For National Headquarters To Verify Eligibility For Members-At-Large. That was rejected and we adopted 204.

No. 209, Award Merchant Marines VFW Eligibility, rejected.

Resolution 210, Award Merchant Marines VFW Eligibility, rejected.

Resolution 211, Amend Section 5 Of The Congressional Charter, rejected. Those are the ones that are rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Does anybody want any of them set aside? Seeing nobody at the microphones, those resolutions have been rejected. Thank you, Past Commander-in-Chief Soden, for your fine work.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SODEN: Thank you, Chief, for the appointment. I appreciate it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: And Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF H. STEVE MASON, SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: A trip to almost any V.A. Hospital will reveal the importance of the Military Order of the Cootie. Each year the Cooties spend thousands of hours bringing a moment of pleasure to our hospitalized veterans. Their commitment to "Keep 'em Smiling in Beds of White" is a grand tribute to the service and sacrifice of all veterans.

Our next guest was elected Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie at that organization's 82nd Supreme Scratch in Milwaukee in August of 2001. Please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States of America, H. Steve Mason.

RESPONSE - MOC SUPREME COMMANDER STEVE MASON

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER MASON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Delegates to the 103rd National Convention, I am proud to stand before you and give a report for the Military Order of the Cootie. For the second consecutive year the Military Order of the Cootie has achieved 101 percent in membership.

We have recruited over 1,300 new Cooties and brought back 400 Cooties who have lost their way. This year in the hospital work, the Military Order of the Cootie has donated over \$8 million worth of credits for administration for the Medical Center and another \$2.35 million in non-V.A. Hospital and nursing homes.

We have donated approximately \$24,196.12 to the VFW National Home. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we did not achieve the 18,000 new and reinstated members for the VFW, but we did recruit 9,529 new and reinstated VFW members. The Military Order of the Cootie has worked on 105,413 VFW projects. Also, the Military Order of the Cootie has donated in gifts to the VFW Posts approximately \$214,524.37.

Comrade Commander, on behalf of the Military Order of the Cootie, the Pup Tents and the Grands, I want to present you with this check for

\$1,200 for your diabetes program.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you very much. Steve, it has been a pleasure working with you. You have been a good Supreme Commander. I thank you for all you have done in the past and what you continue to do. And I thank you for what the Cooties have done.

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER MASON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, and I thank you, the delegates, and God bless America and God bless the VFW.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is Wally Hogan in the crowd? Is Paul Spera on the stage? I wonder if they knew what time the convention started this morning.

At this time we will have the report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs by its Chairman, John W. Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief, along with Bob Currieo, Past Commander-in-Chief.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN SMART (Post 483 - New Hampshire): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I report to the convention the Report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, which convened in the Tennessee Room at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 25th.

Your instructions were read, a roll call was taken and the procedures were discussed. A portion of the Committee members was designated to participate in a Subcommittee on POW/MIA, and the Committee and Subcommittee deliberated all 73 Resolutions

I would like to thank Vice-Chairman of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Currieo, from VFW Post 9972, Arizona, and Chairman of the VFW POW/MIA Subcommittee was Past Commander-in-Chief Billy Ray Cameron from VFW Post 5631, North Carolina, and also Vice-Chairman of the POW/MIA Subcommittee, John Gwizdak from VFW Post 5080, Georgia.

A special thank you to our advisor, Bob Manhan, who was the Acting Director of the National Legislative Service who filled in as the advisor to this Committee. A special thanks to all Committee members out there for their participation in this process.

We had two representatives, and they were guests of yours at this convention. We had Dr. Wu, and we also had Dr. Lee bring greetings to this Convention Committee. At this time, comrades and sisters, I would like to read to you the numbers that have been adopted.

If I may, with your permission, Commander-in-Chief, and I know how much we recognize our men and women in the military, I would like to ask all active military personnel that serve in the Guard and Reserves to stand up and be recognized. Any active military personnel or Guard or Reservist, please stand up and be recognized. (Applause)

The reason I say that, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, very honestly these issues we discuss here today pertain to them in making sure that they have the tools necessary to perform their mission. I would set out at this time and I will read off all the resolutions by number that have been adopted.

The resolutions that have been adopted are 404, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 419, 420, 422, 423, 424, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 434, 436, 437, 438, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 446, 447, 448, 449, 451, 452, 454, 455, 457, 458, 459, 461, 462, 463, 464 and 465. Commander, these are resolutions that have been adopted by the Committee, and I move adoption of these resolutions other than any set aside.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES CURRIEO (Post 9972-Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Bob Currieo, Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded to adopt the resolutions that have just been listed. Anyone want to set any of them aside? Not seeing anybody at the microphones, we will vote for adoption of the resolutions. Any questions on the motion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion passed and is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES CURRIEO: Comrades, the Committee has six resolutions that were amended, two in Committee and the others before it came to the Committee. I believe you have copies of these resolutions. I will just read the numbers. If you have any questions or want any set aside, or read in its entirety, please go to the microphone. These are resolutions, as amended.

They are Resolution 405, Resolution 466, Resolution 467, Resolution 468, Resolution 469, and Resolution 470.

Commander-in-Chief, I move for adoption of these resolutions, as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN W. SMART (Post 483 - New Hampshire): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded to adopt the resolutions as amended. Any questions on the motion? Hearing no questions, seeing nobody at the microphones, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. It is carried and so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN W. SMART (Post 483 - New Hampshire): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would ask Billy Ray Cameron and Vice-Chairman John Gwizdak to discuss the Resolutions on the POW/MIA.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON (Post 5631 - North Carolina): Thank you, Past Commander-in-Chief Smart. Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, I would like to report that your POW/MIA Committee convened in the Governor's East Room on Monday, August 26,

at 1:00 p.m. Your instructions were read and the procedures were discussed.

The designated members from the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee met to consider the Resolutions that specifically applied to the POW/MIA issues. After reviewing two video programs on the POW/MIA accounting, the Subcommittee had two guest speakers, the Honorable Jerry D. Jennings, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and Director of Defense of POW Missing Personnel, from the Washington, D.C. Office, and Brigadier General Steven J. Redmann, Commander of Joint Task Force Accounting from Camp Smith, Hawaii.

The Honorable Jerry Jennings reviewed the administration's policies, programs and budget to aggressively pursue our national goals for accounting for POW/MIA service personnel from World War II, Korea, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and possible future requirements that would occur as a result of the ongoing war against terrorism.

General Steven Redmann discussed in some detail the annual budget and activities of the Task Force Accounting Office. He stressed the mission of the Joint Staff's organization and his present key functions, particularly the activity limited to POW/MIA accountability from the Vietnam War as it is limited to Southeast Asia.

I wish to thank the members of the POW/MIA Subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, Post 5080, Georgia, and Vice-Chairman and Staff Advisor, Bob Manhan, Assistant Director for taking part in this program. Commander, with your permission, I would begin reading the Subcommittee's report. I will read the resolution number. I will read the title so that you will understand. All our Resolutions were adopted and so all of these were adopted by the Subcommittee.

Resolution 401, Support Public Awareness Projects.

Resolution 402, Seek Opportunities to Resolve the Korean War POW/MIA Issue.

Resolution No. 403, VFW Supports Kuwait's Demand for an Accounting of its MIAs.

Resolution 418, Assist Vietnam's Recovery of MIAs as a Sign of Good Faith.

Resolution 421, Oppose Downsizing the Defense Department POW/Missing Personnel Office.

Resolution 425, Support Former POW Slave Labor Claims Against Japanese Firms.

Resolution 433, Interment of an Unknown from Vietnam.

Resolution 435, Increase Central Identification Laboratory Capability.

Resolution 439, A Full Accounting for Commander Speicher.

Resolution 445, Display the POW/MIA Flag.

Resolution 450, Drape the Caskets of Fallen American Warriors with the Flag of the United States.

Resolution 453, Accounting and Release of POW/MIA Information.

Resolution 456, Americans who are Prisoners of War or Missing in

Action.

Resolution 460, No Time Restraints for POW/MIA Accounting.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that these be adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN GWIZDAK (Post 5080-Georgia): Commander-in-Chief, John Gwizdak, a delegate from Post 5080, Georgia, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion and the second to adopt the previous resolutions that were just read. Any question on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Hearing none or seeing nobody at the microphones, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those who object. The motion carried. It is so ordered. Thank you, gentlemen, for a very fine job.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN SMART: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Once again, I want to thank you for Billy Ray and John. Delegates, I wish you would show your appreciation to Bob Manhan, who stepped in this position in the last ten days and put this whole program together for us. I wish you would give a special thanks to Bob for the work he did on this Committee. Thank you, Bob. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION TO THE 102ND NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It is now my distinct pleasure to present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 102nd National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's National Convention. Here to accept the award on behalf of the Committee is Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, and the Convention Committee Chairman for the 102nd Convention, and also an All American District Commander this year. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation reads, "A Certificate of Appreciation presented to the 102nd National Convention Committee in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of their dedication and tireless efforts to ensure the success of the 102nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 18-24, 2001."

This has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLY HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, delegates to the 103rd National Convention, I deeply accept this prestigious award in behalf of my Department, the Department of Wisconsin, who for the 101st and 102nd National Conventions, I could not have done it alone, and I certainly appreciate all the help that my Department gave me in putting on these last two conventions. I accept it in behalf of the Department of Wisconsin. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is Paul Spera in the room

yet? We will have some announcements by our Adjutant General, and if you see George Cramer, just tell him the Chief, and that will be enough.

...Convention Announcements. ...

INTRODUCTION OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL D. MCGINTY,
CEO, AIR FORCE AID SOCIETY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: This morning, I am pleased to present our next distinguished speaker, Lieutenant General Michael McGinty. Currently, Mike McGinty is the CEO of the Air Force Aid Society. AFAS is a non-profit organization with a proud 60-year history of helping Air Force people and their families.

In 2001, AFAS helped 32,000 people with over \$25 million worth of assistance in the form of emergency assistance, education grants for family members and community enhancement programs at Air Force Bases worldwide.

Prior to his retirement from active duty, General McGinty served as Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force. He served as the senior Air Force officer responsible for comprehensive plans and policies covering all life cycles of military and civilian personnel management, education and training, compensation and resource allocations.

The General entered the Air Force in 1965 as a distinguished graduate of the University of Minnesota Reserve Officer Training Corps Program. He has commanded an Air Force fighter wing and the Air Force Military Personnel Center. He is a command pilot with more than 3,500 hours, principally in fighter aircraft. He flew 115 combat missions in Southeast Asia, including 100 over North Vietnam.

General McGinty has lent valuable advice and assistance to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He has contributed greatly to our successful efforts to provide support to the men and women who are currently serving in the armed forces. Please join with me in welcoming Lieutenant General Michael D. McGinty. (Applause)

REMARKS - LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL MCGINTY, USAF (Ret.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MCGINTY: Good morning to the VFW. Well, let me start off by thanking your good Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith for this invitation to talk to you for just a few minutes this morning at your National Convention. I asked for these few minutes to say thanks, to say thanks to each and every one of you for the absolutely outstanding support that the VFW has been providing to our Air Force, the active duty, the International Guard and our Air Force Reserve, and all their family members.

The VFW, as you all know was helping us an awful lot before

September 11th, but since that terrible day your help has increased many times over. And I want you all to know that your help is truly appreciated. My job, as you heard, is to run the Air Force Aid Society. That society was started by the father of our great Air Force General Hap Arnold in 1942 to help members of the Army Air Corps and their families, and now to help the Air Force members and their families.

As you heard, last year we were able to help 32,000 people with \$25 million worth of help. That is 32,000 people with \$25 million worth of help. That is a lot of help and assistance. If you are not aware, an E-4, with four years of service in the Air Force today, after he pays his average bills has about 56 bucks of discretionary money at the end of the month. So it doesn't take one of our great young troops to have much of a problem before they are a little behind the power curve.

We were able to do all this help because of the help that we got from all of you. That is what I want to let you know about. Early on, you made a large cash donation to us, which was really important, because we are in our third year of a very crummy market, as you all well know.

You provided us with 14,000 phone cards, so that the troops that are deployed could stay in touch with their families. You shipped hundreds of boxes, hundreds of boxes of goodies to every family support center around the world, and these boxes of goodies are excess products that were given to the VFW from companies such as Hallmark.

And we owe a great big thank you to these companies that donated these products and also to FedEx who has been nice enough to ship all these boxes all over the world for us. There is a group of VFW volunteers, I believe from the Kansas City area so far, that need a big pat on the back because they have prepared all these boxes for shipment.

You have a wonderful young lady that works at the VFW by the name of April Butler. April has just worked her heart out getting all these shipments out all over the world, and shipping stuff overseas has not been easy. April deserves a great big thank you. I would like to have her to stand up but she is at home celebrating her child's first birthday. She is the greatest.

Now, you have also shipped 100 dozen cookies, that is 100 dozen cookies, 1,200 of these great big three-inch individually wrapped cookies to every base around the world, and those great cookies that have been such a hit come from Mike Lynch. Mike Lynch is the head of the Help the Hospitalized Veterans Association, and he has gotten us all these cookies. Mike is up here. Let's give Mike a big thank you. (Applause)

Last but not least, as most of you know, many of your Posts have adopted a base that has been close by and provided lots of support to our base communities, and you will hear more about that. As a result of all this support that you have been providing to us, I have received literally hundreds of e-mails, notes, cards, pictures, phone calls, thanking me for the VFW help that they have received. So that is why I wanted this time to thank all of you.

But I am just the headquarters guy. Like all headquarters guys, I don't really have a feeling for what is going on with the troops in the trenches. That is a lie. I really do. You have got to say that when you are the headquarters puke.

I am going to ask Chris Burnett to come up here with me. Chris is the absolutely best family support person we have in the Air Force. She is the best, and it is the family support network at every base around the world that has put these products and help from the VFW to good use.

She will give you a few stories and tell you how much this help has been appreciated while the troops are engaged in this war on terrorism and defending our great homeland. So, Chris, over to you.

REMARKS - MS. CHRIS BURNETT

MS. CHRIS BURNETT: Thank you, General McGinty. It is my great honor and pleasure to be here to say thank you to you and the 2.7 million members of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary for your generous support to the Air Force and its family support center programs.

You truly are 2.7 million people who care. It is your hard work that processed, packaged and prepared for the delivery by FedEx, and let me list just a few things, the phone cards you have heard about, yea. The flags and other patriotic items, footballs, photo albums, books on tapes, playing cards, toy cards, puzzles, and that just names a few.

Believe me, there is much, much more in those wonderful goodie boxes that were all sent by FedEx to the 92 family support centers, who then in turn share them with the Guard and Reserve units on their installations. There were also some that were direct shipped to the Reserve bases, just all over.

Let me give you a list of the people who received some of the gifts that you sent. Certainly, the active duty members, those who were deploying and are already deployed, their family members who were awaiting the return of their spouse or their parent, security forces personnel who were serving on gate guard duty, hospitalized veterans during hospital visitation programs.

Single members who live in the dorms and those who attend our classes and our workshops and visit our family support centers around the world and around the Air Force. Let me give you some direct comments from some of the folks who received these.

From L.A. Air Station came, "Thank you so much, VFW, for all you have done and all you continue to do." From Robbins Air Force Base, "Everything has been a great bit hit."

And from a spouse at Goodfellow, "I wish to express my thanks to all those involved in providing the contents of the goodie bag that I received. It is greatly appreciated, and the photo album will be especially dear as my husband has sent pictures from his time away and they will go inside it nicely as a remembrance of all that he has gone through."

I would like to mention one special relationship that exists between the Barksdale Family Support Center in Louisiana and the Johnny Welch Memorial Post 5051 and the Ladies Auxiliary who adopted the Barksdale Family Support Center as part of their Adopt-a-Unit Program.

Their members have helped to raise funds in support of spouses who have family members deployed and also to stock the base's food pantry. The Ladies Auxiliary donated gifts to the holiday shopping days for E-4 members and below, and General McGinty talked about their tight funding situation, and they made handmade patriotic centerpieces for a Thanksgiving feast that was done for families who had deployed spouses.

So, we know firsthand in the family support center business that the letters of VFW symbolize volunteerism and community service. Your unprecedented support of the Air Force and its family support center is one of the best morale boosters we have had in years, and we thank you so much for that.

It just continues your already rich tradition of enhancing the lives of millions through community service and through special projects. We like being your special project. We honor you and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your great service. God bless and thank you. (Applause)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MCGINTY: Thank you, Chris. You can see why she is the best we have in the business. She is a great lady. We will be around for the rest of the day, so if you have any questions or want to talk to us, please come by and see us. We also would like to meet as many of you as possible. So, please, keep that in mind.

Now, I know that Ron Browning and Mike Meyer, the two guys in the VFW Foundation that have been true leaders, true leaders in making all this happen in the last several months, have got a lot of ideas for things that we can do in the future. I am looking forward to that. That is absolutely great. We will use all the help they can send us. It is really appreciated.

So, Jim, again the reason that I wanted to come here was to personally thank this great group of people for all the help that they are doing while our troops are engaged in this war and for taking care of their families. We do appreciate it, and that's why I am so very, very proud to be one of you, a member of the VFW. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I think it is proper for us to recognize them in a proper way. I met Mike at the Golden Age Games in Los Angeles. Mike is the individual who gave us the 40,000 cases of cookies that we spread around the world.

Mike, right here, is the one that did it. Chris has been doing this for years and years, and the General has been doing this for years and years, and we are proud to partner with you. I can assure you that Ray Sisk will partner with you when he is Commander-in-Chief. I can't thank you enough for what you have done over the years, cookie man. That's a good title for Mike, too. Let's give them a standing ovation. They deserve it.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: At this time I would call to the microphone for the purpose of a presentation Theresa Mangiapane and the Department Commanders from 2001- 2002.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I don't have any idea what is up their sleeves. I am not supposed to

PRESENTATION BY 2001-2002 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS

COMRADE THERESA MANGIAPANE: And you never did, did you? Good morning. Chief, we have put together a gift for you through the Department Commanders, and I would like to take this time to read to you an ode that I have written for you.

This is an Ode to Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith.

Reach out is all you said at the beginning of the year, but we, the 54 Department Commanders of 2001-2002 heard so much more. We heard your silent request of us to accept the challenge. We understood there is no distance too far for us to travel to find new members and accomplish the job ahead of us.

We were aware we need to get back to the basics, to remember where we came from and where we are going. We were informed that putting our veterans first is our duty and obligation to this organization. That by doing your requests, we will be opening up a world of opportunity for the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

When we joined our respective services, we were told to be all you can be, Colorado. We served our time, our country, and we served with honor and pride. We are continuing this tradition by reaching out to everyone, all veterans through the membership and the programs of the VFW.

We have proven the diversity strength in unity is today's standard. It is now that our vision becomes reality as we continue to serve and stand tall. United we stand, united we can continue to work our forefathers in this 103rd year of the VFW.

We have learned that we can only do this together as a team. Let's make things happen was our quiet challenge to you. We continued working together for a greater VFW by accepting the challenge. Our pleas became veterans aim high for its duty, duty, duty, as we work for the veterans of our great nation.

We are truly friends helping friends. So, as it was upward and forward, we moved in the quest for filling this challenge. We are beyond a doubt taking care of veterans. We have used our teamwork to achieve the extraordinary. We moved forward with pride as we roared we are proud to serve.

As time went, and September 11th took its toll on us, we again stood

tall and struck with force in American pride. We did not falter, we did not cower, instead we came back stronger than ever with shots of "Follow me; full steam ahead. United we stand."

There we were, united we stand, with pride and purpose carrying on the flags of heroes past and present. Still proud to say we are serving with honor and pride to get the job done. So, go out and spread the word. The Department Commanders of 2001-2002 are caring enough to make a difference.

For us, it is bets now and forever. We know it is success through teamwork, so remember, least we forget that we are veterans continuing to serve our fellow comrades. We know that the commitment begins now, and we are the ones to reach out, volunteer and have fun.

We communicate and motivate to get the membership to go over the top, and we can do it in '02. We were marching side by side, hand in hand, with one thing on our minds. It is duty first. Be a hustler and fly with me as we continue to charge.

Let's all help veterans. Demonstrating success in unity is where you will find the Department Commanders of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are proud to be veterans standing tall and still producing commitment of guaranteed results for our veterans.

We are continually pioneering into the new century, though we will always cherish the past and embrace the future. For to believe is to achieve success in all we do. VFW, a continuing commitment that the Department Commanders accepted readily and willingly to uphold to the fullest has been fulfilled.

Let us proudly stand up and be counted. We are veterans working together for veterans. Our message to those who follow is to be proud of the VFW and the job you are taking on. Remember, veterans, go forth and just do it. Reach out.

Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, I present to you your 54 Department Commanders of 2001-2002, and we salute you. (Applause) We have put together a shadow box. There is a hole for each of the Department Commanders and each Department Commander has put a little trinket of something that represents them in 2001-2002.

I would like to congratulate you on your year as the National Commander-in-Chief. We hope it has been all that you wanted it to be and it is as successful as you wanted it to be. Whatever your future plans in the VFW are, we wish you the very best.

For the last three years, we have all built friendships that we feel are second to none. As we move on in life, we hope our friendships will continue to grow and we will always be able to have a hug and a laugh. Thanks for the many memories you have given us.

We are stronger because of our experience of serving the Veterans of Foreign Wars as Department Commanders as they reach out with leading hands in working beside you and serving with you as our National Commander-in-Chief. Again, we thank you for everything. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I have not seen it, but I know it is not going to fit on my refrigerator. (Laughter) Guys and gal, I couldn't thank you enough for what you have done for this organization. I don't get emotional too often, as John Senk will tell you.

I certainly do feel an emotional time now. I can't thank you enough. You have been a great, great, great team. Once again, I not only thank you for what you have done and the hospitality and kindness, I thank you for your friendship. Thank you. (Applause) Let's give them a round of applause. These were your leaders this year. (Applause) It took me a few minutes to realize what Theresa was reading there. Every one of their themes were in that speech. That is pretty neat, isn't it?

Ray, this is a good job.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: I am sure of it. I am looking forward to it.

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW JAMES E. VAN ZANDT CITIZENSHIP AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Wal-Mart Stores, Incorporated, record of community involvement reflects Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton's belief of service with compassion and integrity. Wal-Mart stores located nationwide work hand-in-hand with organizations located in their own community to improve quality of life for all citizens.

Wal-Mart associates lend their efforts locally to a variety of community service projects. They have a phenomenal record of achievement, having raised and contributed a staggering \$190 million for community involvement last year. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to partner with Wal-Mart through the years on a variety of patriotic projects and community service initiatives.

And I want to put an urban rumor to rest right here and now. Wal-Mart does not require their employees to purchase the American flags that are displayed in each store. Each Wal-Mart store has budgeted money for that express purpose.

The generosity of Wal-Mart Stores, Incorporated, and its associates has improved the lives of thousands of people and their communities.

Thomas M. Coughlin is President and Chief Executive Officer of Wal-Mart and Sam's Club USA. He is responsible for all Wal-Mart Discount Stores, Super Centers, Sam's Clubs and Neighborhood Markets, as well as the Loss Prevention and Marketing Division of Wal-Mart Stores. He was elected a member of the Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Board of Directors in 2001.

Please join with me in a warm VFW welcome to Mr. Thomas M. Coughlin who is here to accept the 2002 VFW James E. Van Zandt National Citizenship Award on behalf of Wal-Mart associates.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation being presented reads as follows: "James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and this Citation presented to Wal-Mart in recognition of continuous support of

veterans programs and activities as evidenced by their unparalleled assistance with the VFW's distribution of buddy poppies. Their community-oriented goals, along with their major contributions to a multitude of charitable causes, earns them the highest praise and admiration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 27th day of August, 2002 Approved by the National Council of Administration."

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, John. Along with this award is an honorarium for \$5,000 that I want to present to you.

RESPONSE - MR. THOMAS M. COUGHLIN

MR. THOMAS COUGHLIN: I appreciate that very much, but I would like you to put that back into your funds to take care of vets, if you would, please.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you.

MR. THOMAS COUGHLIN: I am humbled and privileged to have the opportunity to represent over 1,100,000 Wal-Mart associates, Sam's Club partners from around this country. The associates in our clubs and stores really, really care about their customers, their members and the communities they are in, about this great country of ours as well.

We were at a meeting of the management group two years ago in Dallas, and Bob Dole was there to speak to our leadership group. He had talked about the fact that he thought it was a tragedy that they were having trouble raising the funds that were necessary for the World War II Memorial.

After he left, I asked our managers whether they were up to taking on the challenge of doing what is necessary to fund-raise the \$15 million that was the shortfall. I told them that, quite frankly, I wasn't interested in that occurring unless they were willing to do it at a 100-percent level.

I will tell you they made a commitment that day and 100 percent of the stores that were opened at that time, in fact, did within 90 days raise that \$15 million for the World War II Memorial. You can imagine the pride that I felt not only in the funds that were raised but that 100 percent of them understood how important it was.

We have had similar things happen with our people like that. Our Secretary of State, General Colin Powell, spoke to them probably three years ago. I had dinner with him the night before. I asked him, you know, "What is it that you see that we can do to be better corporate citizens?"

General Powell told me about his involvement with America's Promise and his involvement with the Boys and Girls Club of America. He talked about a program that they had developed to try to take underprivileged kids and bring them into a work environment one day a year, the first week in February.

He called his movement Ground Shadow. Again, we went back to the managers and asked if they would get involved to cause that to take place. Again, I said it only really mattered if 100 percent of them bought in. I will tell you again, every single store participated and over 44,000 children that year became a part of the workplace for a day, everything from the stores to the clubs, the distribution centers, to riding around in the Wal-Mart trucks.

I say that to tell you I work with a great, great group of people. They believe in doing things at a 100-percent level. They took that Ground Shadow this year to 78,000 kids. They understand that what Sam taught us was to be good citizens, and we are good business people in our communities.

I think their ideas of being spectacular through the years, this year they sent the ideas to us with all the service people out of the country serving this country, coming into Mother's Day that we do something with phone cards so they might call mom or somebody else, some other loved one.

We got together 378,000 phone cards to be shipped to service people around the world. I don't say that for any other reason but to express the pride I have in them as a group of people and the commitment that they have to you and what you do and what you represent.

We right now have over 1,000 of our associates activated someplace in the world or in the country, and we share our concern with them regularly. One of the things that I am proudest of is we have nearly 1,200 World War II vets that are still in our employment.

We, as a company, are humbled to be here in front of you today and pleased that we are able to do at least part of what our part should be in causing things to be better for service people. Again, thank you for this invitation and the award. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you very much, Tom, for all that you do for our organization over the years. We appreciate it.

At this time we are going to call on Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera to report on the Committee on General Resolutions. We have found him.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 - Massachusetts): Thank you very much, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I am honored at this time to introduce the co-chairman of the General Resolutions Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief, from the great Department of Ohio, Doc Wasylik.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, in behalf of my co-chairman and all the members of the Committee, we want to thank you very much for the faith you put in us by appointing us to this very important Committee. I will first proceed by reading the Resolutions that were recommended for approval by the Committee.

Resolution No. 303, Oppose the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals

Decisions on the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resolution 308, Support the Bob Hope Tribute Comrade Commander-in-Chief, at this time I make a motion that the convention approve the recommendations of the Committee and adopt those two resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN WASYLIK (Post 2529-Ohio): John Wasylik, Post 2529, Sandusky, Ohio, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion to adopt the following two resolutions, and the second. Are there any questions on the motion? Are there any questions on the motion? Seeing nobody at the microphones, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried and is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades, the following resolutions have been recommended for rejection by the Committee:

Resolution No. 301, Veterans Living Memorial Aviary.

Resolution No. 302, Medal of Honor.

Resolution No. 304, December 7th as a National Holiday.

Resolution No. 305, Fully Support the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America Remain Unchanged.

Resolution No. 306, Oppose Any Attempt to Remove "Under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance.

Nos. 305 and 306 were recommended for rejection because of the adoption of Resolution No. 303.

Resolution 307, Emphasizing Stewardship Instead of Socialism in the Observance of "Birthday".

Resolution 309, Boycott the Disrespect of the American Flag.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, those are the resolutions recommended for rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the recommendation. I will recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DANNY HENRY (Post 4372 - Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Danny Henry, State of Texas, Post 4372. I move we set aside Resolution 309.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We don't need a motion. No. 309 has been set aside. Are there any others to be set aside? Seeing none, the rest of them have been rejected, with 309 set aside.

Microphone No. 2. Comrade Henry, will you make the motion that needs to be made on 309? You wanted it set aside.

COMRADE DANNY HENRY (Post 4372 - Texas): I move we adopt No. 309.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved that we adopt No. 309. Is there a second to the motion?

COMRADE RON HORNSBY (Post 10428 - Texas): I will second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded to adopt Resolution 309. The motion is to adopt 309.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: The reason it is not listed as it came in after the printing. Resolution No. 309, Boycott for Disrespect of the American Flag; and

“WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States continues to promote patriotism and the proper respect for the flag of the United States; and

“WHEREAS, many of these patriotic programs are taken into schools so that the youth of this country will know the proper respect for the flag; and

“WHEREAS, many of these students along with adults on a regular basis watch professional wrestling; and

“WHEREAS, during several performances televised on television professional wrestlers and others have displayed disrespect for the American Flag by throwing the flag on the ring floor, marching into the ring with the stars and stripes upside down, and wrapping the flag around scantily-clothed ladies, among others.

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States send a letter to all of the professional wrestling leagues, along with the networks that broadcast these matches, strongly objecting to the disrespectful way the American flag is portrayed; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a formal letter go out to all the Posts of this great organization requesting that they boycott the showing of any of these matches at any VFW Post.”

The recommendation of the staff was for rejection. Among the reasons for those recommendations was what was perceived by the staff as a lack of comments from others. Other than this resolution, there have been no people that have come to the VFW, either with e-mails, phone calls or letters, complaining about this situation.

Members of the staff felt that the prestige of the VFW should be used sparingly, and since there was no large outcry that this may not be a time for us to do that. That was the reason for the recommendation and the resolution was rejected.

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

COMRADE DANNY HENRY (Post 4372 - Texas): I understand what maybe the staff may be coming to on that, but I see no harm in putting our foot down now instead of letting this stuff escalate further and further along. It worked with the National Baseball League with a letter.

They no more stand at attention during the Star Spangled Banner and scratch themselves without a \$5,000 fine. It worked with the Fox Network. I see no harm in now putting out a letter to maybe stop this on national TV.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Comrade Henry. Any other discussion on the motion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CHARLES WILKERSON (Post 4554 - Arkansas): Commander-in-Chief, I have been to many schools and done many flag education hints. I was on the General Resolutions Committee. We had a

close vote and it was rejected. I feel that the disrespect that we have seen, and I have not seen this because I don't watch wrestling, but I have seen it in other places.

We should and we have always done that. There have been many instances where we have brought up, even at the Olympics, at baseball games, the VFW has protested and it has been cleaned up. We do see an improvement. If we are going to allow the disrespect to the flag, how can we walk into a classroom and teach these young citizens how to respect the flag?

They watch TV and they see this, and I am sure that when we go in we make a difference. I stand in favor of adoption of this resolution. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE CHARLES LOWE (Post 1114 - Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Charles Lowe from Evansville Post 1114, Indiana. I stand along with these veterans to adopt this amendment. I work with a federation of pro wrestling and we don't allow it in our federation.

If a pro wrestler comes with a flag to the ring, he brings it right and hands it where it will not drop to the floor. I see the WWE every Monday night and Saturdays. I watch it constantly. It is very disrespectful, and I have E-mailed Mr. McMann. He is the CEO out of New York. I have not gotten a response from him.

I have stated to this fact that the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the veterans of this country around the world have fought for that flag and have died for that flag, and it is very disrespectful to have a pro wrestler, or any person that is working in the World Wrestling Federations around the world to throw a flag on the floor outside the ring, to beat somebody in the ring with the flag on the pole, as they have got these guys now on WWE called — I can't remember what they are called — the Un-Americans. They are called the Un-Americans. If they are so-called Un-Americans, let them get the hell out of this country. (Applause)

The only thing I would like to see is this resolution adopted, because maybe we can stop it. We stopped the ball players not standing at attention. We need to step up and put our foot down right now and tell Mr. McMann, and he is a powerful influence; Ted Turner, he is in it. We need to send these people letters and I am going to draw up a letter when I get back to the Post, and I am going to have a petition up at the Post, and I am going to send it to these people.

Maybe we can get some response if we all join together as one as we are, as veterans of this great nation, to put a stop to this ridiculous and un-American and unpatriotic thing to do to our flag. It is disgusting to me. I, too, stand to adopt this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Comrade. Is there anyone who wants to speak against the motion? Is there anybody that wants to speak against the motion? If not, then I am going to cut the debate off and

we are going to have the vote.

You have heard the motion to adopt 309. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. I was right in cutting off the debate, was I not? It is carried and is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes our report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Paul, and thank you, Doc, for a good job

INTRODUCTION OF COLONEL FREDERICK JOHNSON, CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The story of the heroic acts of four Army Chaplains on board the troop transport ship U.S.A.T. Dorchester is known to all.

Those brave men provided us with an example of the ultimate act of unselfish courage, one that inspired us during our years of military service and continues to influence our lives. Today we are pleased to welcome Colonel Frederick A. Johnson of the Chapel of Four Chaplains for a special presentation.

PRESENTATION BY THE CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS

COLONEL FREDERICK JOHNSON: It is my privilege to be here as a representative of the Chapel of Four Chaplains to present the Legion of Honor Gold Medallion to our Commander-in-Chief, James Goldsmith.

I want to take you back to 1943, January 23rd, when an old coastal ship was commissioned to serve our troops and carry about a thousand of our people to Greenland. On the way, it was torpedoed. The torpedo hit the boiler room. Many died instantly.

Many tried to get to the decks and succeeded. When they got there, they got into the lifeboats, which were overcrowded. Some of the rafts floated away. Many of the men, as were ordered by the captain of the vessel, had slept with their life jackets but in the confusion the life jackets of many were lost, and as the men hit the water, or they stood on the deck with no life vest at all, the four chaplains who were there took their life vests and gave them to the men who didn't have a life vest.

They stayed on the vessel until the vessel went down. The four chaplains, two Protestants, one Roman Catholic and one Jewish Rabbi, knelt on the deck, arm-in-arm, and prayed together and went down with the ship without their life vests, having given their life vests to another.

In 1951, Harry Truman dedicated the Chapel of Four Chaplains in remembrance of these men and their heroic sacrifice. There were other sacrifices made that day, but these four seemed to stand out among many of them. Harry Truman dedicated the chapel at Temple University and the chapel now has been moved to what used to be the old naval yards in

Philadelphia. There we have a wonderful facility. We honor people who have had lives of outstanding service, who have made sacrifice, who have made their lives count across ethnic lines, religious lines, people who have lived great lives of sacrifice and service.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains believes our Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith is one of those men. You are familiar with the credentials. His credentials go back 40 years. Chief, We appreciate your service in the military, all you have done for active and reserve forces, and what you have done for our country, for the commissions and the investigative bodies of which you have served. We want to present to you this flag with a picture of those four chaplains who gave their lives for the men that day.

It reads, "The Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion is given to James N. Goldsmith on August 27, 2002, in recognition of your service to all people regardless of race or faith. This award symbolizes for all Americans for all times the unity of this nation founded upon the fatherhood of one God."

We would be pleased if you would wear the Gold Medallion and we recognize your distinguished service. May God bless you and continue to use you. You mean a lot to this country. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Let me present you with this, one of my medallions and pin, and thank you for what you do.

COLONEL FREDERICK JOHNSON: Thank you. It is an honor to be with all of you today. God bless.

PRESENTATION FROM THE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES GOLDSMITH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We now have a presentation from the Chairman of the Political Action Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ART FELLWOCK: My name is Art Fellwock, and I am from Evansville Post 1114, Evansville, Indiana, and Chairman of the VFW Political Action Committee. I would like to, first of all, introduce the Committee that serves on this Political Action Committee.

That is Forrest Parker, Neile Deibler, Robert Loftus, Robert Maxwell, Paul Spera, Joe T. Wood, Craig Schwartz. I would like to pay a special tribute to our Treasurer of the PAC, who is Gerald Jonas, who this year has done an outstanding job on the Political Action Committee.

Of course, all of you know that Jack Carney has been our Director and he has served on this and he has served without any salary at all, and he has done an excellent, excellent job, which is accounting for most of the success that I am going to tell you about this morning.

Then we have also on that from the Ladies Auxiliary Cortina Barnes, who has really, really done a tremendous job. The ladies have come through this year like you couldn't believe, and we are so proud.

Let me tell you this has been a busy year for the Political Action Committee. It has been a very busy year because the coming elections in

November, we want to get the endorsements out to those incoming Congressmen and Senators, who have supported the VFW in a very strong national defense and in regards to the veterans' rights.

There has been a lot of redistricting in the states, so that causes additional problems. We have asked the states to put in their support. Give us your recommendations on who we should support. I will tell you again, I want to congratulate the Post Commanders and the Quartermaster/Adjutants of the states because we have received more participation and more returns and more input than we have in many, many years.

I certainly want to thank the states for doing that. We have the contributions, we have the endorsements made. We endorsed them at our meeting on Saturday morning. They will be distributed very shortly. That will not be all of our endorsements because, as you know, some of the primaries are not over with. As soon as the primaries are over with, then we shall make some additional endorsements.

Now, the check for the Senators and Congressmen will be mailed to your state. That contribution will be made, and we certainly ask and encourage you to present those checks to your Congressmen and Senators at one of your meetings or someplace where he can be there and you get a picture of that and you put it into your news publication, because this then gives us more publicity which we want.

I want to pay a special thanks to Michigan, who has done a fabulous job, Maryland, Texas and California. They led their divisions. You know, this has really been an outstanding year. This has probably been the most successful year we have had in the Political Action Committee.

There are a lot of things that I think made that happen. First of all, the Commander-in-Chief and the chair officers and the National Organization really, really were behind us. The Ladies Auxiliary came through like you couldn't believe, and it made us very proud to know that the Ladies Auxiliary are again coming through with such support.

Then we had 9/11, as you know, and I think a lot of our members who never ever go to a meeting or maybe never go to a Post, but they have been reading about the VFW and all the great things that we have been doing in regards to 9/11, and our veterans overseas, our servicemen overseas, and I think some of the contributions in this has increased that

I want to tell you about some of those contributions. You know, this has really been an outstanding year. The donations this year from Posts and Auxiliaries totaled over \$392,000. Pat yourself on the back. We are proud of you. We will be able to put that to good use in the endorsements of these candidates who support what we think and what we believe in. So that is very good.

Let me give you just an example how successful some of this is going to be. I think that again I have got to pay tribute to the Marketing Department, Ron Browning and Kelly who has been really doing a fabulous job for us. I want to pat them on the back.

We sent out labels in July of this year. We estimated when they would

come through, it would bring us a revenue of \$23,000. We thought if we had \$23,000, that was our projected amount, that would be great. Let me tell you, right now instead of \$23,000 we have already gotten over \$36,000 from that, and it looks like it could very possibly double what we had projected. Again, thanks to you.

This has been a fabulous year in regards to new donors, people for the first time that have given to the Political Action Committee. That totals 11,383 people, veterans, comrades, sisters, who donated to the PAC that never ever donated before.

This brings our donor list back up to over 95,000 names that we have because of that. I can't pay tribute enough to Jack Carney for what he has done. I want to thank all of you out there because this has certainly been the best year that the Political Action Committee has had.

Believe me, we will make sure those endorsements get out to friends of ours in Congress who support how we believe.

Therefore, I want to present to our Commander-in-Chief this eagle, which I want to read what it says here: "Golden Eagle Award honors James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, 2001-2002, for exceptional support of the Political Action Committee." Jim, we are proud. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Art. Let me say this, that I accept this on behalf of what you good people out there have done. If it doesn't start at the grassroots level, it doesn't get done. I am extremely proud of my state, Michigan, and I have to brag on them a little bit. Come on up, Dave.

I know they have got a check, and I think we have led the nation in political action donations ever since the conception of the program. I am proud of that record that these guys have done. I would like to give my home state a warm round of applause for that. (Applause) They just gave me a check for \$1,335 to start off this year. Thank you, Dave. (Applause)

I don't want anybody to leave. Please don't leave, because we have the Secretary of Labor on her way. She is going to have a dynamic talk to give to us. Then we are going to be pretty much done this morning. Please don't go. She will be here in just a few minutes. If you will wait, I would appreciate it. I know she would, too.

INTRODUCTION OF ELAINE L. CHAO, SECRETARY OF LABOR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker for the day, the Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor. (Applause) Secretary Chao is the nation's twenty-fourth Secretary of Labor and the first Asian-American woman in our history to be appointed to the President's Cabinet.

Before her confirmation as Labor Secretary by the Senate in January, 2001, Secretary Chao was a distinguished fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based public policy research and educational institution.

Previously, she served as President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of America where she restored public trust and confidence to the nation's largest institution of private charitable giving after the organization was tarnished by mismanagement and financial abuse. She has served as Director of the Peace Corps, the world's largest international volunteer organization, where she established the first Peace Corps' program in the Baltic nations of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and the newly-independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Secretary Chao's previous government career includes serving as the Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation. She also served as Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission and Deputy Maritime Administrator in the United States Department of Transportation.

Secretary Chao brings a wealth of private sector experience to the position, having served as Vice-President of Syndications at BankAmerica Capital Markets Group in San Francisco and as a transportation banker with Citicorp in New York.

An effective and articulate champion, Secretary Chao advocates for a strong and productive work force in which everyone can participate. In her words: "Getting people back to work is what this department does. Giving people hope in their future is our job."

Please give a warm VFW welcome to the Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor.

