

PROCEEDINGS
of the
112TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES
(SUMMARY OF MINUTES)

San Antonio, Texas
August 28 – September 1, 2011



VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

June 25, 2012.-Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS;
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PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

The proceedings of the national encampments of the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of World War I of the United States, Incorporated, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), respectively, shall be printed annually, with accompanying illustrations, as separate House documents of the session of the Congress to which they may be submitted.
[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES,
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
June, 2012

Honorable John Boehner
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 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in San Antonio, Texas, August 28-September 1, 2011, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allen 'Gunner' Kent". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allen "Gunner" Kent
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. HansenElected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1962-1963	Byron B. Gentry* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1963-1964	Joseph J. Lombardo* Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1964-1965	John A. Jenkins* Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1965-1966	Andy Borg*Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1966-1967	Leslie M. Fry* Elected at New York, New York.
1967-1968	Joseph A. Scerra* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1968-1969	Richard W. Homan*Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1969-1970	Raymond A. Gallagher* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1970-1971	Herbert R. Rainwater*Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1971-1972	Joseph L. Vicites*Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1972-1973	Patrick E. Carr* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1973-1974	Ray R. Soden Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1974-1975	John J. StangElected 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. Currie	Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1983-1984	Clifford G. Olson Jr.	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1984-1985	Billy Ray Cameron	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1985-1986	John S. Staum	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1986-1987	Norman G. Staab	Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1987-1988	Earl L. Stock*	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1988-1989	Larry W. Rivers	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1989-1990	Walter G. Hogan	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1990-1991	James L. Kimery*	Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1991-1992	Robert E. Wallace	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1992-1993	John M. Carney	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1993-1994	George R. Cramer	Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1994-1995	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent	Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1995-1996	Paul A. Spera	Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
1996-1997	James E. Nier	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1997-1998	John E. Moon	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1998-1999	Thomas A. Pouliot	Elected at San Antonio, Texas.
1999-2000	John W. Smart	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
2000-2001	John F. Gwizdak	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
2001-2002	James N. Goldsmith*	Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
2002-2003	Raymond C. Sisk*	Elected at Nashville, Tennessee.
2003-2004	Edward S. Banas, Sr.	Elected at San Antonio, Texas.
2004-2005	John Furgess	Elected at Cincinnati, Ohio.
2005-2006	James R. Mueller	Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
2006-2007	Gary L. Kurpius	Elected at Reno, Nevada.
2007-2008	George J. Lisicki	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
2008-2009	Glen M. Gardner, Jr.	Elected at Orlando, Florida.
2009-2010	Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.	Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
2010-2011	Richard L. Eubank	Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.

VFW National Officers and Directors, 2010-2011

Commander-in-Chief	Richard L. Eubank
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Richard L. DeNoyer
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	John E. Hamilton
Adjutant General	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent
Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Judge Advocate General	Larry B. Minton

Surgeon General.....	William J. “Doc” Schmitz, Sr.
National Chaplain	Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta
National Chief of Staff	David B. Norris
Inspector General	Darrell F. Bencken
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Assistant Adjutant General, Operations.....	John J. McNeill
Assistant Quartermaster General.....	Robert B. Greene
Acting Director, VFW Foundation	John G. Lowe
Director, Administration & Operations, Washington Office.....	Fredrick W. Burns
Director, Administrative Operations.....	Kevin C. Jones
Director, Communications & Public Affairs, Kansas City	Jerry L. Newberry
Director, Communications & Public Affairs, Washington	Joseph E. Davis
Director, Human Resources.....	Debra L. Anderson
Director, Information Technology/CIO	Patrick J. Botbyl
Director, Member Dues Processing.....	Robert A. Crider
Director, Membership.....	Matthew C. Claussen
Director, National Military Services	Michael G. Penney
Director, National Veterans Service.....	William L. Bradshaw
Deputy Director, National Veterans Service	Gerald T. Manar
Director, Programs.....	Stephen L. Van Buskirk
Director, Properties.....	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Publications and Editor-in-Chief, VFW magazine	Richard K. Kolb
VFW Political Action Committee, Director	Salvatore J. Capirchio

Regional National Council of Administration Members, 2010-2011

District No. 1	(ME NH).....	Eugene A. Pawlik
District No. 2	(MA VT).....	Vito S. DeMarco
District No. 3	(MD NJ).....	James L. Youngblood
District No. 4	(DC DE EU)	Charlie W. Smith
District No. 5	(IN MO).....	Paul E. Connors
District No. 6	(VA WV)	Harold “Hal” J. Roesch
District No. 7	(KY TN).....	John H. Ranson
District No. 8	(AL GA)	Dean E. Smith
District No. 9	(NC SC)	Roy C. Meares
District No.10	(AR OK).....	Robert A. Clark
District No.11	(IA WI).....	Larry J. Larson
District No.12	(ND WY)	Gary K. Mathisen
District No.13	(CO KS)	Charley L. Shoemaker

District No.14	(ID MT WA)	George C. “Corky” Berthiaume
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District No.16	(AK HI LAT PAC)	George F. Barlett
District No.17	(NV OR UT)	Michael H. Musgrove
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District No.19	(LA MS)	Thomas J. Kijak
District No.21	(MN NE)	Steven P. Van Bergen
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District B	(IL)	Donald R. Smithenry
District C	(NY)	Bernard L. Thompson
District D	(OH)	Roger A. Frye
District G	(CA)	John P. Wolfe
District H	(TX)	Eliseo “Al” Cantu, Jr.
District J	(FL)	Robert Shepherd
Past Commander-in-Chief		Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.

National Honor Guard

Ronald E. Servary, Captain	521 MD
Alfred N. Simmons, Adjutant Quartermaster	8509 MD
Eugene Daisey	5118 MD
Barbara Floyd	521 MD
Raymond H. Glock	1858 MD
Thomas V. Kimball	10159 MD
Neil William Koski	6694 MD
Gary Lee	3859 MD
Charles P. McConville	521 MD
Michael McGuire	8849 MD
Phillip S. Medlin, Sr.	2678 MD
Stephen J. Olcott	9619 MD
Robert J. Patterson	6027 MD
Henry E. Servary	521 MD
Clinton A. Slack	475 DE
James L. Youngblood	9083 MD

National Convention Committee
August 20-26, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana

Convention Committee Chairman	Arthur J. Fellwock
Operations Officer.....	Ronald E. Martin
Health Fair Chairman	Jerry Herston
Meeting Halls, Signs & Flags Co-Chairman.....	Lewie Cooper
Meeting Halls, Signs & Flags Co-Chairman.....	Richard Faulk
Assistant Adjutant General Administration Operations.....	John McNeill
Manager, Meetings & Events.....	Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM
Memorial Service Chairman	Ernest G. Condra
Patriotic Rally Chairman	Thomas V. Burks
Registration Chairman	David G. Havelly
Transportation Chairman	David Bowman
Military Contests Chairman	Charles Bass

National Sergeant-at-Arms

	POST
Bryan P. O'Brien	2394 MA

National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms

Gary W. Barringer.....	9134 NC
Joy Ausman	10043 ID
James M. Galen.....	6802 MI
Joseph P. Schirmers.....	4847 MN
Lonnie Garza.....	7110 TX



Richard L. Eubank
Commander-in-Chief
2009-2010



Richard L. DeNoyer
Commander-in-Chief
2011-2012

VFW National Officers and Directors, 2011-2012

Commander-in-Chief	Richard L. DeNoyer
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.....	John E. Hamilton
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	William A. Thien
Adjutant General	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent
Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Judge Advocate General	Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic
Surgeon General.....	Curtis O. "Doc" Bohlman, M.D.
National Chaplain	Rev. John J. Holland
National Chief of Staff	Walter Gansenberg
Inspector General	John A. Biedrzycki, Jr.
Assistant Adjutant General & Executive Director, Washington Office	Robert E. Wallace
Assistant Adjutant General, Operations.....	John J. McNeill
Assistant Quartermaster General.....	Robert B. Greene
Director, Administration & Operations, Washington Office.....	Fredrick W. Burns
Director, Administrative Operations.....	Kevin C. Jones
Director, Communications & Public Affairs, Kansas City	Jerry L. Newberry
Director, Communications & Public Affairs, Washington	Joseph E. Davis
Director, Human Resources	Debra L. Anderson
Director, Information Technology/CIO	Patrick J. Botbyl
Director, Member Dues Processing.....	Robert A. Crider
Director, Membership.....	Matthew C. Claussen
Director, National Military Services	Michael G. Penney
Director, National Veterans Service.....	William L. Bradshaw
Deputy Director, National Veterans Service	Gerald T. Manar
Director, Programs.....	Stephen L. Van Buskirk
Director, Properties.....	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Publications and Editor-in-Chief, VFW magazine	Richard K. Kolb
Director, VFW Foundation	John G. Lowe

Regional National Council of Administration Members, 2011-2012

District No. 1 (ME NH)	Thomas R. Lussier
District No. 2 (MA VT)	Vito S. DeMarco
District No. 3 (MD NJ).....	Otto A. Gollon
District No. 4 (DC DE EU)	Charlie W. Smith
District No. 5 (IN MO).....	Richard M. Faulk
District No. 6 (VA WV)	Harold J. Roesch

District No. 7	(KY TN).....	John H. Scott
District No. 8	(AL GA)	Dean E. Smith
District No. 9	(NC SC)	Francis M. Fogner
District No.10	(AR OK).....	Robert A. Clark
District No.11	(IA WI).....	Allen W. Kochenderfer
District No.12	(ND WY)	Gary K. Mathisen
District No.13	(CO KS)	Ronald J. Lattin
District No.14	(ID MT WA).....	George C. Berthiaume
District No.15	(AZ NM)	Raymond K. Thomas
District No.16	(AK HI LAT PAC).....	George F. Barlett
District No.17	(NV OR UT)	H. Merle Jackson
District No.18	(CT RI).....	Stanley W. Borusiewicz, Jr.
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District No.21	(MN NE)	Dan G. Petersen
District No.23	(MI SD).....	Russel L. Dramstad
District A	(PA)	Robert C. Eiler
District B	(IL).....	Jules D. Spindler
District C	(NY).....	Ronald J. Bush
District D	(OH).....	Roger A. Frye
District G	(CA)	Jack E. Turner
District H	(TX)	Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr.
District J	(FL).....	Allen E. Hall
Past Commander-in-Chief	Richard L. Eubank

National Convention Committee
August 28 – September 1, 2011, San Antonio, Texas

Convention Committee Chairman	Glen M. Gardner, Jr.
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Eugene Daisey.....	5118 MD
Barbara Floyd.....	521 MD
Raymond Glock.....	1858 MD
Gary Lee.....	609 VA
Stephen Olcott	9619 MD
Henry Servary.....	521 MD
Clinton Slack.....	475 DE
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National Sergeant-at-Arms

	POST
Bryan P. O’Brien	2394 MA

National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms

Joy Ausman	10043 ID
Gary W. Barringer.....	9134 NC
James M. Galen.....	6802 MI
Lonnie Garza.....	7110 TX
George Lott	10152 NJ
Keith MacDonald	2275 CA
Joseph P. Schirmers.....	4847 MN

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 112th NATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN
WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, AUGUST 27-SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2011

(The Memorial Service of the 112th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Richard L. Eubank 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 EUBANK: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please escort the Gold Star Families, Honored Guests, and Past National Chaplains to their reserved seating, please.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BRYAN O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades and Sisters, please rise and remain standing, and I request that you do not applaud while the Gold Star mothers and parents are escorted into the hall. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Assistant sergeants-at-Arms escorted the Gold Star Families, Honored Guests and National Past Chaplains into the hall at this time.

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Captain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Honor Guard, advance, post and salute the Flag of the United States of America.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard Advanced, Posted and Saluted the Flag of the United States of America.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, Sisters and Friends, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag followed by our National Anthem, and then the Posting of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Assembly gave the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the National Anthem sung by Juanita Bohlman, National Soloist, Ladies Auxiliary, and the Posting of the Colors.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: You will remain standing for the Invocation by Chaplain Rudy Chavana.

INVOCATION

CHAPLAIN CHAVANA: Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this special blessing that you have given us in being here today for the 112th reunion of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We also thank Thee, O Lord, for the guidance and leadership that you have given this organization as being one that is second to none.

We would like to go ahead and ask for Thy blessing for our Gold Star Families. Praise them, O Lord. We also ask that you go ahead and take good care of our troops all over the world, especially those in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bring them home, O Lord, and show the world that we can live in peace and in harmony.

At this time I would like to go ahead and ask for Thy blessings on my brothers and sisters here today, my comrades. I would like to go ahead and ask for a special blessing for our country, the United States of America. Amen. God bless you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Please be seated. The Texas Children's Choir will now sing "Song for the Unsung Hero."

(Whereupon, the Texas Children's Choir sang "Song for the Unsung Hero" at this time.)

MEMORIAL RITUAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: 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 final call. The VFW Ritual provides that the audience shall refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see there is no disturbance during the ceremony.

NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF DAVID NORRIS: Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

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

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN ELMER LIIMATTA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am at your service and I shall endeavor to humbly perform this solemn duty in the spirit of faith, hope and charity.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: We now have the lighting of the POW-MIA Candle, the Armed Forces Vigil Candle by the Commander-in-Chief and the National President of our Ladies Auxiliary. Let us pray.

O God Almighty, Creator and Ruler of the Universe, some of our comrades and companions are Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. Comfort them, we pray.

In their isolation from their homes and their loved ones, supply their needs and protect them from all want and deprivation; strengthen and sustain them that they may face discouragement with courage and hardship with resolution. Grant that they may find patience to endure and peace in the knowledge of your continuing presence.

O God, we ask that You will strengthen and protect all our members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. In the day of battle, may they be courageous and strong, resourceful and capable, resolute and victorious. In the time of peace, may they serve with dignity and honor as effective emissaries of good will for this Nation.

May their devotion and loyalty to You, to their homeland, inspire them in moments of challenge. Comfort them in tribulation and long separation from their loved ones. And finally, we ask that they may return safely to serve You and our country in the days and years to come. Amen.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, to whom should the true soldier look for help in the battles of life?

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

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

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RICHARD DeNOYER: For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as with all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

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

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN HAMILTON: I have.

The Book of Life tells us that, "Like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

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

LADIES AUXILIARY CHAPLAIN ARMITHEA BOREL: I have a message of hope that should inspire our comrades at this solemn moment and all through life. The message is from the Captain of our Salvation. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life; 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 LIIMATTA: Comrades, we are thankful for those inspiring thoughts. Let us learn the lesson of the hour which is that we, too, are nearing the end of life's pilgrimage 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, a perfect charity toward all mankind. Let us pray.

Our Father, as we pause to remember those among these tributes, their personal memories, that we see faces, we recall names, their voices are still familiar to us. We thank you that death and time have not separated us from the memories of their service and sacrifice. In our daily journey, they are still our comrades from whom we draw strength and courage in our battles of life. Amen.

Juanita Bohlman, National Soloist for the Ladies Auxiliary, will now sing "Sleep Soldier Boy."

(Whereupon, Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist Juanita Bohlman sang at this time "Sleep Soldier Boy.")

SYMBOLIC TRIBUTE

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: In commemorating the virtues of our departed heroes, comrades, who served their country in a time of need, we now offer our symbolic tributes.

I place upon our sacred shrine these red flowers, which symbolize the

zeal of our departed comrades in upholding brotherhood, truth and justice.

Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, what tribute have you to offer?

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

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Commander-in-Chief, have you a tribute to place upon this sacred shrine?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: 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 of our departed comrades.

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

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT CORTINA BARNES: 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 LIIMATTA: Juanita Bohlman will now sing "I Won't Let Go."

(Whereupon, Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist Juanita Bohlman sang at this time "I Won't Let Go.")

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Chaplain Karl O. Kuckhahn, Jr., entered the military as a chaplain candidate completing the Chaplains Officers Basic Course in August 1982.

He currently serves as the Fort Sam Houston Installation Garrison Chaplain with a Joint Base San Antonio title of 502nd Mission Support Group Chaplain.

Chaplain Kuckhahn's assignments have included those as Chaplain on the squadron, battalion, and brigade levels, as well as the Installation Management Command Deputy Installation Chaplain, in Fort Riley, Kansas; the Installation Chaplain, at Camp Humphreys, Korea; and, Family Life Chaplain, at Fort Irwin, California. At the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School, he served as Director, Resource Management and Base Realignment, and Enclosure Code for the Army and to the Navy then located at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

Chaplain Kuckhahn is endorsed by the Military Chaplains, by the Evangelical Convention Church and has degrees from Dartmouth College, B.A., MBA, North Park Seminary, M-Division, and Kansas State University Masters in Family Counseling.

His military decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with five Oak Leaf clusters; the Army Commendation Medal and the Parachute Badge.

Chaplain Kuckhahn has been married for 31 years to the former Jeanine Lexing of Grantsburg, Wisconsin, and has three grown daughters. Chaplain Kuckhahn will do the Memorial Address.

CHAPLAIN KUCKHAHN: Good morning. On this fine Texas day that the Lord has made, I am honored to be here today and I thank you, Mr. Eubank and Chaplain Dickerson for inviting me. It was an invitation that I

didn't delay in accepting because I know the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Gold Star Families here have given so very much.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has served and advocated for our forces both active, reserve and all veterans, and I personally want to thank you very much for that. Thank you from my heart to you.

Today, I believe the deaths will be most honored by embracing the pain of their loss by walking with their survivors and embracing their pain and loss.

We see it in pictures, and I personally have seen it too many times, the boots carefully placed with an upright weapon, the dog tags hanging from the weapon and the picture of the fallen nearby, or the casket of your friends covered by the flag of our great country, the United States of America.

Our biggest loss in recent days with the warriors killed in the crash of the CH-47 Chinook Helicopter on August 6th, 30 U.S. service members. Reflecting on that loss, President Obama says that the deaths were a reminder of extraordinary sacrifices made by the men and women of our country and their families. President Obama went on to say, "We will draw inspiration from their life and continue the work of securing our country and standing up for the values that they embodied".

Those are the values which we lift up here today: duty, sacrifice and the camaraderie which you share.

Let me go a little more into depth on that moment of loss. I know, as a chaplain, I can be busily engaged with counseling appointments, with office calls, staff meetings, soldier visitations, but when I get that call for a funeral, all of that seems to fade into the background. Time seems to slow down to a crawl as I enter in with the family and hear the story of their fallen warrior.

It becomes a sacred time; for me, an encounter with the living God. This morning I would like to call our attention to a scripture that I believe is a similar encounter with the living God. It was different circumstances at a different time, but an encounter with the Lord, nevertheless.

These encounters with God show his activity in the world and offer us courage, comfort and hope.

My three points -- it is a three-point deal here. We move to the Old Testament, Genesis 28, and in this encounter Jacob had essentially lost his family. Some say it would not be much of a family, but today we call it a dysfunctional family. It was filled with rivalry, it was filled with deception and it was filled with hate.

As we read in Genesis, Jacob was alone, fleeing from all he knew as his brother Esau was after him, was going to kill him. Genesis 28:11 and following, I would like to read, please.

"When Jacob reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a staircase resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

"There above it stood the Lord and he said, 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.'

"Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples

on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and I am going to watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

This scripture continues, "When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place. This is none other than the house of God; this is the gates of heaven.'"

Three more verses: "Early the next morning, Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar of remembrance" -- if you will -- "and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel.

"Then Jacob made a vow saying, 'If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I return safely to my father's house, hold then the Lord will be my God. This stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.'" That was his promise to the Lord.

Of those three points, first, is the courage. It takes courage to face the loss of a fallen warrior, whether he is young or old, especially as we take it in times of being alone.

Jacob was alone, but he had a dream. It was a dream from God, so he was not as alone as he thought. In that dream, he saw the stairway I mentioned, a stairway stretching all the way from earth to heaven, and angels again were ascending and descending on it. It was a mysterious picture, the relationship between heaven and earth. But it gave him courage as it called to mind the things of God: angels, a gateway to heaven and God himself.

At the top of the staircase, God became very real to Jacob as he spoke, "I am the Lord, the God of your father, Abraham, and the God of Isaac." This was a God not just of the moment but a God of history.

This was a God of his people, Abraham and Isaac, and so, too, for us. God says he is the God of Abraham and Isaac, a God who has continuity with the Old Testament, with the Bible characters that we read about and with us today.

For thousands of years, more closely for hundreds of years for our great country, men and women in war have gained courage by knowing that God was present with them in the scriptures and in the life and death around them.

Next to comforts, the Bible tells us when Jacob awoke from his sleep he said, "Surely, surely, the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it."

Through the dream Jacob became aware of God's presence, but God had been with him all along. It was a great comfort to Jacob to be reminded that God was with him, and so, too, for us today we are reminded of God's presence.

Paraphrasing what Jacob said for us today, surely, the Lord is in this place as we honor the dead in our own way. As we see that picture in our minds of a staircase, a gateway to heaven.

At this point, the Bible says that Jacob was afraid seems a little unusual for us now. But I submit to you that that is a hallmark of a real encounter with God, that certain kind of fear.