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

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - U.S. SECRETARY OF LABOR ELAINE CHAO

SECRETARY OF LABOR CHAO: Thank you. Well, good morning, everyone. Thank you so much, Commander Goldsmith, for that very nice introduction. I am just delighted to be here. I also want to commend you, Commander, for your leadership during this time of great challenge for our country. Let's give him a round of applause and for those on the stage as well. (Applause)

Before I begin, I want to make sure that I give a special hello to my home state of Kentucky. Where are they? Yea, they are right back there. I also would like, of course, to thank everyone who has been on this dais, the Planning Committee. You have all done such a great job. It is wonderful to be here.

Also, sadly, I want to take a moment to note the recent passing of former Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown. As Commander Goldsmith recently noted, Jesse was a great champion of America's veterans. I am also here to salute the 2.7 members of the VFW for their service and their good works, particularly in the aftermath of September 11th.

Every American was deeply affected by this severe attack, this outrageous attack on our country. But we, as a people, have turned an act

of terror into a renewed sense of national unity and determination. Our resolve, in no small part, is due to the sacrifices and the examples of the men and women who have served in our armed services.

The events of September 11th helped us appreciate their and your patriotism, bravery, valor and skills. All veterans deserve the best from the country that you have served so selflessly.

As Secretary of Labor, my mission is to ensure that you, America's veterans, are a key part of our national strategy to build the work force of the 21st century. I am all too familiar with the fact that America faces a widening skills gap.

As our economy becomes increasingly service-oriented and globalized, we will need to rely even more on the talents and the disciplined work ethics that veterans offer.

That is why the President and I chose Fred Juarbe to be the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training at the Department of Labor. You all know Fred well. His 30 years with the VFW offers the Department, the administration, firsthand knowledge about how to leverage the strengths that veterans bring to the labor market.

Today, I would like to talk to you about some important new initiatives that we are launching to better serve the veterans' community. First, we are developing three initiatives to better target PROVETS resources on areas of critical need.

The Promoting Re-employment Opportunities for Veterans Program focuses on placing transitioning service members in career building jobs.

One of the areas we are targeting through this program is health care, where there is an acute shortage of skilled professionals. We are working with the private sector, the state and local governments and our partners in other federal departments to leverage these and other emerging employment opportunities for veterans.

Now, this program is being implemented in places like Maryland, where DOL/VETS is designing a cooperative program between Johns Hopkins University, Maryland State Agencies and the Department of Defense to help veterans expedite the licensing and certification requirements they need to find good jobs in the health-care industry.

Another place is San Diego, California, where we have launched a pilot job-training program with Kaiser-Permanente. It will not only serve veterans, but the spouses of military veterans as well.

And yet still in Georgia, where we have undertaken a unique study to determine how we can assist a large retail chain in transferring the seniority and other benefits of military spouses between stores.

One of the keys to developing effective relationships with local governments and employers is our network of veterans employment representatives. Now, you know them as Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives. They understand the special employment and training needs of veterans. They know what it takes to succeed in the civilian labor market as well.

To make better use of their talents, I have directed VETS to develop a new prototype for the roles and responsibilities of DVOPS and LVERS. We want to preserve the distinction between them, but to extend their reach. One way to do this is to give states more flexibility in using these valuable assets.

In particular, we want to free up disabled veterans' representatives so they can concentrate more on case management and help those who are difficult to place. We will also redirect the focus of local veterans' representatives to aggressive employer outreach.

Our goal is to turn these employment representatives into talent scouts for veterans. I am giving them a new mission. That mission is to find out where the new jobs are at the local level, to learn what skills are needed, and then to help veterans position themselves to take advantage of these opportunities.

Your organization is a leader among veterans' service organizations in recognizing the importance of training and career development for the future of the American work force.

That is why, when I authorized the Department of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training, I asked Jim Magill, your Director of Employment Policy to serve as the chair.

I was really pleased to attend the Committee's first meeting in June. I am looking forward to hearing its recommendations on important issues, particularly on ways to improve our transition assistance programs for separating service members.

Another issue of special concern to me is homeless veterans. One of the charges that President George W. Bush gave his administration is to make sure that no one is left behind. I am very proud to serve as one of the four co-chairs of the President's Inter-Agency Task Force on Homelessness.

Through our Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project we are ramping up our efforts to help those men and women regain their self-sufficiency and their self-respect. I look to you, and the leadership of the VFW, for your special insights on ways to help this community.

Our armed forces are constantly adapting to new threats posed by terrorism and the challenges of supporting peace keeping and humanitarian missions. In that same way, our work force must adapt to the changing needs of the 21st century workplace so that we can remain strong and competitive, economically as well.

The U.S. military spends \$14 billion annually on training. Servicemen and women work with the most sophisticated technology equipment. They learn state-of-the-art technology. This put veterans ahead of the human resource curve.

Our job is to reach out to employers and to let them know that America's veterans have skills that can help any organization prosper and grow. An important part of this effort is to make sure that employers know what is required of them under USERRA, the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act.

With more than 90,000 Reservists and National Guard members now on active duty, we want to make sure all returning service members and their employers understand their USERRA rights and responsibilities.

That is why the VETS team at the Department of Labor has conducted more than 750 USERRA briefings and presentations to Guard and employer groups since September 11th. We have also developed on-line programs that answer your questions about USERRA and direct you to information that is easy to understand.

You can find them by clicking on “the USERRA Advisor” or the DOL VETS’ home page. One of the most prominently featured new items on the VETS home page is a guidance memorandum on the Family and Medical Leave Act. It will help returning Reservists and National Guard members and their employers understand their rights and obligations under this very important legislation.

I am also delighted to announce that VETS has just brought on line its E-Vets Internet portal. It puts hundreds of Web sites containing all sorts of information about benefits to veterans just one click away.

As more and more Reservists are called to active duty in the war against terrorism, effective outreach will be more important than ever. But we want to use every high-tech tool at our disposal to get the word out about the opportunities, protections and programs available to veterans and our citizen soldiers.

But, you know, sometimes there is no substitute for old-fashioned face-to-face conversations. That is why I recently met with the Executive Directors of all the major veterans’ service organizations. Your Executive Director, Bob Wallace, who is recognized in Washington as a true leader among veterans, was part of that group.

Now, that brings me to my last, and one of our most important, initiatives. You know, I have spoken today about many programs that involve the private sector in our efforts to serve vets. But there is even more I think we can do. The non-military sector of the federal government is a great source of good-paying, stable jobs. These jobs are particularly sought after in times of economic uncertainty. And to paraphrase the old Uncle Sam recruiting poster, “We Want You!”

I am a strong, strong supporter of veterans’ preference in federal hiring. I want the Department of Labor to be a model for other federal agencies when it comes to hiring veterans. We are going to make it happen. (Applause)

As you know, there are special hiring authorities to enable veterans to come on board quickly and easily. I have instructed my senior management team to use these tools to ensure that the Labor Department takes full advantage of this pool of skills professionals.

But I have also gone one step further. The Department of Labor has teamed up with the Office of Personnel Management to ramp up the Veterans Preference Program in all federal agencies. We have developed a PowerPoint presentation to disseminate to all federal hiring managers.

It explains two things: one, the pool of skilled talent that veterans provide and, two, what veterans preferences are and how to use them.

In the near future, my team at VETS will launch this program through the country using its regional representatives. With your continued support, I know that we can ensure that our nation's veterans take their place as leaders in the 21st century work force.

You are truly the backbone and strength of our country in times of war and tragedy. Now it is our turn to be there for all of you and all of those who bravely served during their transition from the military to civilian employment.

I think I speak for all Americans when I say this is not a responsibility but it is an honor. Thank you so much for inviting me here today. God bless you and God bless America.

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

SECRETARY OF LABOR CHAO: Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We have one more presentation and then we will close. I will make this announcement now that tomorrow morning we will start at 9:00 a.m. I don't want you here at 9:15 or 9:30, but 9:00 a.m. We are a little bit ahead of schedule. We have one presentation that we want to give here.

PRESENTATION BY COMRADE DONNA EVICK

COMRADE DONNA EVICK (Post 6554 - West Virginia): Commander Goldsmith and delegates to the 103rd National Convention, I believe every veteran has a soft spot in their hearts, and I have picked up a hobby, counter cross-stitching. Today I would like to present Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith with this counter cross-stitch map of Michigan which includes his home state and his city.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you very much, Donna. Thank you so very, very much.

William Moody, from the great state of Texas, will you come up and give our closing prayer.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Moody gave the closing prayer.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We will see everybody at the Patriotic Rally this afternoon and tomorrow at 9:00 o'clock a.m. We are in recess.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:05 o'clock a.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 28, 2002

(The Second Business Session of the 103rd National Convention of the

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Delta Ballroom of the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Officer of the Day, will you prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors and the Prayer.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms Barry Hoffman led the Convention in the Salute to the Colors, and the Pledge of Allegiance.)

(The Opening Prayer was given by National Chaplain William Moody.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Good morning. We have got a busy schedule this morning. We are going to have many people here that you are really going to be interested in. We are going to have Jan Scruggs, we are going to have the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders that are coming in to see us. We have Ike Skelton, we have Bob Dole. It will be a very busy morning. Bear with us and we will have to get some work out of the way first.

The first order of business will be the Report of the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions, with Chairman George Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief. George.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Good morning. Let me tell you, first of all, that we had a lot of Resolutions that we covered, so if you have a copy of all of the National Service Resolutions you may want to get them out with your pen and pencil so you can keep track of what we adopted and what we amended, or whatever.

If you don't, you might want to have a piece of paper, or whatever. I have some opening comments I would like to make, and that will give you time to do all of that.

Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith and delegates to the 103rd National Convention, I report that your Convention Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions convened at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, August 25, 2002. Your instructions were read, roll call taken, and preliminary matters were discussed.

The Committee was divided into three equal Subcommittees to carefully deliberate each of the 74 Resolutions that were assigned. The Subcommittees were established as follows:

Subcommittee I - Medical Programs and Veteran Benefits and Entitlements: the Committee was chaired by State Service Officer Dan

Crocker from Michigan and Vice-Chairman Kenneth Thie, Service Officer from Florida. Staff Advisors were Michael O'Rourke, Assistant Director of Veterans Health-Care Policy; Sid Daniels, Assistant Director of Veterans Benefit Policy; Fred Burns, VHA Field Representative; and Paul Hayden, Deputy Director of National Legislative Service.

Subcommittee II - Employment: This Committee was chaired by Donald Porter from Illinois. He works for the Department of Employment Security. The Vice-Chairman was Past Adjutant/Quartermaster and Council member Cleve Cox from North Carolina. Staff Advisors were Jim Magill, Director of Veterans Employment, and Tony Eiland, Special Assistant for Employment Service.

Subcommittee III was "Other Benefits". This Committee was chaired by State Service Officer Tom Hanson from Minnesota and Vice-Chairman State Service Officer Pat Teague from Idaho. Staff Advisors were John McNeill, Deputy Director of National Veterans Service, Larry Berman, Assistant Director of Field Operations, and National Veterans Service Renaee Allen, VHA Field Representative.

Before proceeding to the report, I wish to take a moment to express the Committee's appreciation to Bill Bradshaw, Director of National Veterans Service; Jim Magill, Director of Veterans Employment; and Dennis Cullinan, Director of National Legislative Service, for the valuable technical guidance which they and their staff provided to the Committee.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank my good friend, Past Commander-in-Chief Gunner Kent from Arizona for serving as Vice-Chairman of this very important Convention Committee, and to Bill Dozier, VHA Field Representative, National Veterans Service, who served as our Committee Secretary and coordinated the results of our deliberations.

I would like to tell you that Gunner is here, but he works for a gentleman by the name of Tony Principi, who is the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and they are in the anteroom back there. So Gunner is present but he is with his boss.

Are you ready? I will begin by reading the Committee's suggested recommendation for the Resolutions we think should be adopted. If I go too fast, I believe you will let me know about it. Are you ready?

Recommended for adoption, Resolutions 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 639, 640 and 641. We have a gap.

Next recommended for adoption is Resolution 659. I will say it again, Resolution 659. We have a little gap again. The next one is 668. I will say it again, 668. Then Resolution 669. We have a little gap again, and the next one is Resolution 673 and 674.

Resolution 674 is entitled Mandatory Funding for Veterans Health Care. The Be It Resolved clause reads as follows: "Be It Resolved, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge Congress to establish a statutory entitlement for veterans health care as a means to ensure veterans

receive the care they justly deserve, obviate the depleted excess as current primary methods of cost control and provide a basis for jurisdiction off those capital investments needed to streamline process for efficiency and improvements." Are you okay with that, or would you like me to read it again? You are okay with that. All right.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 103rd National Convention, I move the adoption of those Resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion. Is there a second?

COMRADE BILL BRADSHAW (Post 284 - District of Columbia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded to adopt the Resolutions that were just read. Any questions on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Not seeing anyone at the microphones, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. It carried and is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: I will now give you the Resolutions that were adopted, as amended.

Basically, there were some word changes. They are Resolutions recommended approved, as amended: Nos. 638, 642, 648, 653, 654, 658, 665, and lastly 666.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 103rd National Convention, I move for acceptance of the Resolutions read and be approved as amended.

COMRADE BILL BRADSHAW (Post 284 - District of Columbia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded to approve the just listed Resolutions as amended. Are there any questions on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Seeing nobody at the microphones, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried and it is so ordered.

At this time we would like to have a Report from the Credentials Committee, George. It will take just a second, and you can leave that stuff right here if you want.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Department of Illinois): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this will be a temporary report of the Credentials Committee as of 3:30 last night. Total delegates, 12,708; total Department Commanders, 51; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 26; total National Officers, 36. That is for a grand total of 12,821.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Elwood. We will now continue with the Report of the Veterans Service Committee.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS (Cont'd.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Resolutions that were rejected, sometimes we rejected them in favor of a different Resolution, because we thought the Resolutions we adopted gave us more parameters to operate with the Federal VA and the rest of the government.

Those Resolutions recommended for rejection: No. 643, we rejected in favor of Resolution 607, which you have already adopted.

Resolution 644, we rejected this Resolution in favor of several that we thought were more strengthening.

Resolutions 607, 610, 626 and 612, 645 and 646.

Resolution 647, we rejected in favor of Resolution No. 622.

Resolution 649, we rejected this in favor of Resolution 673.

Resolutions 650, 651, 652, 655, 656.

Resolution 657, we rejected this Resolution in favor of 607 and 642.

Resolution 660, we rejected this in favor of Resolution 607.

Resolution 661, we rejected this in favor of Resolution 602.

Resolution 662, we rejected in favor of Resolution 621.

We rejected Resolutions 663 and 664.

Resolution 667, we rejected this Resolution in favor of Resolutions 632 and 635.

Also Resolutions 670, 671 and 672. Those are the Resolutions that were rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Does anyone want any of those Resolutions set aside? Anyone want any of those Resolutions set aside?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RICHARD LaFAVE (Post 5670 - Michigan): Commander-in-Chief, I request No. 656 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Resolution 656 has been set aside. Any other Resolutions to be set aside? Hearing none and seeing nobody else at the microphones, those Resolutions have been rejected.

We will go to Resolution No. 656.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RICHARD LaFAVE (Post 5670 - Michigan): Last year —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Richard, you have got to make the motion to adopt.

COMRADE RICHARD LaFAVE (Post 5670 - Michigan): I make a motion to adopt Resolution 656.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is there a second to the motion? Is there a second to the motion? Is there a second to the motion? The motion dies for lack of support.

No. 656 is rejected. I would like to thank Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer and his chairman and vice-chairman for all the good work. Thank you, gentlemen. Let's give them a round of applause. That is a tough Committee. (Applause)

At this time we will see a George Jones video, so if we can have the lights down we will relax for a minute. Now, don't go to sleep.

(Whereupon, a video by George Jones was shown at this time.)

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S SPECIAL AWARD TO JAN SCRUGGS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Our next guest is well known to most of us. Jan Scruggs is the founder and President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. He conceived the idea of building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the most visited monument in Washington. More than 40 million people have visited the memorial since its dedication in 1982.

Scruggs is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War. He served with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade and was wounded in action. In May of 1979, Mr. Scruggs took \$2,800 of his own money and launched the effort to build the memorial. Working tirelessly, he eventually was able to garner national support for the project.

Serving as President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., the non-profit organization set up to build and maintain the memorial, Jan headed up the effort that raised \$8.4 million and saw the memorial completed in two years. It was dedicated on November 13, 1982, during a week long national salute to Vietnam veterans in the nation's capital.

His ongoing efforts are a great reflection of his love for his country and for all of those who served in Vietnam.

Please join me in giving a warm VFW welcome to Jan Scruggs. (Applause)

MR. JAN SCRUGGS: Thank you for your very kind introduction.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Commander-in-Chief is presenting an award that reads: "Commander-in-Chief's Special Award presented to Jan Scruggs in sincere appreciation of your continued leadership and dedication as founder and President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund August 28, 2002." This is signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, 2001-2002.

RESPONSE - COMRADE JAN SCRUGGS

MR. JAN SCRUGGS: Well, thank you. Once again, you know, Commander, it is certainly worth noting that the first veterans organization to give a donation to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to build it in Washington, D.C., was the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

So that is one reason, among many, that I join hundreds of thousands of people as a Life Member of the VFW. I believe it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to try to find more Life Members, because we have to keep our organization going for a lot of reasons.

One of those reasons is that the Veterans of Foreign Wars stands for patriotism, it stands for duty to country. It stands as well for educating

America's youth with the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a partner. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund sent curriculums, posters and books on history education to every high school and every middle school in the United States. That is over 40,000 schools received these packages.

It was a multi-million dollar project, and these are used on a daily basis in our schools. America's youth are not forgotten and they must not be forgotten by the Veterans of Foreign Wars for we and the Auxiliary must remain engaged in our schools, in America's schools.

Here is a video showing the VFW program that we are involved in. (Whereupon, the video was shown at this time.)

So, as we commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, I come to the Veterans of Foreign Wars today asking for your help. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, their former Presidents, educators and the public recognize the need for something very simple, just a small visitors' center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to be paid for privately, not by taxes, a visitors' center where young people can learn patriotism and sacrifice at the nation's most visited monument.

But for two years, one United States Senator has stopped legislation to allow this visitors' center to be built. One man alone, a man with five draft deferments, five draft deferments to avoid military service in Vietnam is stopping America's youth from learning patriotism at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. His name is Phil Graham from Texas.

Those who sponsor this bill includes Senator McCain, Senator Kerry, Senator Cleland, Senator Warner, a decorated Vietnam and World War II, Senator Hagel, over 65 Senators. but one person can stop this under the Senate Rules for Unanimous Consent.

The Senator has made it clear to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to the American Gold Star mothers that your calls to him are of no consequence. Don't waste your time, his staff has made it pretty clear. He is going to stop this bill, so he thinks.

Because there are two people in America, there are only two people who can make this bill a reality. One is Senator Tom Daschle, and you know what Tom Daschle says? He says we have got to do this. This is the right thing to do. And Senator Tom Daschle, God bless him. I met him 20 years ago and he doesn't owe me any favors. He says we are going to make this happen, but I need some help.

All we need now, there is only one man that can make this education, that is Senator Trent Lott from Mississippi. He must agree. Senator Lott needs to be persuaded by calls from the Veterans of Foreign Wars that he will get this bill passed.

All he needs to do is get it on the floor and we will let Senator Graham make his arguments, and that is fine. There are a lot of us that really believe in ideals like duty, honor and country. We really believe that these are not old-fashioned concepts. We really believe these are not old-fashioned words.

We really believe that those who would try to deny America's youth an opportunity to learn patriotism and sacrifice at the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial are an embarrassment. We, at the VFW, have earned respect for doing our duty during time of war and just as the VFW has earned respect for standing up for veterans during a time of peace, so, too, we must stand up for America's youth.

Please call Senator Trent Lott today. My staff is here with further information on this, or you can stop by our booth. You can thank him for his support. He is a great patriot and he is a co-sponsor of the bill. All we need for him to do is to work and bring this in front of the United States Senate for a quick debate.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the VFW, and God bless each and every one of you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Jan, for all you have done. Let me say this, if I may. Over the last few years, I have been asked by many of our youth, and I remember a young lad in California, a Voice of Democracy district winner.

When I was going to lay a wreath at the VFW Memorial in Sacramento, he said to me, "Mr. Goldsmith, what did we do wrong in Vietnam?" That was a very good question, was it not?

Just recently I visited Australia and their Defense Minister made comments two days before we got there that maybe Australia should not have participated in the war.

Once again, as soon as I was on TV or the press, they asked me about that. Let me tell you what I told young David. I said, "David, the young men and women who fought in that war didn't make any mistakes. Maybe the politicians made the mistakes, but we damn sure didn't make any mistakes." (Applause)

That is what I told the Australian press. They seemed very satisfied with it. I have recognized the Korean veterans this week, I have recognized the World War II veterans this week. I want all of my era, Vietnam veterans, to stand and be recognized right now. (Applause)

I wish you guys were all up here where I am, because the next time the press tells you that the Vietnam veteran does not join the VFW, you tell them they are full of crap, because I am telling you what, there are two-thirds of you out there that are Vietnam veterans. (Applause)

Jan, here is a small token of my appreciation. Thank you for all that you do.

INTRODUCTION OF HONORABLE EDWARD A. POWELL, JR.,
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The United Service Organization, better known as the USO, has been a part of American military life since 1941. From home point to battlefield and many places in between, it has brought entertainment and a host of other services to the men and women who guard America's freedom.

Today, the USO plays an even more critical role in ensuring that our servicemen and women know how much every American appreciates and

supports them.

We are indeed fortunate to have with us today the President and Chief Executive Officer of the USO, with a long history of dedicated service himself, the Honorable Edward A. Powell, Jr.

A Navy veteran, Edward Powell, Jr., was nominated by former President Clinton to serve as Assistant Secretary for Financial Management, and then was promoted to Deputy Secretary for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Managing an annual budget of \$48 billion and 220 VA employees, VA received its first-ever clean audit opinion. That is amazing.

He was recognized for his skilled leadership by receiving VA's Exceptional Service Award and was named Distinguished Federal Executive for the year 2000 by the Association of Government Accountants.

A former business owner and manager, he is a former Adjunct Professor of Business Ethics and Policy at the University of Richmond, School of Business.

The success of the USO, just as that of the VFW, relies on the dedication of a large number of volunteers to operate 118 centers, including five mobile canteens around the world. In the USO, 12,000 volunteers donate 450,000 hours of their time to serve over five million servicemen and women annually.

Please welcome the man who commands the huge force of volunteers in bringing a "touch of home" to troops around the world. Let us give a good VFW warm welcome to the Honorable Edward A. Powell, Jr. (Applause)

REMARKS - THE HONORABLE EDWARD A. POWELL

MR. EDWARD POWELL: Thank you, Jim. Also, in case you were not aware, John Senk sits on our Board of Governors. We have a long association with you. I am really here to do a couple of things. One, I want to say thank you. We couldn't do it without your help.

Did some of you see the show last night? Was that any good? Did you have a good time with that? (Applause) I have got to tell you this is the toughest job in the world. I have to travel with them and Bo Derrick and the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. Well, somebody has to do it. What can I say?

Actually, I want to check and just see, it is early and it is hard to tell, but you are going to laugh at me, but I am going to ask you the question: how many people in this room are veterans? How many of you have been overseas? How many of you have been to a USO show?

I just got back from Korea and Germany in the last month. What we do is just as relevant today, in some cases more so, than it has ever been. To see the faces on the young soldiers, airmen when our entertainers arrive, and to give you some idea of how amazing it is to me even when I arrive.

They didn't have a clue who I was, but the fact there was somebody from here who had gone there to say we appreciate what you are doing, we value what you are doing, and we want you to understand that we love you very much. You talked about Vietnam a little bit this morning.

One of the problems with Vietnam, I might add, there is a wonderful book written by Harry Summers (?), and it is called "On Strategy" if you have not seen it. It is a wonderful analysis of that period. One of his points was the politicians took over the military. They forgot that the military belongs to the American people. (Applause)

There is no organization out there today that is as in touch with our men and women in uniform as we are at the USO to make sure that they know that the American people have not lost touch with them. Your support is critical to us to do that and we are very appreciative of that.

I also wanted to thank Ron Browning for his leadership internally. It has been very important to us. Actually, there is another question I want to ask. We have a video called "Soldiers in Grease Paint." When you leave this morning, there are nine USO fact sheets stuck under your chairs.

Now, I don't know where they are. But before you leave, feel under your chair and see if you have one. If you have the fact sheet, you can take it downstairs to our booth in the Exhibition Hall and we will give you one of the videos. Again, it is very important — I figured I would lose you with that one. I did. Free stuff is always good. What can I say? (Laughter)

It is always good when you get to a low point in your speech you can kind of do something else to distract you. Seriously, folks, I do want to thank you very much for all of your help. It is important to us. What you are going to see, coming up with the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, and what you saw last night in our show, we couldn't do any of that without your help.

We couldn't take these young people to the field to entertain, to touch, and I don't mean to overstate that. You cannot imagine the dedication of these young women and the talent that is going with us and the impact that it has. They will sit at the autograph table for hours, and you need to watch these kids' faces light up.

I have got to tell you it seems bizarre. I mean, we had Ozzy. Does everybody know who Ozzy is? Ozzy showed up in Japan and said, "I am here. Can I go entertain the troops?" We looked around and said, "Ozzy?" I have got a little old for whatever he did.

Yes, he went to Korea, he was a great hit. Ozzy went there because he heard they were playing his music at the Ground Zero site and he was not convinced that this was real. So he went there. In fact, they were playing his music as the work crews were cleaning up, and they gave him a rebar crucifix from the site.

He was so moved, according to what his wife has told me and he reiterated, that he felt he had to give something back. So he went to Korea on his own with our sponsorship, and even returned to us the stipend we would normally send him for expenses. He said, "Use this for what you are doing."

So the impact is real. Our mission is real, and you are an integral part to us. We appreciate the partnership. Our goal in the future is to make sure the legacy that you enjoyed, whether it be in World War II, Korea or Vietnam — we did 700 shows in Vietnam, by the way — is not lost for this

generation of soldiers and airmen and sailors.

Thank you so very much for all you do for us. You have my absolute commitment that we will maintain the integrity of this organization and we will continue the good work. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Ed, you have a heck of a crew. When I was over in Korea, this young gal said, "Mr. Goldsmith, we have got troubles." I said, "What are your troubles?" She said, "We have a freezer that doesn't work, we have a refrigerator that doesn't work, and we have a computer that doesn't work."

Apparently, nothing was working. When that young lady got done with me, she had her new freezer, she had her new refrigerator and she had her new computer. That is what you did there as an organization. We ought to see more of it. To you, I thank you for what you do constantly for the military men and women. You are a great American.

MR. JAN SCRUGGS: Thank you sir. I appreciate it very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD TO THE DALLAS COWBOYS CHEERLEADERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We ought to leave this group until last, and I guarantee you nobody would leave the room. The Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders are known the world over for their dazzling beauty and their dance routines during the Dallas Cowboys football games.

What isn't known quite as well is that for more than 20 years the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders have actively traveled the globe, touring with the USO, visiting with and entertaining American service personnel. They often travel overseas during the winter holidays, away from their own friends and families, in order to bring a "touch of home" to troops stationed far from home.

The cheerleaders have participated in 42 tours since 1989 and have been honored numerous times for their commitment to the men and women serving in uniform.

Today, we are pleased to add to their list of honors. Today, we recognize the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders for their tremendous goodness of heart and spirit. Please welcome the recipients of the 2002 VFW Hall of Fame Award, the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Is there anybody out there that envies the Commander-in-Chief? The Certificate reads, "Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of over two decades of service to American fighting men and women through their cooperation with the USO to 'Deliver America' to troops stationed around the globe. The sincere compassion, caring and Texas-size spirit they brought to distant lands provided comfort, relief and a touch of home to all United States service personnel, thus earning them the title of 'Official

Cheerleaders of America's Veterans'.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2002." Approved by the National Council of Administration. This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It gives me great pleasure to present this honorarium to the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, an honorarium of \$5,000.

RESPONSE - MS. KELLI FINGLASS

MS. KELLI FINGLASS: Thank you. First, I would like to introduce those from our organization. My name is Kelli Finglass. I am the Director of the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. We have four of our group leaders. These are our commanders, if you will, of our troops back in Dallas.

These ladies are in charge of our football field when we are performing and dancing. They call the routines, they call audibles in football terms, and we are very proud of them. I would like to introduce Kelli Kerchoff, Rhonda Musgroves (?), Julie Mouliss (?) and Shannon Goldbeth (?).

I had a wonderful speech typed out and written, and ready for you-all this morning, and my computer crashed. I would just like to speak to you for a moment from the heart, because that is all I have here with me this morning. I am actually kind of glad I made it this morning.

Has anybody in this hotel figured out how to set their alarm clock? I tried to set Alarm 1, Alarm 2, back to Alarm 1, back to Alarm 2, and then I thought forget the alarm clock, I am going to leave a wake-up call. Has anybody figured out how the phone system in this hotel works? What a monster.

We are proud, very, very proud to be here. We were talking about it on the plane ride over here. We have performed in front of thousands of troops overseas, but there is something even more nostalgic to meet you gentlemen. We are truly honored to be in this room today with such Americans. I am speechless. So, we thank you, first of all, for just having us here this morning.

Twenty-five years ago our tours, for those that may not know how this whole marriage began, the Dallas Cowboys received a letter from the Department of Defense. It was addressed to Tex Schramm, who was our General Manager at the time, and the Department of Defense wanted NFL football players to travel to Korea to visit the troops stationed there during Christmas time.

Tex, on a little handwritten note for his secretary to respond to, said, "The players can't come, they are in football season, but how about the cheerleaders?" We were in our seventh year at that time, a very primitive part of our history.

We had cheerleaders and it was kind of catching on, this thing in Dallas, this kind of new and glamorous. So, we sent 12 cheerleaders to

Korea in 1979. Basically, the rest is history. It was such a success and such a marriage, such an honor for our cheerleaders, and obviously, the troops enjoyed the entertainment and they enjoyed the visits.

So, we have now done 47 tours all over the world, from Israel, Egypt, Panama, Honduras, Korea, Italy. (Applause)

We have been to just about every base and every installation that America has, and we are proud of that. We commit to you that we will continue to serve in our own special way if continued to be invited.

We do appreciate the invitations. What these tours mean to our organization is what I would like to leave you with this morning. We are celebrating our 30th anniversary this year. We will have about 300 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders join, and like you, we love seeing each other and we tell our old war stories, and we enjoy telling the fun antidotes of a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader.

But I can promise you the stories that prevail, the stories that mean something, it is not the glamour, it is not the glitz, it is not even the Super Bowl rings. I personally have three Super Bowl rings. I am proud of them. There are football players who would kill to have Super Bowl rings. But they don't mean what my unit means to me that I have received through the years from your family.

I mean that sincerely. This is a very wonderful part of our history. Our former cheerleaders, I personally can remember being in Turkey and I met a 19-year-old soldier on a base that was called the Rock. I have forgotten the proper name of it, but they called it the Rock.

We were in the Mess Hall having lunch. He pulled out his wallet and showed me a picture of his brand new baby, and he had never even met his new baby. He was away from his wife when the baby was delivered. That is just a small sampling of the sacrifices we have been able to see firsthand what you gentlemen have sacrificed and done for us and our country.

That story didn't mean so much to me when I was 19 years old in Turkey, but it sure means something to me now that I am a mother of two. I would just like, on behalf of all the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, former, who are now mothers and proud Americans, our current cheerleaders who are representing 33 ladies back in Dallas, and our future cheerleaders, how proud we are to get to serve our country.

We thank the USO for inviting us and allowing us way back in 1979 to entertain our troops. We thank the VFW for supporting the USO. We have been on many tours where VFW members have joined us and have helped sponsor the tours. We appreciate that.

But most of all, from the Dallas Cowboys organization, the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders and from fellow Americans, we acknowledge what you gentlemen have done. This room is just filled with heroes, and I again don't know what to say except to thank you for protecting our freedom and the freedom of our families and our children. We are honored to be here and we appreciate what you gentlemen have done, and your families, on our behalf. Thank you. (Applause)

We also in turn would like to give our donation to the USO so they can continue to deliver America to America's finest. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: There are some around this country, especially in Texas, that say the Dallas Cowboys are America's team. We can debate that all day, but I know one thing, the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders are America's veterans dream team and we thank you for doing that. (Applause) Eat your hearts out. (Laughter) Thank you so much. Let me say this, too, and I should have said this when Ed was up here. The CEO of the USO, this organization, I am sure under Ed's leadership, we look forward with keeping our co-sponsorship up with the USO, and we are going to be a big part of your life as you go on. Thank you for coming in, and let's give them a big round of applause. (Applause) I will tell you this job has got perks in it sometimes. (Laughter)

MR. JAN SCRUGGS: Thank you again. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE POST SERVICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO LELAND EDWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: This year we are pleased to present the National Veterans' Service Post Service Officer of the Year Award to a man who has dedicated himself to serving America's veterans and their families. This award is presented annually to the Post Service Officer who demonstrates exceptional efforts in assisting veterans and their dependents.

With a nationwide link of Post Service Officers at the more than 9,000 VFW Posts nationwide and overseas, the Post Service Officer is an important resource and vital link between the veteran, the Department Service Officer and the Department of Veterans Affairs. To be effective, a service officer must be knowledgeable, caring and, above all, compassionate.

Mr. Leland "Lee" Edwards of VFW Post 6330 in Jonesboro, Georgia, has been selected in this year's competition as the VFW Outstanding Post Service Officer of the Year.

Through Lee's outstanding dedication and devotion as a Post Service Officer, he has become known as the "Veteran's Veteran" whose efforts are in keeping with the VFW's motto:

"Honor the Dead by Helping the Living."

Please give a warm VFW thanks and welcome to our VFW Post Service Officer of the Year Award recipient, Leland "Lee" Edwards. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation presented reads: "VFW Post Service Officer of the Year Award, 2001-2002, presented to Leland 'Lee' Edwards, VFW Post 6330, in special recognition of your exemplary achievements in support of the veterans service mission and programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as the Post Service Officer of the Year.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2002." This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-

in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE - MR. LELAND EDWARDS

COMRADE LELAND EDWARDS (Post 6330 - Georgia): This is overwhelming to say the least. I didn't start doing this to receive awards. I do it because I love people and I want to dedicate the rest of my life to doing just this, and I hope the good Lord will give me the strength that I might carry on. (Applause)

I know as long as I am doing what I am doing I am serving my Lord also. But I love the VFW and I love the State of Georgia, and the people I have worked with over the years there have encouraged me, and the lessons I have been taught at the Service Officers Schools and my reading I have been able to accomplish some things.

The work is just starting. I hope the day that I leave this earth that all someone says to me is, "Lee Edwards loves his fellow man." Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW AMERICANISM AWARD TO UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE IKE SKELTON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: United States Representative Ike Skelton has distinguished himself while in Congress by his strong support for veterans, and is known for his staunch support of the military and a strong national defense policy. Representative Skelton has represented Missouri's Fourth Congressional District since 1977.

A native of Lexington, Missouri, he is a graduate of Wentworth Military Academy and the University of Missouri at Columbia. Prior to his election to Congress, Representative Skelton served as a County Prosecuting Attorney and as a Missouri Senator.

A leader in the House on defense issues, Skelton is the Ranking Minority Member on the House Armed Services Committee. He is also a member of the Subcommittee on Military Procurement. His Congressional District is home to two military installations, Fort Leonardwood and Whiteman Air Force Base. Representative Skelton was instrumental in bringing the Army Engineer School to Fort Leonardwood and the B-2 Stealth Bomber to Whiteman.

Skelton is an Eagle Scout, a member of Sigma Chi Social Fraternity, a Lions Club member, and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation. Representative Skelton is an Elder of the First Christian Church in Lexington. He and his wife, Susie, have three sons.

Because of his undaunting support and tireless work on behalf of our nation, we are honoring him this morning with the VFW Americanism Award.

Please welcome United States Representative from Missouri's Fourth Congressional District, Ike Skelton. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation reads, "Americanism Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Ike Skelton in recognition of 25 years of exemplary service in the United States Congress as a Representative of Missouri's Fourth District. His duties as Ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee and as a member of the Subcommittee on Military Procurement has presented him the opportunity to make critical decisions affecting America's veterans. The stalwart support of our nation's military earns him the admiration and respect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 28th day of August, 2002. Approved by the National Council of Administration." This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Along with this goes an honorarium of \$5,000.

RESPONSE - THE HONORABLE IKE SKELTON

CONGRESSMAN SKELTON: Words are very difficult in a moment like this. There are many moments in a person's life that emblazoned themselves in one's memory, and it is an added thrill for me to be able to say that my wife, Susie, is with me, our son, Page, and daughter-in-law Carolyn. Please stand up, won't you, please. (Applause)

I am deeply grateful for this honor, for this moment, for this award. It also carries with it a deeper sense of appreciation, because of two other members of my family, my father serving on the U.S.S. Missouri during the First World War as a coal shoveler fireman and a Life Member of the VFW; our Army older son, who serves with the First Cavalry Division in combat up the Wanyo Bateene (?) as a Colt Team Leader of the First Cavalry Division during the Persian Gulf War.

If there is an abiding theme for the VFW, I am convinced it is the theme of duty. Each of you understands full well the meaning of that short word. It was General MacArthur who, on May 12, 1962, brought to the attention to our nation the West Point motto in his farewell speech at that great school on the Hudson when he spoke about duty, honor and country.

George Patton said, "If I do my full duty, the rest will take care of itself." Article I, Section 1 of the Constitution of the United States imposes the duty on the Congress regarding the military of our country, that we should raise and maintain and write the rules and regulations therefor.

That is a job I take seriously and that is a job I do, and have done on the Armed Services Committee. I guess that is why just doing my duties, as I see it, you are kind enough to give me this award. In thinking back over the days that I was a youngster during the Second World War, thinking back during those very trying days and the difficult conflicts that America has had since, the American forces in uniform have done their duty immensely well.

What if you or your colleagues had not done your duty at Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Normandy Beach Head, Bastogne, this country would be a different country, this world would be a different world. Thanks to you and your comrades who understood the import and the necessity of duty to your country, we are the free nation that we now have. (Applause)

As I see it, I have occasion to visit our young people in uniform, whether they be aboard ship or at air bases and Army Posts literally around the world. I can tell you you would be very, very proud of them. They are the finest and they are following in your footsteps, and they understand the duty that is imposed upon them by the positions that they hold.

So I want to thank you for this award and for the opportunity to be in the presence of all of you who have done your duty so well for our country. I am proud of you and I am proud to be here. It was Harry Truman, the President from Missouri, who liked to tell about the grave marker in Tombstone, Arizona.

He would say that this marker had pluralized (?) Jack Williams "He Done His Darndest." So in that vein, I pledge to you my continued efforts to merit your confidence, your good thoughts in this award by doing my damndest for those that are in today's uniforms. God bless.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Let's give another round of applause to Congressman Ike Skelton. (Applause) I will tell you what we were talking about, he was talking about the honorarium. He is not going to keep it. He is going to donate it, and he wants to talk to us about where he wants to donate it. That is the kind of individual he is. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI, SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We are pleased to have with us this morning the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony J. Principi. Appointed by President Bush and confirmed as the nation's fourth Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Principi brings to this key cabinet post a wealth of experience as a veterans' advocate.

A naval veteran of the Vietnam War, Mr. Principi served as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs from 1989 to 1992. He was named Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs by then President George Bush and served until 1993. He served as Chief Counsel and Staff Director to the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs from 1984 to 1988.

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

A strong veterans' advocate, he oversees the nation's largest health-care

system, a system with an annual budget of \$48 billion and a work force of some 240,000 people at hundreds of medical centers, clinics and national cemeteries. Please give a warm welcome to a Veterans of Foreign Wars Life Member and Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Anthony Principi. (Applause)

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE ANTHONY PRINCIPI,
SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VA SECRETARY PRINCIPI: Thank you very much. Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, Commander-Elect Sisk, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Banas, National Convention Chairman Cooper T. Holt, Distinguished Officers and Fellow Members of the VFW, Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning. Thank you, Jim, for your kind introduction. It is going to be a tough act to follow after the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. I sat about a foot behind them and the perfume is still in my bloodstream. If I quiver and shake, you know I am an all-American boy.

Jim, thank you so much for your great leadership this past year. Your valued advice and counsel has helped me guide the VA and my Department, as most importantly, the veterans and their families we have the privilege to serve are better for your advice and counsel. Congratulations to my fellow Californian, Ray Sisk, soon to lead this great organization and, of course, Ed Banas, who will soon become the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Before I begin, let me say just a few words of tribute to my predecessor, Jesse Brown, who passed away just a short time ago. Jesse Brown was the veteran's veteran. He was a leader of tremendous foresight and vision. He was a tireless crusader for the rights of all veterans and a man of enormous physical and moral courage. American veterans have lost a great leader and an outstanding comrade. I have lost a good friend. God bless the soul of Jesse Brown.

It is a great privilege to address my fellow members of the VFW and a pleasure to be in Nashville, a city well-renowned for its patriotism and respect for the men and women who have defended our nation in war and peace. Lee Greenwood's "God Bless America" to Charlie Daniels' "Last Fallen Hero", country music praises America and America's veterans.

The 2.7 million men and women of the VFW and the Auxiliary know full well the meaning of the sacrifice and service. You have taken up America's battle without question. You have made so many sacrifices so your children and their children's children will always live in freedom in the greatest nation on earth.

Your service to country did not end when you retired your uniforms. The VFW's many community services and your unflagging support for the men and women who stand the watch here at home and on distant shores, democracy's beacon glows bright, never dimming, no matter how strong

the winds of tyranny and terror blow against her internal flame.

As many of you know, I am the proud father of two active duty Air Force officers stationed overseas, and one soon to be a Marine. I don't know how that happened, having graduated from the Naval Academy. I set those boys on navy blue and gold and look what happened.