Those who have seen and experienced God have a certain sense of fear because of the greatness, the power of God.

Now, in times of war, we work through our fears, we drive on and we

ignore to get the mission done. But this kind of fear of the Lord is different.

When we have a personal experience with God as Jacob did, the fear is something to embrace, because it is based on the awesomeness of God.

Verse 17 reads, "Jacob was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place.'" The fear and awesomeness were part and parcel of each other amidst an all-powerful God.

Jacob went on to say what we can say today, "This is none other than the house of God; this is the gates of heaven." What a comfort to know that the Lord is with us.

Isaiah 43 tells us, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep you away, and when you walk through the fire you will not be burned for I am the Lord, your God."

David, the biblical warrior, reminds himself and us of the Lord's comfort when he said in Psalm 16:8, "I have set the Lord before me always. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."

Those of you who have experienced combat know that the Lord with you helped you not to be shaken. With the death, therefore, a loved one, sometimes we think we cannot take the pain anymore. It is just too much and perhaps we are at our limit. But God knows how much we can bear.

A man named Joseph Bailey lost three children, not one, not two, but three, one at age 15 months, one at age five years and another a soldier, age 18. He wrote a poem entitled, "The Box." I would like to share it with you and it might comfort you as it has comforted me.

"This cardboard box, Lord, see it says first thing limit 100 pounds per square inch. The boxmaker knew how much strain the box would take, what weights would crush it.

"You were wiser than the boxmaker, my mighty spirit, my mind and my body.

"Does the box know when pressure increases to the limit? No, it knows nothing. But I know when my breaking point is near, and so I pray the maker of my soul change me.

"Stop it less I be broken or else change the pressure rating of this fragile container of your grace, so that I might bear more."

What a powerful thought that the Lord knows our innermost being. He knows how much we can take and he gives us the grace to cope. As the Lord comforts us he also puts in our hearts the desire, and even the opportunity to comfort others.

So, Paul said this well in the first chapter of Second Corinthians, "The God of all comfort who comforts us in all of our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

Five times he uses that word "comfort" in that sentence.

Helen Keller, who was blind and deaf since she was a toddler, just a little girl, wrote, "Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it. Believe when you are most unhappy that there is something for you to do in the world. So long as you can sooth another's pain, life is not in vein."

Then finally that third point, hope. God gives us hope in and through this story of Jacob. Following the dream that he encountered with God, Jacob began to have hope. It was a simple trust in God. At least now God was in the picture, even if Jacob didn't have things totally quite right. With

death, we must let God be God. Jacob had to learn this lesson himself very personally.

At the conclusion of this account, Jacob said, "If God would be with me and watch over me in this journey and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house."

Just those simple things that we are that fall for today and especially at war, "Then the Lord will be my God. This stone I set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

What was happening here, Jacob was doing what we often do. We bargain with God. If you will do that, I promise I will do this or that. That's how we talk to God. But Jacob didn't need to say, "God, if you will keep me safe;" God had already promised to take care of him and bless the land with his many descendants. So, too, with us.

There is no need to bargain with God. God has our best interest at heart. I am assured of that. He is always seeking to draw us closer to him.

Why did the bullet hit our friend and not us? Such survivor guilt has hit many, perhaps many of you. Why did the fragments hit our son or our daughter? There aren't any easy answers to those questions. It is difficult times like this that it is best to go to the Lord with a simple kind of faith and trust.

William Cowper expressed it well in his poem which is made into a hymn, "Comfort Me a Lot." He wrote, "God moves in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform. He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill, He treasures up His bright designs and works his sovereign will.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds you so much dread, are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head."

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace; and behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.

"His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour, the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His works in vain; God is His own interpreter, and he will make it plain."

In 1862, one year before Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address, quoting the words that were printed in a bulletin which I saw prior to this, his son, Willie, died. The preacher at that funeral for Willie Lincoln, a Reverend Gurley, spoke of that hope beyond this earth as we know it. The preacher said that, "departure was a sore bereavement to parents and brothers.

While they weep, they also rejoice in the confidence that their loss is the unspeakable and eternal gain of the departed. For they believed as well as they may that he is gone to the Lord and that now with kindred spirits and with a departed brother whom he never saw on earth, he beholds the glory and sings the praises of the redeemer, blessed be God."

It is clear from his surrounding writings that Abraham Lincoln gained great depth and a lot of strength from the tragedy in that loss of his son's life. It was a strength that was folded into the Gettysburg Address, killing the anguish which Lincoln felt over the loss of thousands of soldiers, killing that anguish with a certain hope.

The battle of Gettysburg didn't decisively shape the end of the Civil War, not in a military sense. Both sides lost thousands of soldiers. Lee was forced to return to Virginia and the war was far from over, and would last

another two years.

But the Battle of Gettysburg did give hope to Lincoln's words. It was a special kind of hope commemorating those fallen soldiers. Lincoln wrote, "That here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Those words, I believe, will forever echo through time and in the hearts of Americans, because they express both the anguish and the hope of the American people whose sons and daughters have fought and died for freedom. May their loss to a real encounter with the living God give us courage, comfort and hope.

I salute you, our fallen soldiers and the parents of our fallen soldiers.
Amen.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: The Texas Children's Choir will now sing "Mansions of the Lord."

(Whereupon, the Texas Children's Choir sang "Mansions of the Lord.")

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Please stand for the Benediction by Reverend Walter Hodges.

REVEREND HODGES: Let us pray. O, Heavenly Father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, how we love to call on Thee. Father, we thank you, dear Lord, for your love and for your grace and for your mercy. Father, we thank you for allowing us to come here today to worship you in this Memorial Service, Dear God, to remember our fallen comrades, Dear Lord.

Father, we thank you, Dear Lord, and we stand before you with such a great crowd, a crowd of witnesses that has gone on before us, Dear God. For this, we are thankful, Dear God. We thank you, O, God, for allowing us to meet here. We thank you for the ones that are here. We thank you for the ones that would like to be here but couldn't be here, Dear God.

We thank you, O Father God, for the ones that put this program together. Father, we just thank you for just being our God. We realize and recognize that you said that you would never leave us nor forsake us, Dear God, so we are standing on that promise right now.

Father, we pray for the families that have lost loved ones. We pray to God that you will give them peace and comfort. We pray, O God, that they will realize that they may not be here in body, but they are here in spirit. They live on, Dear God. They live on because the spirit never dies and they live in our hearts. For this we are grateful and we are thankful. We thank you, O Father God, for just being who you are, for creating us in your image.

Father, we thank you for all that was done and said here today, Dear God. But we just thank you, Father, because had it not been for you none of this would be possible. So, we just thank you, Father. We thank you, Dear God.

Now, to one, Dear God, that is able to do it seemingly and memorably more than we can think or ask to the all wise God, to one that gives us peace, which passes all understanding, our Lord and Savior.

We thank you, Dear God, and to God be the glory, to God be glory.
Amen. Praise God.

RETIRING OF COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the hall for Retiring of the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Captain of the VFW National Honor Guard, advance and retrieve the flag of the United States of America.

(Whereupon, the Retiring of the Colors was had at this time, followed by the escorting of the Gold Star Families and Past National Chaplains from the hall.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We would like to acknowledge and thank all of the participants who contributed to making this program a success.

Comrades, Sisters and guests, this concludes our Memorial Service. Thank you for your attention and enjoy the conventions for the ladies and the comrades. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Memorial Service was concluded at 9:25 o'clock a.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 29, 2011

(The Joint Opening Session of the 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 98th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order on Monday, August 29, 2011, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., by Adjutant General Allen "Gunner" Kent.)

CALL TO ORDER

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Good morning, comrades, sisters, ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests. I am "Gunner" Kent, the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Welcome to the joint opening of the 112th VFW National Convention.

Also, I am extremely pleased to have the privilege of introducing some distinguished guests here today. Lawrence G. Romo, Director of the Selective Service System. He served 28 years in the Air Force and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. Director Romo, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be with us here today.

Also in the audience today are John Galina and Dale Beatty. Both men were severely wounded while deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. These two combat veterans are the founders of Purple Heart Homes, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing personalized housing solutions for service-connected disabled veterans and their families that correspond to the needs of, and are fit to welcome home, and thank, service-connected disabled veterans.

John's and Dale's good works and noble endeavors were recently featured in Time Magazine. As described so well, both gentlemen are outstanding representatives of the many thousands of recent veterans who have, and continue to serve our nation so honorably and well.

John and Dale, thank you for your service for what you are doing today, and for just being you. We are especially pleased to have you with us. (Applause)

Additionally, we are pleased to have with us today Congressman Lloyd Doggett who represents the 25th Congressional District of the great state of Texas.

We want to acknowledge our generous sponsors for the 2011 VFW National Convention as they are identified on the large screen. Special appreciation goes to our primary supporters: Burger King, GM, Ol' Glory, Sport Clips and USAA.

Please join me in giving them a round of applause. (Applause)

With us this morning are representatives from the 2010-2011 Outstanding Community Service Posts. Please stand as a group and be recognized. (Applause)

This year, 237 Commanders have earned the right to be named All American. There are 13 Department Commanders, 27 District Commanders, and 197 Post Commanders to be honored, and those in attendance today will be presented their awards later this morning. Commanders, please stand so we can properly thank you for the excellent work you so well performed this past year. (Applause)

Now, please join me in welcoming this year's Convention Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Glen Gardner of our host location, the Lone Star State of Texas. (Applause)

WELCOME BY NATIONAL CONVENTION CHAIRMAN GLEN M. GARDNER

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Welcome, comrades. I am pleased to see you all again. I am delighted to be the Convention Chairman this year and to have the honor to welcome you all to my home state, the great state of Texas, where everything is bigger and dare I say, better, including this 112th National Convention.

Texas is extremely proud to host the 112th National Convention. We sincerely hope the time you spend with us this week is enjoyable and informational and that as you leave here with an even bigger sense of appreciation for this wonderful organization.

Our conventions serve to reinforce your commitment to America's veterans and our military and bring new excitement to your work as a member of the VFW and our great Ladies Auxiliary.

Now, please rise as we officially open the Convention with the Advancing of the Colors.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the room to Advance the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman. Captain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Honor Guard, advance, post and salute the Flag of the United States of America.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the National Honor Guard advanced and posted the colors at this time.)

INVOCATION

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN GARDNER: For this morning's Invocation, we will have the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Elmer Liimatta. Please, then, remain standing as we recite the Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Sergeant-at Arms, the National Anthem sung by Juanita Bohlman, the Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist, and for the posting of the Colors.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Our God and Father, we come in humility asking your blessing upon the plans and prayers of our 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We pause to give thanks for the liberty you revealed in the hearts of men and women. For their courage and sacrifices to make freedom available to all. For the great heritage of our nation, a history of people who came forth in time of special need, ordinary people who met the everyday challenges according to the tasks and thus found themselves and their gifts to serve. For vision of the early founders of the VFW, to serve our veterans and their dependents, and through their devotion to service in the community, nation and world remind us of the cost of being free.

We give thanks for the past year completed. May the work being done

through our various service organizations redound to your glory and the blessings of many. Help us to raise up workers to serve in the many areas of need. Bless those who serve in our Posts. For these needs and all good gifts, we offer thanks in your Holy name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Whereupon, Sergeant-at-Arms O'Brien led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the National Anthem sung by Juanita Bohlman, Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist, and the posting of the Colors.)

VIDEO PRESENTATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: The house lights will now dim for a special presentation.

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

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RICHARD B. EUBANK AND PRESENTATION OF OFFICIAL CONVENTION BADGE

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN GARDNER: Before I introduce the Commander-in-Chief of our great organization, I would be very remiss if I didn't thank my Operations Chairman, Ted Blouin, the Ladies Auxiliary Chairman Betty Boyce, and all the volunteers that are making this a great convention.

If you are having a good time and you are enjoying the convention, thank those that have a "volunteer" on their name tag. If you have a complaint or problem, come see me and I will do the best I can to solve it for you.

It is now my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has served veterans for many years, as well as this organization in a multitude of responsibilities, and is now our Commander-in-Chief.

Richard L. Eubank was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on August 26, 2010, at the VFW 111th National Convention, held in Indianapolis.

VFW Commander-in-Chief Eubank served in the United States Marine Corps from 1967-1987 and earned VFW eligibility while serving in Vietnam as a Field Radio Operator with the 1st and 3rd Marine divisions.

His decorations include the Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V Device for Valor, Good Conduct Medal with Five Stars, Vietnam Service Medal with Five Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal, National Defense Medal, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Medal, among others.

Commander-in-Chief Eubank joined the VFW in 1988 at Post 10165 in Cameron Park, California. He is currently a Life Member of Post 4084 in Ridgecrest, California. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department levels culminating with his election as Department Commander in 1999-2000.

Our Chief earned distinction by achieving the Triple Crown: All American Commander honors at the Post, District and Department levels. He has also served on numerous National Committees.

National Commander-in-Chief Eubank is the owner of Recon Construc-

tion in California. He is a Life Member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Non-Commissioned Officers Association, Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, 1st Marine Division Association, Marine Corps League, and the Military Order of the Cootie.

His other memberships include the Moose, Eagles and Elks, and he is also an Honorary Life Member of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association.

Richard and his wonderful wife, Celeste currently make their home in Eugene, Oregon.

Please welcome our National Commander-in-Chief Richard L. Eubank. (Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

REMARKS - COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Good morning. I just want to look out there and realize all the history in the towns that we have in this great organization, the comrades and the sisters that make it up.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the magnificent men and women serving in our armed forces. I want to thank each of them publicly, and their families for the silent sacrifices they make for our nation. It is only because of such selfless devotion to duty, their sacrifices and their courage that we are able to live in freedom.

I urge you to pause a moment and reflect upon the freedoms that we have today and think about the service and sacrifice of today's warriors and all of the men and women of our armed forces, who for over 200 years have provided our nation with the security necessary so we can build upon those freedoms.

As we all know, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is deeply involved in supporting the men and women of the armed forces and their families through our programs dedicated specifically for them.

I am proud of what we have been able to do on their behalf. Again and again over the past few months members have provided assistance to those who needed it most, and certainly to those who deserved it most.

A thousand thanks to those in attendance today that encouraged me, allowed me to succeed, those who served as role models and inspired me, those who welcomed and befriended, those that I had some hand in developing, and to those who are family and those who are my extended VFW family.

My very best friend in life, the love of my life, Celeste, reminded me that this day is about the VFW and those hundreds, no, thousands of people who served this great organization together, united in cause and purpose.

There are no bonds stronger than those who have been to war and have extended that unique connection through the core convictions that have formed the basis of this great organization since it was founded so many years ago. The values and ideals that you fought for during your military service and continue to defend today are the same as those shared by the majority of people of our great Nation.

As I told "Gunner" Kent a few weeks ago I have had leadership experiences that will stay with me for every remaining minute of my life. Later this week, as I pass the mantle of leadership on to our great comrade Richard DeNoyer, from Massachusetts, I am confident because those who

remain to lead this organization are the best our organization has. However we define our mission of service, they are the ones shouldering the load, and I know they will more than meet our expectations.

I am extremely fortunate. As a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I was allowed to have the distinctive honor to lead, develop, and ultimately be entrusted with your confidence. I have also valued the responsibility and accountability that accompanies this office.

Many of the mentors and leaders that were there as I worked my way from the beginning, Walt Hamilton, Paul Chevalier, Jack Johann, Andy Anderson, Dave Norris, Pat Figg, and Bob Kane, are here today to express their best wishes and reinforce the special camaraderie we share.

Likewise, to see our young members develop into today's Post, District and Department commanders, knowing that I perhaps had a hand developing many of them means the world to this old Marine.

It would take too long to run through all the names, those who led and mentored me, but let me recognize and thank Past Commanders-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell and Glen Gardner for allowing me the opportunity to be a part of their great leadership team, and to "Gunner" Allen Kent, my Adjutant General who had a great impact on me and epitomizes the VFW spirit. And I would like to think some of that rubbed off on me.

Together, we have met with heads of state. We have witnessed up close the courage, commitment and competency of our men and women in uniform.

As your National Commander, I have been privileged to have as part of my leadership team two outstanding leaders: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton. Gentlemen, thank you for your leadership, your hard work and support over the past year.

Members from my VFW Post 4084 in Ridgecrest, California, my State of California, and the entire Western Conference are also here today. And like so many, the VFW has made us family for life.

Along this path of remarkable opportunity to serve as your National Commander, I was accompanied all the way by my soul mate, Celeste, who has kept me straight, been my best friend, toughest critic and staunchest supporter. We have been blessed with wonderful children and now grandchildren as well. We are so proud of each and all of them. Thank you so much. (Applause)

The next chapter in life that is waiting will not be without challenges, to say the least. But make no mistake about it, I will continue to be an active member even out of office, and will figure out different ways to serve the VFW in the years ahead.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has led our nation during a time of great consequence. Few organizations have faced more challenges, but when the history books are written, they will tell the story of a group of people who never wavered from their principles, who kept our nation safe, and who stepped forward to help when help was needed.

As my administration ends and a new one begins, I have confidence in the future of the VFW because I have confidence in the character of our members, the power of our ideals, and the enduring strength of our mission.

As I stand ready to serve my last official duties as your Commander-in-Chief, I am reminded of the two criteria that I felt were the right personal

standards many years ago. At the end of the day what counts most are reputation and the ability to look in the mirror and know you made decisions based on mission and taking care of those we serve, decisions that you felt in your heart, brain and gut were the right ones. If those are two valid criteria for self-assessment, then I am okay, and I do feel okay today. I have served my Nation, my community and our VFW with loyalty to the best of my ability.

I thank all of you for giving me the honor to serve as your National Commander, and along with each of you I wish our next Commander-in-Chief the best and every success.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity. Most of all, thank you for you friendship. God bless you, God bless America, and all the men and women who serve so proudly today, and the families who support them. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a prolonged standing ovation was given at this time.)

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO CORTINA BARNES, NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY

It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Cortina Barnes is a Life Member of Woodbridge Auxiliary No. 9755 in Washington, D.C. She has been actively involved in the organization since joining in 1987 on the eligibility of her father, Benjamin Willis, a World War II veteran.

President Barnes has served as Auxiliary and Department President and has served several terms as Auxiliary Treasurer, Auxiliary Secretary and Department Secretary.

As Department President, she earned Outstanding Department President of the Year. She was employed with the federal government for 32 years, most recently with the Department of Defense.

She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. She is married to Vietnam veteran Gerald C. Barnes, Sr., a VFW Life Member and Past All American District Commander, whom she met at a VFW National Convention. Cortina is a stepmother to three adult children and step-grandmother to five.

I am very pleased to now present the VFW Gold Medal of Merit to my great counterpart, National Auxiliary President, Cortina Barnes. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to Cortina Barnes, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, 2010-2011.

"In esteemed recognition and sincere appreciation of her loyal and benevolent concern for America's veterans as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary, her theme 'United by Love for our Veterans and Country,' reflects her outstanding dedication and unique vision, and will forever serve as the true and honorable legacy of her presidency.

"Her wealth of experience and long-time commitment to the objectives of the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary, has justly earned her the highest level of admiration, respect, and gratitude of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of

August, 2011."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BARNES

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BARNES: Commander-in-Chief Eubank, National VFW and Ladies Auxiliary Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Past National Presidents, Comrades, Sisters and Guests:

I am so very honored to receive this award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I thank you most sincerely.

It is humbling to accept this award just as it has been humbling to represent my Auxiliary sisters all year long and work with our VFW counterpart. The VFW Ladies Auxiliary set very high goals this year.

To the Commander-in-Chief and all the members of the VFW, a job very well done. (Applause)

To my Auxiliary sisters, you make me very proud.

Comrades and sisters, in two years we will celebrate the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, its 100th National Convention. One hundred years, I can hardly believe it.

There are few organizations that can boast that kind of service record and long-standing commitment. Those 100 years have been for one cause, our veterans.

We have existed alongside our comrades for 100 years, because we have sent loved ones off to war, welcomed them home and warmed them, and we will do this for another 100 years. Our organization experience is a unity of purpose few enjoy. It is that unity that will carry us forward, bind us together, and ultimately serve every man and woman who serves this country in uniform.

To every veteran here today, I say thank you. Thank you for answering the call, thank you for your sacrifices, thank you for serving our country.

May God bless all of our service members and may God bless you all, and may God bless America. Thank you very much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF JULIAN CASTRO, MAYOR OF SAN ANTONIO

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Our next guest directs the day-to-day operations of the San Antonio city government.

In 2001, at the age of 26, Julian Castro was elected City Councilman, making him the youngest elected City Councilman in San Antonio history.

Just eight years later, in 2009, he was elected as San Antonio's Mayor, making him the youngest Mayor of the seventh-largest city in the United States.

As we all know, San Antonio has a strong military presence. Throughout his tenure in public service, Mayor Castro has championed a vision of economic growth and topnotch quality of life for all.