Like any parent of children deployed overseas will tell you, I can say that staying in touch with them is so important. That is why I have said it before and I will say it again, VFW's Operation Uplink is such a wonderful program. Thank you.

The VFW should be very proud of your part in keeping the long distance lines of communication open for your deployed forces and the people they love. Thank you for your military assistance program, to fill the critical message needs of military personnel and families with compassion, action and resources.

Thank you for being a tireless advocate and participant in the veterans' history project, to record for all history the incredible stories of the men and women who have served in uniform and have fought our country's battles. Thank you for your being such a strong supporter of my dream to create a veterans' museum in Washington, a museum that will pay tribute to the sacrifices and accomplishments of 48 million of our fellow citizens from the earliest days of the republic.

Thank you for your enormous contribution to the Golden Age Games. This year's games were the greatest ever. I had the privilege of being there with Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Sisk. We could not have done it without you. Thank you for your support of the Golden Age Games and our senior citizens have one final thank you for everything you do for our country, through your extraordinary gifts of love to the American people.

If I have been able to accomplish anything in my life, I am most proud of three things. I am proud to be a citizen of the greatest nation on this earth. I am proud to be a combat veteran, and I am proud to be a Life Member of the VFW.

This past May I had the privilege of accompanying our President to Europe, to Normandy, to commemorate in a place where so many Americans consecrated hard work on soil with their lives. I had an opportunity to stand alone on Omaha Beach where 58 years ago our nation's best young men faced the ultimate challenge knowing full well their lives were expendable.

The cliffs facing the Omaha beach head very daunting to me standing there on a calm spring morning in 2002. I can only imagine what they must have looked like to young 17 and 18 and 19-year-olds loaded down with gear and facing withering fire from the entrenched enemies.

Many of them had never seen combat before. You know, our boys did not cut and run, they did not shirk from their duty. They did not allow fear to overwhelm them. With one objective in mind, they proceeded to take those daunting cliffs.

With one goal squarely before them, they faced their challenges and

overcame them, and the value of freedom we enjoy today is measured in the price they paid that morning to save our world. The true medal of those who love liberty more than life is tested in such moment, and not one American was found wanting of courage, determination and sacrifice that day on Omaha and Utah Beaches.

At the top of those cliffs are over 9,000 touching white marble crosses and Stars of David, eloquent testimony, humbling testimony to the price they paid on that beach and their journey to Berlin. In World War II, as America struggles, heroes in uniform emerge from us to inspire Americans on to victory.

They remind us that the righteousness of our destiny overarches the anguish of our losses. it is a great privilege to lead the VA in the spirit of men and women of our armed forces who took on extraordinary challenges with no thought of giving in to the hardships that they faced.

The citizen's soldiers who stood the lonely watches on freedom's ramp parts or who took up the sword of liberty and selflessly placed themselves in harm's way are today's veterans. They are you and they are the 25 million living veterans who earned the right to be honored and respected by the VA doctors, nurses, VA professionals in regional offices, our National Cemetery team, and those of us in Washington, D.C. (Applause)

The VA is to properly redeem America's debt to you and your comrades. We must faithfully arm the challenge of providing the best care and service under very demanding conditions. I don't want to be too dramatic and attempt to equate the challenges facing my Department with the challenges facing those young American ranges that point to hawk, but there is a similarity, inasmuch as VA also has a tough climb in front of us, and our climb is only a beginning. There will be much more we will have to do once we have successfully achieved our initial goals.

We must first fix a sound base of operations, a rallying point for the next push. In June, 1994, it wasn't enough just to spike the guns above the beach. The entire beach had to be secured before the final assault on Berlin could get underway.

So it is with our efforts in 2002 to achieve victory over disability claims backlogs and the time it takes VA to process claims. We must make a good beginning and sustain our effort in the long run. Administrator Dan Cooper, VA's Under Secretary of Benefits, has his team working with intensity and focus to reduce the backlog.

I am pleased to report that Dan and his team have created a base of operations that will sustain us the rest of our mission. As I look at reports from the front where we are advancing, and I look at them every month, I can tell you we have made serious forward progress in reducing our disability compensation and pension workloads.

By virtually any measure, the trends in rating decisions are all up. We are taking more and more ground to get the size of the claims backlog and we are cutting down the time it takes to process claims as well. The inventory of pending rating related actions, decisions regarding the origins

of severity, or severity of a veteran's disability claim is showing a marked decline and a continuing downward trend.

Now, this year we began with a total number of pending ratings peaking at 432,000. By March, we had taken down the number to 400,000. By August 1st, that number had fallen to 370,000. These decreases in our backlog are occurring as we receive on an average 60,000 new claims each and every month.

Our claims processing times are also declining, moving in the right direction with every passing day. From March to August 1st, we reduced processing times from a peak of 233 days to 224 days. A nine-day improvement doesn't sound like much.

However, I ask you to keep in mind that the timeliness in the claims processing is marked there the day a claim is received to the day the decision is made. If you don't decide a claim from an elderly veteran and just let it sit there year after year, it doesn't count against your time limits.

The VA's averaging process times still reflect my priority on deciding our oldest claims first, claims that have been languishing for over a year. So the measure of nine days lags our true progress which is considerable. Once we have cleared up that log of cases we had on hand for long periods of time, we expect to show much more rapid improvement in my goal of never taking more than 100 days to decide a claim, your claim for disability comp, pension or debt gratuity. (Applause)

Last year, I was so concerned about the number of our veterans and their afternoons of their life, claims that had been sitting for over a year. I decided to initiate a Tiger Team, a Tiger Team being an old military term, very mission-focused, to resolve the claims of our oldest veterans.

I am proud that they, too, are making remarkable progress in this effort. I thank the VFW National Service Officers in Cleveland and the other locations around the country working with the Tiger Team in helping us get those claims decided.

My goal for the Tiger Team was that they should decide at least 113 claims a month for people over the year of 70 who had been waiting over a year for their claim. I am proud that the team that has been in existence now for seven or eight months have exceeded that 1,300 claim per month rate. We will continue to do better.

There is nothing more gratifying to me than getting a letter from a very elderly veteran to tell me thank you, thank you, thank you for what the Tiger Team has done because now I will not have to be a burden to my children. That is what the VA should be all about.

So every briefing I see the flood of numbers receding from their high water marks and the thread gets better with every passing day. But our legacy is not yet secure. We have got a long way to go. If we have taken the cliffs along some of the coastlines, we are still making a way up other cliffs that keep us from proceeding to our final goal.

I promise you that I will stay the course, with strong leadership focused, disciplined, and we will be held accountable to you for our

progress. (Applause) Benefits are only one of the fronts upon which veterans look to the VA for progress.

The veterans health administration is experiencing its own daunting ascent up the very slippery cliffs of service. Along the health-care front we are facing an almost vertical challenge of demands for care of the veterans who are coming to the VA in record numbers, numbers like we have never seen before.

I think they are coming to us for many, many reasons. I think in part we are the victims of our own success. Our system has become renowned not only for the quality of our care, but also the care that produces our quality. Our system has worked hard to ensure that the system is designed with patients' needs and our patients' safety in mind.

Open enrollment, making 25 million veterans eligible for VA care, the increase of the elderly population of veterans with access to comprehensive care, combined with some 850 outpatient clinics, which years ago did not exist across the entire United States, adds to the demand for VA medical care.

To give you an idea, from 1994 to 2001, while the number of hospital beds declined somewhat, we increased the number of veterans that were treated from three million to over four million. We increased the number of annual outpatient visits from 26 million to a staggering 43 million.

We cannot look on these numbers, however, without also being extremely concerned about the effect on the quality of our care without adequate resources and on our ability to succeed in our core mission, our core mission to care for disabled veterans, veterans who have no place else to turn and, of course, veterans who need our specialized programs, spinal cord injuries, blind rehabilitation, mental health, extended prescription drug program, which I think is a premier model for Congress to look at in designing a Medicare program for prescription benefits, experienced a stunning explosion in popularity of the past six years. As a result, our pharmacy bill has grown from \$750 million a year to over \$4 billion a year today, and it is growing at an unprecedented rate.

Since 1998, the number of Category 7 veterans, who have come to us for care, has increased as well. It has increased more than 500 percent. The number has gone from 200,000 in 1996 to over 1 million today, and at current rates the Category 7 veterans will comprise about 45 percent of our workload by the end of this decade.

Without a dramatic increase in spending authority by the Congress, or the ability to manage our workload responsibly, we will be left with a recipe for failure. I want to give you one vivid example. I was so concerned about what I was hearing veterans having to wait long periods of time in our outpatient clinics, I asked one of my assistant secretaries to make unannounced visits to outpatient clinics to try to enroll and get care.

The assistant secretary I selected is a 100-percent combat disabled veteran, having fought at the Battle of Idrang (?) in Vietnam, and had a bullet to his spine. He has been in a wheelchair for 32 years. He rolled himself

into the outpatient clinic unannounced and asked to enroll.

He told them that he was a combat disabled veteran. In six of those eight clinics, they turned him away and said they were over-subscribed, and in one clinic they told him to drive almost 100 miles to a medical center to get his care, and one clerk told him, "Sir, you have to understand that all veterans are created equal."

Ladies and gentlemen, this is unacceptable and this is unconscionable. Service-connected disabled veterans is the very reason the VA exists. Our focus must be on them and their needs, and all veterans, but certainly the service-connected disabled veterans.

I continue to send him out unannounced until I am convinced that is not happening again. But I am going to take another step. I have proposed a priority by regulation, a priority for scheduling treatment for veterans who are 50 percent or more service connected, for any condition, and for veterans who need care for their service-connected conditions, their disabilities.

They will receive a priority schedule as soon as we implement the regulation. (Applause) I simply don't want to see veterans who are seeking appointments in other health-care services spin to the side of the cliff and replacing a field of fire of increasing demand from below and limited resources from above with no relief in sight.

Veterans waiting weeks or months or years for an appointment are not impressed by praises from the Institute of Medicine about the quality of our care, or meeting counts of other improvements in service. If they can't get in to see a doctor, the type of service they face appears unclimbable (?). We need to do better.

Although we are devoting a considerable amount of time to solving this problem, we are also looking for other methods to improve the care we provide. Two years ago, the President promised veterans that he would convene a veterans health-care task force to focus on initiatives to improve health care for American veterans.

He kept his promise and under the able leadership of Dr. Gill Wywanski, and a great veterans' advocate, a former Congressman from Arkansas, John Paul Hammerschmidt (?), and having members like Bob Wallace on that Commission, I am confident that we will find ways to enhance care for veterans.

They are considering things such as Medicare subvention, entitlement for VA health care, and also how we can break down the barriers between the VA and the Department of Defense. I am convinced that if we can break down the barriers between VA and DOD, we can save hundreds of millions of dollars which can be used to expend a reach of health care to veterans who currently are not receiving it. (Applause)

I would like to say a word about the VA budget. I know you are concerned about the fact that the President did not release \$275 million in Congress authorized supplemental funding for this fiscal year. But I would like to explain to you the circumstances of this decision.

In the early spring, at my request, the President graciously requested a

\$142 million supplemental appropriation for VA health care to help us bring down the backlog of waiting times. Congress generously added another \$275 million to that appropriation.

As things sometimes happen in Congress, our request for \$142 million and this other \$275 million sat there month after month after month. We could not hire the doctors and the nurses and expect our clinic fees, so we could get more patients in our outpatient clinics.

The \$142 million was finally released to us, signed by the President a short few weeks ago. Now, the \$275 million that was part of that \$142 million was tied to a \$5.1 billion supplement, and Congress told the President spend it all or leave it all.

You can't give the \$275 million to the VA unless you spend the balance of the \$4.8 billion that he had never requested. So the President decided it would not be fiscally prudent to spend \$5.1 billion and, of course, our \$275 million that had these long strings attached sat there.

I felt you needed to know the circumstances surrounding that, but I can assure you that the \$142 million has now, in fact, been distributed to the field, and those \$142 million are going to be used to expand our clinic space. VA challenges are not limited to health care or benefits.

Our National Cemetery system faces its own set of challenges as well. Maintaining our National Cemeteries as national shrines, improving our properties, opening up new cemeteries is very, very important as our veterans age and pass from us.

We are working hard to open up five new National Cemeteries over the next three or four years so that we can increase our interment place in parts of the country where they are desperately needed. VA and the VFW share the belief in the sanctity of our veterans' sacrifices.

Since 1898, the VFW has never wavered in its personal or professional support of the men and women who have borne the battle or stood the long and dangerous watch. Fifty years ago a distinguished American statesman, Adlai Stevenson, spoke about patriotism, the ideal that binds the American citizen soldier to the fabric of liberty.

He said, "Men and women who have offered their lives for their country know that patriotism is not the fear of something, it is the love of something. Patriotism with us is not the hatred of another country. It is the love of this republic and of the ideal of liberty of man in which it was born and to which this run is dedicated."

Today, the VFW is still faithful to the causes and the traditions our founding fathers set out for us. Together the VA and the VFW have made certain those to whom our veterans risk their lives do not forget the cause of America's veteran and through our love for our fellow veterans we are giving these patriots the rewards for their service they have earned, hope to secure compassionate care, and reason to hope true devotion of a grateful nation.

There is work to be done today to ensure that our veterans do receive the benefits they are entitled, and they have always been entitled to. Your collective voice must be heard in Washington and in every community of

this country. With the VFW's help, no power on earth can stop us from providing the quality of care our veterans have earned and that they so richly deserve.

I stood on Omaha Beach, ladies and gentlemen, I saw the cliffs that American soldiers gave their lives to climb, and I know they had the courage and the patriotism to face their own mortality head-on, which is selfless sacrifice. Then when the VA and the VFW can and will take on our own cliffs in tribute to their last measured devotion.

I thank the VFW for joining me in our quest of care for all who have won the battle and secured the peace for all Americans and all the world. Thank you, God bless you, and God bless our great country.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I hope that you listened very well to what the Secretary just said, because it was a speech that was full of new information.

Mr. Secretary, you aren't quite finished yet. Last year the VFW declared war on diabetes. Today I am pleased to announce that the Veterans of Foreign Wars will donate a total of \$100,000 to be awarded equally to four VA research facilities, one located in each of the VFW conferences.

The VA facilities are located in Seattle, Washington; Detroit, Michigan; Brockton, Massachusetts, and right here in Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Secretary, here is the check for research on diabetes.

VA SECRETARY PRINCIPI: Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Mr. Secretary, about your move for the museum, here is a check for \$10,000 for the development of the National Veterans Museum. (Applause)

VA SECRETARY PRINCIPI: Thank you for your generosity. God bless you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You know, my friends, we started that attack on diabetes. It affects I don't know how many people in this room and, in fact, it affects a tremendous amount of our veterans throughout this country. It is a cause we ought to keep. It is a cause we ought to help defeat.

I know that with your good generosity we are going to continue that. So, I thank you for all the donations you have sent in over the years. Thank you and God bless you on that.

PRESENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: At this time I am going to call on the Department of Michigan for a presentation of some donations.

COMRADE BILL DOBIE (Department of Michigan): Comrade

Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, Comrades, Delegates, we are real pleased to be here from the Department of Michigan. We have a donation for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the Attack on America Fund. This check is in the amount of \$7,679.60. We are pleased to make this presentation.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you.

COMRADE DAVID MILLER (Department of Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Delegates, we have a check from the Department of Michigan for Operation Uplink cards in the amount of \$6,412.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, guys.

COMRADE MICHAEL EDWARDS (Department of North Carolina): Jim, your team from the Southern Conference, we have been collecting for a dinner for the past three years. We had our dinner and we had some money left over. Instead of using it for the Southern Conference, it was unanimously elected to divide it between Operation Uplink and cancer research. This is your contribution from your Southern Conference.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: That is \$250. Thank you, gentlemen.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Comrades, as you all know, the 27th of July, 2003, will close the commemorations of the Korean War. The Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and I met with Colonel Glasser, Secretary of the U.N. over there, and they have a benefactor who is going to pay the expenses of up to 200 Korean veterans to go back and visit during that time.

He will pay the airfare, the hotels and so forth. So what we will be doing is getting the applications out on the Web. We will be doing a mailing to all the Posts with an application. The criteria will be listed. You must be in receipt of the Korean Service Medal to enter the contest.

We will collect all of the applications and we will have drawings for the amount of people that the benefactor allows us to have. Nobody else can hear this but us. I will tell you a secret. We asked how many slots will the Veterans of Foreign Wars get?

The answer we received was that will be decided on who does the best job in promoting this. So, when you get those applications down at your Post office, reproduce them and get them in to us as soon as possible. Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, John. We are in a very unique situation here, and I am going to ask you to do us a favor. Bob Dole is in the air right now. Because of the weather he has been delayed. He is supposed to be here at 11:45. I can't keep you here for an hour.

Do me a favor. Will you take a break for an hour and come back in so we can present the \$850,000 check? Please come back in. We have worked so hard on the thing and the publicity we have received out of it, and what you have done, you ought to be recognized, too, with a break. We will recess until 11:45, and then in a short time we will get you out of here. I will see you back here in an hour.

...Whereupon, the convention recessed at
10:45 o'clock a.m., to reconvene at 11:45 o'clock a.m. ...

PRESENTATION OF \$850,000 CHECK FOR WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Everybody take your seat, please. We have Senator Dole and Mr. Pond on the dais here. We will reconvene the meeting. Let me say this, I want to thank you for coming back to the session.

Four years ago, the VFW launched a massive campaign to fulfill a \$7.5 million pledge to the World War II Memorial. The VFW has remained committed to this effort and is proud of its role in working to accomplish the completion of this important tribute to those who served during World War II.

Last year, the VFW presented a check for \$2.5 million to the American Battle Monuments Commission as the second installment of our pledge. This year, in keeping with our vow to help build the World War II Memorial, I am proud to present a check for \$850,000 as the last installment of our pledge.

Here to accept our pledge check is the National Chairman of the World War II Memorial campaign, former Senator Bob Dole, and the Executive Director of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Ken Pond. Let's give them a warm welcome. (Applause)

I remember a couple of years ago I saw on CNN on Memorial Day, and I can't remember the individual's name, but he was a World War II veteran and he did not want the World War II Memorial built. I remember meeting with him in the Green Room.

He was grumpy, man, was he grumpy. I told him, "You know, you are an icon." "I don't want to be an icon." "Well, you are a hero." "Well, I don't want to be a hero." "Well, whether you like it or not you are a hero." He told me he was going to give his medals back, he was going to turn them in.

I said, "Why don't you just give them to me and I will give them to your grand kids. Whether you like it or not, this country certainly appreciated what you did and you are a hero whether you want to be a hero or not."

Another hero that sacrificed so much for his country is Senator Bob Dole. Senator, we are extremely pleased to have you with us this morning to accept this last check of our ommitment to the \$7.5 million. Senator Dole.

...Whereupon, the assembly extended a
prolonged standing ovation. ...
REMARKS BY SENATOR BOB DOLE

SENATOR DOLE: Thank you. I will apologize for being a little late, but it is raining in parts of the country, which we need very badly. I hope you will understand. As a Life Member of the VFW and an old VFW service

officer a long time ago, it is a real honor to be here and to be here with — I don't see any World War II veterans, nobody is old enough up here.

I didn't bring any samples. All the guys asked me for samples. I gave John a year's supply in one tablet. (Laughter) First, you take the pill and then you drink the Pepsi, and that is how it works. (Laughter)

But I am very honored to be here and I know you have done this about eight times while you have been convening, but I would like all the World War II people to stand up, the widows, the wives, the veterans, spouses, whatever. (Applause)

Tom Brokaw, who has been very helpful, I might add, in raising money for the World War II Memorial, wrote a great book called "The Greatest Generation." We will accept that title, but now we have become the disappearing generation. We have gone from 16.5 million to about 5 million. By the time we dedicate this memorial, we will have another half million gone. So it will be about 4.5 million.

There is about 1,200 World War II veterans every day go on to their reward. I know in this audience there are sons of World War II veterans. How many sons or relatives of World War II veterans are in the audience? They need to stand up. Look at that.

So, you know all about World War II. That is great. We have almost reached the age where we can tell any story we want and there is nobody to contradict us, so we are all going to be heroes. There is no question about that, about how we walked 90 miles with a pack on our back and all these things.

But I have asked myself the question from time to time, because we don't want to remember what has happened almost 60 years ago now, but where we would be today if we had not prevailed in World War II? What language would we speak? Could we have a free assembly in Nashville, Tennessee, and come together and praise people or criticize people, whatever, or criticize our government or have the Vice-President speak to us about a very timely issue in Iraq.

What would we be doing and how long could we talk if we got up to talk, and who would tell us what we could say? I don't suggest that World War II was different, but I think it was the big event in the last century. I think all the World War II veterans in this audience feels just like I do.

We don't need a memorial. There are not going to be too many around to even see it. But this memorial is a symbol of strength and of sacrifice and of liberty and of freedom, and it is going to be there to remind your daughters and sons and grandsons and granddaughters, and on up the ladder that sometime in your life to preserve liberty and freedom you may be called upon to make a sacrifice.

It may be with your life, it may be with the life of disability, it may be something else. But there is no greater country on the face of the earth than the United States of America because of people like you. (Applause) You know, the VFW is the second largest contributor to the World War II Memorial.

Number one is Wal-Mart. They came to us and turned us down the first

time, and we kept trying, and they ended up raising, Ken, what, \$15 million? Every little Wal-Mart store had a bucket in it. Some of you guys may have volunteered to stand there and twist arms. We got about \$15 million and that really gave us new impetus and really put us on the way.

My co-chairman of all of this was Fred Smith from FedEx, who has a great record, a VFW Lifetime Member. He was very helpful to me in opening corporate doors. I will just tell you about one contribution, and there were lots of them. There were kids who raised pennies, your grand kids who raised dimes and quarters.

I went to grade schools and high schools, and we had a great time. They brought their grandfathers with them, and it really kind of reminds you of what America is all about. But we had a fellow call the office one day from Pennsylvania, and I think there are some Pennsylvania folks here. I hope there are a few Kansas folks here. I know they are around somewhere.

They are awake. That is good. They have already heard me speak. This fellow called from Eastern Pennsylvania. He said, "Where do I send some money to this World War II Memorial?" We gave him the address. Joyce McClooney, I think in my office.

About ten days later, she comes in running into the office with a check in her hand for \$1 million. That was the largest single contribution we had in the whole drive where we raised \$187 million. This was the single largest contribution.

Now, having been in politics, as I was, I was a little skeptical, maybe someone is pulling my leg. We first put the check in the bank, of course, and then we called the guy to see if he was for real. We got him on the phone. I said, "Is your name Mr. Kopian?" His name is Sargese Kopian, a Native American. He said, "Yes." "Did you send us a check for the Memorial?" "Yes." "Was it for \$1 million?" "Yes."

And I said, "Thank you. I am relieved." I said, "Don't you want us to come to Pennsylvania and get the Governor and get a lot of World War II veterans and have a big ceremony and you can give it to us?" He said, "No, I don't want any publicity."

He said, "I am 73 years old. I am not a World War II veteran. I came to this country with nothing and I have had a pretty good small business, and I have made some money, and I want to do this because had you not prevailed in World War II I wouldn't be in business today."

Now, that is the attitude that a lot of people, the great majority of the people have about America and about all the sacrifices and everybody here made, and the friends of yours made, and people that are not here anymore made to preserve liberty and freedom. That is just what one man thought of it.

He said, "All I want is to see the ground breaking." I said, "For \$1 million you can have mine." He could have had it for a lot less and I would have left. So, I am just here to say thank you, thank you for not only the contributions but thank you and some of you are going to be there.

Take good care of these World War II guys because we would like to have some there for the dedication. It is May, '04, right before Memorial

Day. Senator Thurman has already ordered tickets. He may be the main speaker, but the last time he spoke in the Senate he talked for 24 hours and 17 minutes. He holds the record for the longest speech.

I don't think he said anything, but he talked for 24 hours and 17 minutes. He wants to be there. I hope all of you want to be there. I know the VFW is going to make certain there are people there from every state. I want to say to all the other veterans, we are not here just bragging about World War II, we want to recognize all the Korean veterans and a lot of Korean veterans had double duty.

They had World War II and they had Korea, and Korea, you saw what happened this past 75 years. You name off the wars and some skip Korea, the forgotten war, where 75,000 American lost their lives and about 200,000 were wounded, and they fought in sub-zero weather in the mountains and the snow.

And it was very, very important. Of course, the Vietnam veterans who came home almost with their tail between their legs, and nobody even cared in some cases if they came home, and were just totally ignored until we finally woke up and recognized these were our sons, our daughters and our grandsons.

I know there are a lot of Vietnam veterans here today and we thank you. First, we apologize for not doing it sooner, but we thank you, thank you, and thank you for your service. And the same with the Gulf War veterans and those who were in Somalia or anywhere you may have been in service.

I have been called a lot of things, as you might guess being in politics, but what I am most proud of is the term veteran. It says a lot. (Applause) It says we are a part of a family. (Applause) I will go way back to George Washington's time.

He said, "It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our existence is that every citizen enjoys the protection of a free government owes not only a proportion of his property but even his personal services to the defense of it."

In other words, this is George Washington speaking. If you live in a free country, you have obligations. One of those obligations is preserve liberty and freedom sometimes with your property, sometimes with your service, and maybe even sometimes with your life.

So I will conclude again by saying thank you to all the members of the VFW and the Auxiliary, and all the others who helped raise the money. The Auxiliary always does a lot of work, and they are great people, and I know they were very helpful in this effort.

But we have raised \$187 million. We didn't ask the government for the money. We felt that the government needs to keep the money and give that to veterans who need it or their families who need it. (Applause) That was our attitude and your attitude.

We met with the VFW and our theory was if we can't raise it ourselves we shouldn't have a memorial. We raised it. You helped us. We thank you for it. We think you are going to be proud of it. It is going to be a symbol

of strength, not war and conflict.

It is going to be a place where you can go and there will be a reflecting area where you can think about your father, your grandfather, your uncle or somebody else who maybe didn't wear a uniform but raised the food or taught school, or did something during that period of time that kept America free.

We are losing — I am going to close the same way as I started. We are losing a lot of our veterans, not just World War II veterans but Korea and other veterans. Someone sent me this poem, I guess it is about two years ago, and I think it has a message for all of us.

Sometimes we get so busy we think we are too busy to do anything except stay busy or at least keep ourselves thinking we are busy. I think this poem has a real message. It is called "Around the Corner."

"Around the corner I had a friend and
this great city that has no end. Yet days go
by and weeks rush on and before I know it a
year has gone.

"I never see my old friend's face, for
life is swift and a terrible race. He knows I
like him just as well as in the days when I rang
his bell and he rang mine.

"We were younger then, and now we are busy,
tired men, tired with playing a foolish game,
tired with trying to make a name.

"Tomorrow I say I will call on Jim, just to
show that I am thinking of him. But tomorrow comes
and tomorrow goes, and the distance between us
grows and grows.

"Around the corner yet miles away, here is
a telegram, sir, Jim died today. That is what we
get and deserve in the end, around the corner a
vanished friend."

The point I want to make is this. There are a lot of veterans in veterans hospitals. There are probably veterans that you know who probably need somebody just to say hello or to spend five minutes or ten minutes of our time, or maybe if you are a young guy here, as I see a lot of the young people, maybe just calling your dad if he is a World War II veteran and tell him about the convention.

Just sort of keep him in touch with what is happening. Above all, if you see any veterans, any man or woman who served America in whatever armed conflict, or whatever, peace time, if you just say five words to that person: "Thank you for your service." That will make the whole day for that

person.

A lot of people recognize me, not that I ran for President, because I was in the Pepsi commercial. They come up to see me in the airport and they say, "Thank you for your service." I know it makes my day just as it makes your day. Somebody recognizes that all of you and the people you know by the hundreds served their country when it was important. Because you did that, we are free.

So don't wait. Don't wait until next week to call old Jim or next year. Do it today or do it when you get home. Thank you for your service, and God bless America. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Senator. Ken, thank you so much for what you do. Here is a little token of our appreciation. Do you want to say something?

MR. KEN POND: Jim asked if I wanted to say something, and I want to tell you I didn't fall off the turnip truck yesterday. I am not going to try to follow the Senator. He has got a lot better experience than I have got and he speaks a lot better.

I admire you veterans. I am like the Senator, I am very proud of being a veteran. I thank you for the money you gave, for the effort you gave, and I also will say when time was getting very difficult, the Washington office, headed by Bob Wallace, came to our rescue and helped us pass the law. The VFW is a great organization and I am proud to be a member. Thank you for your gifts. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: She doesn't want to speak, and I will obey her wishes, but I was very glad when I found out who she is. She is Vickie Cloud, Government Affairs Division of FedEx. And to your CEO, Fred Smith, will you please send a message that we thank FedEx for all they have done.

I will tell you where our relation came in with FedEx, the Patriotic Rally that we had in New Jersey. It was the Liberty Island in New Jersey. That is where it came. As a matter of fact, we don't pay anything for the Operation Uplink. That saves us somewhere in the neighborhood of \$90,000 a year. To Fred and his staff, thank you so much for what you do.

SENATOR DOLE: I want to say a special hello to all the people from North Carolina. Don't forget Elizabeth. (Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Don't you just love ex-politicians? Once again, Senator, thanks for joining us.

At this time I want to give a special thanks to all of you who came back. I told the Senator I recessed them for 45 minutes, and you all came back. We appreciate that. We up here on the stage said they are not going to come back. I am proud of you. Chaplain Moody, will you give our Closing Prayer.

(Whereupon, the Closing Prayer was given by National Chaplain Moody.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Tomorrow morning, we will

start at 9:00 o'clock, not 9:30, 9:15, but 9:00 o'clock. If you don't see me at the opening session, don't think I slept in. I will be visiting the Ladies Auxiliary, and I have a Senior Vice Commander who will have the opening ceremonies.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: The Closing Ceremonies have been performed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Enjoy your afternoon. We will stand in recess.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:15 o'clock p.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 29, 2002

(The Third Business Session of the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Delta Ballroom,

Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Raymond Sisk presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Comrades, take your seats. We are ready to start precisely at 9:00 a.m. Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the hall for the opening ceremonies.

(Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman led the convention in the Salute to the Colors, followed by the Opening Prayer by National Chaplain William Moody. The assembly then had the Pledge of Allegiance.)

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: We will now have the report of the Credentials Committee by Elwood Rickards from Delaware.

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Department of Delaware): Good morning, everybody. This is a temporary report of the Credentials Committee as of 3:30 last night. Total delegates, 13,228; total Commanders, 51; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 26; total National Officers, 36. That is for a grand total of 13,341. That is the report as of 3:30 last night. Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF JAMES C. GATES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Thank you very much, Rick. This morning we have a presentation to make for the James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award to Michael A. Olen, Veterans Service Manager, Texas Workforce Commission, in Austin, Texas. Michael Olen is personally responsible for directing, coordinating and monitoring the services provided by the DVOPS, the LVERS and the additional outreach programs that provide services for veterans.

During the past year, his efforts have led to 57,714 veterans being offered gainful employment as well as placing 4,212 service-disabled veterans via direct staff assistance. He is also the State Grant Manager for the DVOP and LVER Program. In addition, he monitors the Transition Assistance Program for recently-separated veterans. Both of these programs have had consistent success.

He is a professional that is truly dedicated to assisting his fellow veterans through his example of leadership, caring, hard work and commitment to all. Comrades, I now present to you an individual whose efforts have had a positive impact on improving the lives of veterans, Michael Olen. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation reads, "James C. Gates Distinguished Service Award presented to Michael A. Olen, Veterans Service

Manager, Texas Workforce Commission, Texas, in recognition of your extraordinary achievement and exceptional leadership in advancing the employment opportunities for our nation's veterans and in promoting of the employment goals and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 29th day of August, 2002."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith and Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr.

RESPONSE - MR. MICHAEL A. OLEN

MR. MICHAEL OLEN: Thank you, Mr. Sisk. It is a privilege and honor to be standing here today, and I will always treasure this moment. I want to thank the veterans staff in Texas. These fine folks are out on the front line in making the system work.

I also want to thank two strong veteran advocates that help me all the time Mr. Jim Nier, the Executive Director of the Texas Veterans Commission, and a Past National VFW Commander; and Mr. Terry O'Mahoney, the Commissioner for the Texas Workforce Commission. Their help and their assistance has led us to serving more veterans and doing more for them. The VFW is always out front leading the way.

As a young soldier, I went to Southeast Asia. You know, that is the only lottery I ever won. I keep playing the Texas lottery every week and still I have not had any luck. I had a chance over there to use this marvelous connection device called Mars to call home and talk to my wife two times during that tour over there.

Hearing the voice of my loved one, even if I have to say it over at the end of each sentence, "Wait for the beep," and rush to get a reply, for a few brief moments I was there. I was at peace and I was with my loved ones. Knowing how important it is for soldiers and their families to be together, to talk in this time, I am going to give the honorarium that accompanies this award to the VFW Operations Uplink Program. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Thank you very much, Mike. Again, if Paul Spera or Dr. Wasylik are in the room, we need you up here for General Resolutions.

At this time I will call on the Adjutant General for any announcements he might have.

...Convention Announcements. ...

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL LARGE EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: We will now have our presentation for the National Large Employer of the Year Award to Joe

Lowman, ITT Industries, Inc., Systems Division located in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Since its activation on April 1, 2001, ITT Industries, Inc., has made employing veterans a priority. Their employment practices clearly confirm that commitment. With 271 positions available, 189 veterans have been hired, 52 of those being service-disabled veterans. Of ITT Industries' total work force, veterans comprise an amazing 70 percent of the employees.

Their commitment to being a community-involved organization in the Fayetteville area is clearly supported through their positive approach and non-biased desire toward hiring qualified veterans.

Accepting the Large Employer of the Year Award is Joseph Lowman, Project Manager at ITT Industries, Inc.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation reads, "The National Large Employer of the Year Award presented to ITT Industries Systems Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in recognition and appreciation for your implementing an employment policy which encourages and promotes the recruitment and retention of our nation's 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 29th day of August, 2002."

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

RESPONSE - MR. JOSEPH LOWMAN

MR. JOSEPH LOWMAN: Thank you very much. We at ITT Industries are not only delighted but we are very honored to be here today. We also are honored with the recognition for the Large Employer of the Year Award. But I will tell you that the real reward of this is not this recognition, it is in the knowledge that we are assisting and taking care of our veterans.

We also consider ourselves to be among the elite of the elite today having been invited to the VFW organization's meeting. With that said, we would like to donate this check back to the Operation Uplink Program for the State of North Carolina. (Applause)

Also with me today is our Senior Vice-President from the Systems Division in Colorado Springs, and I think he has something he wanted to say as well. Thank you very much.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Mr. Sisk, on behalf of Jim Cameron, the President of ITT Systems, I want to match the award and give this to Operation Uplink for the State of North Carolina. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: You know, I think all of you comrades in this room, probably if you think back and realize how important our Operation Uplink Program is, almost every honorarium that was given out at this convention has been donated back to Operation Uplink. Now, we have one that even matched the honorarium. Let's give these people a great VFW hand. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
SMALL EMPLOYER OF YEAR AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: We now have the National Small Employer of the Year Award presented to David H. Cook, Wackenhut Services, Incorporated, in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

It is my honor to present the VFW National Small Employer of the Year Award to the Wackenhut Services Corporation, Fort Bragg office, located at Spring Lake, North Carolina. The Wackenhut Corporation has succeeded and distinguished itself as a prime example of how a corporation can maximize their employment ranks by using veterans' military training, skills and talents.

As a result, since June 1, 2001, they have employed 91 veterans, achieving a remarkable 94.7 percent hiring goal. Currently, out of the 96 employees, 91 are veterans. This proves their commitment to providing opportunities to veterans to be successful and important members of the workforce.

Accepting the Small Employer of the Year Award is David H. Cook, Project Manager for the Wackenhut Services Corporation, Fort Bragg office.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation being presented reads, "National Small Employer of the Year Award presented to Wackenhut Services, Incorporated, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in recognition and appreciation for your commitment and service towards effecting a successful and comprehensive policy toward the recruitment, employment and promotion of our nation's 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 29th day of August, 2002."

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

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Thank you, John. With this is an honorarium, David.

RESPONSE - MR. DAVID H. COOK

MR. DAVID COOK: Fellow Veterans, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

First, I will have to tell you I am quite impressed, quite impressed with the size and the exuberance of this delegation. I am also impressed with your choice of locations. This is some place. For those of you unfamiliar with the name Wackenhut, and a lot of people are, the Wackenhut Corporation is a leading provider of security and security-related services worldwide.

The Wackenhut Corporation has always had a standing practice of hiring qualified veterans; not only because of their service and sacrifice to our great nation, but also due to the skill sets and work ethics that the

security service industry so desperately needs.

We, at the Wackenhut Corporation, welcome the opportunity for an increased role in keeping our citizens and soldiers safe and in the process providing respectable employment opportunities for qualified veterans. The contract I manage at Fort Bragg now has 120 personnel and we now have 116 veterans working for us. (Applause)

It only makes sense. We are charged to protect the lives and property of soldiers and citizens. Who better to protect those locations, those personnel than veterans? (Applause)

In regard to your generous award, I am breaking rank from the previous practice, recent practice, and I have chosen to donate our honorarium to the Fort Bragg Fisher House. Fisher houses or homes are located on a variety of U.S. military installations, serving soldiers and their families by providing low-cost accommodations at or near major military medical centers and treatment facilities.

I will get off stage here and close by thanking you for your generosity and the recognition you have bestowed upon myself and the Wackenhut Corporation. I salute you all. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE AWARD

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: We are rolling right along. We now have a presentation for the National Employment Service Office Award to Frank Madigan, WorkSource of Clay County, Orange Park, Florida.

We are honored to recognize the WorkSource of Clay County in Orange Park, Florida, as the recipient of this year's National Employment Service Award.

Through their hard work, dedication, quality care and service toward veterans, they have achieved 98 percent of the federal service goals set by the Department of Labor. They have assisted more than 1,200 veterans find gainful employment and are especially aware of the employment needs of our type of proactive assistance in aiding veterans to discover opportunities and establish themselves once again within the workforce is reflective of the superior effort and initiative of true veterans' advocates.

Here to accept the award for the WorkSource of Clay County is Franklin D. Madigan.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation reads, "National Employment Service Office Award presented to WorkSource of Clay County, Orange Park, Florida, in recognition and appreciation for your admirable professional employment services provided to our nation's 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 29th day of August, 2002."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith and

John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Thank you, John. With this Citation, Frank, comes an honorarium of \$1,000.

RESPONSE - MR. FRANK MADIGAN

MR. FRANK MADIGAN: Fellow Comrades, I am honored to be here and very proud to represent a great crew of people. I am in the LVER office and I have wonderful DVOP and a whole bunch of veterans employment representatives. We have retired veterans, we have separated veterans, we have special disabled veterans of both genders. We even have a woman that is a Gold Star Wife, which we are really proud of this crew. Everybody is a veterans representative in that office.

Also, credit, I think, should go to you, comrades. Everyone in this room from every part of the nation has had a comrade walk up to you and say, "I need a job. Do you know anybody that can help me?" I know you have told them where they can go. No, I don't mean down there.

You put them in contact with someone that can help them. It is called networking. It works, it is a great process. I think you also should feel proud in participating in helping veterans.

In closing, I would like to quote something that Teddy Roosevelt once said about who deserves the credit. He said the credit belongs to those who are actually in the arena who strive valiantly, who know the great devotions, the great enthusiasms and spend themselves in a worthy cause; who at best know the triumph of high achievements; and who at the worst, if they fail, fail while daring greatly, so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat. God bless the VFW and God bless America.

Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION TO THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Our next presentation will be the Certificate of Participation to the American Academy of Ophthalmology. You guys didn't think I could say that, did you?

Ladies and gentlemen, the mission of the American Academy of Ophthalmology is to advance the lifelong learning and professional interests of eye doctors to ensure that the public is provided with the best possible eye care.

Academy members are committed to responding compassionately to their patients' individual needs and to advancing the highest standards of comprehensive eye care.

Since 1997, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been fortunate to have at our National Convention Health-Care Fair representatives of the Academy who have contributed their services and equipment that is valued at more

than a half million dollars.

This morning we are pleased to present to the American Academy of Ophthalmology a Certificate of Participation.

Accepting the certificate is Dr. Michael R. Redmond. Dr. Redmond is the Academy's president-elect. He served on the Academy's Board of Trustees from 1993 to 1999 as Advisory Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, and then Trustee-at-Large.

Dr. Redmond received his medical degree and completed his residency at St. Louis University in 1974. He completed a Pediatric Ophthalmology Fellowship at the University of Iowa in 1975.

Dr. Redmond currently practices in a multi-specialty group practice in Pensacola, Florida.

Please join me in a very warm and appreciative welcome for Dr. Redmond. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: "Certificate of Appreciation presented to the American Academy of Ophthalmology in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of its continuing support of the Annual Health Fair sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States at its National Convention. Their donation of equipment, personnel and the screenings and educational programs provided, have a tremendous impact on the health and well-being of the members of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 28th day of August, 2002."

This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - DR. MICHAEL REDMOND

DR. REDMOND: Thank you very much. It is an honor to receive on behalf of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and its over 16,000 member ophthalmologists this Certificate of Recognition. It is also a personal pleasure for me to be here today having served with the 25th Infantry in Kuchi, Vietnam, back in the '70s.

Special recognition must go to Dr. Rick Sponcil and his assistant, Alanda Trego, and your staff person George Hawley, who all have been instrumental in establishing this program over the past five years. Approximately, 3,000 people have been screened through the program and roughly 30 percent of the people have been found to have some type of eye problem. This ranges from glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, cataracts, and sometimes just a simple need for glasses.