Comrades and sisters, please welcome the Mayor of this historical and fascinating city to our convention, Mayor Julian Castro. (Applause)

GREETINGS – MAYOR JULIAN CASTRO

MAYOR CASTRO: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Com-

mander Eubank. To Governor Perry and to all the attendees here for our Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention, welcome to San Antonio. Welcome to America's seventh-largest city and the second biggest city in Texas. Welcome to a charming city and one that truly appreciates your presence here today. Welcome to a city that is a perfect place to hold the VFW Convention.

San Antonio has always called itself "Military City USA", and for a very good reason. Ever since it's founding, San Antonio has played a pivotal role in defense. On the day before he passed away, November 21, 1963, President Kennedy visited San Antonio to inaugurate the Brooks School of Aerospace Medicine and Aerospace Medical Center.

At that time, President Kennedy said that it is fitting that San Antonio should be the site of this center and of this school as we dedicate this complex of buildings, because this city has long been the home of the pioneers in the air. It was here that Sidney Brooks whose memory we have today, was born and raised.

It was here Charles Lindberg and Claire Chennault and a host of others who in World War I and World War II and Korea, and even today have helped demonstrate American mastery of the skies, trained at Kelly Field and Randolph Field, which form a major part of aviation history.

It was in San Antonio that thousands and thousands of basic trainees came to Lackland Air Force Base and still today in this year 2011 you can hear the echoes of President Kennedy's words and know that San Antonio remains a pioneering place for our military.

By September 15, 2011, more than 12,000 new folks will be in place at Fort Sam Houston as San Antonio becomes the home of all military medic trainees and Brooke Army Medical Center becomes the Walter Reed of the West.

Today, San Antonio plays a critical role in cyber defenses as the home of Lackland, of the 24th Air Force. Today, San Antonio boasts the largest joint basing operations in all of the Department of Defense.

San Antonio truly is "Military City USA," but aside from the physical infrastructure, the buildings or even the individual servicemen and women who come to our community and often times stay, the military's presence, your presence throughout the years, has shaped our community in the most fundamental way.

Let me explain that. Today, San Antonio is the city of 1.3 million people, one of America's largest. But it is a city that even as it has grown large has not lost a fundamental character, a sense of community that often eludes other cities. San Antonio is the kind of place that if two people are walking downtown on the street, when they pass each other by they still look each other in the eye. It is the kind of place that if you are in a restaurant and you sneeze, two or three people around you still say "Bless you."

It is a city of enormous character, a city of faith. It is, I am convinced, that kind of city because so many men and women of the military, as active military, as reservists, as retirees, call San Antonio home. So, we appreciate so much that you have chosen San Antonio to gather these days, but more importantly we appreciate the fundamental difference that you have made as to who we are as a community.

The United States has always been a beacon for freedom across the world, and this year, 2011, it remains so as we fight two wars abroad and a new generation of young men and women knows what it is to be in

combat.

As you gather here this weekend, today, I hope that this is a fantastic opportunity to make old connections new again, to see old friends, but also for all of us as a nation to resolve, to demonstrate the same commitment, the same determination, the same drive and the same search for freedom and defensiveness that you have demonstrated in your own lives, to the sacrifices that you have made and that have kept America strong.

Through all of that, on behalf of 1.3 million San Antonians, I say thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF HONORABLE RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The great state of Texas enjoys a rich military history and is arguably at the forefront in leading our nation to preserving and expanding military installations and their missions.

Governor Rick Perry, United States Air Force veteran, has made it his mandate to create a Texas of unlimited opportunity and prosperity through initiatives to improve education, the job climate, lower taxes and enforce disciplined state spending.

Hailing from Paint Creek, a small farming community in West Texas, he is the first Texas A&M graduate to occupy the Governor's mansion.

He was a junior and senior yell leader for the A&M Corps of Cadets before spending four years in the United States Air Force, where he flew C-130 Tactical Airlift Aircraft in the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

Governor Perry oversees and appoints members to the Texas Military Preparedness Commission, a commission that provides loans of financial assistance to defense communities to fund projects to enhance the military value of local military facilities.

Please join me in welcoming a true American patriot, the Honorable, Governor Rick Perry. (Applause)

GREETINGS – GOVERNOR RICK PERRY

GOVERNOR PERRY: Thank you, guys, very much. I would like to thank you and National President Barnes for your hard work on behalf of this fine organization. I also would like to congratulate the incoming National Commander, Richard L. DeNoyer, and the new National President Gwen Rankin. They are going to continue to carry the VFW banner high.

Let me just say howdy and welcome to Texas. When you think about it, Texas is a natural fit for the VFW. Our state and this city in particular, as Mayor Castro shared with you, have a deep connection to our nation's military. We are also home to a great deal of veterans of our foreign wars. My father shared with me, as he was on leave in August of 1945, hearing the news he would not be sent to the Pacific was quite a celebration in the city streets of San Antonio. My dad was a tail gunner in World War II. He flew 35 missions over Nazi-held Germany in 1944 and '45.

He helped liberate millions from tyranny. When he came home, he didn't seek acclaim or credit. He just wanted to live in the peace and freedom he helped create and to just farm his little corner of land in Plain Creek, Texas.

His story is not unique. Indeed, the story was, if anything, very representative of our entire generation, the greatest generation, who know all about placing country and community ahead of self.

Often, we speak in loving terms about that greatest generation, as we should. But I want to say a word about a younger generation of heroes. They went to war at a time of strife at home. They did incredibly tough duties, not knowing at times when the enemy lurked amongst them, and the civilian population.

They were called to war. As I should say, they were called to a war that our leaders were not prepared to win, because they were not prepared to use the full force of the United States military once they sent their sons into battle.

You know these heroes because they sit among you today. You are the American heroes of Vietnam and I salute you. (Applause)

As a former Air Force pilot, I had the great privilege to fly TAC airlifters around the globe from 1972 to 1977. I know the credo of the survivors of war: that only the heroes are the ones who never made it home. But in my eyes, you all are heroes, every last one of you.

I was never called into battle, but I know some of the names on the Wall, including some who attended my beloved Texas A&M. Many of you and many across this country have visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall to find the name of a loved one inscribed upon it.

But for the younger generations, I believe there needs to be a stronger connection to those heroes that we recognize. That's why I was the very first governor to publicly support the Vietnam Memorial Education Center. The education center aims to put a picture and a story to each of those names on that wall, and in doing so it tells the future generations that Americans just like them, from their hometowns, from their way of life, left it all behind to preserve freedom for the people of South Vietnam.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial with 58,260 names etched in black stands as a stark reminder of the cost of war. It reminds us that a president should never send our sons and daughters into war without a plan to win and the resources to make that possible.

It is a dangerous world that we live in today. Our enemies often don't wear uniforms or swear allegiance to a particular flag, but instead to an ideology of hatred.

But as the tenth anniversary of the attacks of 9/11 approaches, we must renew our commitment to taking the fight to the enemy wherever they are before they strike at home. I do not believe that America should fall subject to a foreign policy of military adventurism. We should only risk shedding American blood and spending American treasure when our vital interests are threatened.

We should always look to build coalitions among the Nations to protect the mutual interests of freedom-loving people. It is not our interests to go it alone. We respect our allies, and we must always seek to engage them in military missions. At the same time, we must be willing to act when it is time to act. We cannot concede the moral authority of our nation to multi-lateral debating societies. And when our interests are threatened, American soldiers should be led by American commanders. (Applause)

I say this because we owe to them, and to their loved ones, the commitment of any war is led by the country with the most advanced technology and the best training. We have the best fighting force the world has ever

known. We have a generation of heroes that love this Nation, who are willing to sacrifice all, that many may be free.

The men and women of the United States military are the greatest ambassadors of freedoms this nation has ever sent abroad. That's why, when we send them to war, we must give them every resource and every weapon to help them succeed. (Applause)

When they come home, some of them physically scarred, many more scarred in ways that don't show on the surface. We must devote whatever resources are needed to help them heal and live fulfilling lives.

A great nation cannot turn a blind eye away from its wounded warriors. We should honor them with the best healthcare possible; with help transitioning back into civilian life and with jobs. It anguishes me to see young men and women come home scarred, feeling isolated, unable to cope with what they have experienced. These are our precious sons and daughters. They are our nation's newest generation of heroes. They are our own flesh and blood. We must take care of them, every one of them. (Applause)

Today, I am really proud to come here to this convention to announce in Texas a new program that will be run by the Texas Veterans Commission. It will be referred to as "Housing 4 Texas Heroes." We are making \$3 million in grants available to help Texas veterans build, buy, rehabilitate, or rent their homes, or possibly renovate them to the needs that have been created by a service-related disability.

"Housing 4 Texas Heroes" will help ensure veterans and their families have adequate housing as they ease back into civilian life and enjoy the blessings of liberty they earned with their valor and their sacrifice.

Let me finish with a commendation, a commendation to all of you for your sacrifices, your courage, your leadership. And I hope you have an enjoyable and a productive convention. I wish you the best of luck as you go home and you continue to improve the communities that each of you are from. I pray that God continues to bless you and, through you, He continues to bless this great country that we love. Thank you all for coming. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SET TO GOVERNOR PERRY AND MAYOR CASTRO BY THE LADIES AUXILIARY PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We got permission from the Governor to go ahead.

Sue Wells, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, will now present a commemorative flag set to Governor Perry and Mayor Castro.

Thank you both for all you do for this great state and for our veterans.

GOVERNOR PERRY: I was shaking hands. I am sorry.

PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR SUE WELLS: On behalf of the more than 530,000 Ladies Auxiliary members to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is my great honor to present a flag set to each of you, the beautiful symbol of our country. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL TSENG JING-LING, MINISTER, VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is now my privilege to introduce Minister Tseng Jing-ling of the Veterans Affairs Commission from the

Republic of China.

Minister Tseng served his military for almost four decades and retired as a General Officer two years ago to become the Minister of the Veterans Affairs Commission, which is similar to our Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Minister was a gracious host when I visited Taiwan in March, a visit that also included meeting his country's vice-president. I also want to thank him for hosting VFW Ladies Auxiliary National President Cortina Barnes when she visited last winter.

The VFW has a special relationship with the Veterans Affairs Commission that goes back many years, and I am very pleased that he could join us at our National Convention this year.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Minister Tseng from the Republic of China on Taiwan. (Applause)

GREETINGS – GENERAL TSENG JING-LING

GENERAL TSENG: Good morning again. Commander-in-Chief Eubank, National President Barnes, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning. Thanks to Commander-in-Chief Eubank very much for his kind introduction and this is our great pleasure and honor to be invited to have this opportunity to speak at the National Convention's opening ceremonies of the VFW held here in this beautiful city of San Antonio, Texas.

We especially show our respect for all the efforts that the VFW has put in striving for the benefit and welfare for all veterans. Over the past 50 years, and especially the recent 30 years, the top levels of our new Veterans of Foreign Wars Committee and Veterans Affairs Commission in Taiwan have continued on with mutual visits.

In the past year, Commander-in-Chief Eubank and National President Barnes have made a visit to our country, the Republic of China on Taiwan. We are very happy that we are given the chance to be the host and we hope they have kept a very good impression about Taiwan.

This year, the year of 2011, it is also the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of China on Taiwan. We will be holding a service of celebration from the time of October 8 through October 14. A series of celebrations will show the achievements that we have gained in the past years.

The celebrations, of course, will include the parade, a military parade, the national reception on the National Day, and all kinds of exhibitions and shows. Of course, we expect and we are sure there will be hundreds and thousands of distinguished guests from overseas to be present joining in the celebrations, and we are so happy that there will be a representative from the VFW to Taiwan.

Every year during your convention, you pass resolutions in support of our country, the Republic of China on Taiwan. For that, we extend to you our most sincere appreciation.

The people in Taiwan are pursuing a life just like Americans. We are pursuing freedom, a democratic and a prosperous life. When our incoming President Aquino assumed his office, he's given every bit of his efforts in promoting the relationship between the cross-Strait, the airspace on China's side and Taiwan side and also the international relationship, especially this relationship with America. (Applause)

Some example responses from the American side is that, for example,

President Barack Obama supports us in joining the world of the organizations, and also Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also supports us in signing the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement with China, which we appreciate very much. We especially appreciate the veterans, especially the Veterans of Foreign Wars, for continuously supporting us by passing resolutions urging the federal government to sell the advanced defensive weapons, in accordance with the Taiwan Reorganization Act. As veterans, we all agree that a strong enough national defense is the base that we can assure our own safety. And we, in Taiwan, the soldiers or the veterans will not, and like the veterans of America, do not like to wage wars. Nobody likes that. But we do need enough defensive weapons from the sale of the United States, and because we need these to safeguard our own security, and especially the Air Force fighters, F-15 model.

Dear friends, dear comrades, we are so honored and it is a great pleasure to have camaraderie and friendship with you and we shall always cherish it. (Applause)

In closing, we wish you good health and a successful convention. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. HANS SONG: Thank you. There is a little more to go. Please take your seats. To express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to your Chief, the country of the Republic of China on Taiwan will present a Medal of Resplendent Banner with Cravat, and here I take the pleasure to read the certificate of award.

"Certificate of award to accompany the award of the Order of Resplendent Banner with Cravat to Mr. Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in recognition of his significant contribution to the promotion of veterans and support of America's cooperation between the Republic of China and the United States of America.

"The award of the Order of Resplendent Banner with Cravat is hereby awarded on the date of the 29th of August, the year 2011."

This has been signed by President Ma Ying-jeou, co-signed by Premier Wu Den-yih, and the Defense Minister Kao Hua-chu, and presented by Minister Tseng. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF 2011 VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Since the attacks on the World Trade Center, our next guest has made it her mission to raise the morale of America's defenders around the globe and here at home. Leeann Tweeden was part of the first group of civilian entertainers to enter Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein, and, to date, she has entertained troops through 16 USO Tours, 14 of which took place in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Perhaps better known to the American public for her appearance in the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue -- I am just reading what was written -- or as the host of Poker After Dark, Ms. Tweeden is certainly no stranger to the military community.

In 2008, she was honored by the USO with the Angela Harvey "Heart of a Patriot" award. Nominated by Gary Sinise, the award was created expressly to honor those in the entertainment industry who have gone above and beyond in support of our troops, but also to honor those whose talent has reflected the spirit of American service members.

Ms. Tweeden has flown with the Navy's Blue Angels and skydived with the Army's Golden Knights. She has visited Walter Reed and Bethesda hospitals so many times, she says she simply lost count, but who's counting when it comes to visiting our heroes.

She has spent the Thanksgiving holiday serving turkey dinner to troops in Afghanistan and has participated in numerous opening ceremonies for USO and MWR Centers all over the Middle East.

The list of good works Ms. Tweeden has done in support of our service members, veterans and their families is certainly long and continuous.

Therefore, the least we can do, ladies and gentlemen, is to thank Ms. Leeann Tweeden for her tremendous legacy of service to our country in our own way by presenting her with the VFW 2011 Hall of Fame Award. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation, awarded to Leeann Tweeden.

"In heartfelt recognition of her fervent love of country and the indomitable American spirit that she expresses so dynamically and poignantly while entertaining deployed troops. Her generous efforts to sustain and improve the morale of United States service members through her USO Tours are a reflection of her determination and patriotism, as well as her enthusiastic and undying support for our military, thus earning her the utmost respect and sincere 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 29th day of August, 2011. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MS. LEEANN TWEEDEN

MS. TWEEDEN: Wow. Thank you very much. Thank you, sir. First off, I would like to thank Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank for inviting me here and giving me this award on behalf of the VFW. I would like to thank everyone in this room, all of the veterans who have served and all of the loved ones who have supported them throughout the years.

I stand before you as a grateful American, the daughter of a Vietnam veteran, and the wife of my husband over here, Major Chris Daugherty, a C-130 pilot who supported Iraq and Afghanistan. (Applause) So, I not only support it, I live it myself as well.

The work that the VFW does on behalf of our veterans who have served in foreign wars is second to none. Since 1899, you guys have worked tirelessly to secure the rights and benefits for our veterans with a strong united voice and the support of almost two million members.

Just a little background story on myself. I have been a model and sportscaster in Hollywood for about 20 years, and my views on things in the world are not quite the mainstream in Hollywood, but that doesn't stop us from giving our support.

I grew up in Manassas, Virginia. I give support with friends like Gary Sinese and John Boyd, and all those people. We kind of bond tightly together.

As I said, I grew up in Manassas, Virginia, where I learned from my father about the USO. I was about eight years old when I found a shoebox

full of old photos that he had in the back of a closet, and we started going through them.

In his box, I found a little square photo. It was a black and white photo with little jagged edges, a photo of a skinny, bikini-clad Raquel Welch. I said, "Wow, dad," you know, being from Virginia, "where did you get to meet this Hollywood movie star?" He said, "Well, she came to Vietnam."

I said, "Why would she go to Vietnam?" He said, "You know, there is a thing called the USO." And I was like, the USO what, what is that? Now, I understand what that is. He said that Bob Hope brought Raquel Welch with him to the jungles in Phan Rang, Vietnam.

My dad was a P-57 mechanic. He said, "you know, for that hour or two, we were able to forget that we were in the middle of a war." My dad's first life flight was leaving this country, to be serving for his country.

Finally, my dad talked about — my husband is a C-130 pilot, and my dad is like "I flew a C-130 to Vietnam." He is very proud of that and my husband.

I didn't understand why Hollywood celebrities wanted to go visit in the war zone. I said, "Well, do people get shot at?" He said, "Yeah, I think the plane they actually flew in had small little firearm bullet points on it."

Right then, I kind of thought, well, that is a little bit crazy, but all right. That thought stuck with me. I said their job was to bring a little piece of home. My dad was a young teenager, and I thought that was pretty cool.

As years went on, I finally started to model and I got into the entertainment business when I was about 18. The very first time I got the call was right after 9/11. They said, "Hey, would you like to do a USO Tour?" It was one of my agents calling me. I just remember that feeling when they asked me, and as an American, I thought, wow, this is how I can serve my country, because I have never put on the uniform, but I love my country so much.

My dad taught me what it was to be patriotic and to love my country and everything that it stands for. We have the greatest country in the world.

I said this is the least I can do for the men and women that put themselves on the front line for us. Being a woman, especially traveling so much, being a woman that is in the entertainment business I can own my own house, I can drive my own car, I can work and I can do all the great things that we can do because of all the men and women who served before them and those that continue to serve to secure our freedom. So, I immediately said yes.

I didn't even ask when it was. I just said I have my passport; I am ready to go wherever you send me. I hung up the phone and I called my father.

I said, "Dad, guess what I just got asked to do? They asked me if I wanted to go on a USO Tour."

You know, fast forward, now I have been on 14 tours to Afghanistan and Iraq, and two other tours in the Pacific to visit our troops. (Applause) The topping, to me, is sort of a little bit uncomfortable because it is something I feel is my duty as an American to give back and say "thank you."

You know, I am not the biggest celebrity and probably a lot of you don't even know who I am, but in my little part of the world, this is something that many are known for, and I hope I inspire other people to go over.

People ask me why do I keep going. I say, "Well, you will understand once you go the first time. It is just something that you feel, like you are giving something of yourself."

My dad always told me, you know, the one thing that you give is your time, and that's something you can never give back. I don't care how many rich people out there can write checks for millions of dollars, and that is nice, too, we all need things to happen and to stand up.

Dad said, "But if you give your time, you are never going to get that part of your life back."

That is very important. My dad has always engrained that in me and instilled in my head, and it is engraved in my brain forever.

If it wasn't for those USO Tours, I would never have met my husband. Ironically enough, we were introduced by another Air Force pilot who now serves in the Texas National Guard here. My husband is a C-130 pilot, and like I said, and he has been through 11 deployments on the war on terror and he has flown 800 combat hours and over 4,000 hours in the plane. He was active duty when we decided to get married.

I said, "Well, if we are going to get married, I don't think I can move every two to three years." He separated from the military after ten and a half years, and he is now a member of the California National Guard. So, he is still serving.

This past week, my husband and I, every other day for five different days, on the C-130 planes, we saw our friends off to war, off to serve three or four months in Afghanistan. It is something very close at home. My husband didn't have to go on this deployment, thank God, but he was going to go if somebody had to back out for family reasons or health reasons. He will be going on the next deployment, which will probably be in the next few years.

I always tell people when I visit the troops or if I am with family members, I say thank you for serving your country by supporting your loved ones. I always say that you are the reason why they are fighting and you are the reason why they can't wait to come home.

As a wife that has lived through most of the deployments of my husband, I sleep with a laptop in my bed because, of course, we are on the other side of the world, and I just want that quick e-mail, even the times he wakes me up in the middle of the night, that lets me know he made it home safe. I live that every time he is gone, and I live it through my friends who are deploying every day still.

Until everyone comes home, like the USO slogan, "We'll be there thinking about them, loving them and supporting them." You know, these are just the veterans of my generation. But everyone sitting in this room, I cannot tell you how many times I have gone through airports, and my dad wears his Vietnam veteran hat, and I really try to thank them.

If I see them in the airport, I will maybe buy them lunch or whatever. I always want to thank our veterans. I don't want the kids in my generation to forget all the sacrifices you guys have made for this country, the sacrifices for your friends that never made it home, and everything that you stand for in the greatest country in the world.