This year two probable brain tumors were identified in the screening program. It shows the importance of getting your eyes examined, having these things found early and treated early. The Academy recognizes the importance of health-care issues to the VFW and values its working

relationship with you in Washington with the Veterans Administration.

As ophthalmologists, we recognize the importance and the value of making that contribution and long-term investment in vision care, both in the preservation of vision and the improvement of vision. We look forward in seeing you in San Antonio next year and working with you in the future. Thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: At this time if there are any Past Chiefs out in the audience, I want you to work your way forward to the stage for an introduction, which is a little overdue.

At this time all members of the General Resolutions Committee, if you would, please, meet with your chairman and vice-chairman right outside in the back of the hall. I believe there is another resolution out there that you need to go over. So all members of the General Resolutions Committee that are in the room, please go to the back of the hall and meet with Paul Spera and Dr. Wasylik. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF PATRICIA VARGA, DOMINION VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: At this time I would like to introduce to you Patricia Varga, Dominion Vice-President of the Royal Canadian Legion.

With more than 450,000 members and affiliates, the Royal Canadian Legion is Canada's largest veterans' organization. From the time of its formation in 1925-1926, the Legion has focused its efforts on the fight to secure adequate pensions and other well-earned benefits for veterans and their dependents. The Legion deals directly with the federal government to ensure ex-military personnel and their dependents are treated fairly.

The Royal Canadian Legion also ensures the tradition of remembrance in Canada. Each year the Legion organizes and runs the National Poppy-Remembrance Campaign to remind Canadians of the tremendous debt owed to the more than 117,000 men and women who gave their lives in the defense of Canada during two World Wars, the Korean War and other missions around the world. Contributions made during the campaign are used to assist needy veterans, ex-service members and their families.

The Legion also supports programs for seniors and the Legion's Youth Program provides scholarships and bursaries, sports programs and support to activities such as cadets, scouts and guides.

Representing Dominion President Allan Parks is Comrade Patricia Varga, Dominion Vice-President of the Royal Canadian Legion and a former President of Saskatchewan Command of the Legion. Mrs. Varga is the first woman to be President of her command and the second woman to attain the office of Dominion Vice-President.

She has been a member of the Legion for 22 years, having served in the Royal Canadian Navy. She holds the Legion Meritorious Service Medal and the American Legion Medal of Merit. She is currently Chair of the Dominion

Command Public Relations Committee and a former member of the Poppy and Remembrance Committee and the Membership Committee. Please give a warm VFW welcome to Dominion Vice-President Patricia Varga. (Applause)

REMARKS - COMRADE PATRICIA VARGA

COMRADE PATRICIA VARGA: Thank you. Good morning. good morning to all of you. Distinguished Guests, Veterans, I bring you greetings from the Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion and our 460,000 members, plus our Ladies Auxiliary and, of course, what we call our extended families, the members of our organization that serve our veterans in their communities.

It is indeed an honor to be here today. Just a few short weeks ago, your Commander-in-Chief stood on the stage in Edmonton, Alberta, to address our delegates at our National Convention. At that time he noted the ties between our great nations in war and in peace. It is unfortunate in a way that some of those ties have been developed under times of war. But that is inevitable when you have two countries which believe so strongly in freedom and justice for all.

Since we went our separate ways so many years ago, we have found that while we may have some differences in the types of governments we choose to live under, we still live with certain privileges and values that make us natural allies. While you may not like tea as much any more, and we are not as exuberant as you in expressing love of country, and I really, really hate that, we do share a lot of grounds.

The latest instance of our commitment to our ideals started just less than a year ago on September 11th. Our hearts and thoughts and prayers were with you that day, and on every day since. The world, as we knew it, changed that terrible day.

Our way of life was assaulted, but the terrorists did not succeed. Your nation, your people, and people throughout the world are more committed than ever. We and you have responded in a manner that leaves no doubt about our intentions.

It is indicative of the closeness of the bonds we share that the Canadian unit deployed to Afghanistan in the war on terrorism was the Third Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry from Edmonton. On their dress uniforms they proudly wear the United States Presidential Citation for actions in Korea. (Applause)

Since the start of the past century, our servicemen and women have fought together in Europe, in Asia, and in the Middle East. They have served together on peace-keeping and peace-making missions. But as is often the case, when they come home, they need help. That help is one of the reasons that both of our organizations exist today.

Our shared experiences in war and peace allow us to share information to help those who often have to fight the very government they served for benefits and medical treatment. It is also our shared experiences in the

service of our nation that makes our organizations natural allies.

Many of our branches close to the border, gather with yours on a regular basis to experience comradeship and to serve their communities better. Indeed, some of our branches in the United States use your facilities, your Posts to hold their meetings.

We are grateful for that and we are grateful that you are our neighbors. In so many ways, our organizations parallel each other, primarily in our work with veterans, the still serving military personnel, the program of remembrance, and in our communities.

We both have wonderful partners in this work, and that is our Ladies Auxiliaries. Without them, many things would not be possible. One of our most important tasks in the Royal Canadian Legion is that of remembrance. We encourage all citizens to remember the valor and the honor of those who have gone before. Our country blooms with the blood red poppy to memorialize the fallen and ever remember the sacrifices they made.

Around two years ago, the Canadian people brought home a Canadian soldier from the World War I battlefield at Vinney Ridge. This was the Royal Canadian Legion's millennium project and involved many governments' departments, all branches of our military and all ex-military service organizations in Canada.

I was privileged to be part of the state's military funeral held on a beautiful day in May in Ottawa. Our unknown soldier had come home. He was laid to rest on Canadian soil at the base of our National War Memorial in our nation's capital. I can't tell you of my feelings that day, the pride I felt at being a Canadian, the pride I felt at being a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, or my overwhelming emotions.

I felt, although it was like 100 Remembrance Days services all rolled into one, that day became part of our history and affected Canadians young and old in many ways. Many people stopped us at the memorial that day to thank us for bringing home our soldier.

Many wrote letters of thanks and many thousands have visited the tomb since then and they leave tributes, including a Marine sword. We don't know who left it, but it is now part of our history. A young lady who lives not far from me in Saskatchewan, and in case you don't know, that is somewhere in Canada, wrote of the unknown soldier. I would like to share it with you. It is called "Who is the Unknown Soldier?"

It goes, "He is the one who led the way so the general could make the home. She is the one who saved the child and was left to die alone.

"His dreams were cut off by his untimely death. Her innocence shattered by her last shallow breath.

"He is the voice that echoes our pride. She is the eye that for freedom cried.

"He is the rain that waters our souls. She is the river holding secrets untold.

"He is in the wave crashing Normandy shore. She is on the wind over the Alps once more.

“He is in the song that passion dell sang. She is in the bell from which freedom rang.

“His death was a pledge, prayers cannot suffice. Her life of gift at the ultimate price. We will remember them.”

Thank you again, Comrades, for your welcome, for your hospitality and for your sacrifices in the pursuit of freedom, justice and good government. May God bless each and every one of you as you continue your work to honor the dead by helping the living.

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

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: You know, John gave me a list of the Past Chiefs. Boy, if I don't know them, I am already in trouble already, aren't I? Let's see how I can do here.

At this time I am going to introduce our Past Commanders-in-Chief. If you would, please, hold your applause until I get them all introduced. When I do get them introduced, for gosh sake, let's give them the warm VFW welcome that they so richly deserve for what they have done for this organization.

A lot of times our Past Chiefs are called upon to do many things from representing the National Organization at a Mid-Winter Conference or a State Convention, and a lot of you Department Commanders ask for these particular Chiefs, and they do such an outstanding job in bringing the message and update on what is going on in the VFW at our National Headquarters and in our Washington office.

Too many times I think we fail to realize and respect the great time and effort that they have spent and the many hours that they have given this organization. So when I get through, I want to hear a thunderous applause for these Chiefs. I am going to introduce the back row first, so they will be seen before the front row stands up in front of them.

Our Commander-in-Chief from Texas, Jim Nier.

Our Commander-in-Chief from the great state of Washington, Eric Sandstrom.

Our Past Commander-in-Chief from the great Department of Kansas, John Stang, and sitting next to him is another great Kansan, Norman Staab, Past Commander-in-Chief.

Sitting on the other side of Norman is our very recent Commander-in-Chief, John Smart from New Hampshire.

Starting on the front row, we have Doc Wasylik from Ohio; John Moon from the great state of Ohio.

Next to him is Clyde Lewis from New York. Next to him is Paul Spera from the great Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And next to him is George Cramer. I don't know how I could forget him, he was my Chief, from the

great state of Illinois.

Also Wally Hogan from Wisconsin, and our Executive Director of the Washington, D.C., office and our Past Chief Bob Wallace from the great state of New Jersey. There are some that got behind me.

We also have Tom Pouliot from the great state of Montana, and on this side we have with us Cooper T. Holt from Tennessee.

My friend from the great state of Arizona, Gunner Kent, and another friend from the state of Arizona, Bob Currieo.

From the great state of North Carolina, Billy Ray Cameron, and we have Bulldog Smith sitting next to him.

And next to him is Ray Soden from the great state of Illinois.

We have got Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson from Massachusetts, and last but not least, John Gwizdak from the Department of Georgia. Now, let's give a round of applause to our Chiefs.

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

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN F. GWIZDAK

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: At this time we will have a presentation of the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Past Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak. You know, John's theme was "Follow Me." And he set the example of leading from the front "walking point." He wouldn't have it any other way.

John Gwizdak knew the importance of setting the example for others to follow, not asking anyone to do what he wasn't willing to do himself.

John F. Gwizdak of Stockbridge, Georgia, was the VFW Commander-in-Chief for the 2000-2001 year. It was a year when the entire world became informed and reacquainted with the VFW's mandate of service. John Gwizdak was a firm and eloquent spokesperson for the VFW, and today we recognize his many years as an outspoken advocate on behalf of his fellow veterans and their families.

Here to receive the VFW Distinguished Service Medal and Citation, Past Commander-in-Chief and a person I was proud to serve with, John F. Gwizdak. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation reads, "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to John F. Gwizdak, Commander-in-Chief, 2000-2001, 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. His challenge of 'Follow Me' and his fierce American spirit with the foundation of his exceptional leadership during the 2000-2001 administrative year and strengthened the resolve of our nation's 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 29th day of August, 2002.”

This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN GWIZDAK

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk, Ed Banas, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and all the elected and appointed Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Past Chiefs and National Members, my Comrades:

I would first like to introduce to you, and many of you already know who she is, Betty, my wife. (Applause) I accept this award for all those folks that made such a difference in getting me to be able to be the proud member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and also those who helped me become the Commander-in-Chief of one of the finest, most dedicated unique organizations in the world, and that is the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The ability to get here was not easy because there are a lot of folks that had a lot to do with everything that made it possible for me to be here. Most of all, may I thank you for the opportunity to serve the champions of America, the warriors that make the difference, patriots and heroes who sit in this room today.

You are the champions and I have been privileged to serve with you. You are the champions of the oppressed. You do not champion oppression. You are the champion of those who cannot speak for themselves, you speak out for them. You are the champion of those who lie in Veterans Hospitals today with their mind delusional and foggy eyes that cannot even move, but they know that someone with the VFW cap will come by and touch them.

You are the champions of their mother who at night now sleeps well because she has food in her house, she has pajamas for her children, they have a teddy bear to hug, and they now have a home because you made the difference in their lives.

You have given a quality of life to people that never would have been there. The homeless veteran who sits under the bridge today knows full well when winter comes a blanket or sleeping bag will come from the champions of freedom, and that is the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

You do not accept second standards, you do not accept anyone that would live to second standards, so you produce always the ability to be who we are, just as last year when the Park Service decided that the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Winners could not sing the Star Spangled Banner in the Jefferson Memorial, and I took them on personally for you, and then they apologized and rearranged how they do business.

A champion again was Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith when Fox TV decided to make a joke about America's heroes. He took them on. They apologized again for being wrong for harming America's champions. One more time the champions spoke up last year is when they said, "Under God, who is that?" Well, they found out very quickly that the Veterans of Foreign Wars was even a champion for God. (Applause)

I do not know where our membership is going, but I hear so often they are going out the back door. "Oh, we are losing so many out the back door." Yes, we lose some, but I think, my comrades, more choose the option of not returning by the front door because of the treatment that they receive sometimes in our own Posts.

Maybe we can make the back door a little bit more secure and make the front door a little more lit up and open so that folks can come in and out and do the things that have to be done to champion again veterans service and representation of those who cannot represent themselves.

The Military Initiative Program, I can only hope that it will continue under the leadership of Commander Sisk as it has this year under Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith. The Military-at-Large Program, I don't know what is going to happen, but I can tell you this, based on your mandates, the wonderful staff we have in Kansas City, John Senk's staff, Joe Ridgley's staff, and under the leadership of Commander Sisk, it will be taken care of, it will be cleaned up and it will be what you want and you will be proud of it, and you will be proud to have it as part of our Membership Program. (Applause)

Our POW/MIA issues, I am so proud we continue to champion the cause of those individuals, and as I mentioned to them in the POW/MIA meeting the other day, the small phraseology of this, "I believe in the sun, even though it is not shining. I believe in you, even though you are gone."

That is the dilemma of the POW/MIA issues. You will not forget who they are. As far as the politics of this country, all I can say is if we took the fear that is in this room and put it in a hypodermic needle and shot it in the veins of those in Congress today, maybe they would understand what it is like to face the bullet.

It is so easy to send off folks to war, especially if you don't have to go. When America sends folks off to war, she better understand one thing. She does not have an option to care for them. She has an honored responsibility to care for America's warriors. (Applause)

I appreciate all the work that you do continuously, and I would only hope that the makers of Wheaties would come here, because they could serve the breakfast to champions, and on the back of the box they could put the VFW logo, and that would be the real heroes of America. (Applause)

Each of you has made a difference in my life. You have made me a different person. You made me much more aware of everything that I felt close and dear to my heart. It has brought it even more to the surface. You have made a difference in my life. I can only hope that I continue to make a difference in your life also.

I know that God loves you or you wouldn't be here. I know that America needs to love you for your sacrifice. She needs to welcome you home and she needs to tell each of you thank you for your service, warriors. And last, but not least, I love you all. Thank you so much.

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

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith assumed the chair.)

VISIT OF LADIES AUXILIARY DELEGATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Good morning. I just came from visiting the Ladies Auxiliary, and it was apparent how successful their convention has been. I am extremely pleased that here to visit our convention today is a lady that I was proud to serve with for the past year.

She has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary for many years, and has left a successful legacy for others to follow for years to come. I admire her deeply. Please give a warm VFW welcome to a great lady and President of the Ladies Auxiliary, Diana Stout. (Applause)

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT: Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: This is as good as the cheerleaders. I have just been to the Ladies meeting, and I have got to say this before Diana has the floor here. I couldn't have asked for a better President. Two days after September 11th, I got hold of her and I said, "I need help. We need help with Operation Uplink."

My friends, I am here to tell you we wouldn't have near the success with Operation Uplink if it had not been for the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They make a difference in people's lives. For 14 consecutive years now they have raised over \$3 million for cancer aid and research.

They have not only made a difference in people's lives over that 14-year span, but they have saved people's lives. That is what they are about. We sit in the organization and kind of thump our chest a little bit about how good we do, but ask Past Commander-in-Chief Carney where the Political Action Committee would be without the Ladies Auxiliary and what a great job they did there this past year. (Applause)

The list goes on and on and on. I just came from there, and I have said this before, and I want to say it again this morning, there are people in the VFW that say that we could do without the Ladies Auxiliary. I might add they are not the brightest bearers we have in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but I can assure you of this with the Ladies Auxiliary we are a much, much better organization.

Diana, I want to thank you and this organization thanks you.

REMARKS - LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT DIANA STOUT

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT STOUT: Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, National Officers and VFW Members:

It is a privilege for me to be with you this morning and to have the opportunity to greet you one more time as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. During this past year, the Ladies Auxiliary have achieved many milestones, and I would like to share some of those with you, except the Commander has already done that.

But I would like to say that for the first time in several years, all 51 Department Presidents achieved their 85 by December 31st, and were invited to attend a night on the town in San Juan, Puerto Rico. That was a wonderful achievement for them.

But even more importantly, although we did suffer a loss in membership this year in the Ladies Auxiliary, it was the lowest loss in six years. We have hopes that we are turning this around.

Finally, I would like to say I am very proud of the VFW and the Auxiliary this year with regards to what happened on September 11th. Not only do we show our support for the troops at the rally but all across America, both of our organizations met the challenges from assembling personal packets for our rescue workers, to donating to the Salvation Army for those affected in Washington, D.C.

Also, we handed out thousands of free United States flags to show how proud we are to be Americans. The members of the Auxiliary are very proud of the legacy of service they have, particularly this year insofar as we have been reaching out to our veterans, to our active duty military, to our communities and to our members. We look forward to many, many more years of this partnership.

I particularly want to thank you, Jim, for all of the courtesies and for making this such an honor to serve with you. As a token of the appreciation of the Ladies Auxiliary, allow me to present to you a flag set for your own personal use. Jim, thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You gave me a beautiful set of cufflinks that had all kinds of diamonds and rubies. Diana, this is a little token of our appreciation to you and may be on Tuesday you find time to go shopping a little bit.

How many hours do we have left?

LADIES AUXILIARY STOUT: Oh, about 23.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: She is a great lady. Give her a round of applause. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO W. BENNY BACHAND

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The next man to be honored today is someone who has lent much to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Aside from his successful tenure as Membership Director, there is much to be said about his innovative and forward thinking while serving as Assistant Adjutant General, Programs, since 1990.

It has been his total commitment and love for the Veterans of Foreign Wars that has led him to the implementation of new concepts that have led to a stronger and more vital organization. He has worked tirelessly to assist and advise all Departments, and his counsel has proved to be a valuable commodity to most of us who are here today.

His knowledge and wisdom enabled him to be not only a teacher and a mentor, but also a true friend to many throughout the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Although he is retiring as a member of the National staff, his talents will be put to good use by the Department of Florida.

It is my great pleasure to present the Veterans of Foreign Wars Distinguished Service Medal to a dear friend to all of us, Benny Bachand.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Citation reads, "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to W. Benny Bachand in sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of 25 years of exceptional service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars as a dedicated employee, fulfilling the positions of Director of Research and Development, National Membership Director and Assistant Adjutant General of Programs. His commitment to the goals and objectives of the VFW along with the professionalism in which he performed his duties are in the highest keeping with the traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 29th day of August, 2002."

It has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE - COMRADE BENNY BACHAND

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND: You know, I have seen a lot of people get these awards for the last 25 years, and I guess I didn't realize how hard it is to talk about these things. But for those of you who really know me, I want you to pay particular attention, I am wearing a cap.

You know, I stand here very humbled and very proud, first of all, being a member of this organization. My roots in the Veterans of Foreign Wars go back to my dad who was active in the VFW, Past Department Commander in Connecticut in 1955, turned around and moved to Florida and became an All American Post Commander in 1964 with the Post that I am a member of. He died at a very young age, but was also active and loved this organization, and his love for this organization I have carried in my heart

all of these years. (Applause)

I am one of the few staff members left at National Headquarters that had the opportunity to work with four Adjutant Generals. I need to thank each of them, Julian Dickinson, Howard Vander Clute, Larry Rivers and John Senk, our present Adjutant General.

I have had the opportunity of working for 25 Commanders-in-Chief, all of which are right here on the stage, and some who are no longer with us. I considered all of them to be outstanding leaders in our organization. I particularly have a fondness for those whom I have become a very close friend of, Larry Rivers, Jim Nier, John Staum, John Moon, more in particular I have got to tell you who my particular mentor has always been and will always be Jack Carney, who I relish and consider a great friend of mine.

I have got to tell you that I have got to thank all of the staff members in Kansas City and Washington I have got to thank Joe Ridgley, the Quartermaster General, for his counsel and advice and being a friend, and his staff, and those previous Quartermaster Generals whom I have had an opportunity to work with.

I would like to particularly thank my immediate staff, those who work day-to-day for you, Jim Rowoldt, the Membership Director; Bud Haney, Military Assistance Director; Mike Gormalley, the Citizenship Education Director; Gordon Thorson, the Youth Development Director; and Jerry Newberry, the Communications Director.

I have got to tell you in particular I have to thank a very gracious lady, one who many of you have served on the National Committees are very familiar with because she works with you on a daily basis. That is my assistant, my friend and one who I will always be very close and dear to, Mary Ann Vassholz. Mary Ann. (Applause)

I have got to thank 25 years of classes of Department Officers and Adjutant-Quartermasters through this country I have had the privilege of working with and working for so that we can work together to ensure a successful organization.

I want to thank my Department who has always been there for me, my District 18, Post 4287 in Orlando. Just tell those folks in Florida I am coming home. You know, I have got to tell you, and this may sound kind of strange to you-all, but I have got to thank my two ex-wives. I have got to thank them for relieving me of a lot of my money, but I have to thank them for the sacrifices that they have given, because as all of us know, our families do sacrifice.

We don't get a lot of holidays and a lot of Father's Days and a lot of times that we need to be with our families. But they understand what we do and they know how dear it is to our heart, so they have played a great role in not only the 25 years that I have been a member of this staff, but I have been a member of this organization since 1967.

I want to thank my sons, both of which are here today. I would like to introduce them. My oldest son, Chris, and my youngest son, Keith Bachand. You know, again, they sacrificed a lot because dad has not always

been around when dad needed to be around.

But as we know, sons understand these things and they have been very supportive of me and my passion for this organization and my desire to see that we continue to succeed. And they have always been there for me and with me, and I am so proud that they are here today, also. (Applause)

I guess as General MacArthur said, "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." Well, I can tell you that as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars I am not fading away. I am going to look forward to continuing to work for this organization, to join with you on these floors of these conventions.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have got great issues. We have got great concerns and we have got great challenges ahead of us as an organization. I look forward to being a voice for those changes, a voice for those challenges, and a voice to make sure that we do the things that are right for this organization in the future.

And so I look forward to standing there on the floor of future conventions in my Department of Florida and speaking out, standing up and speaking out, as Jack Carney's slogan was. As I depart the National staff of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I can assure you that my voice will not die, that I will continue to be there for you and work with you. Thank you for allowing me to work for you for the last 25 years as a member of the National staff of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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

PRESENTATION OF VFW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND
CITATION TO RETIRING
DEPARTMENT QUARTERMASTER JOHN SMART

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Our organization depends on a certain type of individual, someone who sees what needs to be done, figures out the best way to do it, and then accomplishes it. Perhaps no one else in our organization reflects that type of "can do" spirit better than the next person we are about to honor.

John W. Smart has served as State Quartermaster of the Department of New Hampshire since 1985. As such, he has left an indelible mark upon his Department and to all within his state who have come to rely on his knowledge and expertise.

As former VFW Commander-in-Chief, John Smart was unequalled in his unwavering commitment and loyalty to America's veterans.

Through his year as Commander-in-Chief, John proved to be an aggressive and articulate spokesman for the VFW and for all those we serve. For that, and much more, we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to him. Please join me in honoring John W. Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: John, did you bring the whole Department? (Laughter)

The Citation reads, "Distinguished Service Medal and this Citation awarded to John W. Smart in appreciation and special recognition of three decades of unselfish service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as a dedicated worker, distinguished leader and able administrator, fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the office of State Quartermaster of the Department of New Hampshire, testifying to his commitment to the ideals and goals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 29th day of August, 2002."

This has been signed by James N. Goldsmith, Commander-in-Chief, and John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General.

RESPONSE - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN SMART

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you-all so very much. To you, Commander-in-Chief, thank you for bestowing this high award upon me and thank you for your leadership this year. To John Gwizdak, I am proud of you, man. You deserved that award. Thank you for your service.

I was glad to see that Benny Bachand had the opportunity to receive this award for his many years of service, and I can't tell you over the course of 17 years how many debates Benny Bachand and I have had. He is a true veterans' advocate and a dedicated veteran to the causes of all veterans.

Benny, may you enjoy your retirement, and I look forward to continuing the debates and friendship on this floor. Congratulations to you, Benny. I know you are out there someplace. To my wife, Mary, you-all know Mary. You have seen her over the course of the last few years. I don't know if I have ever given a short speech when I have come to the podium.

To the delegates from the State of New Hampshire, especially the guy at the end, it was around 1985, Richard Robinson when he came to me and asked me if I would consider being his State Adjutant. At that time we all had the old manual-type copying machine and the manual typewriter.

So I asked him, "How much room will it take up?" "Well, you can probably do most of the work on the kitchen table. We don't have headquarters. We work out of our homes." Over the course of the years, I think we have had three additions put on to our home, and Mary was very gracious to spend that money to have those additions put on.

I think probably some of the trying times we have had, and the question I have to ask, how many Post Commanders out here have had the opportunity to serve where their wife was Post Auxiliary President? I know you never had debates in the household during those trying times.

If you think it is difficult to be a Post Commander and an Auxiliary President, try being a Department Adjutant working with the State Auxiliary Secretary. There are some interesting times that happened in our household,

you know, near the end of every month when general orders had to be put out.

And the words she kept saying to me, and I know these words you have probably heard many, many times, "You do it that way, the Ladies Auxiliary doesn't do it that way." I was told more than once the way it was going to be done.

To this special group behind me, when I was asked to run for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, you know, I took a lot of kidding and jokes around the United States. I don't know how many times comrades have come up to me and say, "But John, we have Districts bigger than your whole state." You are right. We understand that.

You know, when I went up to ask, that I wanted to run for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, these individuals behind me went out and raised over \$100,000 and not one penny came from the Department's funds. That is the kind of comrades and sisters we have in the State of New Hampshire. (Applause)

Once you get elected, and I think you are going to find this out, Ray, shortly, there is a homecoming they have to put on. You just happen to have to go back to them again and say, "Can you find another \$50,000 or \$60,000 so we can put on a homecoming?"

Let there be no doubt about it, they took on that challenge, they found the funding and they went out there and did the fund-raising. As far as I am concerned, they put on one of the best homecomings any Commander-in-Chief has ever had. I thank you, Comrades, for that.

I just want to say, Comrades, I have had the opportunity to serve as your Commander-in-Chief. There is no doubt in my mind that we have the finest staff of dedicated workers that work for us in our Kansas City office and the Washington office. They do work for you.

We have debated many issues in this organization this weekend here, and in less than 24 hours a new Commander-in-Chief will take his oath of office. We can talk about membership, we can talk about eligibility, we can talk about various types of programs we have, whether it be the member-at-large program or the MIP program.

Under the leadership of James Goldsmith, he told you that we lost 55,000 members this year. You continue to hear us say that recruiting is difficult. I continue to tell you we don't have a membership program problem, we have a recruiting problem.

You need to get involved; each and every delegate in this room has to go back to their state, look themselves in the mirror, and ask themselves, "Am I doing everything I can to make this organization better?" If you think you are going to do it for the Post, if you are going to do it for the District, or if you are going to do it for the Department, or if you are going to do it for the National Organization, you are wrong.

You heard all weekend national leaders, military leaders, come and thank you for the work that you do. The only thing I can tell you is search your heart, search your souls and think of those men and women today

who now lie in beds across this country and in VA facilities and our State Veterans Homes.

Think about those men and women who now serve in harm's way that depend upon the actions that you do. Let there be no doubt. We belong to the finest, the greatest veterans' advocate organization in this world, and that is the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I thank you for the service you give to this organization. May God bless each and every one of you in this room today, and may God continue to bless the great United States of America. Thank you, Comrades.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: As John and the New Hampshire delegation make their way from the stage, Barry Hoffman, I would like you to have all the Sergeants-at-Arms assemble behind me.

While the Sergeants are assembling behind me, Commander-in-Chief, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law No. 620, 90th Congress, approved October 2, 1968, entitled 44 United States Code, Section 1332.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RAY SISK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk, Post 9791, Frazier Park, California, seconds it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing nobody at the mikes, all those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried and it is so ordered.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Commander-in-Chief, I thank you for this privilege. My comrades, at this time you see standing behind me our Sergeants-at-Arms. Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to a group of comrades we see annually at our National Convention. They come to this convention and they are up early in the morning and the first ones in the hall.

They arrange for the seating on special occasions, and they keep order in the hall. They try to seat everybody and maintain order that is necessary during the meeting itself. These folks don't get a lot of money to do this. It is obviously a labor of love for them. I am sure everyone recognizes they do an outstanding job on our behalf. (Applause)

It is my privilege to introduce the National Sergeant-at-Arms from Post 6240, Department of Kansas, Barry Hoffman. Barry has been a Sergeant for 14 years and when he is not issuing orders at our VFW meetings, he serves as the Counter Drug Coordinator for the Kansas National Guard. Barry Hoffman. (Applause)

Keith McDonald has been a Sergeant for eight years and a member of Post 2275 in California. He is retired from the United States Navy and is a Past All American Post Commander. Keith McDonald. (Applause)

Dan "Sarge" Brown, Post 1911 in Ohio, is a Vietnam veteran and retired from the United States Army after 20 years of service. He has been a Sergeant for seven years and is a Past All American District Commander. (Applause)

Gary Barringer, Post 9134, has been a Sergeant for seven years. He is a Past Department Commander of North Carolina and he works as a technician for the North Carolina National Guard. Gary Barringer. (Applause)

One of the newcomers to the team, Joe Schirmers has been a Sergeant for 40 years. He is a member of Post 4847 in Minnesota. He has retired from the Great Northern Railroad, and listen to this, he has over 45,000 hours of volunteer service at VA Hospitals. Our youngest member of the team, Joe Schirmers. (Applause)

The next Sergeant to be introduced is a Vietnam veteran who served with the United States Navy. He is from the Department of Florida where he retired from the St. Petersburg Police Department after 25 years, and that is Ed Villiaum. (Applause)

Another member of the Sergeants-at-Arms is an Air Force veteran from Massachusetts, a Past District Commander and five-time All American State Post Quartermaster, Bryan P. O'Brien. (Applause)

I don't think I will have any argument here when I say that the prettiest Sergeant-at-Arms we have is Joy Collins-Baxter from the great state of Minnesota. (Applause)

The newest member, the really newest member, is Jim Galen from Michigan. He is a Past All State Commander, a Post Quartermaster for 15 years, and is employed as an assembly technician for General Motors. (Applause)

These are the comrades that every time something goes wrong, unfortunately, we up here start screaming at them. If something goes right, sometimes we forget to say thank you. At this time I want to publicly say thank you to each and every one of you. Each member of this team does a great job. I am so proud of each and every one of them. Comrades, you handle yourselves as professionals. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with each and every one of you. Thanks so much on behalf of all of us for what you do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Let's show them our appreciation, comrades.

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS (Cont'd.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We have one more resolution to come before this body, and at this time I will turn it over to Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera and Past Commander-in-Chief John Wasylik.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, we have Resolution No. 310 which came before our Committee. The Committee met, and the title is Relocation of the USS Iowa.

“WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$3 million in October, 1999, to fund the relocation of the USS Iowa from Susan Bay, California, to San Francisco, California; and

“WHEREAS, the U.S. Navy has not provided a timetable for the relocation of the USS Iowa; and

“WHEREAS, the USS Iowa is currently carried in reserve status with limited access;

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States endorse an immediate move of the USS Iowa to a permanent berth in San Francisco, California; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States endorses a change in the status of the USS Iowa from reserve status to museum status.”

The resolution was submitted by the Department of California, and at a meeting of the Committee, recommended passing of this resolution. I move for the adoption of Resolution No. 310.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN WASYLIK: Commander-in-Chief, I am John Wasylik, Post 2529, Sandusky, Ohio I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion and the second to adopt this particular resolution. Is there any question on the motion? Well, I have to be fair and impartial here. Are there any other questions on the motion?

Seeing nobody at the microphones, all those in favor will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed. The motion carried and is so ordered.

At this time all Committees will be dismissed. I thank you for your time, your efforts and your dedication to the work that you did.

VISIT FROM NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Sergeant-at-Arms Hoffman, I am about ready to introduce the National Home. At this time, you know how the kids go around and get their pins. So if you have pins, that is fine. If you have money, you give it to the Sergeants-at-Arms and they will take care of it, or give it to me. No, you don't do that. Just give the kids pins, and if you want to give any money to the National Home, the Sergeants-at-Arms will go around with them and take the money.

One of the proud icons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Ladies Auxiliary is the VFW National Home at Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The National Home is a profound example of veterans helping veterans.

Today the home provides comfortable housing and a caring staff designed to give children a safe, nurturing environment.

This morning we are honored to welcome the Vice-President of the

VFW National Home, Mary Sears, the Executive Director Michael Kessler, and the 2002 Buddy Poppy child Shena Blevins, and what a sweetheart she is.

REMARKS BY NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVE MARY SEARS

NATIONAL HOME VICE-PRESIDENT MARY SEARS: National Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, other National Officers and Delegates:

I bring greetings from our Board of Trustees, Ross Henry, who due to illness cannot be here. I hope you will all keep him in our prayers. I would like to introduce other members of the Board of Trustees that are here today.

We have Dan Hosey, District 1; Ben Purcell, District 3; Pat Jankowski, District 7; Ed Sanders, District 8; Orville Gutherson, District 9; Doc Bohlman, District 10; Ruby Cooper, representing District 11, and our ex-officio members Quartermaster General Joe Ridgley and Adjutant General John Senk, and Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith. We appreciate all the work you do for us in coming to the home.

I would especially like to thank Joe for all he does and his expertise in financing that he gives to us. Joe, when you are not able to come, I am happy to have Larry there. We enjoy him very much and for his expertise. We thank you for that.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am proud to tell you since last year's National Convention there have been many improvements made at your beautiful National Home. The houses are not only full but we have smaller families share houses to make room for the many referrals.

The National Home has always been a safe haven for the children and families of our comrades and children. Since the tragic event of last September, it has become even more evident that America needs our National Home as a safety net for the children and families of those young men and women who proudly wear a service uniform of the United States in many different countries around the world and, therefore, stand in harm's way in defense of America.

Thank you for supporting your National Home. You can be pleased to know that the National Home is gaining back the prominence and prestige that it once held. This is evidenced by the fact that it has been highlighted by the award-winning MAP Michigan history. This is a wonderful book and they have written a wonderful story on the National Home. I am confident that the National Home will continue to grow and bring honor to the veterans and its Ladies Auxiliary. Long into the future through a caring and loving staff who do their best to instill the many families on the patriotic values that all of you hold so dear.

Wasn't the rally wonderful? What did you think about our Young Patriots Choir from the National Home? Weren't they great? (Applause) Commander-in-Chief Jim, I want to thank you for that generous donation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars so it was possible to bring our children here. Thank you again.

I would just like to take this time to ask all Posts, Districts and Department National Home Chairmen to stand and be recognized. You do a fantastic job for us. Thank you.

At this time I would like George Riedel and Past Commander-in-Chief Ray Sandstrom to come forward to make a presentation.

COMRADE GEORGE RIEDEL: Mary, we know you have a title about this long, but we have known you for so many years that we call you Mary and call you friend. On behalf of the members of VFW Post 969 and our Ladies Auxiliary, and the Department of Washington, I have a check for you for \$2,500, and we would like this money to be used to continue the refurbishing of the Washington Cottage.

NATIONAL HOME VICE-PRESIDENT MARY SEARS: Thank you so much, George. We appreciate it very much.

I would now like to introduce our Executive Director of the National Home for Children, who assumed the position of Executive Director in September, 1999, after serving as Program Clinical Services Director for two and a half years. Since assuming the position of Executive Director, he has been instrumental in implementing the Americorps Program and Points of Light at our National Home, just to mention a few.

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I present to you the Executive Director of the VFW National Home for Children, Mike Kessler.

REMARKS BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL HOME MIKE KESSLER

NATIONAL HOME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KESSLER: Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Vice-President Mary Sears, and thank you for your great representation on the Board of Trustees, Mary. Well, good morning.

Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and all Guests of this Distinguished Organization:

On behalf of the thousands of children and families aided by your efforts, by your noble efforts throughout this nation, I thank you for all you do for those children and families who are in need. I especially thank you for defending the children who are fortunate enough to find their way to the National Home for Children over the last 77 years.

You are to be commended for keeping many children and families safe from the enemies, those that try to harm them, enemies such as hunger, homelessness, abandonment, suicide, addictions of all sorts, violent gangs and a multitude of other people who would prey upon the vulnerable youth if they were not living at your National Home.

Commander-in-Chief Jim, I know you are proud of the fact that the National Home is in your great state of Michigan. We enjoy having you there and having you visit there. Congratulations to you, Jim, for leading the entirety of the organization, our parent organization, during one of the most difficult years the United States has known in a very long time.

Who would have guessed how appropriate your motto “Reach Out” would have been this year? The events of 9/11 certainly pushed all patriotic citizens to reach out to one another in deeper and more meaningful ways, as it did, the National Home for Children.

First, the staff reached immediately after 9/11 to comfort the children and families who were in fear. Like the rest of America, we tried to plan for every imaginable scenario. We hoarded water, food, clothing, and made many plans during this last year.

It has put your National Home in better stead to deal with emergencies in the future. All of us at the National Home thank you for your role as Veterans of Foreign Wars members for fighting to keep America great. We are grateful that you will never let your guard down and that you will always challenge any decision our government makes that might put American children vulnerable, children in danger of another terrorist attack. Kids need to know that we adults are taking control.

Unfortunately, even before the event of 9/11, many of America’s youth lived in fear. Fifty percent of them worried that there might be an attack within their own school. Thank you for keeping America’s children safe.

Next, I am going to bring to you just a list of accomplishments at your National Home. Last year I told you that the campus really was looking great. Well, it is even looking better, thanks to your help and the hard work of the National Home staff.

The Home definitely reflects the pride that you have in your membership. It now looks even more like a living memorial. The water treatment plant was replaced. We have approximately doubled our water treatment capacity and, therefore, we are more ready for a national emergency.

The extensive renovation of the Health and Education Building was completed, and we are thankful to the Ladies Auxiliary for donating \$1 million to that renovation. Let’s give them a round of applause. (Applause)

Many of the houses received needed renovations and, in fact, you can be proud that the Montana Homestead is fully renovated and looks better than the day it was built. The great state of Arizona has taken over sponsorship of a home. Congratulations, Arizona.

Also, the George J. Maxfield Post 7272 out of New Hampshire has decided to sponsor a home. So we will soon have a New Hampshire home. The Ladies had a new roof put on the Day Care Center, so we are going to keep those toddlers dry for another 20 years. That is if you send enough money to buy thousands and thousands of diapers.

Thanks to the Cooties an Outdoor Fitness and Conference Center has been put on our campus. Many computers were replaced, and the children were well-clothed because of a one-time donation of \$25,000 for clothing. Thank you, Cooties.

Let’s not ever forget how much fun the Cooties bring to these fun-loving kids on the campus.

Many of you are wondering, well, campus is looking fine, but really how are the kids doing? You saw how the kids were doing, didn’t you, at

the National Rally? We are proud of them. How are you doing, kids? They say they are doing fine.

Come to the National Home and see them and you will find that many of the kids are doing fine.

I have said to you before I have worked in the human services field for 20 years, and I have never been at a place where kids who have been so hurt and abandoned end up with doing so well. Thank you, VFW. I also want you to know when the kids get up and sing to you, we are teaching them that it is better to give than to receive.

Their singing to you is an expression, a token of their appreciation for all you do, right? They are shaking their heads. We are grateful to the generous donations of the Dads Program that buy music equipment and music lessons for the kids. This last year we completed the first year of Americorps. Twenty-two youth from around America decided to serve their country, their homeland on homeland ground at the National Home for Children. This was a very competitive \$200,000 grant. It did not come out of your pocket or anyone's pocket.

Thanks to the grant process with the government, it was provided and we should have that for one to six more years. If you know of someone who wants to serve at the Home in the Americorps, send them our way.

Next, several older youth participated in the Dale Carnegie Program. How many of you have been through Dale Carnegie? Well, they now have a Dale Carnegie course for children called Generation Nuts. Guess what, the owner of the largest franchise of Dale Carnegie in the entire world, Mr. Ralph Nichols, visited your National Home.

He fell in love with it, and he has decided to partner with the National Home and help those kids go through Dale Carnegie's Generation Nuts, and many children throughout the nation to go through it. He is personal friends with Lee Iacoca and Tom Monihan, and he promises us that he will tell them the story of the VFW, the Ladies Auxiliary and the National Home for Children.

The National Home began participation in the Adopt the Unit Program in sponsoring a Michigan National Guard Unit. Just like you serving others, these kids are serving others. Any parent organization would want their participants to follow in their footsteps. I am proud to say to you that the National Home kids are following in your footsteps. I am going to ask three things of you. I need your help by identifying more children outside of the Midwest area. I have heard complaints we only serve kids in the Midwest area.

Well, that is not true. In fact, you will see that Shena Blevins is from Florida and her sister is from Florida. A mom with eight children, six of whom came to live at the National Home, were from Arizona. They just left the National Home and went back to Arizona.

By the way, Texas, would you please send some Mexican cattle over to Arizona, because I am telling you those boys can eat. We don't want Arizona to be in a food shortage. We are doing our jobs. The Trustees have

done the job of turning the National Home around.

We are asking you please do your job of looking around and finding the kids and the families in your areas that need something, and send them because we will serve them. They need you. They need you to find them. I need your help to increase donations to the Home.

As the National Home has improved over the years, lo and behold, the donations have been going down. Our kids are worth it. The National Home is just not about serving kids on campus now, but it is about connecting with the national organizations that are helping youth. Please help us help America's youth. Please go to your local organizations.

Last of all, because kids around America are fearful, when you go to your local organizations as you do, would you reach out to the kids and tell them what the VFW is doing to keep America safe? I promise you if you don't tell them they don't know, and they are fearful. That completes my report, Commander-in-Chief and all members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you and God bless you.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Sisk assumed the chair.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: At this time I would like to call upon our National Home Buddy Poppy girl, and I want you-all to give her a rousing, rousing VFW welcome. (Applause)

NATIONAL HOME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KESSLER: This girl loves her nickname. We call her Shena, Shena Bobena.