I am so proud to be here today. I am honored to stand before you and be in your presence. I just want to thank you again for all of your service and your love and sacrifice for this country. Thank you very much. I am so honored to be here today and this is one of the awards I will cherish and treasure for the rest of my life. Thank you very much.

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

2011 AERONAUTIC AEROSPACE AWARD TO DR. MICHAEL GRIFFIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You know, if I had an opportunity to serve over again, I think I would go in the Air Force. They had Raquel Welch and Ann-Margret, and we Marines had Don Rickles. (Laughter)

It brings me great pleasure to introduce our next guest to you. Dr. Michael Griffin was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed in April 2005, by the United States Senate as the 11th Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

His task, to lead the NASA team and manage its resources in order to advance the United States' vision for space exploration.

He holds seven degrees: one Bachelor's Degree, five Master's degrees, and culminating as a Doctor of Philosophy in Aerospace Engineering.

Dr. Griffin is the epitome of that famous statement by Father Hesburgh that we never stop learning in our lives. And, just as significant, Dr. Griffin was named one of Time Magazine's Top 100 Most Influential People in 2007.

During his four-year tenure as Administrator of NASA, America's space program enjoyed many successes. Perhaps his most commonly-known accomplishment was the space shuttle Discovery's successful launch into orbit, marking NASA's first return to human spaceflight after the Columbia tragedy.

In addition to his contributions to the NASA space program, Dr. Griffin has also contributed greatly to military space programs. Well before being named Administrator of NASA, he helped design the successful Delta 180 series of missile defense technology satellites for the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization.

And now today we recognize Dr. Griffin with the 2011 VFW Aeronautics and Aerospace Award for his outstanding contributions to air and orbital space projects, as well as his contribution to national defense.

Please welcome Dr. Michael Griffin. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Aeronautics and Aerospace Award, Gold Medal and Citation, awarded to Dr. Michael Griffin.

"In honored recognition of his distinctive long-term vision for human space flight and space exploration as the 11th Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA.

"His overall superlative pursuit of knowledge, understanding and discovery, accompanied by his exemplary commitment to further mankind's presence within our solar system and beyond, has justly earned him the utmost appreciation and admiration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2011. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – DR. MICHAEL GRIFFIN

DR. GRIFFIN: Thank you very much. When the Veterans of Foreign Wars initially called my office to advise me that I had been selected for this award, they offered good news and bad news. I was selected for the

award, but when it was my time on stage I would have to follow a beautiful talented super model. I said yes anyway. But I don't blame any of you for not paying attention right now.

More seriously, I have been extraordinarily lucky in my career. Following in part from the fact that for 40 years and more since I graduated from college, I have been privileged to do what I love to do for our nation's aerospace and defense programs. I loved it. When you love what you do, the odds are with enough time and effort you can become good at it. If you become good at it, then people in your profession will often recognize you with awards of this type, and I have been fortunate to receive more than a few.

Frankly, most are in recognition of the accomplishments of others on my teams than anything that I did personally. But I was always very grateful.

This award surprised and honored me more than any other that I can honestly recall. I did not serve in our nation's military forces. When I was 19, in 1968, I was drafted routinely to serve in Vietnam. The medical doctors decided that paying for my eye care wasn't worth having me in the service, so they politely rejected me. I don't see well even today, other than through the miracles of modern medicine. So, I did not serve.

I am the son of a career enlisted man, who served beginning in the spring of 1942 after Pearl Harbor, and returned home in December '45, spending more than three years overseas, surviving the sinking of his troop ship and the invasion of North Africa and an extended campaign in the China, Burma, and India area.

I am extraordinarily very lucky that he did survive all that, because I was not born until 1949 and his survival was pretty important to my career.

He stayed in the Army after the war, because as he once said to me, there weren't really a lot of jobs for uneducated 21-year-olds coming out of the service, or 22-year-olds coming out of the service in 1945. He retired as Chief of Accounting for the Veterans Administration of the United States government, and I had the great pleasure of realizing that he was always very proud of what I have accomplished.

He passed away four years ago, and my one regret in receiving this award is that he could not live to see me receive it. He would have been more pleased by this than anything else for which I have had the good fortune to come upon. So, thank you very much in both my name and in his. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL RUSLAN AUSHEV, PRESIDENT, WAR VETERANS COMMITTEE, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is now my privilege to introduce from the Commonwealth of Independent States, the President of the Committee for Warrior Internationalists, Retired General Lieutenant Ruslan Aushev.

General Aushev is a combat-wounded veteran of Afghanistan who received the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union. After the war, he was elected to the Soviet Parliament, and was a member of the Upper Committee Council of Military Affairs.

On February 28, 1993, he was elected as President of the Russian Republic of Ingushetia, a position he held through 2001.

In September 2004, in the Russian town of Beslan, the General made

worldwide news by successfully negotiating the safe release of 26 nursing women and their children before Chechen terrorists blew up the school with more than 300 hostages inside.

The VFW has traveled to Moscow since 2004 to meet with the General and his committee to discuss POW-MIA issues that are vitally important to American families from World War II forward, as well as to Russian families, who have loved ones missing from their war in Afghanistan.

Central to our full accounting mission is access to Russia's military archives, where United States researchers had been banned for almost four years. But thanks to the General, we now enjoy new support for the Commission that goes all the way to the Russian President.

We are very pleased that he and his fellow committee members, plus a representative from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, can join us here in San Antonio.

They are helping to break down barriers to aid our full accounting mission, and for that the VFW is eternally grateful.

Please welcome the President of the Committee for Warrior Internationalists, General Aushev. (Applause)

GREETINGS - GENERAL RUSLAN AUSHEV

GENERAL AUSHEV: Good day. It is my honor to present from the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev his greetings to all of you. The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, sent a letter to be read to you today and I will do that right now.

"To the participants of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention, allow me to salute all participants of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in San Antonio.

"The distinguished veterans organizations in the U.S. and Russia continue to evolve. It has become traditional for delegations from the largest veterans organization in the Commonwealth of Independent States, the International Warriors Committee led by Ruslan Aushev and the all-Russian organization Combat Brotherhood to participate in your forum.

"We are very pleased that increasing cooperation between American and Russian veterans, to include the exchange of experience on socioeconomic support for veterans and their adaptation to civilian life and legislation is providing us with concrete results.

"Russia places significant value on the implementation of one of the most important aspects of our cooperation, the search for both U.S. and Russian POWs and MIAs from World War II, the Korean War, military action in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989, and other local military conflicts.

"We greatly value the efforts of your organization. Thanks to you, we have been able to determine the fate of dozens of our military personnel who were taken prisoner or were missing in action in Afghanistan. Similarly, we salute you for your support for the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POWs and MIAs.

"On July 17th of this year, the President of the Russian Federation signed a decree regarding the indication on POWs and MIAs, in accordance with the Russian Federation, the Co-Chairman of the Commission was named and the staff of the Russian side confirmed. It also served as the basis for the full-scale window wall of the Commission's activities, which

we view as an important element of the U.S.-Russian humanitarian relations.

"We continue to hold dear the memory of Soviet, American and other soldiers of World War II who gave their lives for the sake of victory over fascism. This is our common heritage, our duty to future generations.

"I wish you all success, and to all veterans I wish good health and good fortune."

This has been signed by Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, dated August 29, 2011.

First, on behalf of our Committee, allow me to thank Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank and Executive Director Bob Wallace for their invitation to participate in your 112th convention of your venerable organization. On behalf of the War Veterans Committee, I would like to offer a warm welcome to all of the convention delegates and wish all a successful and productive endeavor.

This is the fourth time I have had the honor to speak before this esteemed group. One could even say this has become a nice tradition that underscores an increased level of mutual understanding and cooperation. Our veterans welcome this development. They understand that it serves to strengthen the veterans movement and helps to resolve real issues.

As we learn more about the state of the veterans movement in the U.S., we use what we have learned as well as the personal impressions gained during our travels as examples and arguments in support of the veterans' interests with legislation and executive bodies.

Vice-President Biden's striking and heartfelt speech at last year's VFW convention fully attested to the attitude of the government and its accomplishments afforded the veterans this year. We published his speech on our websites to media outlets, and also passed it on to the leaders of several state agencies.

I can also once again confirm that speeches by your representatives during committee sessions of the Federation Council and State Legislative bodies made quite a positive impression and contributed to a broader understanding in the halls of power.

To that end, last September's visit to Moscow by U.S. Department of Defense delegation led by Mr. Robert Newberry, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Affairs, as well as the delegation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars led by your Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank and Executive Director Bob Wallace had an extremely positive impact.

Esteemed delegates, a search for POWs and MIAs, determining their fate and obtaining information about the location of the gravesites of those who died in foreign lands, is a priority of the cooperation and coordination between our nations' veterans groups. As you all know, this U.S. Joint Commission on POWs is the intergovernmental agency for the coordination of these issues. The department co-chair was tied up for a number of years which, of course, slowed the work of the Commission and prevented it from initiating a number of efforts.

In March of this year, I wrote to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to request that he appoint the co-chair of the Russian side of the Commission soon, which would make it more effective for both sides. We know our letter did not go unnoticed, and when the VFW leadership, in support of our mutual cause arranged for a similar letter signed by a member of the U.S.

largest organizations to be sent to President Dmitry, it was the capstone that led to the realization of our goal, a signed presidential decree.

In the end, the Senior representative of Russian Ministry of Defense Vladimir Shamanov was named as co-chair of the Russian side, while my deputy and the executive member of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who are here today, were named members of the Joint Commission.

Over the past few years, representatives of our committee have continued working on these issues with members of the Joint Commission Support Director in Moscow.

Whenever possible, our representatives have helped to identify Soviet combat veterans of Korea and Vietnam who may have information about the U.S. service members who have died or went missing during those conflicts. We arranged several meetings with these veterans and Russia's Commonwealth of Independent States.

Moreover, the committee worked on getting U.S. specialists access to several archives of the Federal Security Service as well as the Ministry of Defense Archives. We are prepared to continue these efforts in the future.

For our part, as I have discussed on numerous occasions, we are particularly concerned with the events in Afghanistan involving a limited contingent of Soviet Forces. Much has been done in the search of the missing, but as before there are still 270 persons listed as missing in action, and we will continue searching, by any means, to include contact with the U.S. side of the Joint Commission duty representatives and, if necessary, the Combined Forces Command in Kabul.

I would like to express my certainty that the strengthening of the Commission and the upcoming exchange of visits by the Commission of both sides will serve to energize efforts on both of our behaves. It will also allow our committee to bring before the U.S. side directly, in a legally-sound manner, issues relevant to our search. Our veterans and the family members will be grateful for the U.S. compassion and understanding with regard to this issue.

There are a few specific issues we would like to discuss with our U.S. colleagues. Over the past few years, we have discovered and transferred to Moscow the remains of about 15 Soviet servicemen. They were important in addition to their lengthy exposure to the elements, which has made the MIA analysis particularly very difficult.

For several years now, our committee has been working to establish a single genetic database for all military personnel who went missing in action in Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989. We began our efforts by taking blood samples from relatives of MIA personnel, for which we used special kits provided by the U.S. with the help of the VFW.

We are also grateful to the VFW and the DoD for arranging, a few years ago, for the Ministry of Defense Specialists to receive practical training in forensic medicine at the Central Identification Laboratory in Honolulu. The knowledge they acquired has helped them reach an entirely new level in their efforts to identify remains.

However, new problems have arisen and I will not hide the fact that we are counting on aid and assistance from our American colleagues in this matter.

Once again, we recall the motto of the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command, which is emblazoned on their insignia "Until They Are Home." For us, that is a matter of honor and conscience, the duty of the combat

brotherhood.

So, I wish all veterans of the United States of America and their family's good health, long life, happiness and success, and to the peoples of our nations, peace and friendship. Thank you for your attention. (Applause)

CHECK PRESENTATIONS TO THE VFW FOUNDATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The VFW is very fortunate to have forged strong alliances with many patriotic commercial organizations across America, organizations that hold the service and sacrifices of our military men and women in the same high regard as we do.

The generous donations the VFW receives from these organizations are a remarkable expression of gratitude to those serving in the armed forces and allows us to continue to provide our military and especially their families with much needed assistance and support through our critical programs.

Our next guest is an outstanding example of this as a great friend to the VFW and an avid supporter of our military.

In 2007, while serving as President of Burger King Restaurants Mid-America Franchisee Association, Mike DeRosa developed and has been the driving force behind an incredibly successful fundraising program for the VFW Foundation. During its first year of existence, the Burger King/Unmet Needs Promotion raised more than \$110,000 for the Unmet Needs Program.

Understanding the importance of assisting military families and the positive impact the Unmet Needs Program makes for them during a real time of need, Mike was successful in his efforts to bolster the initiative each year by encouraging other Burger King restaurants to likewise join in and lend a hand. This past November, 1,200 restaurants nationwide joined Mr. DeRosa in his efforts.

Because of this tireless dedication by Mike and the hundreds of respective managers and enthusiastic employees, for the fourth consecutive year, Burger King patrons once again stepped forward to honor America's men and women in uniform. This year, those Burger King restaurants raised an astounding \$450,000 for a total of \$1.3 million over these past four years. (Applause)

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who has played a part in this wonderful and magnanimous endeavor.

Please welcome back Burger King Franchise owner and new member of the VFW Foundation Board of Directors, Mr. Mike DeRosa. Joining Mike is Greg Selting, Burger King's top producing store manager.

MR. DeROSA: I hope everybody goes to Burger King this afternoon. (Laughter)

(Whereupon, Mr. DeRosa presented a check from Burger King to Commander-in-Chief Eubank.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Another great American company that VFW has been very fortunate to have formed a strong relationship with is Sport Clips.

Sport Clips founder and CEO Gordon Logan had a strong desire to support Operation Uplink, due to his memories of wanting to call home during his time spent overseas. So, in 2007, Sport Clips kicked off its first Operation Uplink fundraising effort by donating one dollar from each haircut

directly to the VFW Operation Uplink Program. In its first year, Sport Clips exceeded its goal of \$30,000 by raising an astounding \$87,000.

Mr. Logan and his wonderful team have continued their efforts each Veterans Day for the past five years with ever-growing success, raising over \$400,000 this year. That's \$850,000 altogether.

Sport Clips' involvement with VFW's Operation Uplink program has provided tremendous support for America's service members by helping our military members connect to loved ones back home. Currently, Sport Clips is sponsoring one free call day every month.

And, as a very important sidebar, Gordon is a VFW Life Member of Post 8587 in Georgetown, Texas. His eligibility was earned as a C-130 pilot in Vietnam, and I imagine, Gordon, that it's likely you gave rides to some of our comrades here today. Gordon served with the Air Force from 1969-1976.

We are truly honored to have with us today Sport Clips founder and CEO, Mr. Gordon Logan. Please give him a warm VFW welcome. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MR. GORDON LOGAN, SPORT CLIPS

MR. LOGAN: Thank you very much. It is an honor to be associated with Operation Uplink and the VFW. We are kicking off our campaign for 2011 in another six weeks. We are going for half a million dollars this year. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Logan presented a check in behalf of Sport Clips to Commander-in-Chief Eubank.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: This year, VFW was proud to forge a new partnership. During this past May, Buffalo Wild Wings, one of the fastest-growing restaurant chains in the country, showed their support of service members and their families by inviting restaurant patrons to donate to the "VFW's Return The Favor Campaign."

Thanks to the generosity of Buffalo Wild Wings, and their great patrons, which I am one, countless military families will receive our support in their future time of need.

We look forward to building on our association with Buffalo Wild Wings for many years to come and are grateful for all that the Buffalo Wild Wings' team has already given us, and that includes their wings, which are certainly the best around. Take that, Hooters. (Laughter)

Here today on behalf of Buffalo Wild Wings, please welcome the Manager of Marketing, Leslie Bryant. (Applause)

Before we get to pictures, I would like to also let everybody know that Leslie's father, Bernard, is a 26-year VFW member and is here with us in the convention hall. Welcome, Bernard. Let's give him a hand. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Leslie Bryant, Manager of Marketing for Buffalo Wild Wings, presented a check to Commander-in-Chief Eubank.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Today, the VFW is proud to announce a new partnership with Dish Network, the nation's second-largest satellite TV provider.

Dish Network will be providing the second-largest sponsorship in the history of the VFW Foundation's "Return The Favor Campaign." It will also be the presenting sponsor of the Salute to Military Families Program, which provides V.I.P. experiences for veterans and their families at different enter-

tainment events across the country.

Dish is committed to serving those who have served and will be offering a discount on Dish services to our country's heroes as well.

It brings me great joy to welcome yet another patriotic organization to our team of VFW supporters.

Here representing Dish Network, please welcome Lindsey Wigdale, Marketing Specialist. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Lindsey Wigdale, Marketing Specialist for Dish Network, presented a check to Commander-in-Chief Eubank.)

PRESENTATION OF FRED C. HALL OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT AWARD TO VFW POST NO. 10077

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The VFW has a rich tradition associated with community service, working closely with many national organizations of like commitments such as the Boy Scouts of America and the Freedom Foundation. The VFW also partners with the National Rifle Association, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other civic organizations in fostering community involvement.

Constructive community service is a founding VFW tenet with volunteerism benefitting education, the environment, health sciences and civic projects.

The VFW's Citizenship Education Program is designed to stimulate an interest in America's history, its traditions and institutions, as well as promote patriotism.

The prestigious Fred C. Hall Memorial Outstanding Post Special Project Award is designed to recognize VFW Posts for their unique and outstanding community service projects that are over and above what is expected of VFW units. Receiving this year's recognition is Garrett County Memorial Post 10077 of Deer Park, Maryland, for their "Freedom Is Not Free" project.

The project was executed to honor our Korean War veterans on the 60th anniversary of the start of hostilities in Korea in 1950. It also served to educate Garrett County citizens about the war and foster patriotism in its youth.

Post 10077 was determined to honor their Korean War veterans. Members of the post rallied their community with great success. For instance, the Garrett County Commissioners presented 192 Certificates of Appreciation to Korean War veterans during a special ceremony at the courthouse.

Korean veterans carried the United States Flag at the annual Garrett County "Flag On The Mountain Ceremony" where the post's Honor Guard saluted the fallen. More than 50 children participated with them.

The post even rallied support from the local Historical Society, which featured an exhibit on Korean War history.

All of this vastly increased the awareness about the Korean War. As evidenced by the newspaper coverage, letters received and conversation with residents, it was a resounding mission accomplished.

More importantly, according to local school teachers and staff, Post 10077's efforts also resulted in an increase in patriotism among the county's youth.

Please join me in presenting to the Commander of Post 10077, Paul Everly, the Fred C. Hall Outstanding Community Service Project Award. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF GENERAL KEVIN BERGNER – USAA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: This past year, VFW was fortunate to create a new partnership with the United Services Automobile Association, a long-time friend of our veterans, service members and their families literally from their genesis in 1922. Through our partnership, USAA provides banking and financial advice to VFW members, and is also the proud title sponsor of the VFW Foundation's "Return The Favor" campaign.

In the past year, USAA has provided support to the Salute to Military Fathers event at Michigan International Speedway and the Chick-Fil-A Military Appreciation Night in Southern California.

Here to represent USAA is Executive Vice-President and Chief Administrative Officer Major General Kevin Bergner.

Prior to joining USAA in 2010, the General served as the Army's Chief of Public Affairs, where he was responsible for all communication issues involving the United States Army, including the formulation of communication and public affairs strategies, plans and policies, as well as the professional development of military and civilian public affairs personnel. He also served as the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Army and other senior Department of Defense leaders on communication matters relating to the Army.

In 2006-2007, General Bergner served as the Special Assistant to the President of the United States and Senior Director for Iraq on the National Security Council staff. He also served as the Director of Political-Military Affairs for the Middle East on the Joint Staff.

General Bergner's operational experience includes five years with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment during the Cold War in Germany.

In 1990, he deployed to the Middle East as part of Operation Desert Shield/Storm with the 24th Infantry Division. In 1996, he commanded the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery while deployed to Bosnia.

He deployed again in 2003 to Doha, Qatar with U.S. Central Command-Forward Headquarters in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In 2005, he served as the Deputy Commander of the Multi-National Force in Mosul, Iraq, and in 2007-2008, he served in Baghdad, Iraq, as the Multi-National Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Effects.

Comrades, please give a warm VFW welcome to General Kevin Bergner. I might also add he is a member of Post 76. (Applause)

REMARKS – GENERAL KEVIN BERGNER

GENERAL BERGNER: Thank you very much. Good morning to everybody here. Welcome to San Antonio. As our Mayor said, we are called "Military City USA", but for those of us at USAA, it has a particularly significant importance to us because this is our hometown. This is a place 89 years ago, in 1922, where 25 Army Aviators gathered, actually just down the road at the Gunter Hotel, organized themselves into this Association that now serves over 8.5 million members.

So, this is a place we are particularly proud of, and it is a particularly big deal that the Veterans of Foreign Wars would come to our hometown for your National meeting. So, thank you very much for coming to San Antonio. (Applause)

Let me start by saying as someone who served in the Army for more

than 30 years, I personally, personally appreciate the VFW's advocacy for our veterans and the military families that support them.

I also appreciate the way that the VFW is such an integral part of the communities like this community here in San Antonio.

VFW Post 76, which is also just down the street near the corner of Broadway and 10th, is the oldest post in Texas. It epitomizes what I am talking about. You will see a room there that is dedicated to a young Marine named Matthew Mendoza. His parents, Raul and Liz Mendoza, were kind enough to invite me to a barbecue, a barbecue that they hosted for Wounded Warriors in that room, which memorializes their son.

One young Marine, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, for all of us, and where is he memorialized? At the VFW. That is the place where honor, service to country, loyalty and dedication aren't just words. They are revered and remembered, and integrated into the fabric of our community at that level.

I am very proud to be a member of the VFW. I am very proud to be part of the VFW partnership with USAA. To me, this feels like a very, very natural fit, because USAA and the VFW share a great deal in common. We are both defined by a mission to serve the military community.

We share a commitment to values, and we care deeply about our veterans.

This morning, what I would like to talk about is that mutual concern for our veterans. Everyone in this room today, every single one of the people in this room today knows that veterans are having trouble finding a job and moving into the civilian workplace. Nearly a million veterans are looking for a job today, and each one has his or her own story of sacrifice and challenge.

This morning, I want to share just one story with you. That story belongs to a young man named Kenny Sutton. In 2005, Kenny Sutton was an airman serving in Afghanistan near Gardez when his convoy was ambushed. As he was thrown from his vehicle, the right side of his body was shattered.

Kenny was medically retired as a result of the wounds he suffered in combat, and his body eventually mended, but he subsequently struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

Like so many of our veterans, so many of our wounded troopers, he became dependent on prescription pain medicine and alcohol.

Back in the civilian world, Kenny was trying to make the transition to a civilian workplace, but that is a really tough task as many, many people in this room know. It is a tough task for so many reasons, not the least of which is just making the transition from military skills to the civilian requirements.

The employers were unsure about Kenny's combat trauma and how it might affect his emotional state. Kenny was lost. His despair and substance dependence brought him to the point of attempting to take his own life, like many of our combat veterans.

Kenny is one of many veterans facing the challenges of healing and transitioning to the civilian workplace. In fact, in his age group, the younger veterans, the 18 to 24-year-old veterans, the unemployment rate in our country is now three times our national average, and it is not trending in the opposite direction. Another one million service members are projected to leave the military between now and 2016.

So, at USAA, our goal is that at least one of every four new employees

we hire will be a veteran or a spouse of a veteran. That commitment comes from the top, from our CEO Joe Robles. He is a 28-year Army veteran himself. He earned his rank the hard way, rising from being a private to a major general, and serving in combat in Vietnam and in Desert Shield-Desert Storm, and serving in Korea and Germany as well.

In addition to the hiring objective, our practice is also to review the applications of veterans and military spouses ahead of other applicants. (Applause) Our practice is rooted in a commitment to outreach, to make our company and our veteran hiring policy visible so people know to look there.

We have a team of employee veterans that are dedicated specifically to that.

Some of them are here with me today. Their job is specifically to reach out to the veterans' community including our Wounded Warriors. This team attends job fairs and it attends gatherings like yours today, and works specifically with the military spouse employment program, as well to get the word out.

Another way we make the workplace veteran friendly is that we help veterans connect with one another once they come to USAA. If you walk through USAA today or go on your Internet, you would find something called the VetNet. The VetNet is an informal organization of those of us who have served, who are available to reach out to mentor and support one another in ways that only a veteran could understand with a fellow veteran or a family member of a fellow veteran.

So, my message to you today is we are not just committed, we are acting on the commitment and we are honored to do so. It is the right thing to do and we are really a better company as a result of that. We are really a better company as a result of those veterans in our workforce.

I am confident that other employees who make the same commitment will find exactly the same wonderful result.

I told you earlier about a young man named Kenny Sutton and how his injuries and trauma had led to a downward spiral. Well, that spiral didn't continue. With help from counselors, Kenny got sober, Kenny also got help writing his resume in terms that would help civilian employees really understand what a wonderful young man he is. He attended a Wounded Warrior Job Fair, and guess what he found out about? He found out about a company called USAA.

Four years later, after a couple of promotions, Kenny Sutton is training USAA managers on how to help active service members understand when it is important to have life insurance beyond the level of SGLI.

If you talk to Kenny Sutton, one of the first things he told me was that, he feels blessed, his word, blessed to help service members make the right choices and get the kind of protection that he was never able to.

Well, Kenny Sutton is here with us today and I am pleased to ask you to join me in thanking him for his service and for his extraordinary courage in sharing his personal journey.

Kenny, would you, please, stand so we can all say thank you to you. (Applause)

Kenny inspires all of us at USAA. How could anyone not be inspired by his courage and perseverance? And on a personal level, I could not be more inspired by his willingness to share his story. When I asked him about sharing his story, he said one simple thing: "I just hope my journey can be

a vehicle to encourage others. I just want my journey to be a testimony so that others might find a way on their own.” Kenny, you are a truly great man. We are very thankful to have you. (Applause)

Let me close by saying that more than anyone in America who would understand Kenny Sutton and his journey, all of you do here today. That’s why we are so honored to be partners with you.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is an organization that is really important, a really important force for our veterans and for this country. We are also honored to have you here in San Antonio, in our hometown. We know you will have a wonderful rest of your National Convention.

I want to finally just say thank you for your service. We cannot say thank you enough. Thank you for your partnership with USAA, and we really are proud to be in your formation today. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF HIRAM SASSER – LIBERTY INSTITUTE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, the opening video dedicated an important segment detailing the long protracted legal battle we have been involved in all the way to the Supreme Court to protect one of America’s most treasured memorials. As explained in the video, when the Mojave Cross Memorial, and all that it symbolizes, was in jeopardy, the VFW in conjunction with our friends at the Liberty Institute duly took up the gauntlet to defend all of our nation’s veterans memorials. We have vowed to protect and defend the wonderful heritage our country’s citizens have always extended, from Revolutionary times to the present, of honoring our heroes that have so gallantly protected our ideals and principles.

Today, I am proud to inform you that we have won this particular battle. The courts have ruled favorably and the Mojave Cross will once again stand proudly and majestically against the desert sky for all freedom-loving people to appreciate.

Just as it has so many times in the past, this long battle clearly demonstrates that the VFW has once again fulfilled one of the historic and significant imperatives assigned to it. It is but one of the many splendid and revered legacies of honor we have inherited from so many preceding generations of noble VFW comrades.

With us today are three magnificent people who have been enormously instrumental in preserving and protecting the sanctity of our beloved Mojave Cross Memorial.

The road to securing justice has been long and arduous, but we have been extremely fortunate in having a superlative advocate on our behalf.

The Liberty Institute is an organization that defends religious liberties and protects First Amendment rights in the courts nationwide. Experts from the Liberty Institute have argued before the U.S. Supreme Court and the Texas Supreme Court, in addition to numerous other U.S. Federal Court cases, and have been fighting for us on the Mohave Desert Cross that so proudly honors our fallen comrades.

With us today to provide us with a current update about the Mojave Cross, and other important pending issues is a man who has, and is so valiantly and boldly fighting for our veterans and for the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the quest to protect our First Amendment rights, our friend, Mr. Hiram Sasser.

Thank you, Hiram, for all you do in protecting our freedoms and please

remain here for my next presentation.

REMARKS – MR. HIRAM SASSER, LIBERTY INSTITUTE

MR. SASSER: Thank you very much. This is still very providential. All my insurance comes from USAA, and I got my hair cut the other day at Sport Clips. So, I feel like I am VFW up here and good to go.

I want to let you know that it has always been our privilege at Liberty Institute over the years to represent the VFW. We have always done it on a pro bono basis, meaning for free. Most people like that. Most people don't like lawyers, but free lawyers kind of have a free pass, right? That's good.

I want to make sure that the rest of what I have to say is about what is going on in the Mojave.

So, I am going to start with something that is a little closer to home, here in Texas, just to give you kind of an update that is going on. Some of you may have some questions about our case. We are representing the VFW District down in Houston regarding the VA Cemetery and the issues there.

I will tell you, it is a bitter fight going on right now at the courthouse. The good news is that we have received an early victory from the judge saying that, that kind of religious discrimination, censoring what kind of religious speech that the honor guards may or may not want to say in conjunction with the blessings of the families. Whatever they want to say, the government is prohibited from interfering with the religious speech that goes on at the National cemeteries. So, that is a great victory. (Applause)

But for whatever reason, that order was not circulated amongst the e-mail inboxes of all the VA employees who needed to receive that. So, we are going to continue with this fight until all of the honor and respect is restored down at the Houston National Cemetery, where it belongs.

Now, what I would like to talk about is the Mohave Cross. As most of you know, this was put up by you, the VFW, in 1934 by your comrades, World War I veterans. You know, the folks that you are going to meet, Henry and Wanda Sandoz, I want to take you back to 1982.

In 1982, there was Riley Bembry, a VFW World War I veteran, living out in the desert, living a lifestyle that I think most of would find very difficult, and basically his sole mission was preserving this memorial for his fallen comrades.

He didn't have electricity. He lived a rough lifestyle out in the desert. He basically takes his friend, Henry Sandoz, by the shirt collar and says, "I need somebody to take care of this memorial when I am dead." Henry said he would do it.

I want you to imagine what a lonely place that really was over the years out in the middle of the desert, Henry going out there taking care of the memorial. Sometimes it would be vandalized; sometimes the weather may have some impact on it, constantly maintaining this memorial out in the desert essentially alone.

Then I want you to imagine an organization like the ACLU coming along and suing the federal government to have it torn down. Then, the federal government comes to the doorsteps of Henry Sandoz' house in the desert. They say, "Henry, will you take this memorial down because we want to end this controversy?"

Henry, without any backing, there is no one behind him, just Henry and

his wife, Wanda, says not only “no” but “hell no.” That was his response. I am quoting that for the newspapers that are allowed to say that kind of language. (Applause)

I want you to imagine that years go by in litigation and place after place he loses and loses, and Henry is still standing there valiantly alone. The only comparison I could come up with is that comparison that was memorialized in the movie “The Longest Day”, that said, “Hold until relieved, hold this bridge until relieved.”

Henry was essentially, he and his wife, were alone holding until relieved, and then came you guys.

We have had the privilege, Liberty Institute, to represent the VFW, and we were able to show up en masse with everything that you guys bring to bear, come to the Supreme Court of the United States, and the VFW was able to relieve Henry. The VFW was able to step up and relieve him.

It is going to be you, and I think I have known him long enough I can say this, Henry is not going to be with us forever. This is your memorial. You put it up, it is going to be yours forever. I want to let that sink in, that, you know, it is out there in the middle of the desert and, you know, probably more rattlesnakes have seen it than people, but I am telling you it is important. It was important to those World War I veterans who were out there, but it is important enough for our Congress to pass a law especially protecting it, and important enough for Henry Sandoz to sacrifice all these years to continue to preserve it. He is going to now be passing the torch to you.

So, the great news is that we won our Supreme Court case, and Lord willing, by Veterans Day we should be able to put the cross back up on VFW soil. (Applause)

It is your land out in the desert, and it is going to take some defending. Someone is going to come along and try to steal it, I am sure. That has happened in the past, and lowly as that is, that could happen again. It is yours to defend and guard. I see you have all these fine guys and ladies guarding the stage, so I know you guys will have that covered. You will be pretty good at it.

I want to make sure that this is the passing of the torch from Henry to you guys. I am just going to ask you now, and you can resound with one “yes”, are you willing to take the torch up now? Are you willing to stand in the gap where Riley Bembry stood alone, and Henry and Wanda stood alone? If you are willing, say “yes”.

(Whereupon, the hall gave a resounding “yes.”)

That makes me feel good and I am sure it makes Henry feel good as well.

I want to give a special thanks to some of the folks who have helped the VFW along the way. We didn’t do it alone at Liberty Institute. We had law firms such as Morgan, Lewis & Bokius, and Baker Botts. We had great lawyers, Ted Cruise and Allison Ho and others, all part of the team in order to bring this victory about for the veterans.

Finally, I would like to say there is an ongoing battle going on in the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial, another memorial in the shape of a cross. These battles are not over.

This one may be won, but there are future battles ahead and we have to remain vigilant. You can’t let off the gas when you have to leave. You have got to keep pressing. That is what we do.

So, I want to encourage you all if you want more information to go to don'ttearmedown.com. Also, you will find there is a great group of singers and songwriters, who wrote a song dedicated to you guys, the veterans, and to your memorials. You can download that song if you want to at don'ttearmedown.com/song. I encourage you to do that.

Share it. It is a way that you can download it on your iPod and share it with your children and grandchildren, and instill in them the pride to move forward.

At the end of the day, this memorial has been there since 1934, and I expect it to be there in 2134. It will only be that way if the VFW holds on and holds its soil. It is your soil, you own it. It is yours.

So, I want you guys to defend it with all you have got, and if for no other reason than to honor Riley Bembry and Henry Sandoz.

So, with that, I am going to introduce Henry and Wanda. I know I have said so many things. I have to tell you, when I went out there to go meet with them, I thought, you know, who would be out here in the middle of the desert? My first impression was it was the Marlboro Man.

I will tell you, Henry is a man of the desert. Whenever we drive to the memorial, every little desert crack and cranny we passed, he would say, "I remember when I worked there." He has done every job there is out in the desert.

The Lord couldn't have picked a better man to guard your memorial than Henry Sandoz. So, thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION PRESENTED TO HENRY SANDOZ

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Hiram, for all you do in protecting our freedom and please stand next to me so we can recognize some other folks here.

Henry and Wanda Sandoz's names have become synonymous with the Mojave Cross. For nearly 30 years, these incredible individuals have served as tireless and intrepid guardians of the cross and all that it represents. Their incredible example of commitment toward preserving the cross was borne out of a keen sense of honor, loyalty and powerful devotion to a friend.

While on his deathbed, the last surviving man who built the original cross in 1934, exacted a promise from his best friend, Henry, to preserve it.

Henry's resolute vow to honor his pledge is a bright, shining illustration of how the stalwart bonds of brotherhood forged between friends has transcended time and impediment.

In the years since, Henry and Wanda became the unofficial caretakers of the cross. Henry Sandoz has twice replaced vandalized versions of the memorial since the mid-1980s, and under an arrangement facilitated by then U.S. Representative Jerry Lewis and approved by Congress in 2003, the acre beneath and surrounding the cross would be swapped for five acres generously offered by the Sandozes and moved into the possession of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Truly, if it were not for the unassuming yet fiercely patriotic and loyal Sandozes, this national treasure would have surely been lost to all of us and would have been, at the least, an irrevocable and immense tragedy for our entire nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the Gold

Medal of Merit to Mr. Henry Sandoz, accompanied by Wanda, for his tremendous legacy of service to our country, and for his exemplary efforts to keep his promise to his best friend, indeed to all veterans, by presenting him the VFW Gold Medal of Merit. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to Henry Sandoz.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation of his exemplary devotion to our nation's ideals as demonstrated through his remarkable willingness to give so much of his life to preserving and protecting the Mojave Cross Memorial, one of our nation's foremost and most beloved national treasures.

"In spite of a myriad of arduous challenges, Mr. Sandoz remains always stalwart in his defense, devotion and preservation of this most eminent of national symbols. His undaunted patriotism and love of country has ensured our venerated Mohave Cross Memorial will forever endure through the ages.

"All he has accomplished for our comrades and brethren has earned him the utmost admiration and gratitude of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2011."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MR. HENRY SANDOZ

MR. SANDOZ: I think a lot has been said that can be said about it, but I am very proud of all you veterans for honoring me here and thank you very much. My friend, Riley Bembry, as a World War I veteran, he is surely looking down on us now. (Applause)

MRS. WANDA SANDOZ: For you to honor us in this way, our whole time we have been in this, it has been for Riley. People will say, "Why are you doing this?" We would always say, "Because we love our country and we love our veterans." Where would this country be without our veterans?

We are just so honored that you have honored us in this way. Thank you so much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I live out by Mojave. I was born in Ridgecrest, California. When I told Henry that I lived in Ridgecrest, he said, "I worked there."

AUXILIARY AWARD PRESENTATION TO RICKY GILLELAND

Please welcome VFW Ladies Auxiliary National President Cortina Barnes, who is making a special award presentation. (Applause)

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT CORTINA BARNES: It gives me great pleasure to introduce our next guest, but first join me in viewing a short video detailing his wonderful story.

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

Ricky Gilleland is one teenager, armed with one mobile device, and one incredible mission to document soldiers' graves at Arlington National Cemetery.

Ricky comes from a long line of veterans: His great-great-great-grandfather, his father and his two older brothers. And, he hopes someday, to add his name to that illustrious list of patriots. The names on the graves to him, just like to us, are people loved and lost but never forgotten.

We believe that Ricky has done an extraordinary act of service for our country. People from all over the United States have been able to view the headstones of the ones they love and know its exact location.

Ricky, we join them in saying: "Thank you."

Today, we want to honor Ricky for his service. Ricky, won't you please come forward?

On behalf of the 520,000 members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is my pleasure to present you with this award which reads:

"For our veterans and country award presented to Ricky Gilleland, August 29, 2011, for his outstanding service to all Americans through his project Preserve and Honor at Arlington National Cemetery."

From the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and it has been signed by me, Cortina Barnes, National President.

With this award, Ricky, we are pleased to present you with this scholarship of \$10,000, which we know will go toward a future of promise and excellence.

We thank you, Ricky, for your active service and for being with us here today. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF SENATOR KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: In 1993, Texans elected Kay Bailey Hutchison to the United States Senate in a special election, making her the first, and to date, the only woman elected to represent Texas in the Senate. Later she was re-elected to a full six-year term, and in 2000 she received more votes for her re-election to a second full term than any other statewide candidate had ever received. In 2006, she was again re-elected by an overwhelming margin.

Senator Hutchison has played a vital role in shaping America's defense policy and fulfilling our nation's promises to our veterans. She introduced and passed legislation creating an overseas basing commission, which conducted a comprehensive review of the U.S. military's global footprint to help ensure that our armed forces are prepared to meet 21st century threats. She currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of Visitors for the United States Military Academy at West Point.

As ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and as a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Senator Hutchison is dedicated to fulfilling all of our nation's commitments to the veterans who have protected and preserved the freedoms of our great country.

Recently, Senator Hutchison joined 13 Senate colleagues to introduce bipartisan legislation to amend existing federal funeral protest laws to help prevent disruption at military funerals. Entitled the Sanctity of Eternal Rest for Veterans or "SERVE" Act, the measure defines the time and place for any protests at funerals, and it provides clear remedies and increased penalties when conduct at military funeral services is deemed appropriate under the First Amendment of the Constitution.

Please join me in welcoming United States Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. (Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)

REMARKS – SENATOR KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON

SENATOR HUTCHISON: Thank you. Thank you very much. I am very proud to be here. I have come to a number of your National conventions. I love serving on the Appropriations Committee for Defense and Veterans Affairs, because I can't think of anything more important to preserving the patriotism and loyalty of our country for you who have served. (Applause) I have to say, being the Senior Senator from Texas, welcome to Texas. This August, we are giving you an especially warm welcome.

I am sure you-all have heard there was actually an earthquake in Washington, D.C., last week. Everyone evacuated the building, the entire government shut down for a day, and on this news, the stock market went up 300 points. (Laughter)

Well, let me just say that you have chosen a great city to have your National Convention. I don't know of another major city in America that calls itself "Military City USA." They do it because they love the military, and they love the retirees who stay here and serve. Every Air Force airman starts his or her career at Lackland. Every medic in the armed forces is trained at the historic Fort Sam Houston. In fact, for many of you, it might be a homecoming, if you have served in the Army or the Air Force. And, I have to say that you probably have gotten some pretty good health care here from the Veterans hospital, as well as the Active Union Hospital. I brought the Veterans Secretary, General Peake, here when he was serving as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the only request he had was to go where we got the best tortillas in America, that he remembered from his service here in San Antonio.

Well, as I was prepared to come here and talk to you, I was reminded of a quote by T.R. Fehrenbach. Now, T.R. Fehrenbach is a San Antonian. He is an historian and he wrote a wonderful book called "This Kind of War," that was about the Korean War. In it, he says, "You may fly over a land forever, you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it, and once it is clean of life. But if you desire to defend it, protect it and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way that the Roman Legions did, by putting your young men into the mud."

Well, those words were written over 40 years ago. They are as true today as when many of you served. Living conditions for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are sparse, but tolerable. I have been there. I have been numerous times to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am always amazed at the capacity of American troops to make any place seem like a home away from home. Working conditions, on the other hand, are deadly. Our troops there are fighting a vicious enemy, a different kind of enemy than we have ever fought in our country before. This is not an enemy that wants to stay alive and kill you. It is an enemy that will kill itself in order to kill you and innocent people. We are fighting abroad, just as those of you who fought in earlier wars for our American freedom and way of life, in places that you probably have never heard of, certainly not before you went. You have always fought for our American way of life and freedom. You have made it possible for our countrymen and women to be at home carrying on our everyday lives. We will not take it for granted.