REMARKS BY 2002 BUDDY POPPY CHILD - SHENA BLEVINS

2002 BUDDY POPPY CHILD SHENA BLEVINS: Hi. My name is Shena Blevins and I am nine years old, and I go to Northwestern Elementary School. My teacher is Ms. Bay and she is very nice and very funny. My favorite subject in school is music. I like to sing and play the piano. I have a favorite piano teacher. Her name is Rhonda. She is nice and very funny.

I came to the VFW National Home last September. I live in the Indiana House with three brothers, Michael, Dominic and Joseph. I also have three sisters, Christina, Paula and Margie. Sometime I get the feeling I am living in a zoo. My house parents are Keena and Krantz. Keena is a housekeeper and she loves me. Krantz is a good house parent and is very funny. When I am awake, we like to play cards and go to the movies. Sometimes we invite friends over. My big sister, Brittany Kress, is 14 years old. We spend a lot of time together at our family houses.

My favorite color is pink. My favorite food is peaches. I am happy to be Buddy Poppy because I like telling people about the Home and how great it is. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith assumed the chair.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Did you notice she didn't use any notes? What a speaker. She said she was ready, and you were, weren't you? Thank you.

2002 BUDDY POPPY CHILD SHENA BLEVINS: You are welcome.

NATIONAL HOME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KESSLER: Thank you, Shena. Vice-President Mary Sears, if you will come up. Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, it has been an honor and a privilege to have you as a member of the Governing Board of Trustees.

During your term of office as Commander-in-Chief of the greatest service organization in the world, you have given good direction to your National Home. To you and your representatives, the views and the concerns of your organization have been at every Board meeting. Thank you for your service.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you very much. I was out of the room for a second and, Mike, to your officers and the staff that runs the National Home, make no mistake about it, we have had problems down there. We all know that in the past.

I can tell you this, if you ever have the opportunity to visit the National Home, please do so. It is a beautiful campus. The houses are up to date and I really do firmly believe that the staff does an outstanding job. If I didn't believe that, I wouldn't say it. Mike, to you and your staff, I thank you and this organization thanks you.

At this time we will have Tom Kissell for the Poppy Awards.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS OF NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CONTEST

COMRADE TOM KISSELL: Commander-in-Chief, ladies and gentlemen, many milestones were reached this year with regard to the distribution of Buddy Poppies through our local Departments down through our local Posts in cooperation, of course, with the Ladies Auxiliary.

Let me at this time, before we announce the display contest winners, the divisional winners, let me announce a few of those milestones. This year the National Organization, along with our Departments and its Ladies Auxiliaries, realized 14.6 million poppies being distributed throughout the nation, throughout the Departments, our Posts and Districts, for an approximately net gain of one million over the previous year.

We have one Department that has exceeded their poppy purchases by 312,000 over the previous year. One Post alone distributed over 113,000 poppies. We had one Post who went to a Major League baseball game and which we will recognize them with a Citation later on, that distributed 14,000 poppies on one single day at the ball park.

In addition to that, this year, in my memory, perhaps going back to John's memory when he was the Buddy Poppy Director, and even before that, we had over 100 poppy display entries in the National Poppy Display Contest. I think that is another milestone for the organization.

So, Commander-in-Chief, I think you had a very successful year with regard to one of your pet programs, the distribution of buddy poppies.

Let me start off by announcing the Buddy Poppy Display Contest Winners that took place this week at the convention.

CATEGORY 1 - PUBLIC PROMOTION OF POPPY SALES

Category 1, Public Promotion of Poppy Sales. First Place winner is Caseyville Memorial Post and its Ladies Auxiliary No. 1117, Caseyville, Illinois.

The Second Place Winner is Sergeant John Rice Post and Auxiliary No. 6316, Blaine, Minnesota.

The Third Place Winner is Lewis E. Jackson Post and Auxiliary No. 4309, Brevard, North Carolina.

Honorable Mention goes to Arthur W. Jones Post and Auxiliary No. 7564, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The Director's Award is Boone McDowell Post and Auxiliary No. 2277, Bastrop, Louisiana.

CATEGORY 2 - MEMORIAL OR INSPIRATIONAL DISPLAYS

The First Place Winner of Category 2, Memorial or Inspirational Displays, is Carroll P. Foster Post and Auxiliary No. 3455, Anna, Illinois.

The Second Place Winner is James D. Bowers Memorial Post and Auxiliary No. 169, Venango, Pennsylvania.

The Third Place Winner is Middletown Post and Auxiliary No. 1170, Middletown, Kentucky.

Honorable Mention goes to Rebel Post and Auxiliary No. 5625, Chiefland, Florida.

The Director's Award goes to Pikes Peak Post and Auxiliary No. 4051, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

CATEGORY 3 - ARTISTIC OR DECORATIVE USE OF POPPIES

For Category 3, Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies, First Place goes to Potomac Highlands Post and Auxiliary No. 6454, Petersburg, West Virginia.

Second Place goes to Crawford County Post and Auxiliary No. 4549, Robinson, Illinois.

The Third Place Winner is Brighton Memorial Post and Auxiliary 2140, Long Branch, New Jersey.

Honorable mention goes to Linden-Tripkos Memorial Post and Auxiliary No. 6651, De Soto, Kansas.

CATEGORY 4 (JUNIOR UNITS) - MEMORIAL OR INSPIRATIONAL DISPLAYS

Category No. 4, Junior Units, Memorial or Inspirational Displays, the First Place Winner is Pierce Dant Hamblin Junior Girls Unit No. 3167,

Williamsburg, Kentucky.

The Second Place Winner is Champaign County Junior Girls Unit No. 5520, Champaign, Illinois.

The Third Place Winner is Fort Chippewa Junior Girls Unit No. 936, Alexandria, Minnesota.

Honorable mention goes to Yingling-Ridgely Junior Girls Unit No. 7472, Ellicott City, Maryland.

At this time it gives me great pleasure to announce the Department Divisional Winners.

The Department of Minnesota, First Place, and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 2, the Department of North Dakota and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 3, the Department of New Hampshire and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 4, the Department of New Mexico and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 5, the Department of Virginia and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 6, the Department of Connecticut and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 7, the Department of Idaho and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 8, the Department of Hawaii and its Ladies Auxiliary.
Division 9, the Department of the Pacific Areas.

RECOGNITION OF THE OVER ONE MILLION BUDDY POPPY DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

The Over One Million Distribution program was formed a few years ago to pay special recognition to those Departments whose poppy distribution equaled or exceeded one million.

This year's recipients are California, who led the nation in total distribution of Buddy Poppies, with a total of 1,029,000, and the Department of Minnesota distributed more than 1,500,00 Poppies.

I would ask that those 2001-2002 Department Commanders and Presidents of the Ladies Auxiliaries from California and Minnesota join Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith for the award presentation.

At this time, Commander-in-Chief, we have Certificates of Appreciation presented to the Department of Virginia, Robert J. Clausen, Chairman of the Buddy Poppy, and Gale Payne, Buddy Poppy for the Ladies Auxiliary. If I may, I would like to read the citation.

"In sincere appreciation for outstanding support of the program and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and in special recognition of exceptional service during this 2001-2002 administrative year resulting in the Department of Virginia recording the largest numerical gain of over 312,000 poppies over its previous year's total in distribution.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 29th day of August, 2002."

It has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief, James N. Goldsmith, and attested to by the Adjutant General John J. Senk, Jr. (Applause)

Again, we have a Certificate of Appreciation presented to Sergeant John

Rice Post No. 6316, and its Ladies Auxiliary, in Blaine, Minnesota. Ray Trevis is Commander and Laura Carlson is the Ladies Auxiliary President.

“In special recognition and sincere appreciation for outstanding service and sustained efforts in the distribution of over 113,000 Buddy Poppies during the 2001-2002 poppy promotion year, evidencing exceptional support for the programs and purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

“In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 29th day of August, 2002.”

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief and attested to by the Adjutant General.

Next is a Certificate of Appreciation presented to the Department of Minnesota, District 7, Don Nix, Buddy Poppy Chairman, Opal Peterson, Buddy Poppy Chairman for the Ladies Auxiliary.

“In grateful recognition and sincere appreciation for your able, loyal and dedicated service to the programs and the purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, your efforts which resulted in the distribution of more than 14,000 Buddy Poppies at the May 30th Minnesota Twins baseball game and contributed immensely to the success of the Buddy Poppy Program for 2001-2002.”

That Citation has been signed by the Commander-in-Chief and attested to by the Adjutant General John Senk. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Tom, thanks for an outstanding job on the Buddy Poppy Program this year.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Commander-in-Chief, we have received the following nominations for Trustees for the National Home.

Representing the Fifth National Home District, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Panama Canal, Helen Free, Post 5408, Acworth, Georgia.

John F. Gwizdak, Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia.

John E. Hamilton, Post 7909, Jacksonville, Florida.

W. J. Leonard, Post 7327, Springfield, Virginia.

Mary Murphy, Post 5381, Lenoir, North Carolina.

In the Eighth National Home District, comprised of Illinois and Indiana, Cynthia Paris, Post 5036, St. Charles, Illinois.

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We will now go into the nominations. Will the nominees kindly work their way up to the stage, please. Maybe they are already up here and I just don't know it.

NOMINATION FOR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Nominations are open for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2002-2003. Well, maybe nobody is going to nominate you, Raymond. Well, good morning, Eric.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ERIC SANDSTROM (Post 969-Washington): Commander-in-Chief, Delegates of the 103rd National Convention, for over 50 years I have been coming to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Conventions, and for over 50 years I have listened to individuals nominate their candidates for Commander-in-Chief of our organization. All of them are very worthy candidates.

Today, I have the honor of nominating our candidate from the Western Conference for Commander-in-Chief. It is time to advance our present Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief into the chair of Commander-in-Chief. We believe he has handled the chores of Junior and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief very adequately.

I am not going to read all of Ray Sisk's accomplishments in the Veterans of Foreign Wars for I am sure you have heard and read about his work in the VFW so many times during the last few years. You will hear it so many more times during the coming year if you see fit to elect him as our Commander-in-Chief.

Ray was born in Marshall, Arkansas, and grew up in Oklahoma and California. He is a Navy veteran who qualified for the Veterans of Foreign Wars with the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. Ray is retired from his own trucking business in Bakersfield, California, and now has been able to spend full-time as your Commander-in-Chief if you see fit to elect him.

I personally believe that the most important asset in Ray is that he is a born leader. He will take the time to listen and talk to all veterans. Ask anybody from the State of California and the Western Conference. It is my privilege for this old, old Past Commander-in-Chief and, yes, this old, old United States Marine to nominate a swabby, a very good swabby, my friend and I hope your friend, Ray Sisk from Bakersfield, California, to be our next Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is there a second to the nomination? I recognize Norm Staab from the great state of Hays, Kansas.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NORMAN STAAB: I am Norman Staab from Russell Post 6240. I have the distinct honor and pleasure to second the nomination of Ray Sisk for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We are indeed proud to have a candidate who has the qualifications, ability and experience that Ray Sisk has.

Ray has distinguished himself in the VFW from the Post level all the way through the National Organization and is currently serving us as our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Briefly, Ray is a member of Post 9791 in Bakersfield, California.

He has reached the high honor of All American Post and All American State Commander. He has held all the traditional leadership positions from Post, District, State and Council member. He has served for four years as the

National Coordinator for the National Veterans Golden Age Games.

He is a comrade who has distinguished himself on all levels and most recently as our Junior and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. His leadership ability and knowledge of our organization are a proven fact. It is my pleasure again to second the nomination of our comrade from the Western Conference, Ray Sisk.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief? Hearing none, the nominations will stay open until tomorrow morning.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Are there any nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars? I recognize Cliff Olson, Past Commander-in-Chief.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CLIFF OLSON: Thank you, Commander. Comrades, good morning. For the record, my name is Cliff Olson, Past Commander-in-Chief and a delegate from Post 8699, Milton, Massachusetts.

It is with a great deal of pride and humility that I come before you today. As I have stated in the past, this is not something I take lightly to nominate a comrade for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. It is something that I, as a Past Commander-in-Chief, take very seriously and something that I would not do if I were not sure that the comrade I am about to nominate was worthy or capable to fill the position.

This comrade has quite a background in both his civilian and military service and with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, so much that I cannot cover everything. The basics are that he joined the VFW in 1967 and is a Life Member of Post 10004 in Jewett City, Connecticut.

He has held most chairs in the Post, culminating in his year as Post Commander by being named as an All State Post Commander. He further distinguished himself on the District level by earning the coveted honor of All American District Commander in 1991.

He attained and was successful as State Commander in 1993-1994, and continued in office as he was elected to the National Council of Administration, serving in 1994-1996.

He has served on many Committees, both as a member and as chairman. Some of those Committees are By-laws, Safety, Budget and Finance, along with Americanism and Legislative Committees.

His eligibility was derived by his service with the 66th MP Company, 18th Military Police Brigade in Qui Nhon, Vietnam, from March, 1966, through March, 1967.

For the next 18 months he served with the Armed Forces Police in Boston's infamous "Combat Zone." Some of us folks think that it was worse than what we said before. He was honorably discharged in October, 1968. While serving in Boston, he attended Northeastern University and also later

graduated from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms School for Criminal Investigations.

He has been a member of both the Connecticut and International Narcotics Officers Association, and he has served as a police officer for the Norwich, Connecticut Police Department for over ten years, and is a Past President of the Patrolman's Benevolent Association.

My comrades, this past year, as he has served as our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, he has traveled extensively throughout our country and the entire organization. He has traveled to Laos, Hawaii and Vietnam as we continue in our quest to return all of our POW and MIAs. He has been in Laos also seeking information regarding the unexploded ordnance and its recovery.

By direction of our Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, he has visited NATO countries and also visited Bosnia and Kosovo to meet with our troops as we continue in our efforts to improve our servicemen and women's quality of life and to let them know that the Veterans of Foreign Wars supports them and their families as they continue to protect and defend our way of life. He is father of five children by his first wife and is presently engaged to the very lovely Sandra Robichaud.

Comrades, it is with a great deal of pride that I place in nomination for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief a man, a comrade who will perform as well in the coming 12 months as he has in the past 12 months. From the Nutmeg State of Connecticut, it is my pleasure to nominate for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Edward S. Banas.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The chair will recognize Ron Rusakiewicz for a seconding speech.

COMRADE RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460 - Connecticut): Thank you very much, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. To all the National Officers and members of the National Council of Administration, to our great State Commanders, to the Officers, Members and Delegates of this, our 103rd Convention:

I want to tell you how proud I am to come before you this morning to second the nomination of a man who has proven to each and every one of us that he has the qualifications and the capability of carrying out the duties of the very high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

His vision of this organization is just like yours and mine. It is a vision where we take our aims, ideals, goals, programs and further them as we move this organization forward. I am very, very proud to know that Ed is very close to the VA system in his commitment that every single solitary valued veteran in that system receives competent, compassionate medical health care, and he will certainly continue to strive to have that happen.

My fellow comrades, I am indeed honored to second the nomination of Edward S. Banas, Sr., for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: For the purpose of a second,

the chair recognizes Richard Cyr.

COMRADE RICHARD CYR (Post 10004 - Connecticut): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Officers and Delegates of this 103rd National Convention:

My name is Richard Cyr from Post 10004 in Connecticut. It is with great pride that I stand before you, the officers and the delegates to this National Convention, for the purpose of nominating a man who is no stranger to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Those of you who have met Ed in the past and those of you who will meet Ed in the future understand why we call him pure VFW. On behalf of Post 10004, Jewett City, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it is my honor to second the nomination of Ed Banas for the high office of National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? The nominations are open until tomorrow morning.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Are there any nominations for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any nominations for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

At this time the chair will recognize Past Commander-in-Chief Larry Rivers from Alexandria, Louisiana.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, how much time is allotted for that?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Five minutes.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS: Good morning, my fellow delegates. I am Larry Rivers, a Life Member of VFW Post 1736, Alexandria, Louisiana, and a registered delegate to this convention. I proudly stand before you this morning to place the name of Hugh Long, a Life Member of VFW Post 4302, Yazoo City, Mississippi, in nomination for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Hugh Long was elected by the delegates to the Southern Conference as our candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for one reason. He is the best man for the job. We never doubted that. The actions of the candidate since the elections have proven that we were right.

In dealing with his fellow VFW comrades, Hugh Long will look you in the eye, give you his word, and he will keep it, not just some of the time, not just when it is convenient to do so, but all of the time. That doesn't surprise the ones of us that know him best, his supporters and friends in the Southern Conference, because we know he is a man of integrity and honor.

Hugh would never allow others on his behalf or in support of his candidacy to trash the good name and reputation of a fellow VFW comrade simply for political gain. That doesn't surprise us either, because Hugh would not do that himself. He is his own man. He can speak for himself.

He does so honestly and with a sense of purpose. We do not take a second seat on the issue of honesty and integrity to any other candidate. Hugh and his supporters are men and women who do everything they possibly can to abide by the Constitution, By-Laws, rules, agreements and customs of both the VFW and our great Southern Conference. They play by the rules. It is a measure of honor and integrity.

We believe that if you campaign seeking the Southern Conference endorsement for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and lose the election you should accept the judgment of your comrades. Why campaign for years seeking the conference endorsement if you are not going to accept the decision?

For more than 50 years, every losing Southern Conference candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief has done so. We are Southerners and to us this is more than simply being a sore loser, although it certainly is that, it is a matter of keeping your word. It is about honor and integrity.

We think the delegates to this convention should know the same cries of indignation that have been directed toward Hugh at this convention were also used against him throughout the campaign in the South. They didn't work. Down South it is hard to smear a good and decent man based solely on one incident, particularly when that occurred more than 20 years ago and before he joined the VFW.

Based on your own public and private conversations with our National Officers and Senior VFW staff members, you can reach your own conclusions as to how they feel about all of this hoopla. You can also reach your own conclusions as to whether they are using the perks of their good offices to try and thwart the will of the Southern Conference by joining together to defeat our unanimously-endorsed candidate.

To the Southern Conference, what is going on is pretty obvious, but no sense in guessing. We will know the answer when the votes are cast tomorrow. How about the troops, how do they feel? You know, the troops, that invisible, faceless, nameless mass within the VFW whose opinion is used for justifying all things done on the VFW National level.

Are the troops outraged that a member in good standing, a member with an outstanding service to his country, a member who has had a record of accomplishments and service to veterans in the VFW, who happens to make a mistake, might rise through our ranks and be elected to the exalted national chairs?

Are the troops so horrified by this one mistake made 20 years before VFW membership that when it is mentioned in their presence they discount all other lifetime accomplishments and judge that person unfit for office? Are the troops concerned that irreparable damage will befall the VFW if we elect Hugh Long as our Commander-in-Chief?

Have the troops been tricked into believing large hordes of newspaper reporters will report and descend on Mississippi, Washington, Kansas City, and to every VFW Post in America if we elect Hugh? Clearly, they are not. Otherwise, when given the opportunity on Sunday in the By-Laws Committee, and again on the convention floor Tuesday morning, it seems

logical that they would have at least asked to debate, much less pass the By-Law Amendment submitted by Hugh's opponents to prevent just such an occurrence.

If it is true that something horrible will befall the VFW when we elect Hugh, doesn't it seem strange that no person, no VFW leader, no delegate asked that the By-Laws designed to protect the organization from such terrible acts stood on the convention floor in its defense?

Unfortunately, we in the South are all too familiar with the harmful effects of discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping and painting all people with a broad brush. It is hurtful and it serves no good purpose. We are very proud that when Hugh Long of Mississippi and the men and women of the Southern Conference who supported him stood strong in refusing this kind of discrimination.

The Commander-in-Chief has informed me I am out of time, so I will not have time to go into the various things about Hugh Long and his career. But I will be in the hall when this is over and I would love to discuss his candidacy with all of you. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for the notice.

In closing, let me say this. Hugh Long won the election in the South, Hugh Long will win the overwhelming majority of the votes of the Southern Conference delegates on this floor tomorrow, and he will have won the election and vote of his Southern Conference comrades for a second time.

I stand before you and ask you to stand with me and support our great Southern Conference and proudly endorse Hugh Long for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The chair will recognize Johnnie Richard, Department of Mississippi Commander, for a seconding speech.

COMRADE JOHNNIE RICHARD (Post 2539 - Mississippi): Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am Johnnie Richard, a delegate from Post 2539, Gulfport, Mississippi, Department Commander in Mississippi. Comrades, I stand before you to second the nomination, and it is a high honor for a gentleman from the South, a man whose integrity has been questioned and stands unquestionable, a man who stands before you today as the only official Southern Conference candidate, a man who knows what a gentleman of the South means, and he represents it that way each day; a man who uses good words and good deeds to motivate people, not threats and intimidations; a man whose life has been spread before us as no other has in recent memory, at least during my lifetime.

Comrades, I stand before you to second the nomination of a true comrade of the VFW, a true friend of the VFW, a man who has given his life, an All American Post Commander, an All American District Commander, and an All American State Commander, and a National Council member who served you and served you well. It is my extreme privilege and honor to second the nomination of Hugh Long for National Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: For the purpose of a seconding

speech, the chair will recognize Bob Sprute, Past National Council of Administration member from Florida.

COMRADE BOB SPRUTE (Post 5625 - Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, members of this august body, and delegates: I am Bob Sprute, Past State Commander from Florida and a delegate from Post 5625 in Chiefland, Florida, presently serving as Vice-Chairman of the Southern Conference.

It is my privilege to stand before you and second the nomination of Hugh Long from the great state of Mississippi. My colleague, as a State Commander and a National Council member, but most importantly my friend of 35 years, and a friend forever.

Almost two years ago, in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida, and at our Southern Conference meeting three men of integrity stood together as candidates for nomination as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. They vowed, number one, a clean campaign; number two, the winner would be supported by those who lost. Then that vow was sealed with the American concept of a handshake.

Clearly, that vow has been broken. It has been shattered for political convenience. At our Southern Conference meeting in Savannah, Georgia, Hugh Long won the conference endorsement in a close but fair and honest election, if you do not include the presence of influence of our conference, much as we have seen here this week.

But Hugh Long prevailed and had every right to believe he would be our candidate from the Southern Conference for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, because "that gentleman's agreement had been in existence for over 50 years and has never been broken."

I bring these facts to you so that in your deliberations you can take this all into account. He is our chosen candidate from the Southern Conference. He remains our chosen candidate, our only chosen candidate. I simply ask you to do the right thing: vote your conscience and do so with the good of the order in mind.

Vote for Hugh Long, because he is the right man, because he is a veteran, because he preserves the conference system. Send the message that this organization belongs to us, the members, not the used-to-be's who still want to be. Send a message that we will not be intimidated.

Cast your vote with this in mind, this is our organization, he represents us and we elected him honestly and fairly. Gentlemen, I ask you to consider Hugh Long as your next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

The chair will recognize John Gwizdak, Past Commander-in-Chief, from Lake City, Georgia.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN GWIZDAK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John Gwizdak, Post 5080, a delegate. Officers to this great convention and delegates to this convention, when I was asked what I thought about nominating an individual other than by the so-called system, I was asked what do you think the delegates will do?

My thought was this. The delegates would not only welcome but be responsible for their position in choosing the leadership of this organization. You have heard about all the fair play, you have heard about how things went so well, but you have not heard about how votes were changed and arms were twisted, and it didn't quite come out that way. Perhaps, you are not used to that in any other conference. But things did happen.

When the vote was taken an individual by the name of John Furgess went to the stage and said, "This will go to the convention floor." That is the same as a "nay" vote on a unanimous endorsement. There was no reason to call for a vote for unanimous endorsement when there is already a "nay" that had already been presented.

They also asked me what do you think the delegates will discuss and debate at the National Convention in reference to you nominating from the floor? I said they will debate that this is a serious situation. They would not debate it if they had the right to make it right. They already have that right.

They would not debate it if the VFW would be tainted, but they would debate how long will it take to stand and finish and scour this stainless integrity. They would not debate what to do, but they would debate to do what else is necessary to keep the organization moving forward and with the characteristics and criteria that they have established within themselves.

They would not permit individual politics, individual agendas, or even the sacred lines of the conference system to stop them from doing the right thing. They said, "Well, why doesn't the South settle it among themselves?" That is like going back to the same judge and jury that you just faced.

We don't have a lot of perfect things in the world, but there is one thing that you cannot take away from me or you, and that is your name, your integrity and your moral character.

John was born at Langley Field, Virginia, now called Langley Base, and was raised in Nashville, Tennessee. He and his wife, Velma, had three daughters and nine grandchildren. John received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Middle Tennessee State University, August 20, '65.

He is also a graduate of the U.S. Management School and the Commanding General Staff College. He was named as the Military Scientist Distinguished Alumnus of Middle Tennessee. He has served for several years as Assistant Chairman of the Davidson Pitt County Veterans Coordinating Council.

John is a graduate of the ROTC program, a Vietnam veteran, and he served with the United States Army Americal Division at Shuli during '67 and '68, of course, receiving the Vietnam Service Medal and Campaign Ribbons. He served an additional 20-some years to come up with 28 years total with the National Guard and his active duty service, and retired at the rank of Colonel.

Among his military awards are the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the U.S. Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, citations and other awards.

John joined West National Post in 1970 and served through the chairs of Post Commander, serving through his District 6 as a District Commander also. John served as the State Commander of his Department of Tennessee Veterans of Foreign Wars from '78 through '79.

He was the first Vietnam veteran to hold that position in the Department of Tennessee, and among the first in the nation to serve as VFW Commander as a Vietnam veteran. John joined the VFW National Council of Administration, District 7, which represents the States of Tennessee and Kentucky during '99-2001.

He remains very active in his Post. He takes special pride in being the long-time chairman of the Voice of Democracy program in the Department of Tennessee, and he belongs to Pup Tent 3, Military Order of the Cootie. John has served on numerous VFW National Committees and he has served as Vice-Chairman on several of them. He has served as co-editor of the VFW state newspaper in Tennessee since 1977.

Delegates to this National Convention, you have the opportunity for your voice to be heard. Monday, we will have to look at ourselves and make sure that we made the right decision for the right reasons. I place in nomination for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Furgess of Tennessee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: For the purpose of a second for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the chair recognizes Gene Kent, Past Department Commander of North Carolina.

COMRADE GENE KENT (Post 891 - North Carolina): I was just given the high sign of two minutes. I am only going to take less than a minute. I stand here before you, Commander-in-Chief, and delegates at the 103rd Convention to second the nomination of John Furgess for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

There are two things that I have lived by in my 21 years in the military, two traits. One of those traits is integrity. We always say it at least 9,000 times a month around the world, life of stainless integrity. The second thing is moral courage. That is for you to stand up for what you believe in.

I have believed this from the onset of the finish of the Southern Conference nine months ago. I started this quest, I signed the letter that went out to all the State Commanders. It gives me great pride and humility to second the nomination of John Furgess for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Any other nominations? Hearing no other nominations, the nominations will stay open until tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The chair will now open nominations for Quartermaster General. Are there any nominations?

The chair will recognize Billy McCarthy as a speaker from District 2,

National Council of Administration.

COMRADE BILLY McCARTHY (Post 864 - Massachusetts): Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, this is a combination of four people that will nominate one person. Greetings to all the dedicated especially hard-working, persevering Quartermasters.

I would like to introduce the seconders, one representing each conference. From the Eastern Conference, my successor, the Quartermaster of the Department of Massachusetts, Stanley T. King. Representing the Western Conference, John Lowe from California.

Representing the Southern Conference, my daughter, Precilla Wilkewitz. And I probably pronounced her name wrong.

Representing the Big Ten is David Havelly. Joe Ridgley was elected Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in March, 1995. Prior to assuming that position, he had served as Assistant Quartermaster General since April, 1991. Joe began his employment in the VFW National Headquarters in 1976.

In 25 years he also served in Life Membership, Purchasing, Per Capita Tax and the VFW Emblem & Supply Department. Joe served on active duty with the United States Navy from 1970 until 1975, with two deployments to Vietnam.

Following the end of the Vietnam War, he attended the Navy Supply Corps School in Athens, Georgia. He subsequently served as the supply officer on the USS Schenectady, LST 1185, receiving a Letter of Commendation during his service.

Joe earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri in 1970, attended the Graduate School of Business at the University of Missouri in Kansas City, and Joe is a Life Member of VFW Post 8220, in Belton, Missouri.

Commander-in-Chief, I place the name of Joe Ridgley in nomination for Quartermaster General of the VFW. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The chair will recognize Precilla Wilkewitz from Louisiana for the purpose of a seconding speech.

COMRADE PRECILLA WILKEWITZ (Post 4224 - Louisiana): I am proud to be the second nominating speech for Joe Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General, my good friend, at this 103rd VFW Convention.

For 18 years, I have had dealings with the Quartermaster General's Office and for seven of those years Joe Ridgley has served our organization well as the Quartermaster General. I know the responsibilities Joe face on a daily basis. He is responsible to the membership of this organization.

Time after time, Joe has had to make decisions for the betterment of this organization. Sometimes he has had to disappoint some, but for the good of the majority, he has pleased the rest. He stands guard over our assets and knows well the responsibilities that we have entrusted in him.

He is a credit to the foundation of the VFW. His integrity is unquestionable. I am honored to be seconding the nomination of Joe Ridgley for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Joe Ridgley has been nominated for Quartermaster General. Is there any other nomination? Hearing none, the nominations will stay open until tomorrow morning.

At this time, are there any nominations for Judge Advocate General?

The chair will recognize Mr. Fitzgerald, National Council of Administration member, Area J, from Golden Gate, Florida.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMRADE RICHARD FITZGERALD (Post 7721 - Florida): Good morning. I am Richard Fitzgerald from VFW Post 7721, and also District J National Council member.

Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates to this 103rd National Convention:

Today I have been accorded a rare privilege and that is to place in nomination the name of a personal friend and comrade for the high office of Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He is the endorsed candidate from the Southern Conference.

Don Pierce has been an attorney for 44 years, 13 years serving in a judicial capacity, and also a VFW member for 57 years. In his 30-plus years of military service, he served as an enlisted demolition specialist in France and Germany during World War II, and also as a Small Unit Commander in Korea, and as a Staff Judge Advocate of the First Calvary Division and Chief of the Military Justice for all units in Vietnam.

Following his retirement as a Lieutenant Colonel, he became a Legal Advisor of the Board of Veterans Appeals. Later he was Legal Consultant to Jesse Brown, the former Secretary of Veterans Affairs and a member of the President's Cabinet. Pierce is a Life Member of Post 8696 in Florida, and has had numerous National and Department Committee appointments.

The positions he has held within the VFW are just too numerous to mention. He was an All American Post Commander and served as Judge Advocate for the Department of Florida for four years. He is a member of the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the Retired Officers Association, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the Military Order of World Wars.

He has held Judge Advocate positions in those organizations, totalling 29 years. Pierce received a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Maryland in 1950, and his LLB, a Bachelor of Law, from Emory University in 1959, which was later converted to a Juris Doctorate Degree in 1970.

He successfully completed work on his Master of Law Degree in Military Law Judge Advocate General School at the University of Virginia in 1964. He is a member of the Bars of the District of Columbia and Georgia, and is admitted to practice in Federal Courts, including the United States Supreme Court.

Don has been married to his wife, Laura, for 54 years. They have five

children, eleven grandchildren, four great-grandchildren. It is with a sense of pride and enthusiasm that I have the privilege to nominate Don Pierce as Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2002-2003. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The chair will recognize Pat Love from the Department of Florida, Commander from North Port, Florida.

COMRADE PATRICK LOVE (Post 8203 - Florida): Thank you, Chief. National Officers and all State Department Officers and Delegates here at the 103rd National Convention:

My name is Pat Love. I am the Department Commander from the State of Florida. I would like to second the nomination of Don Pierce for the office of Judge Advocate General. Don Pierce is a combat vet with over 30 years service as an enlisted man and officer.

He is a member of the VFW for 57 years, having served Florida over four years as Judge Advocate in an exemplary fashion. It is my privilege and pleasure to second the nomination of Don Pierce for National Judge Advocate of this great organization. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Pat. Any other nominations for Judge Advocate General at this time? Hearing none, the nominations will stay open until tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock.

At this time we will open nominations for Surgeon General. The chair will recognize Ed Burnham, Assistant Adjutant General (Retired) from Connecticut.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMRADE ED BURNHAM (Post 1724 - Connecticut): Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Delegates to this 103rd National Convention, my Comrades, the candidate I am about to nominate for the Eastern States Conference for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has a lengthy and impressive medical and military background.

He graduated cum laude from both the Universities of San Carlos and Santo Tomas in the Philippines. He served his internship at Clark Air Force Base Hospital in the Philippines and Meriden Wallingford Hospital in Connecticut.

He was a senior resident in internal medicine at Hartford Hospital in Connecticut as well as a Clinical Fellow at the University Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, and a Research Fellow and Associate at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

His hospital appointments over the last 23 years include: Senior Attending Physician, Chief of the Department of Medicine, Chairman of the Medical Executive Committee, Vice-President of the Medical Staff and Chief of Staff of the Backus Hospital in Norwich, Connecticut.

Also, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Assistant Medical Director at the UNCA on Thames Hospital in Eastern Connecticut.

He has authored a number of articles and papers dealing with his medical specialty and has served on many medical organizations as a member or chairman of their Board of Directors.

Commissioned as a Major, Medical Corps, in the Connecticut Army National Guard, his eligibility for the VFW was established while serving as Company Commander of the 142nd Medical Company that went to Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

He later served as Flight Surgeon for the 169th Aviation Unit of the Connecticut Army National Guard.

He is a Life Member of VFW Post 594 in Norwich, Connecticut, and is active in his community where he does volunteer work for the American Heart Association, the New London County Medical Association, and helped establish the Americares Free Clinic of Southeastern Connecticut, and became the Co-Medical Director of a mobile free clinic that sees patients that otherwise would have no access to medical care. He also treats uninsured veterans in his office in Norwich, Connecticut, without charge.

Married, he and his lovely wife, Bonnie, live in Norwich, Connecticut, with their three children, Wendy, Ben and Robin, where he continues his profession and private practice.

Comrades, it is indeed an honor and privilege to place in nomination the name of Dr. Cornelio Ben Hong for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: For the purpose of seconding the nomination, the chair will recognize Thomas Deere, the Department Commander of Connecticut from Essex, Connecticut.

COMRADE THOMAS DEERE (Post 6726 - Connecticut): Good morning. I am a member of Essex Post 6726, Connecticut. It gives me great pride to have the honor of seconding the nomination of such an important individual to our organization. Dr. Hong's years of unselfish dedication have earned him the right to hold the office of Surgeon General.

He is a most compassionate humanitarian with a sincere desire to help others and has earned the respect and admiration of all those in Connecticut and throughout the Eastern Conference. Again, it is my honor to second the nomination of Dr. Ben Hong for the office of Surgeon General. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Any other nominations for Surgeon General? Any other nominations for Surgeon General? Hearing none, the nominations will stay open until tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock.

At this time we will open up the nominations for National Chaplain. The chair recognizes Glenn Walters, Commander of the Department of South Dakota, from Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Glenn.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMRADE GLENN WALTERS (Post 628 - Sioux Falls, South Dakota):
Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to the Convention:

I am very honored to come before you this morning to place in

nomination a comrade, Reverend Dr. James Marrs, Sr., for the high office of National Chaplain for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Reverend Marrs was ordained in 1954 by an Episcopal Bishop in South Dakota and he served as Chaplain on two Indian Reservations before entering the armed forces as a Chaplain in 1960. His Naval career included one year with the Tenth Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and two years with the Story Division 282-ASW out of Norfolk, Virginia.

During the Cuban Missile crisis, Reverend Marrs received the Naval Expeditionary and Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and the National Defense Medal. Other awards and decorations also were received in years following while he served with his units of the Guard and Army Reserves.

Reverend Marrs retired from Active Reserve in 1984. Jim Marrs has also served as a Religious Activities Chairman of the South Dakota State Penitentiary for several years. He also joined the VFW in 1967. He is presently a member of Rapid City, South Dakota.

Gentlemen, I have known Reverend Marrs for quite some years, and I have also found him to be a very respectful, honorable person. I am sure he can provide us with the spiritual leadership we need for this great organization. It is my great pleasure to nominate James Marrs for the office of Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: For the purpose of seconding the nomination for National Chaplain, the chair recognizes Patrick O'Neill, Past Commander of the Department of South Dakota from Rapid City, South Dakota.

COMRADE PATRICK O'NEILL (Post 1273 - South Dakota): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers and Delegates:

I am Pat O'Neill, and I am from Rapid City, South Dakota, the home Post of Reverend Jim Marrs. I am most honored to second the nomination of Reverend James Marrs from my Post for this prestigious office of the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2002-2003.

Chaplain Marrs became a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in late '67 and has been active in several Posts since his duty as Chaplain in the military service moved him about. He came to Rapid City in January of 1992, and transferred to Rushmore Post 1273. Here he became active and was elected Chaplain at our Post's annual election after he arrived, and he has served continuously since, with the exception of '95-'96 when he was elected our Post Commander.

Because of his leadership, ability and knowledge of the VFW, he was, henceforth, awarded the All American Commander for a successful year. As a Life Member, Chaplain Marrs has served District 10 as Chaplain in our Department, and most recently he was elected Chaplain of the Big Ten Conference.

He has attended all of the National Conventions since 1995. Comrades, Chaplain Jim Marrs is a very dedicated and determined man. Not only is he a veterans' advocate but spiritually he is active in our

community serving several churches as well as his commitment to cover veterans in local and VA Hospitals.

He has always fulfilled his obligations. He has the ability and he is retired so he has the time and a very deep desire to continue servicing the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Reverend Jim Marrs has the endorsement of the Big Ten Conference.

Comrades, it is my honor to second the nomination of Reverend Marrs for the prestigious office of National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Are there any other nominations for National Chaplain? Any other nominations for National Chaplain? Hearing none and seeing no people at the microphones, it will remain open until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GEORGE PALMATEER (Post 4171 - Colorado): My Comrade Commander-in-Chief —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Before you start, state your name.

COMRADE GEORGE PALMATEER (Post 4171 - Colorado): I am George Palmateer, Colorado, Post 4171, a registered delegate at this convention. I would like to make a motion that those states that comprise the Southern Conference be allowed to vote first.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I am not going to entertain that motion. It is out of order. I am not going to entertain it. The nominations have been closed.

I recognize Adjutant General Senk for the purpose of announcements.

...Convention Announcements. ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: At this time, if there is no more business to come before the convention today, we will have our Chaplain with our Closing Prayer.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrades, please stand at attention and face the flag of our nation and salute.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain William Moody gave the Closing Prayer pursuant to the Ritual.)

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We will recess the meeting until 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning, bright and early.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:10 p.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 30, 2002

(The Fourth Business Session of the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Delta Ballroom,

Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee, was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Good morning. Are we all set? Let me say before I get started and Barry opens up the convention with the Pledge of Allegiance, I want to thank you all for participating in this convention. I think it has been a good convention.

I thank you for your cooperation, your attentiveness during this time period at National. I hope all of you have had a good time in Nashville. It has been a great convention city.

Please prepare the room for the Salute to the Colors and the Opening Prayer.

SALUTE TO THE COLORS

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrades, will you-all please rise and facing the flag of our Nation stand at attention and salute.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was given at this time.)

OPENING PRAYER

(Whereupon, National Chaplain William B. Moody gave the Opening Prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BARRY HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. The chair would like to have a point of personal privilege. I have not done this during the convention, and I would like to introduce a couple of my people, family members, who are with us, whom you have met over the past years.

We have with us my sister, Barbara, and her husband, Joe Appleby, a Life Member of Flushing Post 566 of Michigan. Also my son, Jim, Jr., and his fiance, Dana.

We will have the report of the Credentials Committee.

FINAL REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE ELWOOD RICKARDS (Department of Delaware): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Department Commanders and Delegates to this Convention:

My name is Elwood Rickards. I am a Life Member of the Mason-Dixon Post 7234, Ocean View, Delaware. This will be the Final Report of the Credentials Committee.

Total delegates, 13,546; total Department Commanders, 51; Past Commanders-in-Chief, 26; total National Officers, 36. That is for a grand total of 13,659. A majority will be 6,830, and two-thirds will be 9,106. This concludes our final report for the convention.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, this has been a most unusual convention. For the first time in almost 50 years there is a serious challenge to an endorsed candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

I move in accordance with the By-Laws of the VFW that any vote for any contested national office be done by roll call and that the roll call begin with the 14 southern states that comprise the VFW Southern Conference, and be followed by all other states alphabetically.

COMRADE JOHNNIE RICHARD (Department of Mississippi): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Before I entertain that motion, I would like to read something out of Demeter's, if you will give me that permission. It has been long established, what is called voting by custom. "The long established usage of a practice in the assembly's mode of voting has the force of law. Custom has status of a standing rule, and a standing rule may be discontinued by a two-thirds vote without previous notice or by a majority vote with notice."

What Demeter's is saying here, that the custom would be what we have done in the past, unless there was notification to change that. I have not received notification to change that. Gentlemen, let's get some rules set here right now. I am going to do the best I can on this election, so I don't need cat calls or shouting or anything else like that. I will do the very best I can. I will try to be fair with everybody. I will make that promise to you. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 - Texas): We understand what the Demeter's says, but we believe that the delegates have a right to determine the voting procedures, although it has been done alphabetically in the past. There is no provision of Demeter's that says that these delegates cannot change that voting procedure prior to the beginning of the vote for a candidate.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Okay. Here is what I am going to do. I am going to entertain this motion. If I am correct, it will take two-thirds to change that. Is that right? Any other questions on the motion? Any other questions on the motion?