Your service has made it possible for us to gather today in safety for our nation, even while others are at war. And you have made it possible for us to commemorate those who have fallen and will never come home from those faraway places. And maybe, some of them were at your side when they left us.

The VFW plays such a strong and important role for our servicemen and women, both active duty and veterans and retirees. You continue to serve. Your members spend more than eleven million hours volunteering each year, \$3 million in high school scholarships, and you have hosted two million military members and their families at homecoming ceremonies.

I have been proud to stand at the DFW airport welcoming our brave men and women as they have returned from Afghanistan and Iraq and from their R&R; they returned every day from that airport, those that are serving our country, with their two weeks of R&R in the middle of their time. It is one of my greatest privileges in my 18 years in the Senate to be able to meet and thank our active duty, as well as our military veterans.

When I visit a US base anywhere in the world, there are members of this organization volunteering to welcome troops in a way that only you know is best, because they are seeing someone who knows what it is like. So, thank you for continuing to serve.

I want to say that on my staff in my 18 years, I have always had military retirees and veterans on my staff. This year I've got a special one – he's an Army Sergeant Major, who also happens to be a Life Member of VFW Post 812 in El Paso, Texas. Being a Sergeant Major, I have to tell you, he is close to the troops in the field, and he can often be counted on to provide the "Ground Truth" on the real concerns of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. I also have three other Army veterans, one of whom is the head of my entire legislative staff. And the Sergeant Major keeps them all in line.

This past April, during the budget impasse, the pay of our military personnel on time was in jeopardy. I introduced legislation that would guarantee that our military would be paid first in the event of a government shutdown. We got eighty co-sponsors out of the 100 members of the Senate, and we got a lot of interest around the country from our military men and women; and people were saying, they were blogging, writing in and calling and saying, "What are they thinking about, that our military would not get their pay on time?! That's disturbing, that our troops on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq, and their families have to worry about their mortgage being paid on time, are you serious?" Well, we got a lot of attention. Now, the bill wasn't needed in the eleventh hour because we came to terms on the budget.

We in Congress are going to have to cut spending, but I will not stand for cutting any of our military and veterans' benefits that they have earned. Why? You are not asking for more, you are just asking that promises be kept, and if there is anything we can do in America it is that, -- keeping our promises to our military, our veterans and our retirees.

Next month will mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Since that time, 970,000 brave men and women have deployed more than once to support combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. What is most remarkable is that nearly all of them joined the military after that tragic day of 9/11 in 2001. They volunteered for service. They didn't join for the perks, they didn't join for the college money, they didn't join for tax-free groceries. They joined because they knew that America was in harm's way and they wanted to be

part of saving our country.

Those are the kinds of young men and women that are serving today, that are our next greatest generation. (Applause) They followed in the footsteps of giants like you, many of whom have served in the greatest generation. You and they joined up to serve for the reasons that we know are essential for America to stay the greatest country on Earth, and that is to protect our way of life from anyone who would try to keep our children from having the same kind of opportunity that we have had growing up in America. That's why you served, it is why they are serving, and they are standing on the shoulders of giants, and they know it.

So, thank you and the VFW for serving in the first place, and for continuing to serve as volunteers in so many important efforts.

We honor you, we thank you, and I am proud to be here to welcome you to Texas, a state that loves our military.

God bless you, God bless Texas and God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

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

CHECK PRESENTATION BY UAW/GM TO THE VFW

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: A great number of current and retired General Motors employees have served in the United States Armed Forces, and GM has a long history of supporting the military.

During World War II, Detroit — home to GM — became known as the “arsenal of democracy” as GM plants were converted to the production of critical war material. This effort played a significant, yet often unheralded role in our great victories both in Europe and the Pacific, and over the years, GM has stayed committed to all those who have served our nation in times of war and peace.

GM has shown an enduring corporate commitment to the VFW. Over the past several years, they have presented the VFW with several generous checks in support of VFW programs that benefit veterans, service members and their families.

Doug Waite, GM's Senior Chief Mass Communications Specialist, President of the GM Veterans Affinity Group, and a member of the VFW Department of Pacific Areas, is here with us today to provide some insight about GM's rich history of support for veterans.

Doug now works for General Motors at the Milford Proving Ground and currently serves with the Navy Reserve at the Naval Operational Support Center in Detroit. He joined the Navy in 1979 and served with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 4 at the Naval Air Station Point Mugu, California. He completed two Cold War deployments to the Mediterranean with Patrol Squadron 49 and was discharged in 1984.

Doug then enlisted in the Naval Reserve in 1990. He was recalled to active duty in 2003 and received orders to the Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Division at Indian Head, Maryland.

In 2006, he reported to Navy Combat Camera Command Atlantic as the Reserve Senior Enlisted Advisor. He was again recalled to active duty in 2009 and deployed to NSA Bahrain as the Navy Combat Camera Detachment Officer-in-Charge where he directed Navy Combat Camera Operations throughout the Middle East.

Doug's personal awards include Navy Commendation medals, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement medals, Navy Good Conduct medals, and the Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal.

He has earned the Enlisted Expeditionary Warfare Specialist, Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist and Navy Air Crewman insignias. He is a recipient of the Phoenix Veterans Foundation 2010 Freedom Award and the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes Hometown Hero Award.

I am honored that a GM representative is again attending our convention this year, and if I do say so myself, an outstanding one at that.

Comrades, please join me in welcoming one of our superlative members, Doug Waite. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MR. DOUG WAITE

COMRADE WAITE: Thank you very much. General Motors is one of our nation's most patriotic companies and ranked by Military Times as one of the top 25 companies in the country as far as our support for military. It is an honor to represent the men and women of General Motors and the UAW here at the 112th VFW Convention. It is a personal honor for me.

My great-grandfather was a veteran of the First World War. Before he passed away, he gave me two items that I treasure to this day. One is his World War I Victory Medal and the other is his VFW pin. I am proud to be a member of the VFW and to carry on that family tradition. (Applause)

General Motors and United Auto Workers have a special relationship with the VFW. We have contributed over \$4.5 million to the VFW National Children's Home over the years, and when the company fell on hard times, the VFW was in our corner, promoting our company and lobbying on our behalf. I would like to personally thank you for standing by us in those dark days.

This is a natural relationship, GM and the VFW. GM has been the "Arsenal of Democracy" and it has provided the nation with tanks, aircraft, weapons and other necessities of war.

Our employees fill the VFW ranks. GM employees have served with you, we have fought with you, we have shared the integral bonds of war, and we have seen the graves of our friends, and they were all our friends, who did not come home. They died hoping that we would come home. They died knowing that by doing so, they would give the rest of us the opportunity to raise families, build careers and carry on the torch of freedom. This, you have done and your presence here today, shows that you have done it very well. As members of the VFW, you continue to serve our nation and to keep the faith with your comrades.

Today, we have thousands of veterans working with the UAW-GM. We have hundreds of Reserve and Guard employees, but more than 200 have been called to active duty since 9/11.

I am proud to stand here today and tell you that we have GM-UAW employees currently engaged in every theater of the war on terror.

General Motors is second to none in our support for our warriors. We at GM go well above and beyond what is considered the legal requirement to protect seniority and wages, and we are committed to continue these protections for the duration, as long as it takes.

General Motors' commitment to the Guard and Reserve was recognized by ESGR, Employer's Support for the Guard and Reserve, a DoD agency.

In 2007, GM received the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award. GM was nominated by its Guard and Reserve employees, both hourly and salaried. GM was the first auto manufacturer to receive this prestigious award.

That support extends well beyond the UAW and GM family. For example, late last year the UAW and GM partnership supported a sendoff for a local unit leaving for Afghanistan. To get this done, we worked with VFW Post 2233 on the east side of Detroit. Are there any Post 2233 folks out there?

Well, on behalf of the UAW and GM team we thank them very much for allowing us to be a part of their team.

By the way, Post 2233 helped us to create the video you just saw. Here is another excellent example for the past several years, UAW and GM partnerships support an event known as Military Mom's Lunch. We invite moms of active-duty service people and they have a very nice lunch, and that features entertainment and more. The moms, who are by and large strangers to each other, end up bonding with moms over their common experience. On that note, let's hear it for the military moms. (Applause) It is a very emotional event, and I am sure you can identify with it. These activities are in addition to many of the programs supported locally by UAW-GM teams coast-to-coast.

I am privileged to lead the GM Veterans Affinity Group, an organization of more than 500 salaried GM veterans. We advise the company on veterans' issues, we help to make GM a place of choice for veterans and we help to recruit qualified veterans to fill our ranks.

Disciplined, dedicated and loyal, from our CEO Dan Akerson, a Naval Academy graduate, to our newest employees, veterans form the backbone of the resurgent General Motors.

I would like to personally invite all of you to stop by our exhibit here at the Convention Center. This is the fourth consecutive year we have attended the VFW National Convention. This year, we brought with us America's car, the American Pride Camaro, dedicated to you, dedicated to us, the veterans. We also brought the Sonic, a new subcompact from Chevrolet, and the only subcompact built in the United States. (Applause)

I have been told to remind you, those of you that are in an RV, this new Chevy will be on the market in October, but we brought it here for you to take a sneak peek at it. Come on out and take a look at it.

I would also like to point out that General Motors has the best military discount of any car company. Normally, this is an exclusive offer to the active duty and reserve components. However, for the convention, for all veterans attending this convention, we are offering you the military discount. So, if you are in the market for a new car, please stop by the booth and see Elliott Benson. Elliott, I would like for you to stand, please. Elliott is a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve, and a West Point graduate.

Mark Hughes, will you stand up? Mark worked his way up to Lieutenant rank in the Navy Reserve. Stop by and say hello, get to know us, and let us know about your experiences, and we will do the same, and they will give you an authorization number.

Before I leave, it was mentioned that I was recalled twice and that was certainly an honor and I just wanted to share with you the experiences I had when I was first recalled in 2003. That was when the Iraq war was getting started. Most everybody was very happy, very concerned, very proud, and there were a few people that I talked to, they acted like I was getting

ready to go to an execution. They had great long looks on their face, and they said, "Gosh, I am really sorry." That just floored me.

I said, "Sorry, what are you sorry about? When our nation is going to war and I am wearing the country's uniform, where else would I rather be? How would I feel sorry? I feel sorry for you, because you will never experience that honor, the honor that is ours."

I am very proud to be here in a room filled with so many people who share that sentiment. (Applause) We have a happy field and we are a band of brothers. God bless you and thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF VOICE OF DEMOCRACY 1ST PLACE WINNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The VFW National Voice of Democracy Program has been in place for more than 64 years. This program provides students far and wide the opportunity to speak clearly about their values and give voice to how they perceive our nation and the many liberties afforded to them.

No one has a greater interest in this country than someone who has defended it on foreign battlefields and seen good friends die for it. What is reflected in this program is an extension of America's values and its ideals. This premier scholarship program helps ensure our nation's heritage will never be lost.

Student interest is what keeps the program going, and in time that interest will be manifested in the form of leadership, and that leadership will help guide our nation for future generations to come.

Education and knowledge are the best weapons against any type of tyranny, and these young people are well-armed to face the challenges of their future and America's future. They won't be sitting around rewriting America's history, they will be out there making it.

Of all our VFW programs, none lets us have a better perspective of what the future holds than when we see the submissions made to the program by so many of our nation's young people communicating pride, patriotism and love of country.

Miss Kelsey Woo's outstanding entry to the selected Voice of Democracy theme, "Does My Generation Have A Role In America's Future?" correctly earned her the esteemed title of 2010-2011 National Voice of Democracy Winner.

A 2011 graduate of Harvard-Westlake High School in Newport Beach, California, and soon to be attending Boston College in the fall, Kelsey is representative of the many thousands of young people who participate in the scholarship program annually.

Kelsey and her peer group are the future of our country. What they are today, America will be tomorrow.

Please join me in welcoming and celebrating Kelsey Woo's success as our 2010-2011 Voice of Democracy Winner. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MISS KELSEY WOO, VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

MS. WOO: Before I begin, I need to quickly repeat and reiterate the same message everybody that has gotten up this morning has given to the VFW, the Ladies Auxiliary, the men and women who have served this country and their family members who love them and support them at

home. That message is thank you. (Applause)

"It is hot; obscenely hot. Suddenly, Bruce Springsteen's voice blasts through the crackling heat, singing "Born In The USA." It wakes the teenage boy. The first thing he sees when he opens his eyes is a picture of his little sister.

For a moment, he is back in Nashville, waking up hungry for one of his mom's family Sunday breakfasts. Only something isn't right. Where are those wonderful smells of coffee brewing and hash browns frying, and why is it still dark outside? As his eyes adjust, he remembers: He is not at home in his bed; he is in his barracks in Afghanistan. It is midnight, and his platoon is getting ready for a mission. When he opens his foot locker, a family photo reminds him to e-mail his sister; her interview for West Point is tomorrow. Tennessee seems light years away as the young private spends his days and nights defending our nation. Forty-eight hours later, two soldiers knock on the front door of a yellow house in Nashville. When the tall, blonde woman opens the door and sees the uniforms, she crumples to the ground, knowing, before a word is uttered, that her son is dead. This soldier was the boy next door, the boy who delivered your newspapers, the young man who cut your lawn. This fallen soldier proves that my generation is already playing a major role in America's future. His unselfish sacrifice is a mirror of the best of my generation.

I want to remind everyone, that while I stand before you and deliver this speech, my generation is in Iraq and Afghanistan, boots on the ground, fighting a war that will determine America's future. The news footage from Afghanistan is the Reality TV show that represents my generation; not Jersey Shore, not the Kardashians. Young Americans are fighting and dying on the battlefield, coming home to be fitted for artificial limbs, in order to defend democracy and our way of life. It is this generation of selfless young men and women that are playing a major role in America's future. That is why my generation will not allow ourselves to be defined by the media as selfish, spoiled young adults.

Instead, my generation is ensured a role in determining our country's future because we are defined by men like Corporal Matthew Bradford, who at 19 became a blind, double amputee when a roadside bomb in Iraq detonated. He learned to walk on prosthetic legs and has re-enlisted; he is serving at Camp Lejeune where he works with wounded Marines to encourage them in their recovery. We are defined by women like Private Melissa Strock, who at the age of 19 lost both legs while serving in Iraq, when an IED exploded under her Humvee. With both legs severely injured, Private Strock crawled to the burning vehicle and rescued a fellow soldier. That is how my generation secures its role in America's future, we never give up. We are defined by the courage of an Afghan girl, Bibi Aisha. At 13, she was sold into a forced marriage; when she tried to flee, her nose and ears were cut off. She chose to seek justice against the Taliban and showed the world her face. Now 18, she has come to America to start a new life. That is how my generation secures its role in America's future, we never give up.

In every generation there is a defining moment. For our parents, it was the day President Kennedy was assassinated. For our older brothers and sisters, it was 9/11. Many wonder: will there be a defining moment for my generation? Is it yet to come? My answer is simple; it is already here. My generation will forever be defined by how we defeat the terrorists and win

the war on terror. That is how my generation secures its role in America's future. We never give up.

It will take all these groups of young adults: from our soldiers fighting on the front lines to college-bound young Americans, working in harmony to solidify our role as the foot soldier, the first line of defense for America's future. And so, I offer the following challenge to my generation: In order to continue to have a significant role in our country's future, we must support each other. To my college-bound peers, I say: remember our brothers and sisters in the military; be aware of their sacrifice and e-mail your Senator to improve the GI Bill and ensure better education and job training once our bravest and best come home. However, my generation can only have a role in America's future by exercising our right to vote, to ensure that our voices are heard. Elect those who will protect, honor, and defend America's interests. We must do this in the name of all those generations before us who have fought and died protecting our country, so that they will not have died in vain. We must do this to honor those of my generation that have given so much and have already made the ultimate sacrifice. Finally, we must do this for that Private from Tennessee. He will not be home for Christmas, he will not see his sister begin her career at West Point; but he will live on as an inspiration for my generation, living and dying to protect America's future." Thank you.

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

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: For 44 years, the members of the Department of Arizona have come together as a team to consecutively increase VFW membership throughout the state.

Each member of the Department of Arizona can take tremendous pride in their many years of dedication and hard work that has gone into reaching this momentous milestone.

Now, in recognition of those efforts, I would like to call on Dennis Dole, immediate past Department Commander of Arizona, and Department Adjutant Ray Thomas to accept this "Consecutive Years of Membership Growth" citation. Congratulations to all in the great Department of Arizona.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Certification of Commendation awarded to Department of Arizona.

"In recognition of the remarkable achievement of 44 consecutive years of continuous membership sustained by a department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2011."

It has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

COMRADE DENNIS DOLE (Department of Arizona): Boy, thank you so much, Commander-in-Chief Eubank. Every year, for 44 years, the State of Arizona has started with kind of a goal, and that is to reach 100 percent in membership. It started the year I graduated from high school. (Laughter)

To the State of Arizona, thank you so much for the hard work you do,

flat out, my family, you rock. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL RECRUITER OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR 2010-2011

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: As Commander-in-Chief, I wanted to emphatically stress the critical importance of recruiting, as well as reward those individuals who work so hard to perform this vital mission.

This year, I have the pleasure of presenting the National Recruiter of the Year Award to an individual who is no stranger to performing this vital mission nor to this award.

This year, he has recruited a phenomenal 548 new or reinstated members. By any measure of recruiting success in recent memory, this is an outstanding accomplishment and fully deserves to be well-recognized by all of us.

From VFW Post 8862, located in Vicenza, Italy, in the Department of Europe, please welcome Peter Luste, the National Recruiter of the Year. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "National Recruiter of the Year Award presented to Peter H. Luste.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of your outstanding service in the VFW membership program.

"Your exceptional initiative and untiring effort during the 2010-2011 membership year contributed measurably toward the national membership goal of recruiting 115,000 new or reinstated members.

"You are commended for your professional achievements and recognized for your dedication to the goals of the 'God Country Veterans' team.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 29th day of August, 2011."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF ALL AMERICAN TRIPLE CROWN AWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The term "Triple Crown Winner" is universally applied for an extraordinarily exceptional accomplishment.

Winning all three major thoroughbred horse races is considered the greatest accomplishment of a racehorse and on the very infrequent occasion it occurs — it was last accomplished in 1977 — the thoroughbred is thus known as the "Triple Crown Winner."

In Major League baseball, a player earns the Triple Crown when he leads a league in three specific statistical categories.

For batters, a player must lead the league in home runs; runs batted in and batting average; pitchers must lead the league in wins, strikeouts and earned run average.

Again, this is a very rare occurrence. The last to do so was Carl Yastrzemski of the Boston Red Sox in 1967. How is that, all you Yankee fans out there?

The VFW has its own class of "thoroughbreds" and "major leaguers" who are also known as Triple Crown Winners as a result of their astonishing distinctive membership recruiting achievements at the Department,

District and Post levels.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure in recognizing this year's select group of VFW's Triple Crown Winners:

From the Department of Maryland is D. Harvey Cunningham, Jr. (Applause) He will receive that award at a later date. There was a storm there and he was not able to get out.

Next is Norberto Millet, Jr., from the Department of Europe. (Applause)

And from the Department of Utah, Norman I. Nelson. (Applause)

From the Department of Oregon, Thomas Laing. (Applause)

And last, but certainly as equal, Comrade John W. Stroud from the Department of Nevada. (Applause)

Comrades and Commanders, congratulations for attaining such a notable record of accomplishment, and thank you all for your extremely hard work and dedication. (Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE LEGACY LIFE CONTEST WINNERS

The VFW's Legacy Life Membership provides an opportunity for Life Members to leave their mark on the nation's largest combat veterans' organization. Membership in this fraternity of distinguished and committed VFW members not only offers expanded and exclusive benefits, but also helps ensure that the VFW's good work will continue for generations to come.

That is accordingly the true meaning of the word "legacy" in this most notable and important program.

The winners of the Commander-in-Chief Legacy Life Contest deserve to be fully congratulated for their efforts and achievements. And they are:

John Kane, Jr, VFW Post 493, Nutley, New Jersey.

Harry Earley, Commander, VFW Post 1536, Waverly, New York.

Gary Nelms, Commander, VFW Post 5978, Nashville, Georgia.

Stephen Milano, Jr., Commander, VFW Post 4647, Antelope, California.

David Smith, Commander, VFW Post 3015, Clovis, New Mexico.

Harry House, Commander, VFW Post 1894, Clinton, Missouri.

Comrades, please stand and be recognized one more time. Thank you so much. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Before we go into the prestigious program of the All American program and awards to these outstanding commanders, Commander-in-Chief has asked me to make an announcement. This announcement will be made throughout the convention. But before we go to the All Americans, I want to give it to you, because as soon as we give the All American Awards, everybody is going to split. As you know, each year on Thursday we have an installation of officers, and Thursday afternoon we have a reception for the Commander-in-Chief, the new Commander-in-Chief and the new National President.