Seeing nobody at any of the microphones, I will call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". I can say this, it is not two-thirds. The motion is defeated. There is no question about that in my mind that it is not two-thirds.

Is there any other business to come before this convention? If not, we will go into the election of officers.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Are there any other nominations for the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars? Is there any other nomination for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, once, twice, three times? The nominations are closed. I will entertain a motion to cast a unanimous ballot.

Ray, you may have to make that motion for yourself. I understand it is early in the morning. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JERRY ANDERSON (Post 2835 - California): I move the nominations close and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for Raymond Sisk, as Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMRADE EDWARD BANAS (Post 10004 - Connecticut): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded that we cast one unanimous ballot for Ray Sisk for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2002-2003. Is there any discussion on the motion? All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion passes.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: It gives me a great deal of pleasure as the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Ray Sisk for the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2002-2003. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: At this time it gives me great pleasure to present to you the Commander-in-Chief-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and he will officially be the Commander-in-Chief as soon as we can wrap this thing up, Raymond Sisk.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SISK: Thank you, Comrades. Thank you very much for this high honor. Of course, I have a short acceptance speech later on in the program where I will introduce my family and those that are here that are special friends.

To you, Comrades, here at the 103rd National Convention, I want to thank you for your faith and your confidence in me, and I will do the very best I can to the best of my ability to be the Commander-in-Chief that you will be proud of. Thank you for electing me your Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

It this time, for those of you who don't know her, my lovely wife, Joan, is going to cap me with the Chief's cap.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Are there any more nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Once, twice, three times. The

nominations are closed.

COMRADE ED BURNHAM (Post 1724 - Connecticut): I move that the convention instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Ed Banas as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is there a second to that motion?

COMRADE RICHARD CYR (Post 10004 - Connecticut): I second that nomination.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded to cast one unanimous ballot for Ed Banas from the great state of Connecticut as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The motion carried. It is so ordered.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, it is a personal honor for me to cast one ballot for the unanimous election of Edward Banas for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or the ensuing year.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT BANAS: First of all, I thank all of you for trusting me to do this job. Last year it was so emotional I forgot to thank my Post in Connecticut and my District in Connecticut and my Department in Connecticut for supporting through several years of campaigning.

I can tell you it has been an honor to go out to the many Departments that I have to visit with servicemen, and just to let you know my posture on that, when I meet servicemen in different places that the Commander-in-Chief has sent me, I tell them as a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars we love you, we support you and as you complete your mission we intend to honor many of you as this century's first military heroes. Thank you very much for the privilege and honor to serve you as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I look forward to visiting more and more Departments this year under the direction of my new Chief, Ray Sisk. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Now, we will open it up for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Are there any other nominations to come before the body? Any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? The nominations are now closed.

Would Hugh Long and John Furgess please join us on the stage. So, there will be no question about this, I have just asked the two candidates if they want me to have the guests removed. They said no. So we will go on with the election.

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

NAME	LONG	FURGESS
Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith		X
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk		X
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas		X
Adjutant General John J. Senk		
Quartermaster General Joe L. Ridgley		
Judge Advocate General Victor Fuentealba		X
Surgeon General Walter Dybeck, Jr.		
National Chaplain William B. Moody	X	
National Chief of Staff John Harrow		X
Inspector General Thomas Tradewell		X

DISTRICTS	LONG	FURGESS
District No. 1 - Paul Chevalier		X
District No. 2 - Billy McCarthy		X
District No. 3 - Joseph Rosetta		X
District No. 4 - Robert McGowan		X
District No. 5 - Charles Thrower		X
District No. 6 - Robert Kesling		X
District No. 7 - Jeff Phillips		X
District No. 8 - Charles Stephens	X	
District No. 9 - William Cox		X
District No. 10 - Bobby Julian		
District No. 11 - Bob Peters		X
District No. 12 - A. L. Ellefson		X
District No. 13 - Richard Weston		X
District No. 14 - Donald Riegel		X
District No. 15 - Tyrone Benson		X
District No. 16 - Marcus Butler		X
District No. 17 - Johnnie Janes		X
District No. 18 - Salvatore Capirchio		X
District No. 19 - Landry Saucier	X	
District A - Neale Deibler	X	
District B - Donald Porter		X
District C - Jack Simons	X	
District D - George Cox	X	
District E - David Adams		
District F - James Van Hauter		X
District G - Steven Jacobs		X
District H - William Bell	X	
District J - Richard Fitzgerald	X	

STATE	LONG	FURGESS	ABSTAINED
Alabama	252		
Alaska		72	
Arizona		160	

Arkansas	180	59	
California		688	
Colorado	24	183	
Connecticut		163	
Delaware			
District of Columbia	20	7	
Department of Europe	94		
Florida	663		
Georgia	2	277	
Hawaii		37	
Idaho		68	
Illinois		719	
Indiana		436	
Iowa		128	
Kansas		298	
Kentucky		233	
Latin America/Caribbean			
Louisiana	209		
Maine		101	
Maryland		338	
Massachusetts		286	
Michigan		588	
Minnesota	49	366	
Mississippi	150		
Missouri	9	276	
Montana		60	
Nebraska		191	
Nevada	11	72	
New Hampshire		110	
New Jersey		327	
New Mexico		131	
New York	377	30	
North Carolina		225	
North Dakota		119	
Ohio	771		
Oklahoma	65	130	
Oregon		96	
Pacific Areas		88	
Pennsylvania	24	773	
Rhode Island		75	7

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We have reached a majority, and I have asked the candidate if he wanted to continue with the roll call, and Hugh asked me to use the microphone. That is what we are doing.

COMRADE HUGH LONG (Department of Mississippi): Thank you. I stand before you honored to be the endorsed candidate from the Southern

Conference, but you, the delegates, have denied the Southern Conference this right. Therefore, I concede and request that my name be withdrawn.

First, I would like to thank all the support that was given to me, especially the Department of Mississippi and my Post, and in particular many of those who have worked with me the last two years and ten months. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I will now entertain a motion.

COMRADE LARRY LeFEBVRE (Department of Michigan): I move that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for John Furgess for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year.

COMRADE CARL JACKSON (Department of Tennessee): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion. All those in favor say "aye; all those opposed. The motion carries.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Commander-in-Chief, it is my pleasure to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of John Furgess for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: All those in favor will say "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried.

At this time it gives me a great deal of pleasure to present to you the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2002-2003 from the great state of Tennessee, John Furgess.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT FURGESS: Comrades, thank you. You have honored me this morning more than words can tell, but as I stand before you this morning words are all I have. I pledge to the Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk from California and to Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas from Connecticut, to the staff in Kansas City and the staff in the Washington office, and to you, my comrades, my support and word and deed. Let's give them a round of applause right now. (Applause)

My heartfelt thanks this morning to West Nashville Post 1970 for their support all these 32 years, and especially for that one act of kindness long ago and far away, it was Christmas Eve of 1967 in the Republic of Vietnam. Maybe you were there, but that Post mailed me a care package and recruited me at that very moment.

To my great District 6 and to all in the great VFW Department of Tennessee, thank you. I wish Tennessee would stand right now. Will the Tennessee delegation please stand. (Applause)

To my wife, Alma, who many of you know, and many of you don't know but will get to know, for her understanding and support for these 31 years of meetings and meetings and more meetings. Thank you, Alma. I love you. (Applause)

Permit me to mention a few names. To Past Commander-in-Chief, that silver-haired golden-tongued orator from Tennessee, Cooper T. Holt.

Cooper, will you stand and be recognized this morning. (Applause)

To my good friend and close friend, State Adjutant Quartermaster from Tennessee, Ronnie Davis, and to that great Steering Committee, which many of you saw and heard on Sunday, and my Steering Committee Chairman, the Pollack from Georgia, John Gwizdak. Wherever you are, I wish he would stand. He is right over here.

Furgess, by the way, is Irish and Hungarian. You will hear a little more about that later. I want to thank three more gentlemen. They may or may not even be in the room now, but they announced for this high office and they ran for this high office, and I salute them and reach out to them this morning: Charles Stephens, my long-time friend from Alabama, Scotty Keene of West Virginia, and Hugh Long of Mississippi. Please honor them with your round of applause, my comrades. (Applause) May they continue their hard work for this great organization.

Finally, to our veterans all across America, 26 million strong, the Veterans of Foreign Wars begins a new year today and we are coming to help you, to help our military and to help our communities all around the world. And to our wonderful Ladies Auxiliary, thank you, thank you. Or as John Gwizdak would put it, I thank ya'll.

Comrades, God bless you. May you have a safe journey when you leave my hometown, Nashville, Tennessee. You are welcome back to the Music City USA at any time. You-all come back, ya-hear? Thank you so much, Comrades. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: At this time we will reopen the nominations for Quartermaster General. Are there any more nominations? Once, twice, three times. The nominations are closed. I will entertain a motion for one unanimous ballot.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JIM HUGHES (Department of Missouri): I move the nominations for the office of Quartermaster General be closed and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for election of Joe L. Ridgley for the high office of Quartermaster General.

COMRADE JIM MUELLER (Post 5077 - Missouri): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: It has been moved and seconded to cast one unanimous ballot for Joe Ridgley for Quartermaster General for the year 2002-2003. Any questions on the motion? Hearing no questions on the motion, all in favor signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The motion carried and is so ordered.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Commander-in-Chief, my Comrades, it is a distinct pleasure for me to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of a friend for many years, and a co-worker, Joe Ridgley, for the high office of Quartermaster General for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Sisk assumed the chair.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: We will have the placement of his cap at this time. My wife did this last year since his wife was not here. She made it this year.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT RIDGLEY: I think, Ray, you have been married 31 years. Judy and I are a little bit ahead of you. We have been married 32 years and I am really proud of her. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: My Comrades, the nomination for Judge Advocate General for the VFW is our good friend from Florida, Don Pierce. Are there any nominations at this time for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States? Are there any more nominations? Are there any more nominations? The nominations will cease.

I would entertain a motion for a unanimous ballot for Judge Advocate General.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE PATRICK LOVE (Department of Florida): I would like to make a motion we cast one unanimous ballot for Judge Advocate General Don Pierce.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Do I hear a second?

COMRADE EUGENE MANFREY (Post 6827 - Florida): I would like to second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: The motion has been made and seconded for a unanimous ballot for Don Pierce from the great state of Florida for your next Advocate General. Those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye". The motion is carried.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: It is a privilege to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Don Pierce for the high office of Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: I present to you Judge Advocate General-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Donald Pierce from Florida.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT PIERCE: Comrades, when I was at the great state of Virginia at the Mid-Winter, one of the ladies of the Auxiliary asked me what does the Judge Advocate General do? I said he speaks when spoken to. It is hard to shut a lawyer up.

You have had a long meeting and the only thing I want to do is to thank the Southern Conference for treating my wife, Laura and myself as visiting royalty when we visited all of the states. I want to thank the one person I hold responsible for my having this election today, my wife, my lover, my friend, Laura. She was my co-pilot, my alternate driver as we drove to all these states. Again, my Comrades, thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: My Comrades, nominated for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is Cornelio R. Hong from Connecticut. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? If not, the nominations will cease.

COMRADE EDWARD BURNHAM (Post 1724 - Connecticut): I move that the nominations be closed and this convention instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Cornelio Ben Hong

as the Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EDWARD BANAS: Ed Banas, Post 10004, Connecticut, a delegate to this convention, seconds that.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: You have heard the motion. There being no questions on the motion, all will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: It is a distinct honor and privilege for me to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of Cornelio Ben Hong for the high office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Comrades, I now present to you your selection as the Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Cornelio Hong from Connecticut.

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT HONG: Commander-in-Chief Sisk, Comrades: It is an honor and pleasure to be here today, and I get a little bit nervous in front of all of you, but if anyone asks in the back if there is a doctor in the house, you will know I will be sitting. Thank you very much. I would like to present my wife, Bonnie. I love her very much. (Applause) (Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith assumed the chair.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: At this time we will reopen nominations for Chaplain. Are there any more nominations for Chaplain? Once, twice, three times. Hearing no more nominations, the nominations are closed. I will entertain a motion.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GLEN WALTERS (Post 628 - South Dakota): I move that the nominations cease and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for James Marrs for Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Is there a second to the motion?

COMRADE STANLEY SEYMOUR (Department of South Dakota): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: You have heard the motion and the second. Is there any question on the motion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion carried and is so ordered.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The Adjutant General casts one ballot for the unanimous election of James Marrs to the high office of Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: While we are getting the Chaplain up here, at this time I will dismiss the Credentials Committee and any other Committee I may not have dismissed yet. You are dismissed with my deep sincere thanks.

I will also dismiss the Parliamentarian, Ed Burnham. You are dismissed, too, with my thanks.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT MARRS: In the absence of my wife, I will thank her for her support. I want to give my thanks to Post 1273 in

Rapid City and my Department of South Dakota, the Big Ten Conference, and to all of you. I appreciate it very much and I assure you that I intend to be your Chaplain and the Commander-in-Chief's Chaplain.

I don't know if you got the pattern, to the degree I have served all four branches, so all of you are my veterans. I wish to be assured that through the Chaplains throughout our country, Posts, Districts, Departments, Conferences that I will give the support to you, not you to me, because I will serve as Chaplain under the guidance and direction of Commander-in-Chief Sisk. (Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: That concludes the election of officers. You have elected the officers for the 2002-2003 year. At this time we will have the announcement of National Council Members-elect by the Adjutant General, with the placement of the caps by Commander-in-Chief-elect Ray Sisk.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: The new Council members receiving their cap from the Commander-in-Chief-elect, District 2, Vermont and Massachusetts, Samuel R. Haskins, Post 1034.

District No. 4, representing the District of Columbia, Delaware, Department of Europe, Peter J. Mascetti, Jr., Post 1058.

From District No. 6, Virginia and West Virginia, Paul T. Moore, Post 4491.

District No. 8, representing Georgia and Alabama, Richard Branson, Post 5080.

Councilman from District No. 10, representing Oklahoma and Arkansas, John Dilbeck, Post 3608.

District No. 12, representing South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming, Larry L. Scudder, Post 1273.

District 14, representing Montana, Washington and Idaho, Larry Longfellow, Post 1087.

District 16, representing Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific Areas, Alaska and Hawaii, Frank Lamson, Post 970.

District No. 18, representing Connecticut and Rhode Island, Robert A. Stevens, Post 10690.

District No. 21, representing Minnesota and Nebraska, Louie Mrozek, Post 6316.

District D, Ohio, Daniel N. Long, Post 1069.

District H, Texas, Jimmie Cantrell, Post 9168.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We will have the appointments by Commander-in-Chief-elect Sisk.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT RAYMOND SISK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SISK: I am very pleased to announce my appointment of John J. Senk, Adjutant General, for the 2002-2003 administrative year. At the Council meeting I will ask the Council to confirm that appointment.

The following appointments are also announced: Our National Chief of Staff, George C. Berthiaume, from Post 969 in the State of Washington.

As Inspector General Darrell F. Bencken from Post 2981, Kansas.

As National Sergeant-at-Arms, Barry Hoffman, Post 6240, Kansas. If you will have your better halves come forward, we will cap you, including you, Mr. Senk.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for the appointment, and I pledge you my full support in your success.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Well, this will be my last official comment as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It has been a great year with you. We will now go to the Installation of Officers.

At this time will the officer of the day please bring to the stage the Installing Officer for the purpose of the Installation, Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I present to you Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom, who is the duly-appointed Installing Officer.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the term to which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed has now expired. It is my duty to ascertain the following: Have the officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: Have the books of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: He has.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time, the By-Laws prescribe that you must within 60 days of the election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General and ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: Have you the charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: I have.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: You will now surrender the gavel to me. Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith, you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization, and it is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander-in-Chief it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences you have gained during your term of office.

You will now station yourself at my right. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now present the officers-elect at the alter as the Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be installed.

NATIONAL SERGEANT AT ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Comrade Installing Officer.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JOHN SENK: Edward S. Banas, Sr., Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

John Furgess, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Joe L. Ridgley, Quartermaster General.

Donald Pierce, Judge Advocate General.

Cornelio Ben Hong, MD, Surgeon General.

James Marrs, National Chaplain.

George C. Berthiaume, National Chief of Staff, otherwise known as Corky.

Darrell F. Bencken, Inspector General.

Commander-in-Chief-Elect Ray Sisk has invited all of the National Council members to be installed with him. They are as follows:

District No. 1, Paul J. Chevalier.

District No. 2, Samuel R. Haskins.

District No. 3, Joseph R. Rosetta.

District No. 4, Peter J. Mascetti, Jr.

District No. 5, Charles F. Thrower, Jr.

District No. 6, Paul T. Moore.

District No. 7, Jeff A. Phillips.

District No. 8, Richard Branson.

District No. 9, William (Cleve) Cox.

District No. 10, John Dilbeck.

District No. 11, Robert C. Peters.

District No. 12, Larry L. Scudder.

District No. 13, Richard N. Weston.

District No. 14, Larry H. Longfellow.

District No. 15, Tyrone M. Benson.

District No. 16, Frank S. Lamson.

District No. 17, Johnnie B. Janes.

District No. 18, Robert A. Stevens.

District No. 19, Larry E. Saucier.

District No. 21, Louie Mrozek.

District A, Neale H. Deibler.
District B, Donald L. Porter.
District C, Jack I. Simons.
District D, Daniel N. Long.
District F, James A. Van Hauter.
District G, Steven D. Jacobs.
District H, Jimmie D. Cantrell.
District J, Richard Fitzgerald.

Past Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, John Senk, Adjutant General, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year, Ray Sisk.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: Officers-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will administer to you the Officers' Obligation. You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, or the shoulder of the person beside 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 SANDSTROM: Comrade Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MOODY: Almighty God, our guide and divine protector, give Thy blessings upon these our comrades who now become fellow officers.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, who are ever present among us to grant wisdom unto them so that in their deliberations they continue to favor Thee, our glorious country and the veterans' organization. May Thy strength sustain them, may Thy power preserve them, may Thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor to which your comrades have elected you. Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your respective offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you through your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties. Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort our Commander-in-Chief-elect up here and bring the American flag with you.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir. Comrade

Installing Officer of the 103rd National Convention, I present to you per your order Raymond C. Sisk, Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect, before administering your Obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties. You will be held personally responsible for the Charter of this organization. At the end of your term of office, you will deliver it to the officer appointed to install your successor.

It is your duty to see that all National Officers perform their duties to the best of their ability. You shall keep yourself informed on all proposed legislation which may affect the welfare of potential and actual comrades of this organization, and strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the By-Laws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important questions referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade Ray Sisk, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SISK: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER SANDSTROM: Will you raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, and repeat your name, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Sisk received the following Obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, Raymond C. Sisk, 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 Ritual and By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, the National Charter, all records, money and other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control.

"I do further solemnly promise that I will be fair and impartial in all 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 SANDSTROM: As you were. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, first of all, I want to ask all the officers to stretch out your right hand and repeat after me:

"To you, Commander-in-Chief Ray Sisk, from the Golden State of

California, I pledge my sincere allegiance and I will be the very best officer I can possibly be. So help me God."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Officers, Friends to the 103rd National Convention, I do hereby proclaim these Officers duly installed and this organization in working order for one more year. (Applause)

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officers to their respective stations.

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, before you put our Past Commander-in-Chief in the seat, Jim, please come forward.

To our Past Commander-in-Chief, I have a presentation to make to you at this time. I have a Gold Life Membership Card for you from the VFW and a Past Chief's pin. I want to thank you for an outstanding job for leading this organization in your particular year. Jim, you have done a fantastic job and I thank you so much for what you have done for us. (Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLDSMITH: Thank you. Ray, it gives me great pleasure to present to you the Commander-in-Chief's pin. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: At this time if our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief will please come forward. I would like to place on your lapel the pin of the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. May you wear it proudly and with honor as I know you shall.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BANAS: Thank you. I will ask the newly-elected Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief to come forward and let me pin him with the pin I shall surrender.

ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: You know, it is customary for a Commander-in-Chief to thank a lot of people and give a long speech normally as an acceptance speech. I am a little unusual. I am sure in heck not going to do that. I want all of you to know that what you have done today has been the greatest honor I will ever have.

Let me start by saying Past Commander-in-Chief Goldsmith, Distinguished National Officers, Guests and Comrades:

I am truly humbled that you, the delegates at this 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, have elected me to the highest office this great organization can offer. While merely a symbol of a cause we have all served, the pride and humility I feel is hard to express. I thank this august body from the bottom of my heart for this expression of your loyalty and esteem.

While I cannot recognize each of you who are here byname, I would like to recognize a few. First of all, I would like to introduce to you my family, who has stood behind methroughout my campaign years and through my years in the VFW. They are my wife, Joan, my son, Doug, my son-in-law, Scott, and my daughter, Jennifer, my grandson, Dustin, and my

grandson, Toby. One of the best friends that a comrade could ever have, a lifelong friend of mine that I have known for over 40 years and who has helped tremendously in everything I have ever done during my lifetime, Al Horton from McAlester, Oklahoma. My nephew, Russell Baxter, a Life Member of Post 9691. My sister, Nadine Jackson.

Now, starting on this other side, my son-in-law, Mike Smith, my daughter, Charlotte Smith, my granddaughter, Corisa and my grandson, Christopher. Also my grandson, Michael, and my daughter, Darla, my granddaughter, Ramey, my daughter, Sandra, my granddaughter Stacy, and my brother, a Life Member of Post 9791, and Lillie Nelson. Lillie, thanks for being here. I am really proud of them. This is my family who have been behind me all this time.

Certainly you have met our incoming Inspector General Darrell Bencken, and I would like to introduce his wife, Marge. Please stand. And our Chief of Staff's wife, Judi.

Now, I would like to have all the members of Post 9791, Bakersfield, California, to stand for a round of applause. (Applause)

Also all the great fantastic members of the Ninth District, please stand, from California. And the wonderful Department and the Ladies Auxiliary members from there, please stand and be recognized, this great Department of California.

I would also like to recognize all of our friends in the Western Conference. Will you, please, rise. Thank you so much. (Applause) You know, I also want to acknowledge the Ladies Auxiliary. Our partnership is based on friendship and service, and I am privileged to have the opportunity to work with a great friend of mine this year, National President Betty Morris.

The Ladies Auxiliary's support of the Cancer Aid and Research Program as well as numerous other local and national programs has earned them the respect and gratitude of millions of Americans. I am committed to ensuring a successful and productive year for both the Ladies Auxiliary and for our VFW.

Comrades, I address you amidst the terrible crisis of our time - terrorism. Those who despise our American ideals launched a most cowardly attack against us on September 11, 2001. They failed to realize that those ideals of freedom and democracy are what will ultimately allow us to prevail. We, as a nation, have united with a renewed sense of patriotism and purpose.

As a result, we now find ourselves engaged in a global war unlike any other that those of us in this room today have ever fought. President Bush has called it a "conflict without battlefields or beachheads; a conflict with opponents who believe they are invisible. Yet we know they are mistaken. They will be exposed, and they will soon discover what others in the past have learned: Those who will make war against the United States have chosen their own destruction."

Just as the nation has united to win the war on terror, let us unite in our

cause and honor those who defend us today. This year will be about service to them, honor in their accomplishments, and pride in our organization and in our country. This focus is nothing new to you because service to country is what the VFW has been about since the dawn of our existence well over a century ago.

We have always assumed the burden of responsibility as individual citizens and collectively as members of this great organization to be at the forefront of home front activities in times of war and peace. From sponsoring service programs that range from Buddy Poppy to the National Home and the Golden Age Games, our organization's commitment to service is based on action, not words.

You provided 16 million volunteer hours of community service to our country this past year. Our Voice of Democracy Program remains second to none in educating the youth of America to the importance of service and duty to country; and Operation Uplink brings joy to the face of every military member stationed far from home. You should be proud of our record of service. Consider it a bench mark as we look to scale new heights this year.

Nowhere else is this service to our fellow veterans expressed as clearly as in our National Veterans Service Program. Embracing our motto, "To Honor the Dead by Helping the Living," this nationwide network of professional service officers ensures veterans and their dependents will receive all due entitlements in a timely fashion while protecting their rights.

We have recently expanded our National Veterans Service Program to include participation in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program. This program allows us to place National Service Officers on selected military installations to assist military personnel in their transition to civilian life. This offers an opportunity for the VFW to make a wonderful first impression and, hopefully, a lasting one. This year we will extend our commitment to include four new bases.

In order to assist them in all their worthy endeavors, I am committed to continually improving the support the National Organization provides to the Departments so that our VFW Service Officers can and will receive the very best training and equipment we have to offer. When a veteran or dependent is seeking assistance with a VA claim, I want the VFW to be their No. 1 advocate of choice.

With over 300,000 veterans waiting for medical appointments, the VFW will continue to have a voice in the national debate surrounding the funding and future of the VA Health-Care System. All veterans are entitled to timely health care and mandatory funding to cover the cost of that care.

Further, we will remain an active participant as VA unrolls Phase II of the Capital Assets Realignment for Enhanced Services Program. We will not allow access to health care to diminish as this process unfolds, just as we will not allow VA to slip behind on the progress they have made in reducing the backlog of benefits' claims.

Our mission does not stop in the veteran community. It extends beyond

to those men and women still on active duty, in the Guard and the Reserves as well, that are fighting the global campaign against terror. They not only deserve the tools and training necessary to accomplish their mission, they deserve an improved quality of life with a focus on pay, housing, health care and education to include a new G.I. Bill for the 21st Century.

Most importantly, our troops deserve the support, respect and undying gratitude of the American people. The VFW will always be in the forefront of supporting our troops. They hold the future of our country in their hands as well as the future of our organization.

To this end, I am pleased to announce the creation of a Military Assistance Program Committee that will be headed by a chairman and four vice-chairmen. This Committee will work with the MAP Directorate to expand our involvement with the armed forces by adopting units and ships, such as the USS Cole, while assisting service members and their families, while again creating a lasting first impression of the VFW.

Further, we will support our nation as it recognizes its homeland defense. We will play a key role through our partnership with the President's USA Freedom Corps. VFW Posts will take a leadership role in local communities by assisting public-safety personnel in responding to disaster situations and serve as a base to coordinate community meetings to encourage participation in local Citizen Corps Councils.

National security and safety is the goal. The right to live in peace and prosperity is the fundamental ideal. In turn, those who made the ultimate sacrifice for this ideal must never be forgotten. As President Lincoln wrote, "Honor the soldier, and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause." We will continue to honor those who serve and sacrifice for country's cause this year through ceremony and recognition as well as assuring the fullest possible accounting of those who remain missing.

In order for our organization to fulfill its service potential, it is incumbent upon us to remain strong and virile. Our strength is in our numbers and our strength will continue to increase when we all work together. Changes to our National Charter expanding membership eligibility will soon take place. We must do our utmost to expand our ranks and bring new and old candidates into the fold that is our VFW.

To motivate you further, I am offering eligibility for the Commander-in-Chief Membership Award Seminar to the top Post and District Commander in each membership division. I believe that this is an incentive that is long overdue. After all, membership is all of our business and who contributes more than you at the local Post, District and Department levels.

Moreover, I am interested in opening new, non-traditional avenues of expanding our great organization. Therefore, I plan to reorganize the Diversity Committee. It will be renamed the VFW National Outreach Committee and its core mission will be to create partnerships with nationally-known non-veteran organizations based on common interests that will in turn enhance the public's awareness of VFW's missions. These coalitions will also provide us additional strength in our battles on Capitol

Hill for veterans' rights.

Finally, it is once again an election year. One-third of the U.S. Senate and all of the U.S. House of Representatives are up for election. With the number of congressional members that have military experience consistently declining, it is incumbent upon our organization to educate those who would seek office on our priority goals. Let the candidates know that you expect their support on our issues, otherwise they can expect not to have our support at the polls on election day.

In order to back up our word, we need to register people to vote, get to the polls, and be visible by wearing our VFW caps. Only by actively participating in the political and legislative process can we make an impact on those who will be making the decisions that affect our lives for the next two years. Let's get out the vote and let's show them what the VFW can do and what we believe in.

Those and many more issues will impact us as we move forward with "service, honor and pride" in the coming year.

In closing, I pledge to you the best of my abilities to accomplish the VFW mission. With Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Edward Banas and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Furgess standing by my side, along with National President Betty Morris, we will not falter; we will not fail. Thank you again from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity to lead this great organization. (Applause)

I want to thank all of you Comrades in this room again and in particular my Installing Officer, Past Commander-in-Chief Eric Sandstrom from the Department of Washington, from the very bottom of my heart for the opportunity to lead this wonderful, wonderful veterans' organization that I belong to, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2002-2003. Thank you so much, my Comrades.

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

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Thank you so much. Guess who gets to close the convention? I would like to make an announcement that the Council meeting will be right after we adjourn. We will give you a little break so you can do your duties. The Council of Administration meeting will be in the Governor's South Room at 12:30. At this time, is there any further business to bring before the 103rd National Convention?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LARRY LeFEBVRE (Post 552 - Michigan): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Larry LeFebvre, a delegate from Post 552, Michigan. There being no further business to come before this convention and the officers having been duly elected and installed, I move that the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be

closed sine die.

COMRADE DAVID MILLER (Post 3925 - Michigan): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Comrades, you have heard the motion that has been made and seconded that we close our 103rd National Convention. Any questions on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Any questions on the motion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered. We will close our 103rd National Convention.

Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, will you now have the Closing Ceremonies.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

(Whereupon, the Honor Guard retired the Colors at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: National Chaplain.

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Marrs gave the Closing Prayer from the Ritual.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS HOFFMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SISK: Thank you, Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms. I now declare the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States properly closed. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the convention was duly adjourned at 11:15 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
NATIONAL BY-LAWS AND MANUAL OF
PROCEDURE AND RITUAL CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL**

B-1

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 108 - - REMOVING INELIGIBLES.

Amend Section 108, National By-Laws, by deleting the words "at all times" in the first sentence of the first paragraph. (APPROVED)

B-2

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

**SECTION 216 - - ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS; CHAIRMEN
AND
COMMITTEES.**

Amend Section 216, National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence in the last paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National By-Laws." (APPROVED)

B-3

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

**SECTION 316 - - ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS; CHAIRMEN
AND
COMMITTEES.**

Amend Section 316, National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence in the last paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, any right of

the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National By-Laws.”
(APPROVED)

B-4

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

**SECTION 414 - - ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS; CHAIRMEN
AND
COMMITTEES.**

Amend Section 414, National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence in the last paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

“In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National By-Laws.”
(APPROVED)

B-5

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

**SECTION 515 - - ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS; CHAIRMEN
AND
COMMITTEES.**

Amend Section 515, National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence in the last paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

“In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National By-Laws.”
(APPROVED)

B-6

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 608 - - ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS; CHAIRMEN AND COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 608, National By-Laws, by deleting the last sentence in the last paragraph and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

“In the event an elected or appointed officer fails to submit proof of eligibility within sixty (60) days of election or appointment, any right of the officer to hold the office shall be forfeited, the office declared vacant and the eligibility qualifications of such officer shall be questioned in accordance with the provisions of Section 108 of the National By-Laws.”
(APPROVED)

B-7

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 617 - - REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS-HOW ELECTED.

Amend Section 617, National By-Laws, by deleting paragraph two and three in their entirety and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

“Regional districts consisting of a single Department having in excess of 70,000 members shall bear alphabetical rather than numerical designations. The regional districts designated D and H shall elect a National Council Member in even-numbered years for a two year term and District A, B, C, F, G and J shall elect a National Council Member in odd-numbered years for a two year term.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Maine, New Hampshire,
Arizona. | 15. New Mexico, |
| 2. Vermont, Massachusetts,
America/Caribbean, Pacific Areas, | 16. Latin |
| 3. Maryland, New Jersey, | Alaska, Hawaii. |
| 4. District of Columbia, Delaware,
Oregon. | 17. Utah, Nevada, |
| Europe. | 18. Connecticut, Rhode |
| Island. | 19. Louisiana, |
| 5. Indiana, Missouri. | 21. Minnesota, |
| Mississippi. | |
| 6. Virginia, West Virginia. | A. Pennsylvania. |
| Nebraska. | B. Illinois. |
| 7. Tennessee, Kentucky. | |
| 8. Georgia, Alabama. | |

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 9. South Carolina, North Carolina. | C. New York. |
| 10. Oklahoma, Arkansas. | D. Ohio. |
| 11. Wisconsin, Iowa. | F. Michigan. |
| 12. South Dakota, North Dakota. | G. California. |
| Wyoming. | H. Texas. |
| 13. Kansas, Colorado. | J. Florida.” |
| 14. Montana, Washington, Idaho. | |

(APPROVED)

B-8

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Amend Article XIII, National By-Laws, by deleting it in its entirety and replacing in lieu thereof the following:

“Sec. 1301 – Formation.

A Post, if the By-Laws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide, may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit. The Department in which the Post is located shall charter such unit. Such association shall be subject to the rules established by the respective Department Convention, Department Commander and Post.

Departments are not authorized to issue charters to units other than those sponsored by a Post. Formation, control and disbandment of these associations, as well as suspension or cancellation of charters, shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure and as may be provided in Department By-Laws not inconsistent with the Manual.

Sec. 1302 – Eligibility.

Membership in the Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons, brothers and half brothers who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must not be less than sixteen (16) years old.

Persons eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall not be eligible for membership in the Mens Auxiliary.

Sec. 1303 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business.

The By-Laws adopted by any such auxiliary shall not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or laws and usage of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or

Department. Such By-Laws shall conform to rules prescribed by the respective Department and Post.” (APPROVED)

B-9

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 420 - - ARREARAGES.

Amend Section 420, National By-Laws, by deleting the word “or” between “bonded” and “failing” on line 2 and inserting following the words “District Election Report” the following:

“or failing to procure insurance as required by Section 709”.
(APPROVED)

B-10

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 709 - - CONTROL OF UNITS.

Amend Section 709, National By-Laws, by inserting after the first paragraph the following:

“Any Post owning and/or operating, directly or by reason of a holding company or other entity substantially controlled by the Post or its members, a canteen, clubroom or other facility available to members or guests must maintain general liability insurance, including, if necessary or appropriate, liquor liability insurance. Such insurance must be of a type and amount sufficient to protect the Post and must name, as additional insureds, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department in which such Post is located.” (APPROVED)

B-11

Proposed by Department of Europe

SECTION 101 - - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, National By-Laws, by deleting in the first paragraph “(1)” on the third line, after the word “membership”, replacing the “semi-colon” after the words “Congressional Charter” on the seventh line with a “comma”, and deleting the words, “and (2) who is a citizen of the United States”, in its entirety. (DISAPPROVED)

B-12

Proposed by Department of North Carolina

SECTION 101 - - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, National By-Laws, by adding the following after paragraph four (4):

“Felon – Any person convicted of, or entering a guilty or no contest plea to, a felony in any state or federal court of the United States and/or its territories, shall not be eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.” (DISAPPROVED)

B-13

Proposed by Department of Florida

SECTION 202 - - BY-LAWS.

Amend Section 202, National By-Laws, by deleting in the first sentence the following:

“by first class mail” (APPROVED)

B-14

Proposed by Departments of Kentucky and Tennessee

SECTION 215 - - ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 215, National By-Laws, by adding the following after the word “standing” in the first sentence:

“unless convicted or plead guilty to or no contest to a felony offense in any court in the United States and not otherwise exonerated or had their conviction overturned or been pardoned by executive order.” (DISAPPROVED)

B-15

Proposed by Departments of Kentucky and Tennessee

SECTION 315 - - ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 315, National By-Laws, by adding the following after the word “standing” in the first sentence:

“unless convicted or plead guilty to or no contest to a felony offense in any court in the United States and not otherwise exonerated or

had their conviction overturned or been pardoned by executive order.”
(DISAPPROVED)

B-16

Proposed by Departments of Kentucky and Tennessee

SECTION 413 - - ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 413, National By-Laws, by adding the following after the word “standing” in the first sentence:

“unless convicted or plead guilty to or no contest to a felony offense in any court in the United States and not otherwise exonerated or had their conviction overturned or been pardoned by executive order.”
(DISAPPROVED)

B-17

Proposed by Department of Kansas

SECTION 414 - - ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS; CHAIRMEN AND COMMITTEES.

Amend Section 414, National By-Laws, by deleting subsection (b) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“(b) The District Commander shall appoint the Adjutant and such other officers, committee chairmen and committees as may be required by Department or District By-Laws. The District Commander may, upon the recommendation of the Adjutant and Quartermaster, respectively, appoint an Assistant Adjutant and Assistant Quartermaster and may appoint such other officers, committee chairmen and committees as he deems appropriate to properly conduct the affairs of the District. The District Commander retains authority to remove officers, committee chairmen and committees appointed by him at any time.” (APPROVED)

B-18

Proposed by Departments of Kentucky and Tennessee

SECTION 514 - - ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 514, National By-Laws, by adding the following after the word “standing” in the first sentence:

“unless convicted or plead guilty to or no contest to a felony offense in any court in the United States and not otherwise exonerated or had their conviction overturned or been pardoned by executive order.”

(DISAPPROVED)

B-19

Proposed by Departments of Kentucky and Tennessee

SECTION 607 - - ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE.

Amend Section 607, National By-Laws, by adding the following after the word "standing" in the first sentence:

"unless convicted or plead guilty to or no contest to a felony offense in any court in the United States and not otherwise exonerated or had their conviction overturned or been pardoned by executive order."
(DISAPPROVED)

B-20

Proposed by Department of Ohio

SECTION 610 - - OFFICERS, POWERS AND DUTIES.

Amend Section 610 (d) (14), National By-Laws, by deleting all therein and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"Annual Budget. Prepare a tentative budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. Said budget shall set forth all anticipated income and estimated expenses. It shall set forth the amount of all compensation to be received by each of the following officers for the ensuing year: (1) Commander-in-Chief; (2) Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (3) Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief; (4) Quartermaster General; (5) Judge Advocate General; (6) Surgeon General; (7) Chaplain; and (8) Adjutant General. Restricted funds shall be budgeted separately in every instance, and the budget shall be in balance. The tentative budget shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for consideration after closing of the books following the National Convention and final action must be taken on the adoption of the budget at the first stated meeting of the National Council of Administration and, when adopted, the budget shall be the expenditure guide for the ensuing year.

Not later than thirty (30) days after the first meeting of the National Council of Administration, he shall forward to all Department Commanders and all Post Commanders a detailed copy of the national budget adopted by the National Council of Administration for their information." (DISAPPROVED)

B-21

Proposed by Department of Kentucky

SECTION 1102 - - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 1102, National By-Laws, by inserting the following words after the second (16) in the first sentence:

“and nieces” (DISAPPROVED)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

The following amendments, published in accordance with Article XIV of the By-Laws, are proposed for consideration at the 103rd National Convention in accordance with Article XIV, Section 1401 of the Manual of Procedure.

M-1

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

SECTION 803 – MANUFACTURE AND USE OF SEALS, EMBLEMS, BADGES, INSIGNIA AND UNIFORMS.

Amend Section 803, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last sentence in the first paragraph under the heading **Cap.** and inserting it as the fifth paragraph under the heading **Cap.** (APPROVED)

M-2

Recommended by National By-Laws Review Committee

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Amend Article XIII, Manual of Procedure, by deleting it in its entirety and replacing in lieu thereof the following:

“Sec. 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries

(a) **Formation.** Mens Auxiliaries may be hereafter formed in accordance with the following provisions and such other provisions as may be required by Department By-Laws.

No Mens Auxiliary shall be formed, unless approved by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Post membership present at a regular or special meeting, due notice of the proposed formation having been given the entire membership in writing at least one week prior to a regular meeting, or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose. Each Mens Auxiliary shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Post under which it is affiliated. It shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of the Department Convention, Council of

Administration and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with respect to matters of authority.

Each Mens Auxiliary shall function in accordance with the By-Laws of the Department issuing the charter and the Post with which it is affiliated or lawful orders issued by Department Council of Administration or Department Commander.

(b) **Suspension and Discontinuance.** The Department Commander may suspend, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or cancel the charter of any Mens Auxiliary, upon the recommendation of the Post to which such Auxiliary is affiliated, or under such other conditions as may be provided in Department By-Laws.

A Post may, by vote of eighty (80) percent of its members present at a meeting following a written notice mailed or delivered to each member of the Post in good standing at least ten (10) days before said meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Mens Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and reason therefore. If the Post votes to request suspension or cancellation of the charter of its Mens Auxiliary, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander.

While the Charter of a Mens Auxiliary is suspended, said unit shall not be permitted to function and officers thereof shall be without authority.

(c) **Disposition of Property.** In the event of a surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a Charter of a Mens Auxiliary, all official records, money and other property shall immediately become property of the Post.

(d) **Reports.** The President of the Mens Auxiliary shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Post Commander an itemized report of the financial status of the association over which he is presiding officer. Such reports shall be acknowledged by the Post Commander during the next regular meeting and may be read to the members assembled. The Auxiliary shall also provide the Post with the names and addresses of its members. At least annually, the Post shall provide the names and addresses of Auxiliary members, and such other information as may be required by Department By-Laws, to the Department issuing the Charter, which information shall also be provided to National Headquarters." (APPROVED)

M-3

Proposed by Department of Connecticut

SECTION 101 - - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by adding at the end of the section a new eligibility category as follows:

"National Defense Service Medal (30 consecutive or 60 days non-consecutive duty outside the Continental limits of the United States.)	27 June 1950 to a date to be determined"
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(DISAPPROVED)

M-4

Proposed by Department of Europe

SECTION 101 - - ELIGIBILITY.

Amend Section 101, Manual of Procedure, by deleting the word "three" in the second sentence and substituting in lieu thereof the word "two".

Amend further the section by deleting "citizenship (2)" in line four and deleting "(3)" in line five, substituting in lieu thereof "(2)". (DISAPPROVED)

M-5

Proposed by Department of Kansas

SECTION 418 - - VACANCIES AND REMOVAL OF ELECTIVE OFFICERS.