In the last few years, the installation of officers, the crowd has been smaller and smaller and smaller, and every year my Sergeants-at-Arms have to wear flak jackets so they don't get run over when we open the door for the reception.

Everybody takes that morning to sleep in or go sightseeing, but they are ready to party at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. I have no problem with that. However, there is going to be a slight change this year. At the end of the installation of the Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars

of the United States and the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, there will be tickets handed out as you leave the hall. If you do not have a ticket, you will not be allowed to go to the reception that afternoon. That will be a change, and we will announce this throughout the convention so everybody can hear it. Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO THE 2011 ALL AMERICAN
DEPARTMENT. DISTRICT AND POST COMMANDERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Certainly, the most prestigious recognition earned as a Commander in the Veterans of Foreign Wars is to be named a member of the All American team. We have 13 Department Commanders, 27 District Commanders and 197 Post Commanders who have earned that distinguished title and are with us today, and now I will be joined by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton to present the All American Commander Awards as the Adjutant General Allen "Gunner" Kent announces this elite group.

Alabama

Post:

Sidney E. Hinson, Post 5035
Edward A. Barry, Post 6020

Alaska

Department:

Robert A. Myles, Post 1685

Post:

Duane E. Gonzales, Post 9365
Marty L. Harris, Post 9785

Arizona

Department:

Dennis A. Dole, Post 769

District:

Kenneth B. Marshall, District 10, Post 8053
Lindsey C. Botkin, District 7, Post 10342

Post:

Larry C. Williams, Post 3713
Ralph F. Arvizu, Post 6310
John V. Pletz, Post 7507
Michael K. Ferguson, Post 7968
Eric Gagomiros, Post 9400
John W. MacDuffee, Post 9972
Lindsey C. Botkin, Post 10342

Arkansas

Post:

Roger L. Peterson, Post 4548
James R. Grant, Post 10483

California

District:

James S. Rosa, District 4, Post 1622

Post:

Douglas R. Perkins, Post 1622
Nicolas Godoy, Sr., Post 1732
Steve W. Miller, Post 4084
Stephen H. Milano, Jr., Post 4647
Gregory H. Johnson, Post 5394
James R. Rutan, Post 7041
Howard G. Dunbar, Post 7907
William A. Ward, Post 8615
Gary C. Reason, Post 8762
Ruben C. Ramos, Post 9869
Robert J. Fowler, Post 9934

Colorado

Post:

G. A. Wolusky, Post 7829

Connecticut

Post:

Jason M. Freeto, Post 2046
Timothy R. Mead, Post 7788
Robert E. Bailey, Post 10153

Delaware

Department:

Robert D. Wilkinson, Post 2863

Europe

Department:

Norberto Millet, Jr., Post 9342

District:

James D. Vergott, District 1, Post 27
Peter J. Mascetti, District 3, Post 10658

Post:

Lawrence A. Perry, Post 2566
Mark C. Bostic, Post 8862
Herbert Hall, Post 9342
Daniel Stoner, Post 9534
Rufus Allen, Post 10557
Timothy S. O'Brien, Post 10658
James L. Holliman, Post 10692
Jacob O. Urban, Post 10810

Florida

District:

Leland R. Fair, District 6, Post 3270

Post:

Paul Nigara, Post 1689
Glen F. Tilley, Post 2391
Mark A. Alvarez, Post 3308
Joseph B. Dempsey, Post 4321
Gene E. Barrs, Post 4364
Barry W. Leach, Jr., Post 4493
Frank E. Valora, Post 5690
William X. Hanson, Post 5968
Bruce A. Scheller, Post 6287
Ronald L. Engberg, Post 11367
George L. Johnston, Post 12055

Georgia

Department:

Leonard D. Ott, Post 6330

District:

Edmondson J. Irby, Jr., District 8, Post 4830

Joel L. Willis, District 3, Post 5290

Donnie W. Jones, District 5, Post 10558

Post:

Michael J. Dwyer, Post 649

Jeff Carroll, Post 2667

Carol F. Mellom, Post 2681

Ronald W. Stubbs, Post 3650

William C. Sandberg, Post 3679

Charles A. Dobbins, Post 5080

John A. Veverka, Post 5255

Michael J. O'Steen, Post 5976

Gary W. Nelms, Post 5978

Darrell W. Harp, Post 8385

Donald L. Hughes, Post 9143

Ben M. Bauman, Post 9949

Donnie W. Jones, Post 10558

Terry H. Haynes, Post 12002

Hawaii

Department:

Alfredo Antonio, Post 352

Post:

Kenneth Wiseman, Post 970

Joseph F. Bragg, Post 2875

George H. Kelly, Post 3830

Frederic O. Chang, Post 10276

Idaho

Department:

Kenneth W. Alsterlund, Post 10300

Post:

Glenn M. Nielsen, Post 63

Denny Croner, Post 2738

Dale W. Smith, Post 3646

Jack P. Uptmor, Post 4902

Illinois

District:

Jeffrey G. Hastings, District 14, Post 805

Edmund J. Krupiczowicz, District 19, Post 2801

Post:

Patrick M. Murphy, Post 805

Anthony R. Avers, Post 976

Danny W. Joergensen, Post 1739

Jerry Foreman, Post 1984

Jerry Johnson, Post 2287

Gary L. Stork, Post 2698

Jerry J. Styrsky, Post 2791

Edward H. Oldis, Post 2838

Steven P. Eller, Post 7710

Kansas

District:

Lynn W. Rolf, III, District 1, Post 56

Post:

Lynn W. Rolf, III, Post 56

Mark T. Leisten, Post 6654

John D. Tillitson, Post 7972

Louisiana

Post:

Elvin R. Bass, Post 3337

Mitchell R. Cota, Post 6706

Barry W. McCoy, Post 7287

Maryland

District:

D. Harvey Cunningham, District 10, Post 8185

Post:

Patrick J. McGonigle, Post 2632

D. Harvey Cunningham, Post 8185

H. Steve Mason, Post 8950

Paul B. Everly, Post 10077

Michigan

Post:

Phillip G. Gannia, Post 4659

Phil D. Patterson, Post 12082

Minnesota

Post:

Clint Bucher, Post 7

Chuck B. Quigley, Post 217

Stan Kowalski, Post 363

Mississippi

District:

Charles Purchner, Jr., District 1, Post 2539

Post:

David G. Usry, Post 2434

Peter A. Schwingle, Post 3036

Missouri

Post:

John R. Whyte, Post 3118

(Deceased 6/13/11)

Jeffrey L. Colyer, Post 3838

Thomas W. Mundell, Post 3944

Terry R. Clay, Post 4207

Billy R. Becker, Post 4680

Nancy L. Cowan, Post 5327

Debra L. Anderson, Post 7356

Montana

Department:

Timothy C. Peters, Post 10010

Nevada

Department:

Jerry M. Chamlee, Post 10047

District:

Damon J. Dellinger, District 4, Post 2668

Post:

David R. McNeill, Post 983

John W. Stroud, Post 2313

Post 10047

Herman C. Hagen, Jr., Post 10468

Billie L. Aubry, Post 12093

New Jersey

Post:

Ralph Corno, Jr., Post 132

New Mexico

Department:

Cathy L. Brock, Post 3274

District:

Darrell H. Angel, District 3, Post 10124

Post:

Tyrand M. Teel, Post 5890

Vincent B.J. Lawrence, Post 7686

William O. Robinson, Post 12071

New York

Post:

James J. DeMilo, Post 2064

North Carolina

Post:

Jack M. Campbell, Post 2423

Ronald D. Hughes, Post 9899

William E. Greene, Jr., Post 10630

North Dakota

Department:

Edward Bennett

Ohio

District:

George R. Dountz, District 11, Post 8736

Robert W. Critell, District 3, Post 9936

Post:

Dennis M. Pilny, Post 3345

Benjamin D. Quinn, Post 7883

Oregon

District:

John P. Stanks, District 13, Post 3965

Post:

Val G. Shaul, Post 180

Kenneth E. McEntire, Post 3965

John R. Wrinkle, Post 4108

James R. Mitchell, Post 4273

Thomas G. Laing, Post 9448

Juan M. Palacios, Post 10626

Pennsylvania

Post:

Terry D. Fritz, Sr., Post 477

Jay H. Ledden, Jr., Post 740

Thomas A. Brown, Post 928

Harry J. Earley, Post 1536
Charles M. Boyle, Post 5958
LaVerne C. Campbell, Post 6345
Eugene L. Myers, Post 8951
Thomas E. Gordon, Post 9639

South Carolina

Department:

Ronald P. Bullock, Post 9539

District:

Donald S. Turner, District 8, Post 11252

Post:

Donald H. Vinsack, Post 2889
Edward G. Stefanak, Jr., Post 3447
Dentist B. Harvin, Post 6500
James E. Butler, Jr., Post 6734
David E. Morehead, Post 9539
Dennis W. Hutton, Post 10804

South Dakota

Post:

Richard W. Dieter, Post 3442

Tennessee

Department:

Charles K. Miller, Post 5156

District:

Charles A. Blair, District 1, Post 2108
Alphonse J. Castonguay, District 7, Post 4969
Gary C. Laymance, District 2, Post 12051

Post:

John H. Croteau, Post 1289
Robert L. Lucas, Post 1291
Jackie D. Adams, Post 1294
Phillip L. Duncan, Post 1733
Curtis B. Hudson, Post 3380
David J. Taylor, Post 4893
James E. Stafford, Post 4969
Dale E. Long, Jr., Post 4973
Hundley L. Ford, Sr., Post 5109
William D. Smith, Post 7175
John L. Comer, Post 8422
Larry C. Helser, Post 11160

Texas

District:

Larry E. Konarik, District 28, Post 8587
Jose Vargas, Jr., District 10, Post 9173
Bruce W. Alford, District 20, Post 9174

Post:

Angel Vasquez, Jr., Post 76
Gilbert R. Uriegas, Post 1533
Willie S. Greer, Jr., Post 2438
Robert D. Scales, Post 2451
Allen R. Freeman, Post 3892
Tashawnya M. McCullough, Post 4676

James W. Van Rite, Post 4695
James W. Pratt, Post 5076
William E. Cadola, Jr., Post 6008
Charles L. Swain, Jr., Post 6115
Ralph Rodriguez, Jr., Post 6873
Paul Wilbanks, Post 7103
Joseph H. McDaniel, Post 7873
Glenn J. James, Post 8551
Janis C. Arteaga, Post 8587
Marvin L. Buck, Jr., Post 8787
John A. Piersol, Post 8904
Evart J. Kennedy, Jr., Post 8925
George White, Post 9078
Leonard A. Layman, Post 9174
Michael A. Mastrangelo, Post 9182
Riley Odom, Post 10454
Carlos A. Vela, Post 12041
James T. Rodgers, Post 12075

Utah

Post:

Norman I. Nelson, Post 1695
Warren J. Johnson, Post 6395
Post 7398
Matthew J. Keogh, Post 10900

Virginia

District:

Richard W. Yancey, District 10, Post 7327

Post:

William M. Jones, Post 609
Venner F. Milewski, Post 824
Max F.X. Gutierrez, Jr., Post 1177
Sterling J. Moninghoff, II, Post 1503
William M. Meade, Post 1994
Charles T. Ferguson, Post 2239
Nelson Betancourt, Post 3150
Harold M. Schupska, Post 3160
Herbert H. Johnson, Post 4667
Robert P. Clinebell, Post 4809
David B. Meyers, Post 5412
Gary M. Kelch, Post 7327
Daniel D. Boyer, Post 7726
Michael P. Boehme, Post 9808
Curtis S. Hunter, Post 9835

Wyoming

Department:

H.H. "Buck" King, Jr., Post 10969

Post:

Charles F. Sutter, Post 4797

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: At this time, we will recess until 1:30 o'clock p.m.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:25 o'clock p.m., to reconvene at 1:30 o'clock p.m.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION
MONDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 29, 2011

(The First Business Session of the 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars United States, was called to order in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, at 1:30 o'clock p.m., by Commander-in-Chief Eubank.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We will now call the delegates into session. I will now request that Betty Gripp give us the initial Credentials Report.

REPORT OF CONVENTION CREDENTIALS

COMRADE BETTY GRIPP (Post 10188 - Arizona): My name is Betty M. Gripp, a delegate from Arizona Post 10188. Good afternoon, Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Delegates to the 112th National Convention:

At the close of business yesterday, August 28th, 2011, the total delegates registered, the credentials are 8,587. Total Department Commanders, 35. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 25. Total National Officers, 38. The grand total is 8,685.

Commander-in-Chief, that is my report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Betty.

The report of the Convention Rules, Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Commander-in-Chief, Delegates, Comrades, I am Thomas Pouliot, Chairman of the Convention Rules Committee. These Convention Rules govern the action of this convention.

Your Committee met Sunday, August 28, 2011, and agreed on the following recommended rules, which are respectfully submitted for your consideration.

1. That, in accordance and conjunction with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, and with any 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 or her 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 not to exceed five minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the convention present; provided, that the chairmen of Convention committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees. In the event of controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion which will curtail further debate without affording the maker of the motion or a member of the particular group presenting the

resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.

4. All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander or, if absent, 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. Tuesday, August 30, 2011, 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, shall initially 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 may 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. No resolution will be considered on the expenditure or appropriation of organizational funds.

8. The Convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization, or requesting us to join with any other organization in sponsoring legislation not expressly proposed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

9. No person not a duly registered delegate or member of the National Convention shall participate in debate, directly or indirectly, on any subject before the Convention.

10. Unit rule of voting is not allowed.

My Vice-Chairman, Clifford G. Olson, will read the remaining rules.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OLSON: I am Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford Olson, Co-Chairman.

11. Voting strength shall be determined by those delegates registered as of the close of the credential registration booth the previous day and as reported to the National Convention. 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 Commanders 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, 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. In accordance with Section 621 of the National By-Laws, voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by ten registered 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. The time allocated to encompass all seconding speeches shall be limited to four minutes. Nomination and election of National Officers will be held according to the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, and Section 617 of the National Manual of Procedure.

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.

Those are the proposed rules.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move the adoption of these recommended Convention Rules.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have heard the motion on the floor that has been duly seconded. Any questions? All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". It is so ordered.

Next is the report of the Committee on the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. Larry Rivers will be reporting for the Committee.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY RIVERS: Thank very much, Commander-in-Chief. The Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual met yesterday afternoon and reviewed and took action on all that was presented to the Committee.

At this time I would like to read the Proposed Amendments recommended for approval, and what I will do is I will read these and then we will make a motion to accept the report of the Committee as to the motion's required approval.

As I read these, if you have one that we recommend for approval that you would like to have set aside for discussion, then get to the microphone, and after we have read the entire list and the motion on the floor, you will have a motion to set aside any of those recommended for approval that you want to discuss.

After that, we will read the ones for rejection. The way I understand the procedure we will use, it will require, then, a motion to adopt in order to bring that on the floor, otherwise, they stand as rejected per recommendation of the Committee.

When we met yesterday, with us in addition to the members of the

Committee, were also the Vice-Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Glen Gardner, Jr., members of the National By-Laws Study Group, which you see behind us here, and also the members of the Adjutant General's staff headed up by Director Kevin Jones.

The Committee recommends approval, and if you have this little booklet, I ask that you follow along as we read, and I will try to move fairly slowly. You will also see as we begin discussing some of the "B" proposals will also match with some of the "M" proposals, and we took those, if they were ones that applied to each other together. So, when you ask that a certain By-law recommendation be set aside, you may also have a Manual portion set aside as well, but we will get into those as we go along.

The Committee recommends for approval B-1, M-1, B-2, B-5, B-6, B-7, B-8, B-9, B-11, M-9, B-12, B-13, M-12, M-13, B-17, B-18, B-19, B-20, M-14, B-21, B-22, B-23, B-24, B-25 and M-15.

Commander-in-Chief, I move for the adoption of the "B" and "M" amendments just read on the floor.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GLEN GARDNER: I am Glen Gardner, a delegate from VFW Post 3359, Garland, Texas. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion made and a second.

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief and a delegate from Post 144 in Boston, Massachusetts. I ask that B-21 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: B-21 is set aside.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE MIKE MUSGROVE (Post 2350 – Nevada): I would like B-22 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: B-22 is set aside.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Please set aside B-1 and B-21.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: B-1 is set aside. B-21 has already been set aside.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): B-23. I am sorry.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: B-23 is set aside.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE KEVIN JONES (Post 7356 – Missouri): I would ask that we withdraw M-15 for consideration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Are you asking it to be set aside?

COMRADE KEVIN JONES (Post 7356 – Missouri): Set aside to be withdrawn, yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOSEPH ORLANDO (Post 5941 – New Jersey): I am Joseph Orlando, a delegate from the State of New Jersey, Post 5941. I ask to be set aside B-1, B-24 and M-15.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Anything else to be set aside? On the ones that were not set aside, we are going to adopt the ones that were recommended by the Committee and not the ones that were set aside. The motion was made and seconded. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. We are now open for discussion.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. The first that was asked to be set aside was B-1. I am not going to read all of the verbiage in these things, because I think most of you have it in your possession, the document where you can read it. What I would like to do, if it is okay with the body, I will read you our rationale and the reasons that we recommended approval.

We recommended it for approval, based on the recommendations of the National Organization. This By-law change basically sets into effect that your dues will become due one year from the date you pay them, and that will make you have a full year dues. If you pay them on June 15th, they don't come due until June 15th of the next year. It was asked that it be set aside. There is a motion and a second on the floor to adopt it. We are open for discussion, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I recognize the comrade at Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): I am against this proposal. I don't understand it. When we asked the National about specifics of this, there were not clear answers. One of the things I have asked the Membership Department, here at the convention, was why can we not prorate dues so someone does not pay for the full year the first year? And if it will have five months before the end of the VFW year, they pay five months of their dues. That way we can still keep the incentive programs, which I think if we adopt this we will be affected, and I believe it will harm our membership programs.

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

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE, JR. (Post 4084 – California): There are a couple of things I have heard on the side against this argument. The first thing is the hat, the All American hat and the incentive programs. Everybody in this room will ask themselves the question, what is our actual mission if not to get a hat? The incentive comes from our leadership up there to recognize outstanding service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars by getting that membership.

As a ship's captain or a Post Commander, I did a lot of Quartermaster work last year. I was our membership coordinator. It would be easier for me to delegate to my officers, five or six people a month to specifically go after, because, let's face it, our retention is what is suffering. It is not the new members.

Yes, we can always improve that, but the retention is where most of the issues are coming from. If we divide that 163-member deficit at the beginning of the year up to that 12 months, we can specifically target these people and get them back into our Post to do what they need to do. Membership is the number one thing, not the hat. Thank you, Chief.

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

COMRADE PATRICK LOVE (Post 8203 – Florida): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Pat Love, Post 8203, North Port, Florida. I stand to reject this motion for a couple of reasons. One, this is the Quartermaster's nightmare. It might be easier on the National Organization and on companies that do this stuff. You know, our Quartermasters work right now really, really hard to get processed all of this stuff.

The time that is allotted to us, this is a volunteer organization, it is really tough to put the amount of time in that the actual Quartermaster does.

Number two, he said the hat doesn't matter. Well, I will tell you it does

matter. It makes the Post proud when they walk in that community and they see those hats. They are All State hats, All American hats, and it makes a difference.

So, if we have a percentage that we base our membership on in June, and our All Americans and All States in May, the hard part is we might be 100 percent in January and come April and May we might only be 80 percent. It makes a big difference. So, I stand opposed to the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Recognizing Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE HERBERT MULLEN (Post 286 – Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Herb Mullen, Post 286, Wabash, Indiana. I am very much opposed to this motion. I believe it is going to put a tremendous burden on the Quartermasters of the Posts. My experience over the last few years of being directly involved in recruiting is that during this six-month window, which we currently have to get the following year's recruits resigned, that out of the approximately 70 people I believe we have who are annual members in my Post, probably 15 or 20 of them like to wait until the last minute, like in December, before they will send their dues in or even pay their dues across the bar, or when someone calls on them.

If we adopt this motion, this is going to, I think in my feelings, cause a tremendous burden on the Quartermaster and the Post recruiters because they are going to have a lot of members out there who will just continue to dawdle, and each month we are going to have different ones who are going to be late.

Are we going to reinstate them or what are we going to do? I just feel this is a very poor way of doing things. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

I am recognizing Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 335 – New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, a delegate from Post 335, Cranford, New Jersey. As I listened to the debate yesterday at the By-law meeting, I understand that one of the reasons for this was because people signed up in May and June, and so forth, were getting first dues notices right after they signed up. That is a simple fix. Suppress the first dues notice to anyone signed up after April 30th. It will make the Quartermaster's job easier and make things easier on the National Headquarters. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Recognizing Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): I am Bobby Price, the other one from California, Department Commander, Post 2111. I stand for this motion. Here are a couple of things that I want to mention. One, I keep hearing the nightmare on the Quartermasters. I have been a Quartermaster, I have been a Post Commander, and the bottom line is in 2011 I think that the National Informational Technology System does most of the work, and all the Quartermaster needs to do is to print out whatever needs to be printed out for the membership. It is there.