Amend Section 418, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following paragraph at the end of the section:

"Should the vacancy occur in the office of District Quartermaster, the District Commander may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster to carry out the duties incident to that office. The appointment shall be valid only until the next special or regular meeting of the District, at which, a District Quartermaster shall be elected and the appointment of the Pro Tempore Quartermaster shall become null and void." (APPROVED)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

R-1

Proposed by Commander-in-Chief

Amend the Ritual by deleting in its entirety the first sentence in paragraph seven of the Memorial Service on page 66 of the Ritual. (DISAPPROVED)

R-2

Proposed by Department of Europe

Amend the Ritual by deleting the words “and a citizen of our great republic” and placing a period after the words “true comrade” in the member’s obligation on page 22, the initiation obligation on page 33, and new post member’s obligation on page 44.

Amend further the Ritual by deleting the words “loyal citizen of our great republic” and inserting the words “true comrade” in the officer’s obligation on page 47, page 51 and page 60. (DISAPPROVED)

R-3

Proposed by Department of Idaho

Amend the Ritual by deleting the words “I will never make known to anyone - - not authorized to receive it - - any of the work of this order.” from the obligation on pages 22, 33 and 44. (DISAPPROVED)

103rd National Convention RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

No. 201 (Department of Minnesota)—Voice of Democracy Participation
Rejected

No. 202 (Department of Minnesota)—Support American Jobs Through Purchase of American Made Goods
Rejected

No. 203 (Department of Oregon)—Rules Addition for Veterans Memorial Protection
Rejected

No. 204 (Department of New York)—Requirement for VFW National Headquarters to Verify Recruit Eligibility

Resolved, that National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America require recruited members-at-large to include military initiative program recruits to provide documented proof of eligibility, exactly as required by individual posts; and

Further resolved, that any bonafide evidence of eligibility, or document attesting to honorable and overseas service be other than the signature of the applicant.

No. 205 (Department of Texas)—Ted C. Connell Resolution

Resolved, that we support this resolution, and the amount of any donation to assist with the cost of this memorial be determined by the VFW Council of Administration.

No. 206 (Department of Texas)—Support the National Vietnam War

Museum
Rejected

No. 207 (Department of Texas)—Recognition Item for Post Members of All State Posts

Resolved, that some type of special recognition, whether it be a pin or cap, be designed by National and made available through the supply catalog for an All State Post.

No. 208 (Department of Pennsylvania)—Requirements for National Headquarters to Verify Eligibility for Members-at-Large
Rejected

No. 209 (Department of Iowa)—Award Merchant Marines VFW Eligibility
Rejected

No. 210 (Department of Oregon)—Award Merchant Marines VFW Eligibility
Rejected

No. 211 (Department of Michigan)—Amend Section 5 of the Congressional Charter
Rejected

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

No. 301 (Department of Minnesota)—Veterans Living Memorial Aviary
Rejected

No. 302 (Department of Michigan)—Medal of Honor
Rejected

No. 303 (Department of Michigan)—Oppose the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Decisions on the Pledge of Allegiance

Resolved, we go on record as opposing the recent decision of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals declaring the Pledge of Allegiance containing the words “under God” to be unconstitutional.

No. 304 (Department of New York)—December 7th as a National Holiday
Rejected

No. 305 (Department of Texas)—Fully Support the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America Remain Unchanged
Rejected

No. 306 (Department of Pennsylvania)—Oppose any Attempt to Remove “Under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance
Rejected

No. 307 (Department of Utah)—*Emphasizing Stewardship Instead of Socialism in the Observance of “Earth Day”*
Rejected

No. 308 (Commander-in-Chief)—*Support Bob Hope Tribute*

Resolved, that we support the concept of a tribute to Bob Hope to be built in San Diego, California in recognition of his lifetime of service to the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States of America.

No. 309 (Department of Texas)—*Boycott for Disrespect of the American Flag*

Resolved, that the National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States send a letter to all of the professional wrestling leagues along with the networks that broadcast these matches strongly objecting to the disrespectful way the American Flag is portrayed; and

Further resolved, that a formal letter go out to all of the Posts of this great organization requesting that they boycott the showing of any of these matches at any VFW Post.

No. 310 (Department of California)—*Relocation of the USS Iowa (BB-61)*

Resolved, that we endorse an immediate move of the USS Iowa (BB-61) to a permanent berth in San Francisco, California; and

Further Resolved, that we endorse a change in status of the USS Iowa (BB-61) from reserve status to museum status.

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

No. 401 (Commander-in-Chief)—*Support Public Awareness Projects*

Resolved, that we will:

(a) Ensure routine distribution to the field of pertinent, credible and responsible information and reports such as those provided on a routine basis

by the VFW National Security & Foreign Affairs Department and, as requested, to provide such information about other POW/MIA organizations as may be needed by the Departments.

(b) Encourage participation in the program by veterans' groups of other friendly nations such as our NATO and Far Eastern allies.

(c) Encourage exchange of information among state POW/MIA Chairmen to include publishing up-to-date lists of POW/MIA chairmen; and

Further resolved, that each Department exercise maximum initiative

to maintain the vitality and thrust of the POW/MIA program at Department levels by encouraging such actions as:

(a) the display of the black POW/MIA flag, subordinate to the U.S. flag, at any function at which it is proper to fly the U.S. flag.

(b) Encourage support of information exchange at Post levels.

(c) Appoint an interested member at the Post level to act as the POW/MIA project officer; and

Further resolved, that we support the annual POW/MIA Recognition Day and the annual former POW Recognition Day.

No. 402 (Commander-in-Chief)—Seek Opportunities to Resolve the Korean War POW/MIA Issue

Resolved, that we urge North Korea to return to the negotiating table and reach an agreement with the U.S. for 2002 so that joint recovery activities in North Korea can resume, and the process of accounting for Americans still missing from the Korean War can continue; and

Further resolved, that with renewed vigor, we urge the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments in coordination with the United Nations Command (UNC) Korea to increase their contact with the North Korea and Chinese governments, to pursue and expand the current joint effort to include the possible “live” POW issue and thus seek new opportunities to resolve this humanitarian issue as soon as possible; and

Further resolved, that in coordination with the U.N. Command Korea and the Government of the Republic of Korea, we urge the U.S. government to conduct U.N. Command repatriation ceremonies for remains recovered in North Korea at a suitable location in the Republic of Korea in lieu of conducting U.N. Command repatriation ceremonies at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

No. 403 (Commander-in-Chief)—VFW Supports Kuwait’s Demand for an Accounting of its MIAs

Resolved, that we strongly urge the United Nations, the United States government and other governments to take such action as necessary that will force Iraq to fully comply with U.N. Security Council Resolutions and account for those Kuwaiti citizens still missing from the Gulf War.

No. 404 (Commander-in-Chief)—Remain United with Allies to Preserve Freedom and Security

Resolved, that the lessons of the Cold War, Gulf War, and terrorist attacks of the past taught us that our peace, our freedom and our security can best be achieved by remaining united in common purpose with our many allies and friends whereby we share both the danger and security burden by maintaining a national defense in combination with our allies and friends that is capable of defeating those continuing threats; and

Further resolved, that in contrast to the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, the lessons of the Gulf War are apparent. To ensure victory in future wars, the United States, led by resolute leadership and backed by unwavering public support, should quickly and decisively engage the full range of its military power until the threat to our security is eliminated.

No. 405 (Commander-in-Chief)—Limit Foreign Ownership of U.S. Businesses and Properties

Resolved, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation to deny foreign ownership of United States corporations, companies, businesses

and property, and industrial technologies and/or processes which could become vital or sensitive to the national security of the U.S. and which will protect the economy of the United States.

No. 406 (Commander-in-Chief)—Take Action on the Illegal Immigration Problem

Resolved, that we urge the President and the Congress in the strongest terms to heed these ominous warnings and focus their attention on solving the illegal immigration problem; and

Further resolved, that we petition the President and the Congress to expand and strengthen the office of Homeland Security, the Customs and Immigration Services, the Border Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard, and enact such emergency measures as necessary to prevent illegal aliens from entering the United States; and

Further resolved, when required, that well trained and supervised military resources be employed to assist other government agencies in stopping the flow of illegal aliens into the country.

No. 407 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support Western Hemisphere Institute for Defense Cooperation

Resolved, that we urge Congress to support and fully fund the Department of Defense Western Hemisphere Institute for Defense Cooperation that is an important instrument in training and educating Latin American military personnel and thereby serve as an instrument for strengthening democracy in the Americas.

No. 408 (Commander-in-Chief)—Punish Terrorists and Support the War on Terrorism

Resolved, that we continue to urge the U.S. to take decisive action against all terrorists and bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts to serve as a warning to all terrorists that - no matter what country gives them refuge - they will be hunted down and brought to justice; and

Further resolved, that we continue to urge decisive action in the war on terrorism by:

(a) Staying on the offensive in the war on terrorism.

(b) Urging our allies to join the coalition in the war on terrorism and taking offensive action against terrorist groups and support taking positive actions against those "rogue or outlaw states" guilty of inciting, harboring, or aiding and abetting terrorists.

(c) Holding all countries accountable for the security of American citizens traveling within their borders; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Congress to authorize and the Administration to take strong and decisive action against "outlaw" countries and states that are found to sponsor, support and harbor terrorists; and

Further resolved, that we urge our civilian leaders and military commanders to take all necessary steps to ensure U.S. servicemen and women stationed abroad are adequately protected against the threat of terrorist attacks and that both foreign governments and U.S. authorities be held accountable for such lapses in security that endanger the lives of our

servicemen and women.

409 *(Commander-in-Chief)—Ballistic Missile Defense is a National Security Priority*

Resolved, that we support the development and deployment of a ballistic missile defense that is effective to protect our country, our deployed military forces, our friends, and our allies as soon as possible as a high priority national security requirement.

No. 410 *(Commander-in-Chief)—Honoring Those Who Serve*

Resolved, that we call on all elected and appointed officials to publicly recognize the major contributions and sacrifices made by those in military service; and

Further resolved, that we further call on our elected and appointed officials to acknowledge the professionalism of our servicemen and women by restoring entitlements and expanding the benefits of service and by so doing, show that this nation cares for those who unselfishly serve and sacrifice in the armed forces; and

Further resolved, that we call on our elected officials to provide military pay raises that continue to close the “pay gap” between the military and private sector.

No. 411 *(Commander-in-Chief)—Oppose Lifting the Defense Department Ban on Homosexuals in the Armed Forces*

Resolved, that we unequivocally oppose the efforts of homosexual organizations and other organizations to force the military services to accept and/or retain homosexuals and urge that Public Law 103-160, Section 654, Title 10 USC, and implementing DOD policy which provides for the discharge of those engaging in homosexual conduct be consistently and properly enforced; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Department of Defense to review the current, “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy and replace it with a policy more consistent with the intent of Public Law 103-160; and

Further resolved, we urge the Department of Defense to review applicable directives and, if necessary, revise them in an effort to eliminate any possible question that any denial of civil rights is based on moral, religious or ethical behavior and that there is no intent to deny civil rights to any service member, rather our concern is to maintain the good order, discipline and readiness of our armed forces and their ability to operate effectively.

No. 412 *(Commander-in-Chief)—Maintain an Effective U.S. Coast Guard*

Resolved, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to provide the funding necessary for modernization, recapitalization, and increased homeland security, and parity of the Coast Guard to carry out its mission and enable the Service take full advantage of modern information technology, including but not limited to, drug interdiction and enforcement, pollution control, maritime safety, search and rescue missions, and maintaining military readiness as well as its many other duties and responsibilities.

No. 413 (Commander-in-Chief)—Standing Firm for Democracy and Liberty
Resolved, that we will always stand firm for democracy, and in furtherance of the ideals of liberty and freedom, we support a foreign policy that nourishes democracy, freedom, and liberty throughout the world, and a domestic policy that maintains our superior military strength to protect our liberty and our national interests throughout the world and defend us against those enemies who wish to destroy our country and our way of life.

No. 414 (Commander-in-Chief)—National Strategy of Peace Through Strength

Resolved, 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 domestic and overseas energy resources and vital raw materials.
- (b) Maintaining an American military presence in Europe and Asia to stabilize the military balance in these regions and help our friends and allies to defend themselves from aggression.
- (c) Maintaining such strategic, nuclear and conventional military forces (including active, reserve and National Guard components) trained and equipped with such high technology weapons and equipment and with sufficient bases and infrastructure which in the judgment of our military leaders are more than equal to the current threats and adequate to meet our current defense requirements.
- (d) Helping formerly communist controlled countries in their process of converting to freely elected democratic governments.
- (e) Maintaining effective security and intelligence capabilities to prevent strategic surprise from any quarter.
- (f) Employing the leadership necessary to inspire, focus and unite the national will and international unity to further our goal of peace and freedom.
- (g) Maintaining alliances as required by our national strategy, protect our national interests, support our friends and promote peace.

No. 415 (Commander-in-Chief)—Strengthen Intelligence Agencies and Capabilities

Resolved, that we reject any further reductions in our national intelligence agencies, and instead support appropriate expansion and funding to ensure that we will have adequate intelligence capabilities that provide appropriate warnings of future political, military, economic or technological threats that would increase the risks to our national security and vital national interests abroad and that Congress appropriate necessary funds to strengthen the intelligence agencies and services.

No. 416 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support for the Republic of Korea

Resolved, that we urge the government of the United States to increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern state of the art weapons and technology to safeguard its freedom, and promote security in the Asia/Pacific region; and

Further resolved, that we urge the United States government, in concert with its allies, to bring pressure to bear on North Korea to comply with the “nuclear safeguard accord” of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to be a responsible country in the community of nations and to come to the table for peaceful dialogue directly between South and North Korea.

No. 417 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support Withdrawal from Bosnia-Herzegovina

Resolved, that to prevent further endangerment to our troops, we support the view that unless unforeseen circumstances arise, the U.S. forces assigned to Operation Joint Forge should be gradually withdrawn from Bosnia-Herzegovina while transferring remaining responsibilities to other NATO members.

No. 418 (Commander-in-Chief)—Assist Vietnam’s Recovery of MIAs as a Sign of Good Faith

Resolved, that at each level of the VFW—National, Department, District, and Post—strenuous efforts be made to collect any information which might be of value in determining the fate of Vietnam’s 200,000 MIAs and of assistance in the recovery of their remains; and

Further resolved, that we urge all levels of the VFW to solicit all Vietnam veterans for any information or material that could be used to determine the fate of Vietnamese MIAs and possible burial sites. Such information and material include battlefield souvenirs, especially if they contain names or other identifying information; personal effects such as photos, letters or identification documents taken from casualties; sketch maps, photos, overlays (annotated with dates and locations if possible) which would be of help in identifying Vietnamese grave sites; and

Further resolved, that VFW National Headquarters publicize this effort and provide Departments with materials which might be used in further publicizing our efforts and that the VFW Washington Office act as the collecting point and repository of all such information obtained from our members and the public at large; and

Further resolved, that on subsequent trips to the region by VFW national officers, information collected on Vietnamese casualties is turned over to Vietnamese authorities as an expression of our desire to assist them in recovering their MIAs and to encourage their greater effort in helping us reach the fullest possible accounting of our MIAs.

No. 419 (Commander-in-Chief)—Oppose U. S. Forces Under Foreign Command

Resolved, that we oppose any plan or directive placing U.S. military forces under the command of foreign military officers including those who are operating exclusively under orders from the United Nations; and

Further resolved, we urge the administration and Congress to re-examine Presidential Decision Directive 25 to determine if any Constitutional authority has been misused, and if so, to find an appropriate remedy.

No. 420 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support for the Republic of China on Taiwan

Resolved, that while recognizing the settlement of the legitimacy question remains an issue between the two countries, we support and urge the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United Nations and other international bodies so those agencies can be useful in fostering a spirit of cooperation and assisting the resolution of the legitimacy question; and

Further resolved, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to adhere strictly to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons and technology to include modern aircraft to the Republic of China on Taiwan as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capabilities to provide for military balance and stability in the region; and

Further resolved, that we urge the United States government to employ the full range of its economic, diplomatic and military influence if it is necessary to contain the overtly aggressive posture of the Peoples Republic of China and to use this influence to further the peaceful settlement of remaining disputes; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Administration to reverse its departure from longtime U.S. policy and remove Taiwan from the FBI's list of hostile intelligence threats under the national security list.

No. 421 (Commander-in-Chief)—Oppose Downsizing the Defense Department POW/Missing Personnel Office

Resolved, that we urge the Department of Defense to refrain from downsizing the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office because we believe such action would have a disastrous effect on achieving our goal of the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs and would have the following dampening effects:

(a) It would slow the momentum of a POW/MIA effort that has taken years to develop.

(b) It would prevent us from taking full advantage of new opportunities that are becoming available to resolve this issue.

(c) It would send the wrong signal that the United States is downsizing its effort to recover our missing men to those countries where the search for our men still continues, or as in the case of North Korea, where the search has only recently begun and the effort is expanding; and

Further resolved, that we go on record as being adamantly opposed to any Department of Defense downsizing of the resources put into the effort to reach the fullest possible accounting of our personnel missing from past wars.

No. 422 (Commander-in-Chief)—Retain the Selective Service

Resolved, that the VFW supports the ongoing existence of the Selective Service System and its necessary programs in its stand-by status and urges the United States Congress to provide the funds necessary to retain the Selective Service System; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Congress to shift appropriations

oversight for the Selective Service System from the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittees of the House and Senate.

No. 423 (Commander-in-Chief) — Monitor the Panama Canal Carefully

Resolved, that we urge the President and the Congress to closely monitor conditions in the Republic of Panama, and be prepared to take the steps necessary to protect the Panama Canal and to ensure continued safe and efficient freedom of passage through it, and to continuously evaluate the conditions of Panama and the region with a view toward balancing the concerns and interests of Panama, its neighbors and the United States.

No. 424 (Commander-in-Chief) — Keeping Faith with the American Military

Resolved, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of State to initiate changes to the Status of Forces Agreements, the Geneva Conventions and other international agreements to improve the legal protections for United States military personnel and their families serving in foreign countries; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of State to periodically provide written, factual assurances to the Congress, the public and the military services that legal protections have been put in place to bring to trial those guilty of murder, execution or assassination of members of our military service in foreign lands; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Congress of the United States and the Administration to find a solution and take the necessary steps to ensure that the El Salvadoran murders of LTC Picket and CPL Dawson are brought to trial and punished.

No. 425 (Commander-in-Chief) — Support Former POW Slave Labor Claims Against Japanese Firms

Resolved, that we support fair and just compensation for the injuries suffered by all American POWs at the hands of their Japanese captors, and the slave labor they were forced to perform by private Japanese companies during World War II; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Administration to work with all parties involved in this issue to resolve the claims of these former POWs in an expeditious manner.

No. 426 (Commander-in-Chief) — NATO Enlargement

Resolved, that we support the enlargement of the NATO Alliance and the extension of the United States mutual defense commitment to the countries that are chosen for membership and invited to join NATO at the Summit in Prague as it is important to the future security of Europe, our own vital interests in the region as well as world peace; and

Further resolved, we urge that the integration of those chosen countries into NATO be accomplished in a non-threatening manner so as not to force other countries into an opposing alliance and that in order to project a peaceful image we urge consideration be given to adoption of a declared policy that U.S. forces and weapons will not be stationed, based

or deployed (except for training) in those new NATO countries; and

Further resolved, we urge that any future enlargement of NATO is approached with careful analysis as to the costs, benefits and risks involved.

No. 427 (Commander-in-Chief)—Restore Economic Sanctions Against North Korea

Resolved, that we support restoring economic sanctions against North Korea because North Korea has pulled back from various confidence building steps it had agreed to with South Korea following the historic summit, and contributes to instability in the Middle East and South Asia through its aggressive sales of arms, missiles, and technology; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to closely review North Korean activities and behavior, and closely consult with the Republic of Korea and our other allies in the region before considering any significant policy changes with North Korea.

No. 428 (Commander-in-Chief)—Tighten U.S. Policy on High Technology Exports

Resolved, that we strongly urge the President and the Congress to refrain from exporting American advanced “dual-use” technologies and supercomputers to China and Russia, and strengthen the rules that limit the export of American “dual-use” technologies to any country that poses a possible ballistic missile, weapon of mass destruction, or other significant threat to the U.S. and our allies and friends; and

Further resolved, that we strongly urge the Administration to deny authorization and stop any U.S. commercial activity that facilitates the improvement of Chinese ballistic missile capability, and provides any information or technology that would provide new military capability, including any long-range missile technology, to any country that poses a significant threat to our nation and our allies and friends.

429 (Commander-in-Chief)—Take Action Against Countries that Proliferate Ballistic Missile Technology and Weapons of Mass Destruction

Resolved, that we urge the Administration and the Congress to take appropriate actions against any country that proliferates ballistic missiles, related technologies, and/or weapons of mass destruction to any potentially hostile or rogue states or terrorist groups that may seek to target the United States or our allies and friends with these weapons.

No. 430 (Commander-in-Chief)—Increase the Defense Budget

Resolved, that we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to take whatever steps are necessary to increase defense spending to a realistic level that will begin to address the long-term problems created by several decades of inadequate defense funding, and to sustain a period of real growth in future defense spending.

No. 431 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support Increased Shipbuilding for the U.S. Navy

Resolved, that we urge the Administration and Congress to immediately increase Navy shipbuilding to the point where the U.S. can at least sustain and possibly increase the current number of ships in the fleet; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Administration and the Congress of the United States to closely review the results of the latest studies and restore the U.S. Navy fleet to the level that is required to support our national military strategy, achieve our national objectives, and adequately protect the United States without an unnecessary level of risk.

No. 432 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support of Self-Determination for Puerto Rico

Resolved, that we urge the President of the United States and the Congress to enact legislation that supports self-determination for Puerto Rico by defining the political status options available to United States citizens of Puerto Rico and authorizing a plebiscite to provide an opportunity for Puerto Ricans to make an informed decision regarding the island's political future.

No. 433 (Commander-in-Chief)—Interment of an Unknown from Vietnam

Resolved, that we view the Tomb of the Unknown Serviceman of the Vietnam War as a powerful place, symbolic of the sacrifices of all who served in that most divisive war and believe the tomb has come to be recognized and revered by the American people as the place they can come to honor all of America's military heroes; and

Further resolved, that we support the fullest possible accounting of missing service members from past wars, and therefore, we support the interment of another Vietnam War unknown's remains in the crypt at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery only if it can be proven that those remains will never be identified.

No. 434 (Commander-in-Chief)—Improve Military Readiness

Resolved, that we support the President's commitment to rebuilding the United States armed forces and we urge the President and the Congress of the United States to act now to reverse the trend in decreasing defense readiness by providing our military leaders with the resources required to accomplish their missions and the military strategy of the United States; and

Further resolved, in order to improve the morale and retention of our high quality, dedicated American servicemen and women, that the Congress and the Administration take action to continue enhancing and improving the quality of life of American service members and their families.

No. 435 (Commander-in-Chief)—Increase Central Identification Laboratory Capability

Resolved, that we urge the Department of Defense to conduct a comprehensive review of the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii to include its mission, tasks, work load, operational requirements, and resources to determine if any additional changes in structure are required, and if necessary, increase its budget and the number of personnel

assigned; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Administration and Congress to accelerate CILHI's building program in the Army's military construction budget in order to begin the construction of new permanent facilities for CILHI at Hickam Air Force Base as soon as possible.

No. 436 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support the Kosovo Peace Agreement Resolved, we support the terms of the NATO/Yugoslavian Peace Agreement and Implementation Plan; and

Further resolved, that we urge NATO and the United States to use the NATO Kosovo peace keeping force (KFOR) to guarantee the Kosovar people freedom from oppression and the right to self determination; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Administration to develop a plan for the replacement of all U.S. troops serving in the International/NATO Kosovo peacekeeping force or Kosovo Force (KFOR) with troops from other NATO countries as soon as possible; and

Further resolved, that we encourage the Administration to develop an exit strategy for the eventual withdrawal of all U.S. troops from the Balkan region.

No. 437 (Commander-in-Chief)—Strengthen Security at Department of Energy (DOE) Laboratories

Resolved, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to ensure that the provisions of the Department of Energy Reform Law is fully implemented; and

Further resolved, that we urge Administration and Congress to periodically review the implementation of these improved security measures at Department of Energy nuclear laboratories in order to preserve our national security against the threat of foreign espionage and prevent any further loss of the nation's nuclear secrets to other countries or groups.

No. 438 (Commander-in-Chief)—Increase Military Base Pay and Entitlements

Resolved, that we support all congressional efforts to increase entitlements and continue annual pay raises for all grades and ranks that are higher than inflation until the 10 percent pay gap is closed in order to assist in maintaining recruitment and retention goals and improve the quality of life of service members and their families.

No. 439 (Commander-in-Chief)—A Full Accounting for Commander Speicher

Resolved, that we urge the Administration and Congress to continue an aggressive investigation into Commander Speicher's fate until either he is recovered alive, his remains are recovered and identified, or until a full accounting of his fate can be determined; and

Further resolved, that we urge the government of Iraq to cooperate with the United States in the effort to account for Commander Speicher.

No. 440 (Commander-in-Chief)—U.S. Response to Chinese Actions

Resolved, that we urge the administration to maintain a policy that demonstrates resolve and leadership in responding to the challenge of China's proliferation of weapons and ballistic missile technology, increased military spending and modernization of its armed forces including increased ballistic missile forces, and its anti-missile defense campaign aimed at the United States and its allies in Asia; and

Further resolved, that we urge the administration to offer a full assessment of China's future missile development plans to Congress and the American people; and

Further resolved, we urge the administration to encourage the Chinese government to respect the laws of international air space and abide by the 1998 U.S. - China Agreement aimed at preventing incidents at sea.

No. 441 (Commander-in-Chief)—Condemn Terrorist Attack on America

Resolved, that we (1) Condemn in the strongest possible terms and call for retribution against the terrorists who planned and carried out the September 11, 2001, attacks against the United States, as well as their sponsors, and all states and individuals who would give them shelter; (2) Extend our deepest condolences to the victims of these heinous terrorist attacks, as well as to their families, friends, and loved ones; (3) Stand united with our fellow Americans as our nation begins the process of recovering and rebuilding in the aftermath of these tragic acts; (4) Commend the heroic actions of the rescue workers, volunteers, and state and local officials who responded to these tragic events with courage, determination, and skill; (5) Declare that the United States is entitled to respond under international law; (6) Thank those foreign leaders and individuals who have expressed solidarity with the United States in the aftermath of the attacks, and ask them to continue to stand with the United States in the war against international terrorism; (7) Call for increased resources in the war to eradicate terrorism; (8) Support the determination of the President, in close consultation with Congress, to bring to justice and punish the perpetrators of these attacks as well as their sponsors; and (9) Call for fullest possible support to our military forces and their families as they protect the United States and our national interests and prepare for whatever tasks and missions the President may assign to them.

No. 442 (Commander-in-Chief)—Authorization to Wear the Bundeswehr and the Land Berlin Unit Awards

Resolved, that we urge the Department of Defense to review two foreign awards (the Streamers of the Bundeswehr and Land Berlin) that were awarded on March 18, 1994 and July 4, 1994, respectively to all veterans who served in Berlin from May 1945 to September 1994, to determine if U.S. military personnel and U.S. veterans are authorized to wear these awards either on their uniforms or on civilian attire.

No. 443 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support the Nation's War on Drugs

Resolved, that we urge the Administration and Congress to review the National Drug Control Strategy and determine if changes are required

to apply increased emphasis, energy, and resources towards winning the war on drugs by taking action to reduce the demand for drugs and reducing the flow of illegal drugs into our country.

No. 444 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support F-22 Fighter Aircraft Program

Resolved, that we urge the Congress of the United States to provide full funding to the U.S. Air Force F-22 fighter aircraft program to ensure that the armed forces of the United States always achieve air superiority in any future incident, conflict, or war.

No. 445 (Commander-in-Chief)—Display the POW/MIA Flag

Resolved, we urge the government of the United States to strictly enforce the existing public law and require all government agencies to fly the POW/MIA flag on the required occasions as well as everyday the American flag is displayed; and

Further resolved, that we encourage the Secretary General of the United Nations to request that the POW/MIA flag be flown at the U.N. Headquarters in New York City as a reminder to all member nations that many persons are still missing from past wars; and

Further resolved, that this POW/MIA flag be flown by federal agencies, state and local governments to serve as a reminder to all U.S. citizens and nations worldwide that accounting for missing Americans from past wars is our highest priority.

No. 446 (Commander-in-Chief)—Retention of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences of the Department of Defense (DOD)

Resolved, that we petition the Congress of the United States of America to guarantee continuation of the USUHS in perpetuity.

No. 447 (Commander-in-Chief)—Eliminate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

Resolved, that we support the decision of the President to withdraw from the ABM Treaty and drop any plans to renegotiate the ABM Treaty with Russia; and

Further resolved, that we urge the administration and Congress of the United States to take action as required to eliminate the ABM Treaty as a binding agreement because the Soviet Union no longer exists as a country and continued adherence to the terms of the treaty restricts the development, testing, and deployment of both the national and theater defense missile systems that are needed to protect deployed U.S. military forces and the United States and its citizens against emerging threats to our national security.

No. 448 (Commander-in-Chief)—Improve Theater Ballistic Missile Defense

Resolved, that we urge the administration and the Congress of the United States to work together to field a capable and reliable theater ballistic missile defense system to protect deployed U.S. military forces and their families as soon as possible.

No. 449 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support the Death Penalty for Acts of Treason, in War and Peace, Against the United States of America

Resolved, that when justified by the nature of the crime, we support capital punishment for those who commit acts of espionage or treason against this nation; and

Further resolved, that we support federal laws that allow the courts to sentence those convicted of treason or espionage against the United States in accordance with the nature of the crime.

No. 450 (Commander-in-Chief) — Drape the Caskets of Fallen American Warriors with the Flag of the United States

Resolved, that we are firm and united in our demand for legislation establishing the right of every fallen member of the armed forces of the United States to have his casket draped with the flag of the United States immediately upon departure from a foreign country, and that the law restrict the use of flags or symbols of other nations or international organizations upon their caskets.

No. 451 (Commander-in-Chief) — Award the Army of Occupation Service Medal for Service in Trieste, Italy

Resolved, that we petition the United States Congress to rectify this injustice by awarding the Army of Occupation Service Medal to those who served in Trieste, Italy with the U.S. Army from 8 May 1945 – 26 October 1954.

No. 452 (Commander-in-Chief) — Restore Vieques Naval Ranges to Full Use

Resolved, that we call for restoring the U.S. Naval ranges at VIEQUES to full use to help achieve the goal of maintaining the highest possible level of combat readiness for our Atlantic Fleet forward deployed Naval forces; and

Further resolved, that we petition the Administration and the Congress of the United States to never again permit a peremptory action, such as the decision to suspend the training at VIEQUES, to be taken that jeopardizes the combat readiness of the nation's armed forces.

No. 453 (Commander-in-Chief) — Accounting and Release of POW/MIA Information

Resolved, that we urge the United States government to release all non-personal and unclassified information about missing American servicemen and post it on the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel web site so that the public may have free access to the information; and

Further resolved, that we vigorously pursue all possible avenues on POW/MIA accounting and remain focused on our goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing from our entire nation's past wars.

No. 454 (Commander-in-Chief) — Maintain Pressure on Castro

Resolved, that we urge the U.S. government to continue its present policy of no trade with Communist Cuba and no diplomatic recognition of that communist state and to increase the economic and political pressure on Castro; and

Further resolved, that we urge the U.S. government to use all measures, short of violence and/or invasion, to isolate and maintain pressure on Castro to hasten the time until Castro's dictatorship is overthrown and the Cuban people can regain its freedom.

No. 455 (Commander-in-Chief)—Oppose the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Resolved, that we oppose ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by the Senate of the United States; and

Further resolved, that we support arms control that is pursued according to strict standards and with the recognition of its inherent limitations, and we encourage the Administration and Congress to closely review the history of America's arms control agreements before endorsing any future arms control treaties.

No. 456 (Commander-in-Chief)—Americans Who are Prisoners of War or Missing in Action

Resolved, that we urge the President of the United States of America, senior government officials, and every member of the U.S. Congress to speak out on every occasion to expedite the return of those U.S. servicemen who are still prisoners of war or missing in action.

No. 457 (Commander-in-Chief)—Oppose International Criminal Court

Resolved, that we hereby oppose ratification of the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) by the Senate of the United States, and we oppose the United States becoming a party to the ICC in any fashion; and

Further resolved, that we urge the administration and members of Congress to support legislation that contains a number of provisions and authorizations to protect U.S. citizens, particularly U.S. service members, from the International Criminal Court.

No. 458 (Commander-in-Chief)—Transform the Army to Face Security Challenges of the 21st Century

Resolved, that we concur with the U.S. Army's vision statement and support the Army's transformation process with the objective of changing the Army into a more strategically responsive and dominant force at every point on the spectrum of military operations; and

Further resolved, that we urge the administration and members of Congress to support a defense budget and appropriate legislation that helps the Army accomplish its selective modernization and recapitalization of the legacy force (the current force), fielding of the interim force, and comprehensive transformation into an "objective force" Army.

No. 459 (Commander-in-Chief)—Award the Korea Defense Service Medal for Service in the Republic of Korea

Resolved, that we petition for the creation and the award of the proposed U.S. Korea Defense Service Medal (KDSM) for service in Korea from 28 July 1954 through 30 September 1966 and from 01 July 1974 to a date to be determined.

No. 460 (Commander-in-Chief) — No Time Restraints for POW/MIA Accounting

Resolved, that on “National POW/MIA Recognition Day” every year, all members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars be encouraged to send letters to their Senators, Representatives and the President of the United States to request the fullest possible accounting of all Prisoners of War (POWs) and Missing in Action (MIAs), especially noting those from their home state if possible, until the fullest possible accounting is complete; and

Further resolved, that no time constraints be attached to the full accounting process.

No. 461 (Commander-in-Chief) — Support Continued Live Fire Training at PFC Herbert K. Pililaa Range at Makua Valley, Oahu, Hawaii

Resolved, we support the sovereign rights of the United States government to conduct this essential training at the Pililaa Range on Oahu, Hawaii.

No. 462 (Commander-in-Chief) — Adequate Funding for the V-22 Osprey Tilt-Rotor

Resolved, we urge that adequate funds be included in the Department of Defense fiscal year 2002 and 2003 budgets thereby helping to ensure that the V-22 will reach full operational capability in the least amount of time, thereby paving the way for using this important technology as a key strategic weapon for our armed forces.

No. 463 (Commander-in-Chief) — Award a Cold War Campaign Medal

Resolved, that we support the creation and awarding of the Cold War Campaign Medal to all eligible U.S. service personnel who served overseas in military operations during the Cold War.

No. 464 (Commander-in-Chief) — American Servicemembers Protection Act

Resolved, that we urge the U.S. Congress to expedite passage of this vital legislation as soon as possible.

No. 465 (Commander-in-Chief) — Balanced Energy Plan for America's Future

Resolved, that we urge the Congress to pass an energy bill that strikes the proper balance between energy conservation measures and increased domestic production, and takes the actions necessary in the areas of conservation, efficiency, alternative source, technology development, and domestic production to reduce U.S. energy dependence on unstable foreign sources.

No. 466 (Department of Washington) — Oppose Sister County Relationships with Cuba

Resolved, that we vehemently oppose any national, state, county or city, or other government entity, from endorsing or otherwise encourag-

ing through its elected officials the adjoining of cooperation with the Sister City Association concept until Cuba gets rid of its communist government and embraces a democratic form of government with free elections in Cuba.

No. 467 (Department of Colorado)—Eligibility for Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (War on Terrorism-Afghanistan)

Resolved, that we petition the Congress of the United States to award an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in Operation Enduring Freedom commencing on September 11, 2001, and continuing until the operation ends; and

Further resolved, that the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Afghanistan) be awarded to any and all members of the United States armed forces serving or having served in Operation Enduring Freedom.

No. 468 (Department of Iowa)—Award Service Medal - Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom

Resolved, that we urge Congress to approve and the President to sign legislation that awards the American Defense Service Medal to those military service members who served in Operation Noble Eagle or any future similar operation.

No. 469 (Department of Michigan)—Re-Designate the Position of Secretary of the Navy as the Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps

Resolved, that we support legislation to re-designate the position of the Secretary of the Navy to Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps.

No. 470 (Department of Wisconsin)—Investigate the Attack on the U.S.S. Liberty

Resolved, that we call upon Congress to immediately investigate the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty that was perpetrated by the armed forces of the State of Israel on June 8, 1967, in order to determine the truth behind the attack.

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

No. 601 (Commander-in-Chief)—Increase the Department of Veterans Affairs Budget

Resolved, that we urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget and authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which will fully fund and maintain the integrity of and enhance the benefits programs and health care system.

No. 602 (Commander-in-Chief)—Concurrent Receipt of Retirement Pay and Veterans' Disability Compensation

Resolved, that we urge both the Administration and Congress to budget and subsequently appropriate the necessary funds to fulfill concurrent receipt of both military retired pay and disability compensation.

No. 603 (Commander-in-Chief)—Ensuring Timely Access to Quality Health Care and Services

Resolved, that we urge the VA to consider, as a top priority, the reduction of waiting times for access to patient care and services.

No. 604 (Commander-in-Chief)—Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) as an Option for Military Retirees

Resolved, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to offer all military retirees the full range of FEHBP as another lifetime health care option under the same terms as do all other federal departments, agencies and the Postal Service.

No. 605 (Commander-in-Chief)—Entitlement to Nursing Home Care

Resolved, that we urge Congress to mandate and provide funding for the provision of nursing home care for all veterans.

No. 606 (Commander-in-Chief)—Presumption of Service Connection for Radiation Related Disabilities

Resolved, that we urge Congress to enact legislation which provides for a statutory presumption of service connection of the radiation-related disabilities to include skin cancer, colon cancer, posterior subcapsular cataracts, nonmalignant thyroid nodular disease, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the central nervous system, prostate and rectal cancer.

No. 607 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support an Effective Veterans Employment and Training System

Resolved, that we support a viable and effective Veterans Employment and Training system which has necessary funding and capability to assist veterans in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment and re-employment opportunities; and

Further resolved, that any Veterans Employment and Training system be held accountable and that veterans receive priority of service in all federally funded job-training programs.

No. 608 (Commander-in-Chief)—Improved VA Hospital Facilities for Women Veterans

Resolved, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the purpose of improving the quality of hospital facilities and services available to women veterans at VA hospitals.

No. 609 (Commander-in-Chief)—Funding Fee for VA Home Loans

Resolved, that we urge Congress to repeal VA Home Loan funding fees.

No. 610 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support Priority of Service for Veterans to All Federally Funded Job Training Programs

Resolved, that we urge Congress to enact legislation which will mandate priority of service to all eligible veterans in federally funded job training programs.

No. 611 (Commander-in-Chief)—VA Medicare Subvention

Resolved, that we support the swift enactment of legislation authorizing VA to collect and retain all Medicare dollars.

No. 612 (Commander-in-Chief)—Funding of Small Business Administration Veterans Programs

Resolved, that we support the strengthening and sufficient funding of an effective veterans entrepreneurship program in the United States Small Business Administration.

No. 613 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support for Gulf War Veterans

Resolved, that we continue to urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a open-ended presumptive period until medical and scientific research can be adequately utilized to help determine an appropriate time in which conditions associated with Gulf War service will manifest; and

Further resolved, that we urge the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for all active duty military and veterans and, as appropriately determined, their dependents and survivors, whose health has been adversely affected by the Persian Gulf War, and to conduct all necessary tests to determine the causes of these illnesses; and

Further resolved, that we urge Congress to adequately fund appropriate medical and scientific research, and the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs to implement all relevant laws that support all research efforts; and

Further resolved, that we petition the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense to define the Persian Gulf War region (also known as the Kuwait Theater of Operation and Southwest Asia Theater of Operations) under 38 USC § 1117 and 10 USC § 101. as including the following geographic locations: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Suez, Suez Canal, Gulf of Aqaba, and the Red Sea.

No. 614 (Commander-in-Chief)—Exempt VA's Disability Compensation in Determination of Eligibility for HUD's Assisted Senior Housing Program

Resolved, that the Department of Housing and Urban Development not consider VA disability compensation as income when determining eligibility for their Assisted Senior Housing Program.

No. 615 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support for the Guard and Reserve

Resolved, that the provisions of the Uniformed Service Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act be strictly enforced; and

Further resolved, we support the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve in its efforts to educate employers on the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserves and their responsibilities as mandated by USERRA.

No. 616 (Commander-in-Chief)—Specially Adapted Housing Allowance
Resolved, that we seek legislation to amend 38 U.S.C. § 2102 to allow a second grant to cover the costs of home adaptations for veterans who are forced to replace their original specially adapted home with new housing.

No. 617 (Commander-in-Chief)—Service Connection for Hearing Loss and Tinnitus for Combat Veterans
Resolved, we request Congress enact legislation that will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection to veterans with documented combat service and who have been diagnosed with hearing loss or tinnitus at any time after discharge from military service.

No. 618 (Commander-in-Chief)—Licensure and Certification
Resolved, that we urge a standardized licensure and certification requirement be adopted by the appropriate federal and state agencies; and
Further resolved, that recently separated service members be afforded the opportunity to take licensing and certification exams without a period of retraining.

No. 619 (Commander-in-Chief)—VA to Pay their Fair Share of Caring for Veterans Residing in State Veterans Homes
Resolved, we support a VA per diem payment that equals 33.33% of the national average cost of providing care in a state veterans home; and
Further resolved, that we urge the Congress of the United States to fully fund the State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program, giving priority to projects from fiscal year 2003.

No. 620 (Commander-in-Chief)—Veterans Employment Program to Remain a National Mandate
Resolved, that we oppose any such elimination of Federal direction and control over the employment assistance entitlements earned by America's veterans through their honorable services.

No. 621 (Commander-in-Chief)—Veterans' Preference
Resolved, that we oppose all attempts to reduce or circumvent veterans' preference.

No. 622 (Commander-in-Chief)—Workforce Investment Act
Resolved, that at least one veterans' advocate be placed on the state and local workforce development boards; and
Further resolved, we request all "one-stop" centers created by the Workforce Investment Act provide priority of service to veterans.

No. 623 (Commander-in-Chief)—Establishing a Presumption of Service Connection for Veterans Suffering from Hepatitis "C"

Resolved, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to authorize an open-ended presumption of service connection for veterans with Hepatitis C.

No. 624 (Commander-in-Chief) — Department of Defense to Increase the Monthly Deduction to \$1.00 for the Armed Forces Retirement Homes

Resolved, that we strongly urge the Secretary of Defense to immediately exercise his authority to increase the monthly deduction from \$0.50 to \$1.00 to ensure solvency for both Armed Forces' retirement homes.

No. 625 (Commander-in-Chief) — A GI Bill for the 21st Century

Resolved, that we urge Congress to enact a new GI Bill for the 21st Century which would provide an educational benefit that covers the cost of tuition, fees, books and related expenses along with a stipend to cover housing expenses, at the university or college of the veteran's choice.

No. 626 (Commander-in-Chief) — Homeless Veterans

Resolved, that we urge Congress to fully fund all veterans' homeless programs that are administered at the federal level; and

Further resolved, that we encourage VFW Posts to join community-based organizations in addressing the problem of veterans' homelessness.

No. 627 (Commander-in-Chief) — Compensable Disability for Hearing Loss for Veterans Requiring Hearing Aids

Resolved, that we urge VA to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum ten percent disability compensation evaluation for any service-connected hearing loss (unilateral or bilateral) requiring the use of a hearing aid.

No. 628 (Commander-in-Chief) — Removal of the Limitation on Payment of Accrued Benefits

Resolved, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to remove the inequitable two-year limitation on payment of accrued benefits and instead make it open-ended.

No. 629 (Commander-in-Chief) — Include Dental Care as Part of the Veterans Uniform Benefits Package

Resolved, that we urge Congress to authorize and fund VA to provide dental care to all enrolled veterans as a part of their Veterans Uniform Benefits Package.

No. 630 (Commander-in-Chief) — Veterans Employment Preference with the U.S. Government Overseas

Resolved, that we urge the Departments of State and Defense to ensure the protection of veterans' employment benefits in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature.

No. 631 (Commander-in-Chief) — Change Disability Pension Eligibility Requirements

Resolved, that we request Congress to change the eligibility requirements for disability pension to include veterans who have received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Navy/Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Combat Medical Badge or the Combat Action Ribbon for operations not falling within an officially designated period of war.

No. 632 (Commander-in-Chief) — Repeal of the Montgomery GI Bill Pay Reduction Provision

Resolved, that we hereby petition Congress to repeal the pay reduction provision of the Montgomery GI Bill.

No. 633 (Commander-in-Chief) — Place World War II Veterans in Enrollment Priority Category Six for VA Health Purposes

Resolved, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to include all World War II veterans in at least enrollment priority category six for health care purposes.

No. 634 (Commander-in-Chief) — Attorney Fee-Based Representation at VA Regional Offices

Resolved, that we inform Congress of our strong opposition to allowing private attorney fee-based representation of veterans during the regional office claims process and appellate proceedings to the Board of Veterans' Appeals; and

Further resolved, that we petition Congress to pass legislation that will prohibit the VA from collecting fees directly from veterans' disability compensation awards in fulfillment of any fee-based arrangement by the veteran with a private attorney, including those cases involving attorney representation before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

No. 635 (Commander-in-Chief) — Refund of Montgomery GI Bill Contributions

Resolved, that we urge Congress change the law to permit a refund of an individual's contribution to the Montgomery GI Bill when the service member receives a "general" or "under honorable conditions" type discharge as a result of minor infractions or inefficiency.

No. 636 (Commander-in-Chief) — Exchange and Commissary Privileges for Military Retirees Residing or Traveling Overseas

Resolved, that we petition Congress to enact legislation requiring the departments of State and Defense to ensure full exchange and commissary benefits for retirees of the U.S. armed forces in all future treaty negotiations, renegotiations, amendments, or adjustments of any nature.

No. 637 (Commander-in-Chief) — Adjust VA Vera Funding Mechanism for Pre-And-Post Organ Transplantation

Resolved, that we urge the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to adjust the VERA allocation rate for pre-and-post trans-

plant care to a rate somewhere between the rate for basic healthcare and complex healthcare, sufficient to establish equitable reimbursement to a facility providing long-term follow-up treatment.

No. 638 (Commander-in-Chief)—Military Retiree Survivor Benefit Plan Reduction

Resolved, that we urge Congress to amend current law that requires the beneficiaries annuity to be reduced to 35% of the base amount and restore it to 55%, notwithstanding the beneficiary's entitlement to Social Security.

No. 639 (Commander-in-Chief)—VA Medication Co-Payments

Resolved, that Congress provide legislation to exempt all enrollment priority category 5 veterans from the requirement to make medication co-payments.

No. 640 (Commander-in-Chief)—Support Maximum Eligibility for Financial Aid for GI Bill Recipients

Resolved, that we go on record to support the removal of "GI Bill" benefits from all calculations for determining eligibility for all federal Title IV, Student Financial Aid.

No. 641 (Department of Illinois)—Support VA Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (Cares) Initiative but with Concerns

Resolved, that our national, state and local leadership stand ready to work with the VA in this effort to focus resources where they are needed to meet current and future veterans' needs, but will not do so at the overall expense of neglecting the care of today's veterans; and

Further resolved, that the VFW National Veterans Service carefully monitor and coordinate with the Veterans Health Administration to keep the VFW membership informed of the progress of CARES to ensure that the process is fully responsive to the healthcare needs of veterans.

No. 642 (Department of North Dakota)—Provide Required Funding for the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists

Resolved, that we urge Congress to provide mandated funding for the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists.

No. 643 (Department of North Dakota)—Oppose the Transfer of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs

Rejected

No. 644 (Department of North Dakota)—Provide Adequate and Permanent Funding for Veterans' Employment and Training Programs. the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI), Small Business Administration (SBA), Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP), Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER), and Homeless Veteran Programs

Rejected

No. 645 (Department of California)—Maintain a Service Dedicated to Securing Employment for Veterans

Rejected

No. 646 (Department of California)—VA Home Loan Fairness

Rejected

No. 647 (Department of California)—Workforce Investment Act

Rejected

No. 648 (Department of California)—Rename the Palo Alto VA Medical Center

Resolved, that we support the renaming of the Palo Alto VA Medical Center as the Bob Hope VA Medical Center to honor Bob Hope's contributions to our nation's veterans and their dependents and his service to our country.

No. 649 (Department of California)—Support for HR 959 and S 615

Rejected

No. 650 (Department of California)—Asbestos Compensation

Rejected

No. 651 (Departments of Kentucky and Texas)—Timeliness of Asbestos Claims Through the Courts

Rejected

No. 652 (Department of Kentucky)—Travel Pay for VA Treatment

Rejected

No. 653 (Department of Rhode Island)—VA to Pay for Nursing Home Care in State Homes

Resolved, that we urge Congress to allow state veterans' homes to admit any eligible veteran who meets the above requirements to receive the average contracted VA nursing home rate for providing care. It is understood, that the state home would relinquish the federal state home per diem rate and no resident charge for those veterans who qualify for the higher benefit.

No. 654 (Department of Washington)—Equity in Accrual of Annual Leave for Federally-Employed Veterans

Resolved, that we pursue legislation to amend Title 5 of the U.S. Code, section 8411, to allow federally-employed retired veterans to credit all military service to the accrual of annual leave on the same basis as is currently allowed by non-retired veterans.

No. 655 (Department of Illinois)—Long Term Care for Veterans

Rejected

No. 656 (Department of Minnesota)—Support for House Resolution (H.R.) 548 and Senate File (S) 145 Doing Away with the Social Security Offset of Survivors Benefit Program (SBP) for Survivors of Retirees Over the Age of 62

Rejected

No. 657 (Department of Montana)—Provide Adequate Funding for Local Veterans Employment and Training Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists

Rejected

No. 658 (Department of Colorado)—Active Duty Military Personnel to Transfer their Educational Benefits

Resolved, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to allow active duty military personnel to transfer or assign their educational benefits to dependent spouses or children.

No. 659 (Department of Colorado)—Additional Benefits and Services to Vietnam Veterans Children with Spina Bifida

Resolved, we urge Congress to enact a law to provide Vietnam veterans children with spina bifida cystica with comprehensive health care coverage; attendant services; independent living services; up to 48 months of educational assistance; and adaptive housing and transportation assistance.

No. 660 (Department of Ohio)—Support the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service Remaining a Separate Agency

Rejected

No. 661 (Department of Ohio)—Receipt of Military Longevity Retirement Pay and Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Compensation

Rejected

No. 662 (Department of Ohio)—Veterans Preference, Veterans Priority of Service and Other Special Considerations in Employment and Training Programs

Rejected

No. 663 (Department of Ohio)—Employee Protection

Rejected

No. 664 (Department of Ohio)—Award of Medal of Honor to Corporal Fred McGee

Rejected

No. 665 (Department of Ohio)—Retroactive Award of the Purple Heart Medal due to Friendly Fire

Resolved, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to amend Title 10 United States Code, section 1129 (c), to authorize the Purple

Heart Medal to any one killed or wounded as a result of “friendly fire” retroactive to April 5, 1917.

No. 666 (Department of Michigan) — Government Headstones

Resolved, that we petition Congress to amend Title 38 United States Code to allow the purchase of a government headstone at an applicant’s own expense through the government contractors for those interred prior to the enactment of Public Law 107-103.

No. 667 (Department of Michigan) — The Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty Rejected

No. 668 (Department of Michigan) — Increased Rates for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for Disabled Children

Resolved, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to increase the rates of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation payable to disabled children of deceased veterans to at least three fourths of the amount payable to the surviving spouse; and

Further resolved, Congress should enact legislation to adjust these payments annually for inflation.

No. 669 (Department of Michigan) — The Use of the “Battlefield Cross” in National Cemeteries

Resolved, that we petition the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration to amend their policy regarding the use of weapons of war to exclude the “Battlefield Cross” from this definition and allow its use in a proper and dignified manner as a memorial on the ground of a national cemetery under their control.

No. 670 (Department of Wisconsin) — Asbestos Related Diseases Rejected

No. 671 (Department of Wisconsin) — A Resolution to Help Retired VA Nurses Get the Benefits They Deserve Rejected

No. 672 (Department of Tennessee) — Amendment of the Social Security Laws Rejected

No. 673 (Commander-in-Chief) — Amend Internal Revenue Code for State Financial Veterans Home Mortgages

Resolved, that we support legislation to amend IRS code of 1986 to allow veterans who served after January 1, 1977, in a military operation and who are authorized a military campaign medal, to qualify for the state veterans home mortgage bond program.

No. 674 (Commander-in-Chief) — Mandatory Funding for Veterans’ Health Care

Resolved, that we urge Congress to establish a statutory entitlement for veterans' health care as a means to assure veterans receive the care they justly deserve, obviate diminished access as the current primary method of cost control, and provide a basis for justification of those capital investments needed to streamline processes for efficiency improvements.

NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEES

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

Chairman: John M. Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida
Vice Chairman: John J. Stang, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kansas

(Room 102C, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Jack F. Ivy	2702
Alabama	Robert L. Mattox	10250
Alaska	Calvin E. Pope	9365
Arizona	George K. Mead	9400
Arizona	Vincent J. Mitchell	9972
Arizona	Jerry Pujat	7401
Arizona	William J. Silva	836
Arkansas	Ruben Tamariz	2256
California	Robert A. Crider	1744
California	Aaron Granderson	5179
California	Leonard R. Herrst	1961
California	Steven D. Jacobs	5944
California	Richard R. Pignone	3173
California	Shirley M. Shaw	4647
California	Peter J. Szabo	3928
Colorado	Dielon C. Harwood	3981
Connecticut	Edward L. Burnham	1724
Connecticut	Dominic J. Romano	7330
Connecticut	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Delaware	Paul R. Phillips, Jr.	2863
Dist. of Col.	Philip L. Anderson	284
Dist. of Col.	John P. Breen	2979
Europe	Peter H. Luste	8862
Florida	Raymond D. Brennan, Jr	10131
Florida	John M. Carney	4643
Florida	Charles W. Householder	5690
Florida	Robert Shepherd	4864
Florida	Robert M. Sprute	5625
Georgia	John E. Bogardus	5080
Georgia	James R. Coggins	5080
Idaho	William E. Rhoads	9831
Illinois	James F. Davis	177
Illinois	John H. Farr	367

Illinois	Eugene Lewandowski	4737
Illinois	Jim L. Michel.....	1303
Illinois	John C. Vrtjak.....	1612
Indiana	Roger E. Baker	6841
Indiana	Frederick E. Elliott	6234
Indiana	Omar F. Kendall	673
Iowa	Le Roy I. Jenness	2253
Iowa	Robert S. Randall	839
Kansas	James G. Jenkins, Jr.	6401
Kansas	John Schlichting	1714
Kentucky.....	Thomas R. Aull.....	696
Kentucky.....	Ronald M. Myers.....	1096
Latin Amer/Carib	Salvador Morales Sanchez	11103
Louisiana	Al Courville.....	8971
Louisiana	Larry B. Minton	1736
Maine	Philip M. Farrell	11299
Maryland.....	Elwood S. Knight, Jr.....	5118
Massachusetts.....	Robert J. Gallagher.....	834
Massachusetts.....	William L. Mc Carthy.....	864
Massachusetts.....	Peter P. Rondeau	7556
Massachusetts.....	Paul A. Spera.....	144
Michigan	Ronald L. Amend	7486
Michigan	Harry L. Croyle	6756
Michigan	Dominic A. De Mello.....	1669
Michigan	Lawrence Le Febvre	552
Michigan	Donald Mrdjenovic.....	7573
Michigan	James R. Pintar	6165
Michigan	James A. Van Hauter	4553
Michigan	James L. Warner	1888
Minnesota.....	Calvin D. Ferber	612
Minnesota.....	Donald L. Gates, Jr.....	141
Minnesota.....	Dean E. Means.....	1642
Minnesota.....	Lester G. Orton	363
Mississippi.....	Fred W. Scarborough, Jr.....	5931
Missouri.....	George E. Hudson.....	4207
Missouri.....	John C. Krug.....	2210
Missouri.....	Lawrence M. Maher.....	7356
Missouri.....	James R. Mueller	5077
Montana	James C. Aho	2252
Montana	Dale Bond.....	4813
Montana	Duane G. Snyder	2484
Nebraska	Anthony J. Gallardo	131
Nebraska	Dwaine D. Wilson	1652
Nevada	Michael D. Downey.....	1002
New Hampshire	Donald R. Caron.....	7015
New Hampshire	Frank E. Casey, Jr.....	10675

New Hampshire	Robert W. Madigan	483
New Jersey	George J. Lisicki	2314
New Jersey	John G. Mooney.....	711
New Jersey	George T. Van Allen.....	7504
New Mexico.....	Joe D. Salas.....	401
New York.....	T. William Bossidy.....	7466
New York.....	Samuel C. Pilato	307
New York.....	Philip C. Schiffman	8691
New York.....	Robert A. Seagrave	2940
North Carolina	A. G. Parker	8719
Ohio.....	Gary B. Bentfeld.....	2799
Ohio.....	William W. Hawk	9381
Ohio.....	Thomas L. Kissell	9648
Ohio.....	Joseph P. Seibert.....	6428
Ohio.....	Fred Thompson, Jr.....	2984
Ohio.....	Robert A. Whiting	7647
Oklahoma	Frank Kubicek, Jr.	539
Oklahoma	Billie D. Mc Gill.....	1327
Oregon.....	H. Merle Jackson.....	4108
Pacific Areas	Robert W. Zaher.....	2485
Pennsylvania.....	Michael J. Bullister, Jr.	456
Pennsylvania.....	George Cain.....	3614
Pennsylvania.....	Neale H. Deibler	6493
Pennsylvania.....	Anthony Filardi	1810
Pennsylvania.....	Allen Q. Jones.....	21
Rhode Island	Carmino M. Calvitto	45
South Carolina.....	Eugene Johnson.....	4262
South Dakota.....	Daryl L. Halling	3164
Tennessee	Ronnie L. Davis.....	1618
Tennessee	Ernie L. Price.....	5146
Texas	Charles L. Cannon, Jr.	5076
Texas	Jimmie D. Cantrell	9168
Texas	Glen M. Gardner, Jr.....	3359
Texas	Anthony W. Graf	1815
Texas	Thomas R. Howard	3359
Texas	R. Earl Lord.....	10351
Texas	Manuel O. Rivas	8782
Utah	Jack A. Mack	3586
Vermont.....	Thomas E. Frechette	1034
Virginia.....	Joseph O. Longstreet	3219
Washington	Miles S. Irvine	379
Washington	James W. King, Jr.	3067
West Virginia	Randall L. Bare	6669
West Virginia	James M. Burkhart.....	1212
West Virginia	Robert B. Kesling.....	573

Wisconsin.....	Peter J. Breed.....	10331
Wisconsin.....	Howard A. Futrell.....	8337
Wisconsin.....	Walter E. Hahn	721
Wyoming.....	A. L. Ellefson.....	8473
Wyoming.....	William H. Saunders.....	579
Wyoming.....	Ronald A. Steffensmeier	9439

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: Cooper T. Holt, Past Commander-in-Chief, Tennessee
 Vice Chairman: Arthur J. Fellwock, Past Commander-in-Chief, Indiana

(201AB, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama.....	Gregory K. Usrey	2702
Alaska.....	Marcus S. Butler.....	10252
Alaska.....	Robert S. Green	9365
Arizona.....	Perry L. Dobstaff	7968
Arizona.....	Darrel G. Moore	9632
Arkansas.....	Martin O. Cowley	2259
Arkansas.....	James F. Gilbert.....	4548
Arkansas.....	Bobby G. Julian.....	6527
Arkansas.....	Verlin F. Williams	1991
California.....	John L. Fitzke	9241
California.....	James A. Green	1622
California.....	Everett R. Martin	1732
California.....	Willie Mc Cray, Jr.	67
California.....	James R. Rowoldt.....	10040
California.....	George M. Smith, Sr.....	2122
Colorado	Wayne J. Thompson, Jr.	5061
Connecticut.....	Benjamin T. Lord, Jr.....	5095
Connecticut.....	Robert A. Stevens	10690
Delaware.....	Eugene Boyd.....	1207
Delaware.....	Robert A. Mc Gowan	7234
Dist. of Col.....	George A. Lange, Jr.	284
Europe.....	Richard F. Kennedy	9534
Florida.....	Harvey F. Eckhoff	7674
Florida.....	Robert P. Loftus	4643
Georgia.....	Lynn R. Wilcox.....	665
Hawaii.....	Norbert K. Enos.....	2875
Idaho.....	Louis K. Nave.....	9425
Illinois.....	Walter A. Livengood	5083
Illinois.....	Larry L. Nunn.....	1303
Illinois.....	Michael L. Rolando.....	1308
Illinois.....	Raymond W. Schlueter	6869

Indiana	Arthur J. Fellwock.....	1114
Indiana	Everett D. Foreman.....	5864
Iowa	Donald L. Gilbert.....	733
Iowa	Daryl R. Shinker.....	2349
Kansas	Charles L. Brown.....	7437
Kansas	Ronald G. Browning.....	846
Kansas	Buddy J. Haney	56
Kansas	Tommy L. Huff.....	846
Kentucky.....	Ronnie Dickerson	5478
Latin Amer/Carib	Dannie Cooper	3822
Louisiana.....	Charles E. Wiggins	3665
Louisiana.....	Precilla Wilkewitz	4224
Maine.....	Joseph H. Gallant, Jr.....	832
Maine.....	Donald R. Libby, Jr.....	832
Maine.....	Donald W. Linscott, Jr.....	1603
Maryland.....	Thomas V. Kimball, J.....	10159
Massachusetts.....	Walter G. Gansenberg	834
Massachusetts.....	Joseph R. La Plante	662
Michigan	Robert R. Ball.....	7569
Michigan	William P. Bennett	7573
Michigan	Larry A. Coleman	1888
Michigan	Ernest E. Meyers, Sr.....	4090
Michigan	Elmer J. Wurster	7546
Minnesota.....	Robert E. Hansen	295
Minnesota.....	Thomas G. Tweet	1296
Minnesota.....	Larry G. Ziebarth	6843
Mississippi.....	James W. Austin	3036
Mississippi.....	William H. Long	4302
Missouri.....	Lawrence M. Maher.....	7356
Missouri.....	Donald J. Newman, Jr.....	2866
Montana	Ronald O. Worden.....	6774
Nebraska	John L. Iossi.....	3704
Nebraska	Lorenz Montoya.....	1581
Nebraska	Loy Robb	3755
New Hampshire	Kevin P. Mc Keating, Jr.....	483
New Hampshire	Robert T. St. Onge	8214
New Jersey	Robert K. Bischoff	9691
New Jersey	G Bruce Eveland	7677
New Jersey	William R. Grieman.....	4247
New Mexico.....	James H. Ferguson	7686
New York.....	Joseph F. Bernstein	7466
New York.....	Elton C. Klein.....	478
New York.....	Jack I. Simons.....	9217
North Carolina	William C. Cox	7383
North Carolina	Carl E. Mc Alister	9337
North Dakota	Wayne L. Paulson.....	753

Ohio.....	Robert W. Crow	4027
Ohio.....	Keith E. Harman.....	3035
Ohio.....	John E. Keirns.....	7174
Ohio.....	Richard R. Uzl, Jr.	7727
Oregon.....	Roger A. Ege	1909
Pacific Areas	Kenneth W. Schaefer	2485
Pennsylvania.....	William C. Allen	7213
Pennsylvania.....	Glenn C. Dashner	464
Pennsylvania.....	Joseph M. Salvo	5267
Rhode Island	Ernest R. Frappier	6342
South Carolina.....	Frank M. Fogner	10804
South Dakota.....	Jay A. Nebben.....	10632
Tennessee.....	Cooper T. Holt.....	1289
Tennessee.....	Fred L. Kizer.....	4848
Texas	John R. Fair	8231
Texas	Edward J. Krenek.....	8787
Texas	Guy V. Layton, Jr.....	3893
Texas	William B. Moody.....	2034
Texas	Arthur R. Richards.....	4010
Texas	George B. Sparkman	9181
Utah	Benito G. Russo	3586
Vermont.....	James H. Lane.....	6689
Virginia.....	Gerald E. Jonas.....	1811
Virginia.....	Robert J. Klausung.....	2216
Washington	George C. Berthiaume	969
West Virginia	James E. Taylor	4326
Wisconsin.....	Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.	6498
Wyoming.....	Frederick W. Ess	4343

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Wisconsin
 Vice Chairman: Thomas A. Pouliot, Past Commander-in-Chief, Montana
 Vice Chairman: Joe T. Wood, Budget Chairman, Georgia
 Vice Chairman: Raymond R. Soden, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

(Ballroom A, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama.....	William C. Smith.....	4765
Alabama.....	Norman R. Stone	3016
Alaska.....	John W. Minnick	9365
Alaska.....	Kenneth P. Pleasants.....	10029
Arizona.....	Donald E. Maynard.....	7968
Arizona.....	Robert J. Scola	3516
Arkansas.....	Charles O. Wilkison.....	4554

California.....	Vernon Hollins, Sr.....	5394
California.....	Robert J. Maxwell.....	1021
California.....	James S. Rosa.....	1622
California.....	Teddy H. Smith.....	9223
California.....	Philemon J. Velasquez.....	5059
California.....	John M. Warner.....	4851
Colorado.....	Ronald J. Lattin.....	5061
Colorado.....	Curtis L. Mulder.....	2461
Connecticut.....	Robert P. Tozzoli.....	9929
Delaware.....	Mark M. Newman.....	3238
Dist. of Col.....	Lester W. Hansen.....	2979
Europe.....	George W. Eby.....	10692
Florida.....	Ronald G. Lee.....	2473
Florida.....	Robert A. Mc Dade.....	6180
Florida.....	John T. Mc Dermott.....	9610
Georgia.....	Ray L. Christie.....	5080
Georgia.....	William Hamrick, Jr.....	6542
Georgia.....	Jimmy S. Lynch.....	5448
Georgia.....	Joe T. Wood.....	8452
Idaho.....	Alvin R. Mason.....	63
Illinois.....	Morris F. Allen.....	9759
Illinois.....	Clyde F. Davis.....	1604
Illinois.....	Paul J. Hymes, Jr.....	1303
Illinois.....	George R. Lobb.....	3579
Illinois.....	Robert J. Mc Mahon.....	2298
Illinois.....	Raymond R. Soden.....	2149
Indiana.....	Leo R. Reller.....	2366
Iowa.....	Robert C. Peters.....	5981
Iowa.....	Laurel E. Phipps.....	839
Iowa.....	Frank W. Weier.....	3159
Kansas.....	Johnny L. Burns.....	112
Kansas.....	Russell R. Cutright.....	1650
Kansas.....	Robert B. Greene.....	846
Kansas.....	Phil L. Irby.....	8773
Kentucky.....	James C. Hartzell.....	10281
Kentucky.....	Paul A. Nixon.....	1084
Latin Amer/Carib.....	Clifford P. England.....	3822
Louisiana.....	Landry E. Saucier.....	1736
Maine.....	Peter F. Miesburger.....	9389
Maine.....	Arthur J. Roy.....	1603
Maryland.....	Ronald Dickens.....	9376
Massachusetts.....	Theodore R. Eaton.....	2104
Massachusetts.....	Michael J. Gormalley.....	2016
Massachusetts.....	Cornelius F. Sharron.....	9566
Massachusetts.....	Joseph S. Stavolta.....	1272
Michigan.....	Wayne A. Buck.....	9283

Michigan	John J. Harrow, Jr.....	3724
Michigan	Clifford J. Parker	4139
Michigan	Patrick H. Patterson	6756
Minnesota.....	David L. Adams.....	1782
Minnesota.....	Daniel Bartholomew	3144
Minnesota.....	Patrick T. Bohmer	246
Minnesota.....	Harold Genrich.....	1222
Minnesota.....	Louie R. Mrozek	6316
Minnesota.....	John S. Staum.....	9625
Missouri.....	Ernest W. Asher	6137
Missouri.....	Chester A. Doile.....	6272
Missouri.....	Jessie L. Jones.....	2657
Missouri.....	Kevin C. Jones.....	5789
Missouri.....	Lawrence M. Maher.....	7356
Montana	John W. Mahan	1116
Montana	John T. Nelson.....	9040
Montana	Thomas A. Pouliot.....	1116
Nebraska	Robert E. Clark.....	4626
Nebraska	Leroy Z. Clausen	4996
Nebraska	Earl Stiner, Jr.....	3421
Nevada	Bill L. Breen	1002
New Hampshire	Jerry A. Parenti	8546
New Hampshire	Katrina A. St. Onge	8214
New Jersey	Patrick J. Botbyl.....	1593
New Jersey	Warren W. Hague	133
New Jersey	Andrew Henkel, Jr.....	2290
New Mexico.....	Archie F. Bassham	10124
New York.....	Edward F. Kelley, Jr.....	7289
New York.....	Clyde A. Lewis.....	125
New York.....	Raymond Nowak	2940
New York.....	Harry C. Wurth	5253
North Carolina	James D. Chambers.....	7547
North Carolina	Jack W. Kerns	9488
North Dakota	Duaine D. Dockter.....	6831
North Dakota	Gordon R. Thorson.....	7564
Ohio.....	John W. Ford	1042
Ohio.....	James B. Lantz, Jr.....	2901
Ohio.....	Ronald D. Smith.....	7340
Ohio.....	John Wasylik	2529
Oklahoma	William C. Bender	4446
Oregon	Manuel J. Huerta.....	4248
Pacific Areas	William T. Brandon	11435
Pacific Areas	Richard A. Lane	11575
Pennsylvania.....	Russell R. Canevari	5544
Pennsylvania.....	Roland J. Gallagher.....	6704
Pennsylvania.....	Norman F. Rettig, Jr.....	249

Pennsylvania.....	Ronald G. Tyler, Sr.	1462
Rhode Island	Jean P. Arcand	2686
Rhode Island	Salvatore J. Capirchio	2396
Rhode Island	Frank E. Lightowler	6342
South Carolina.....	Clyde M. Lindsay, Jr.	5932
South Dakota.....	Walter F. Joynt.....	1273
South Dakota.....	Dick L. Pickering.....	4726
Tennessee	Merle O. Campbell	4188
Texas	Turner A. Brazell	6635
Texas	Joe Galindo, Jr.....	8570
Texas	Donald L. Harwood	6794
Texas	William W. Howell, Jr.	4010
Utah	Johnnie B. Janes	9803
Vermont.....	Lee W. Lavoie.....	10038
Virginia.....	Michael J. Hoiness	4809
Virginia.....	Paul T. Moore	4491
Washington	Andrew J. Martin.....	10018
Washington	Phillip L. Ottinger	6268
Washington	Eric G. Sandstrom	969
West Virginia	Gene C. Bess	5581
West Virginia	Theodore F. Turley, Jr.	9097
Wisconsin.....	Walter G. Hogan.....	6498
Wisconsin.....	Curtis J. Taylor, Jr.	1318
Wisconsin.....	De Witt H. Woodworth.....	1530
Wyoming.....	David J. Sundstrom	8473

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona
 Vice Chairman: John W. Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Hampshire

(Ballroom B, Midwest Express Center)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: Billy Ray Cameron, Past Commander-in-Chief, North Carolina
 Vice Chairman: James R. Currieo, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Robert L. Littrell	1701
Alaska.....	Leander P. Carr.....	9978
Alaska.....	Gerald J. Dorsher	5559
Arizona.....	Robert M. Jarvey	2364
Arizona.....	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent	9972
Arkansas	Harold F. Belote	2259
Arkansas	Aurbury B. Secrest.....	9095

California.....	Ralph E. Gibbs, Jr.....	7041
California.....	Virgil L. Griffin.....	3795
California.....	William G. Kelley.....	5985
California.....	Arthur A. Napiwocki.....	1614
California.....	David B. Norris.....	52
Colorado.....	Darrell L. Anderson.....	2551
Colorado.....	James E. Mauck.....	2601
Colorado.....	Charles G. Watkins.....	4265
Connecticut.....	Richard A. Cyr.....	10004
Connecticut.....	Thomas C. Walker.....	5849
Delaware.....	Wilbur D. Kirkwood.....	3792
Europe.....	Billy D. Barber.....	10436
Florida.....	Richard Fitzgerald.....	7721
Florida.....	J. Douglas Morris, Jr.....	3559
Florida.....	Ernest R. Sandman.....	2500
Florida.....	Laurence Schatz.....	3559
Florida.....	John Uhrich, Jr.....	10068
Florida.....	Alan A. Wallace.....	10068
Georgia.....	Richard A. Dunlop.....	6602
Georgia.....	Gerald J. Piper.....	4583
Hawaii.....	Francis X. Roddin.....	2875
Idaho.....	Walter W. Jackson.....	63
Illinois.....	Walter C. Luksta.....	9115
Illinois.....	Curtis E. Martyn.....	9773
Indiana.....	Harley D. Andrews.....	6606
Indiana.....	James J. Thiel.....	717
Iowa.....	Richard E. Goebel.....	9663
Iowa.....	A. Arthur Weber.....	788
Kansas.....	David W. Jones.....	56
Kansas.....	Leon Shaw, Jr.....	704
Kansas.....	Mildon L. Yeager.....	7271
Kentucky.....	Jeff A. Phillips.....	1170
Louisiana.....	Timothy S. Green.....	3106
Louisiana.....	Joseph H. Richardson.....	1736
Maine.....	Kevin G. Woodward.....	1737
Maryland.....	Joseph F. Rosetta.....	9619
Massachusetts.....	Joseph E. Caouette.....	1105
Massachusetts.....	Kenneth J. Hebert.....	1105
Massachusetts.....	Michael J. Imbracio.....	639
Massachusetts.....	John F. Leonard.....	639
Michigan.....	Garry J. Goff.....	2406
Michigan.....	Edmund R. Gucwa.....	6896
Michigan.....	Gerald K. Hawkins.....	3243
Michigan.....	Richard E. La Fave.....	5670
Minnesota.....	Gordon W. Kirk.....	8854
Mississippi.....	Johnny J. Raney.....	10567

Missouri.....	Charles C. Clifton.....	4347
Missouri.....	Eugene L. Hoeltge.....	5077
Missouri.....	Jerry L. Turk.....	2426
Montana.....	Maurice J. Mills.....	2986
Nebraska.....	Earl L. Jones.....	2503
Nebraska.....	Billy C. Smith.....	7028
Nevada.....	Walter J. Dybeck, Jr.....	10047
New Hampshire.....	Dana E. Hussey.....	1772
New Hampshire.....	John A. Knapper.....	1772
New Hampshire.....	John W. Smart.....	483
New Jersey.....	William A. Goode.....	809
New Mexico.....	Tyrone M. Benson.....	7686
New Mexico.....	C. H. Thornton.....	7686
New York.....	Robert E. Barnhart.....	686
New York.....	Melvin Garrett.....	6396
New York.....	James F. Mc Nally.....	53
North Carolina.....	William J. Hendren.....	2031
North Carolina.....	Arthur A. Shull.....	2843
North Dakota.....	Robert L. Volk.....	1868
Ohio.....	Robert F. Brenot.....	606
Ohio.....	George H. Cox.....	6772
Ohio.....	John E. Moon.....	2873
Ohio.....	Larry D. Mooney.....	3343
Ohio.....	Gerald J. Ward.....	5713
Oklahoma.....	Elwin W. Doyle.....	577
Oklahoma.....	Donald A. Firkins.....	9969
Oregon.....	Thomas G. Laing.....	9448
Pacific Areas.....	Thomas I. Elliott.....	2485
Pacific Areas.....	Clifton W. Wilsey.....	2485
Pennsylvania.....	Howard L. Adler, Jr.....	456
Pennsylvania.....	John M. Gunn, Sr.....	2506
Pennsylvania.....	Peter Krenitsky.....	6082
Rhode Island.....	Harry W. Smith.....	4651
South Carolina.....	Richard A. Acosta.....	8760
South Carolina.....	William L. Dickey.....	7735
South Dakota.....	James E. Fortin.....	750
South Dakota.....	Gary Knudson.....	2038
Tennessee.....	David Everett.....	4349
Tennessee.....	Otha M Jack Kerr.....	5266
Tennessee.....	Hugh G. Ogle.....	1893
Texas.....	John R. Arnold.....	6111
Texas.....	Robert L. Doumecq.....	3359
Texas.....	Manuel O. Navarrete.....	10354
Texas.....	Ferrell E. Warden.....	8552
Utah.....	Sanford Rosenthal.....	3586
Vermont.....	Raymond G. Snow.....	793

Virginia.....	Daniel D. Boyer	7726
Virginia.....	Bruce R. Harder	1503
Virginia.....	Earl E. Harris, Jr.	2216
Washington	Blaine E. Teachman	9301
West Virginia	Ernest E. Imboden	9926
West Virginia	Scottie E. King.....	1064
Wisconsin.....	Ronald J. Hinkhouse	9677
Wisconsin.....	Kenneth M. Puls.....	9202
Wisconsin.....	Joel P. Walker.....	1904
Wyoming.....	Robert J. De Bernardo.....	9439

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: James E. Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas
Vice Chairman: George R. Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief, Illinois

(102DE, Midwest Express Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Charles D. Davis	2760
Alabama	Charles R. Stephens	3128
Alaska.....	Melvin R. Sheppard	3836
Arizona.....	Forrest E. Barker	9829
Arizona.....	Kenneth A. Buckley.....	9400
Arkansas	Charles O. Wright	4513
California.....	Gordon L. Bailey.....	10859
California.....	George D. Branch	9791
California.....	Judge Brown	7792
California.....	Kenneth N. Niemi	1679
California.....	Leslie I. Raper	8254
Colorado	John J. Holland.....	1
Colorado	Warren E. Wellensiek.....	4171
Connecticut.....	William H. Woodbury.....	1724
Delaware.....	Charles E. Price.....	3792
Dist. of Col.....	William L. Bradshaw.....	284
Europe.....	John C. Neilson.....	2566
Florida.....	Elizabeth L. Case.....	8108
Florida.....	Henry G. Diehl, Jr.	8058
Florida.....	Donald S. Pender	3559
Florida.....	Samuel D. Sweetman	4287
Florida.....	Kenneth A. Thie.....	9272
Georgia	Richard Branson.....	5080
Georgia	Danny L. Gardner	2681
Georgia	Roy L. Jordan, Jr.	6686
Georgia	Robert K. Nelson.....	3200

Hawaii.....	William W. Daves	970
Idaho.....	Donald G. Riegel	889
Idaho.....	Leonard L. Rogers	10323
Illinois.....	Paul J. Bezazian	8322
Illinois.....	George R. Cramer	6869
Illinois.....	Julius C. Grantham.....	4183
Illinois.....	Lee D. Miller.....	3847
Illinois.....	Donald L. Porter.....	2055
Indiana.....	David R. Cole	1832
Indiana.....	Paul D. Curtice.....	1257
Indiana.....	David Lantz	1130
Iowa.....	Larry J. Bender	788
Iowa.....	Donald F. Dickerson	1655
Kansas.....	A Lynn Hall.....	6240
Kansas.....	Gerald D. Mangold.....	7521
Kansas.....	Norman G. Staab	6240
Kansas.....	Roy L. Taylor	6438
Kansas.....	Richard N. Weston.....	6882
Latin Amer/Carib.....	Thomas D. Graham.....	6565
Louisiana.....	Elton J. Landry.....	3700
Louisiana.....	Larry W. Rivers.....	1736
Maine.....	Paul S. Colburn	1761
Maine.....	Raymond R. Lupo	1761
Maryland.....	Carolyn L. Amos	9619
Maryland.....	Fredrick W. Burns.....	2562
Maryland.....	Donald H. Cunningham, Jr.....	8185
Maryland.....	William C. Dozier.....	9619
Massachusetts.....	Jere L. Hill.....	2425
Massachusetts.....	George P. Magrath	6712
Michigan.....	Martha M. Abdelsalam.....	7546
Michigan.....	Kenneth J. Aune	6756
Michigan.....	Arthur C. Bates.....	6165
Michigan.....	Gary E. Brown.....	2406
Michigan.....	Dale J. Brubaker.....	3941
Michigan.....	Daniel J. Crocker.....	796
Michigan.....	Lowell E. Elston.....	3243
Michigan.....	Daniel H. Fettes	796
Michigan.....	David J. Gay	3243
Michigan.....	Eric L. Halvorsen.....	5065
Michigan.....	Jay E. Johnson	5666
Michigan.....	Rollin G. Johnson.....	3165
Michigan.....	Raymond G. O Neill.....	147
Michigan.....	David W. Patrick	3651
Michigan.....	Gary L. Putinsky.....	5666
Michigan.....	Barry F. Walter	4005
Michigan.....	Ian B. Welch	5666

Minnesota.....	Thomas L. Hanson	1639
Minnesota.....	Richard A. Zierdt.....	6587
Mississippi.....	Charles Garrett.....	4877
Missouri.....	Jerry F. Jones.....	1829
Missouri.....	Charles F. Thrower, Jr.....	3838
Montana	Leslie E. Eskildsen	4067
Nebraska	John J. Brehm	1681
Nebraska	Dick Mc Michael	1652
Nevada	John W. Stroud	10047
New Jersey	Lawrence F. Berman.....	133
New Jersey	John F. Kane, Jr.....	493
New Jersey	James A. Nelson.....	493
New Mexico.....	Walter P. Diegnau	7686
New York.....	Neil T. Connolly.....	7227
New York.....	Arthur E. Koch, III.....	6780
New York.....	George S. Smith	53
North Carolina	William C. Dohl.....	4309
North Carolina	Paul G. Yeager.....	7315
North Dakota	Charles D. Barstad	762
North Dakota	Frank Egan	9050
Ohio.....	Clifford E. Bauer.....	3360
Ohio.....	Steven W. Mardis	693
Ohio.....	William K. Seagraves.....	9582
Oklahoma	Mark C. Richardson	4876
Oregon.....	Edward L. Williams	4060
Pacific Areas	Jerome J. Karwacki	9951
Pennsylvania.....	Jack D. Frank	92
Pennsylvania.....	Almon J. Long.....	283
Pennsylvania.....	Franklin E. Lopes	92
Pennsylvania.....	Albert S. Thomas, Jr.....	974
Rhode Island	Leonard M. Harris.....	272
Rhode Island	Michael J. O'Rourke	4487
South Carolina.....	George M. Pullie.....	6091
South Dakota.....	Dale L. Jensen	628
South Dakota.....	Donald D. Nelson	628
South Dakota.....	Cheryl M. Stahlecker.....	791
Tennessee	Ronald N. Cameron	11160
Tennessee	Billie L. Davis.....	2372
Tennessee	John Furgess.....	1970
Texas	William D. Bell	6873
Texas	Oscar G. Gonzalez	7475
Texas	James E. Nier.....	8919
Utah	Donald B. Myers	8307
Vermont.....	John J. Zuba	1034
Virginia.....	Clifton G. Bryant.....	3103
Virginia.....	Tommy W. Hines.....	7166

Virginia.....	John J. Mc Neill, Jr.	5412
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COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: R.D. Smith, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia
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 Massachusetts