Second of all, I think people are confused with the continuous members who are already continuous members. They will remain the same, because their birthday is now December 31st, and the new ones will be — I call them the birthday, but on their new membership date. I hate to say it, but if we reserved it about eight years ago, and it turned out to be the greatest thing in the world, because it stopped the consternation that our Past Commander-in-Chief Senk just mentioned. We don't need to suppress anything; we need to move on with technology. It is easier to do it that

way. Within five or six years they will all be consistent anyway, and let's do it and get on with business.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN WASYLIK (Post 2529 – Ohio): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John Wasylik, Post 2529, Sandusky, Ohio, a man who was a Quartermaster for 25 years.

You are driving the Quartermasters crazy already. They are the hardest-working bunch that you have in this organization, bar none, and you want to make it tougher on them.

Secondly, I joined this organization 50 years ago. Ohio had a tremendous number, 50,000 members. Jim Connelly, Dick Russ and I turned that around. We had competition. Those of you that have competition know that the hat is not just the idea, it is the competition of getting the hat over the other comrade. No, we don't want to demean anybody. But we want to get some energy back into this organization, and I am not criticizing anyone specifically, but we have no real competition anymore. We have twice as many people as we had when I started.

I am opposed to this amendment, and I think it will demean the emphasis on competition. It is going to make it tougher for the Quartermasters and it will be derogatory and demeaning to the organization. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MATT CLAUSSEN (Post 2378 – Illinois): Good afternoon. I am Matt Claussen, a delegate from Post 2378, Berwyn, Illinois. Comrades, this is very simple. This By-law change is to make things fair. It is two different things. It is going to make sure that the members paying their dues, they are getting a full year's dues. Right now we are cheating them out of that fact.

The second thing that you have to take into consideration is that we at National Headquarters, do suppress that list when it goes out in June. That first dues notice, if they come in after April 30th, they don't get a dues notice.

When they get the one in September, they still don't have an understanding on why they get a dues notice so quickly. They say I have been a member of the organization for four or five months. Think about that. That is what we need to change. We are losing our members as annual members rotating over every five to six years. Think about this. This past year we lost 83,000 annual members and they didn't all die. They walked out the back door, and this is part of our problem because we are cheating them out of their dues. Thank you.

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

COMRADE MIKE MUSGROVE (Post 2350 – Nevada): Commander-in-Chief, I am Mike Musgrove, a delegate from Post 2350, Elko, Nevada. I rise in favor of this By-law change. The burden and the problem will all be in our IT Department and not with our Quartermasters. Our people in Kansas City are going to have to keep track of when these guys pay their dues and when their dues notices go out.

As the Adjutant General pointed out yesterday, it doesn't cost any more to send out 500,000 dues notices in July than it does to send out dues notices every month. I believe that our members, especially our younger members who are doing annual right now, that are searching to see if they really want to belong to our organization, should have a year. I still believe

the burden will be on the IT Department and National more than it will be on the Posts and the Quartermasters. Thank you, sir.

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

COMRADE PETE NICHOLSEN (Post 10127 – Florida): Pete NicholSEN, Post 10127, Florida. Comrades, it is time to level the playing field. You give a member, a prospective member, dues for 12 months, otherwise we are going to have people handing them, putting them in the drawer and saying we will give you 18 months, we will just hold them up.

As far as Quartermasters' disasters or nightmares, I think it was about 12 or 14 years ago we went to direct dues. The Quartermaster doesn't have to write a check for each one that he sends in. This is the 21st century. You can call the Membership Director in Kansas City, and they will answer your question within an hour. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHARLES SIMONS (Post 1693 – Indiana): I am Chuck Simons, Post 1693, Department of Indiana, Commander also. I rise in opposition to this, and based on one thing and one thing only. All of our membership people are volunteers. If we have to have them 12 months a year, 360 days a year doing membership, we lose our volunteers. We can do what we do best by leaving this system alone. Thank you.

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

COMRADE STEVE JACOBS (Post 9415 – California): I am in favor of this resolution, and I have been a Quartermaster for over 20 years. Since we went to direct dues, that has cut off a lot, and I was the Department Commander when they started it in California.

Another thing is, nobody is understanding. Yes, the Quartermaster will have to send that first dues in. I will tell you at my Post, I don't see 90 percent of the dues anymore. They go directly to National. So, there is no nightmare for a Quartermaster. And I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion to call for the question. Is there a second?

COMRADE STEPHEN GIBBS (Post 10047 – Nevada): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You will have to come to the microphone to be recognized.

COMRADE STEPHEN GIBBS (Post 10047 – Nevada): I am Stephen Gibbs, Post 10047, Las Vegas, Nevada. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The second has been made. It will take a two-thirds vote to stop the debate. I will call for the question. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

Now, we will move to adopt B-1. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The next one that was asked to be set aside was B-21. We are now moving to discussion of B-21.

B-21 deals with the VFW Political Action Committee.

The approved amendment would remove the VFW Political Action Committee and take it out of existence.

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

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, on B-1, I doubt the vote. Can we have a roll call, please?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have moved on.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): I ran to the microphone, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I think we ought to have an opportunity to have a roll call and make sure.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have to have ten states to get behind that mike to open it back up.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): I move for a roll call vote. I am from the Department of Maine. That is one.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: What state?

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Department of Maine, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We need nine more. Is there anybody in line?

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 355 – New Jersey): I also move for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is two.

COMRADE RON TALLMAN (Post 790 – Vermont): I am Ron Tallman, VFW Post 790, Department Commander. I ask for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is three.

COMRADE BILLY BECKER (Post 4680 – Missouri): I say we need a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is four. What department were you from?

COMRADE BILLY BECKER (Post 4680 – Missouri): Missouri.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHARLES SIMONS (Post 1693 – Indiana): I am Department Commander of Indiana. I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Seeing no more at the microphone, it is defeated. We are moving on.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Chief. We will now go to B-21, which is the By-law amendment that would effectively remove the VFW Political Action Committee as a Committee of the VFW.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion is on the floor and it is open for discussion.

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA (Post 144 – Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Paul Spera, a Past Commander-in-Chief and a delegate from Post 144 in Boston, Massachusetts. I rise in opposition to this By-law change. I truly believe that we are making a mistake. We are changing the By-law based on false information and false premise, and I believe that what we need is more activity by our organization or by the members of our organization in the political process, not less.

Everybody that follows the news understands that it is not going to be very much longer before the Congress of the United States has to deal with a severe budget shortfall, and those of us who have been involved in politics and in veterans issues understand that the first two places that politicians look when they need money is the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

So, for us to take a tool away from our organization that makes the members of Congress accountable for their actions, I believe is a mistake.

I said earlier that I believe that the decision was made with errone-

ous information. You know what happened was that we got inundated in National Headquarters with e-mails and phone calls and faxes of outraged people out there complaining, couldn't understand why we did what we did.

The job of the Political Action Committee, from its very beginning, was only to judge sitting members of Congress, to take a look at how your Congressmen and your Senators voted on veterans' issues and on national defense. That is the job that we had. That is the job that we did.

Now, when I say "erroneous information", I think the conclusion may have been what was erroneous. I heard because of the actions of the Political Action Committee we were going to lose countless members from our organization, we were going to take a huge hit. And I would venture to guess it was either the Quartermaster General or the Adjutant General who made the comment at least one time since we got here that we are losing on an average of 40,000 members a year from our organization, and bemoaned the fact that our organization is dwindling in size.

Well, that is not the fault of the Political Action Committee. If we are losing membership in our organization, we need to look to find out where. Don't use the PAC as a scapegoat, or don't use the loss of membership as an excuse to get rid of the PAC.

A year ago, we sat in the hall at our convention and our Commander-in-Chief gave us marching orders. We were going to fix things, we were going to go out there and we were going to get muddy and we were going to get bloody. We were going to fight for what was right. That is what the PAC was doing. We were fighting for you. We were fighting for all of those who wear the uniform today. We were fighting for that in the VA hospitals.

We hired a consultant to take a look at what we should be looking at. We followed the exact voting record for the last two years for Congress and the last six years for the Senate, and there are people that disagreed with decisions that we made. Well, if everybody had agreed with us, we wouldn't be doing our job. You have got Democrats that don't like it when we name Republicans, and you have got Republicans when we name Democrats.

We don't care what they are. We only care how they vote for us. That is our job. It should be your job, too.

We never told anybody how to vote. What we told you is while you are trying to figure out who the best candidate is, and you are listening to your union and you may be listening to your church and you may be listening to your neighbors; remember that those Congressmen and Senators have the fate of America's heroes in their hands.

I have heard the Executive Director of the Washington office come to the Eastern States Conference, and I dare say you have heard it, too. Do you have any idea why over the last two to six years why we have the increase in the VA budget? We wanted a GI Bill for the 21st century. The Congressmen that we endorsed are the ones that voted for that and gave it to us. We wanted advanced funding for the VA. The Congressmen we endorsed and the Senators we endorsed, they gave it to us. It didn't happen by itself, they voted for it.

My question at the Eastern States Conference, at our fall meeting, was what is it you have to do as a Congressman or Senator before the Veterans of Foreign Wars Political Action Committee stands up and says thank you? Thank you for giving us what we need. Thank you for giving the health care

to those veterans who need it. Thank you for taking care of the quality of life for America's heroes, for those on active duty. That's all we did.

To throw it out would be a mistake. I think in the years to come we are going to need the Political Action Committee and every tool at our disposal to track the actions of Congress to ensure that they are taking care of America's veterans and active duty personnel.

You know, we only had one instance, and the only one I am going to mention was in California. That is the one that really got me going, because I heard over and over about how the Iraqi veterans and the Afghanistan veterans were going to be so mad because we recommended and endorsed Barbara Boxer based on her record. Everybody excoriated us for that.

Then, the amazing thing was the Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America organization issued their report to us and gave her an "A". They said she was doing wonderful things for Iraqi veterans.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Past Commander-in-Chief, be aware of your time. We need to wrap it up.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: How much more time?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is probably over.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: I will just close by simply asking you to consider the defeat of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Recognizing Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): I also rise in opposition to this By-law amendment. As Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief Spera said, based on the endorsement of three people who are "ultra liberal", I don't get it. Now, anybody in New Jersey knows my politics. I sit to the right of these people. These liberal people are voting on behalf of veterans' legislation and they are helping us.

For years, the Political Action Committee of the VFW has struggled to build a base for the legislation. We have been doing a good job. We have been doing a darn good job. We were ranked No. 18 in the nation as a Political Action Committee. Your actions in the room, removing this Committee, has usurped the authority of this convention floor. It has effectively caused a good man, one of the best legislative directors we have ever had, and I appointed him, Mike Wysong, who later came down to Washington to work for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He doesn't want to be bothered with the organization anymore. I say we need the PAC; we need the PAC.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That's your opinion.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): That is my opinion. I move to defeat this amendment. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Recognizing Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GILBERT HERNANDEZ (Post 2350 – Nevada): I rise in favor of this. As you know, Nevada is one of the ones that took a brunt on this, and if you know our state and the members that are within that state, we have a big concern. We can beat it to death, one way or the other, but the Political Action Committee does not do their job.

Once they don't do their job and it gets out of hand, or like it did this year at an election time, then we have got to do something about it. The best way to do it, and we followed it up with letters, and I am not the only one here that has that feeling, I am sure there will be a lot when we take this vote. It is just not worth it.

Any time you have to go there and meet with a Senator that is now a Senator, and he is a veteran and a Post member, and you have got to

apologize for this VFW organization not supporting him, that is something else. Then you have another one that believes he won because the VFW endorsed him. That is how it came across.

Whether we like to hear that or not, whether that was a misunderstanding or not, that is the way it came across. So, I am in favor of this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Recognizing Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DOTTIE MARSH (Post 12093 – Nevada): I support this amendment and the reason is as a major recruiting drive during this process in Nevada, and as my colleague said we have severe problems. People my age and younger are very apolitical and they don't want to hear that we supported one candidate over another. They want to hear that we supported issues, that we worked on veterans' issues and funding towards those versus saying any one candidate is better than anyone else.

Even though the PAC is separate from the VFW, in our state they said the VFW represented them. I believe that is an issue that we need to resolve.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BOBBY COX (Post 2715 – Kansas): I stand in favor of this amendment, approval of this amendment, for the simple reason we hear all the time since we have been here and have for the last year we need to move forward with our technology. Back in the years past, it was a good tool. I feel like they have already exceeded their usage. I also feel like our legislative representative, Mr. Wallace, if I may, does a fine job in Washington, D.C., representing us.

As far as I am concerned, that should be our Political Action Committee. I stand in favor of this amendment. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

Recognizing Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WILLIAM BACKES (Post 8320 – Wisconsin): As a Past State Commander in 2004-'05, Commander-in-Chief, I believe that we should approve this because of the fact when I was State Commander, the PAC would ask me what my recommendations were and they didn't listen. We didn't want certain people endorsed and they endorsed them anyhow. They don't listen to the membership. We need to disband the PAC program. Thank you.

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

COMRADE ALLEN KOCHENDERFER (Post 10406 – Wisconsin): I stand in the strongest possible way in favor of maintaining the PAC. For 40 years, I have looked forward to receiving my National Rifle Association publication on the appropriate month that had a clean, simple scorecard or report card of every candidate on the respective ballot, the incumbents and challengers, both.

Yes, we have had PAC troubles, but even in this electronic world today, I cannot find, and I challenge anyone to find, an accurate voting record of all of our national legislators. The PAC can keep tally on this and simply state the report card of how they have served or not served the veterans. A PAC properly guided by the Chief and the other by-laws that concern them is a necessary information tool for us to be informed. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBBIE (Post 4659 – Michigan): I rise in favor of the defeat of this By-law amendment. I have been over the years a very strong advocate of the PAC. I have always thought you had to have the

PAC. I guess way down deep I still do think you have to have a PAC. But, Comrade Commander and delegates, I believe that the PAC Committee dropped the ball on this one.

I know you, Commander, you know when, we the National Council, received that list, and it was while we were at the Council meeting. It was before anybody received this list, anybody outside the Committee, as far as I know. I guess Paul Spera can correct me if I am wrong, that was published through the magazine before anybody knew about it.

The Departments had no opportunity whatsoever to have a name removed from that list as they did in the past, you know, through written direction from the Department or to have another name placed on the list again through written action of the Department.

I just believe if we stand for the Committee, and I truly believe the Committee really, really dropped the ball on this, but if we stand for that, then I don't know what we are going to have the next time.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Bill, can you clarify? Are you for dissolving the PAC?

COMRADE WILLIAM DOBBIE (Post 4659 – Michigan): I am for dissolving the PAC.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ALLEN KUCHINSKY (Post 7686 – New Mexico): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am in favor of this amendment for the simple reason that we did lose lots of members because of the PAC's decisions. I know personally I lost five friends of mine who would not renew their membership because of the PAC's decision. I tried to sign up people that refused because of the PAC's decision. So, anyone that thinks that it did not affect our membership, they need to check the records. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 2, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAMILTON: I rise in favor of doing away with the Political Action Committee. I can tell you this: It is a divisive issue. It divides the VFW. It divides our organization. We can say what we want to in a perfect world we can look at how somebody voted and say we are not going to vote whether he is a Democrat or a Republican, male, female, black or white, Jew, Gentile.

Our organization doesn't work that way, guys and gals. It just does not work that way. It is a divisive situation for us. Please, here is who speaks for us in Washington, D.C. It is the Washington office. It is the Commander-in-Chief who we give the marching orders to.

To my good comrade Paul Spera, I respect the job you have done and tried to do, but I have been active in this organization for a lot of years as many of you have. I remember the debate when we put this in, in 1979, and we have been debating it ever since.

We reinvent the wheel about every two or three years. We have a new set of marching orders, and a new set of guidelines, a new directive. We used to do presidential elections, and we couldn't stand the heat for that. We got out of that. We can't endorse in primaries. So, we get in after the fact half the time. It is just a no-win situation. We should be dealing with the issues, and to my good comrade that says the Political Action Committee can put the word out, we can put the voting records out, we don't have to take a position on what you should do.

The National magazine can put out the voting records. E-mails out of the Washington office can put out the voting records, and guess what, I am a dumb fat Marine and I can make up my own mind. So, I urge you, let's quit fighting this battle and let's fight a more serious battle. Let's get on the membership and programs, let's let the Washington office, who have great people there, Bob Wallace and his people who do a wonderful job.

Let's take that \$300,000 or \$400,000 that we raised each year and let's funnel it towards Veterans Service and Veterans Service legislation. That is why we are here.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I call for the question.

PARLIAMENTARIAN "FRITZ" MIHELICIC: For principles of fairness, it is not right to have your say and then say I want to stop debate. So, another person can make that motion.

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

COMRADE WILLIAM THOMSON (Post 6192 – New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I stand in opposition to the amendment to the By-laws, and I respect the debate on the other side of the issue. I certainly understand the debate on the other side of the issue. I am someone who has lobbied professionally for 20-some years. Although I reside in New Jersey, my telephone cell number is still at the 202 area.

The reason why we have got to this place, where we are today, is that there were a number of calls that were made to the Kansas City office saying that they were against the PAC endorsements, and that they were going to tear up their membership cards. I would tell those that, although I have a political persuasion like probably all of us in this room, when I put this hat on to go lobby, I lobby for veterans, not for donkeys or elephants.

I was a service member before I was old enough to vote. I was a veteran before I was old enough to vote. Veterans are first and foremost when I go and lobby.

When I lobby, the only issue I care about is whether a Senator or Congress person is in our favor. I have been in this business long enough to understand there are no isolated incidences in politics. The process is one of connecting the dots.

There are two different things. One is called grassroots, whether it is a grassroots uprising, which is a populous by people who are overwhelming in groundswell support for or against an issue. But there is also something new that has come in politics in the last ten years or so, which is called artificial turf. Because of technology, you can create something that looks like grassroots support through e-mails and through telephone calls, or Twitters, Facebooks, or whatever the case may be to make it look like there is a greater deal of people out there in support or against an issue.

I am not so sure that those 500 or 600 calls that came to Kansas City, whether they were genuine or not, or they were some part of something that was artificial turf. When you connect the dots, after the VFW pulled the endorsements of the PAC, it was the Tea Party that was quick to get their talking points out there to say, see, they don't have the endorsement anymore.

Now, we talk about some of the people that had the endorsements. One of them was the Senator from Nevada.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You are getting into politics now.

COMRADE WILLIAM THOMSON (Post 6192 – New Jersey): No, let me complete the circle.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: No, you are getting into politics.

COMRADE WILLIAM THOMSON (Post 6192 – New Jersey): I am not getting into politics. I am way outside the realm of politics, Commander-in-Chief. I am talking about a process.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You are now out of order.

Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, a Past Commander-in-Chief and a delegate from Post 144 in Boston. I believe firmly in the position that I have held and I will continue to believe in that position. But I believe more strongly in this organization. I would never, ever be a party to anything that would cause divisiveness, rancor or anger inside this organization.

With that in mind, I make a motion to call for the question and I have asked and I will tell you now I had asked several people after the vote was taken to come to the microphone and ask for a roll call vote. At this time, I am asking that they not do that. It is clear to me that the delegates at this convention have made up their mind. I respect that.

So, Comrade Commander, I move the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We need a second.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: All in favor, and we need a two-thirds vote, will signify by saying "aye"; opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

We are now going to vote on the resolution itself. Let me emphasize that a "yes" vote will dissolve the PAC. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you. It has been requested that B-22, B-23 and B-24 be set aside. Since these all refer to the same section of the By-laws that have to do with the same premise of the By-laws, we will take them as a group.

Basically, what it does is it allows for the restructuring of the National Council of Administration to provide that every Department within this organization would have a member on the National Council of Administration to help govern this organization between conventions.

As recommended by the By-Law Study Group, this was approved by the Committee.

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

COMRADE ROY MEARES (Post 10400 – North Carolina): Commander-in-Chief, I am Roy Meares from North Carolina, and currently on the National Council. I stand in opposition to this motion. First of all, increasing from 28 to 54, I am told that we can afford that, but I don't think we can. There is nothing wrong with the system now. Four years is great, but having some other issues with that, I stand in opposition to it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN SENK (Post 335 – New Jersey): I sat through the National Council of Administration meeting on Saturday. I listened to the Quartermaster General tell us that in a few years we are going to be broke. Yet, we see a By-law before us to increase the National Council members from 28 to 54.

Where do the dollars come from? You are going to bring them to four meetings anyway, and there is no operations going to cut it, and we are going to spend three times as much money to bring them into Washington, two conferences and a Washington Conference, and the National Conven-

tion plus all the other travel. I can't see the wisdom in doing that. I am not sure who said it now, but if you want to screw something up appoint a bigger committee.

Commander-in-Chief, I urge everyone to vote against this resolution.

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

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am "Gunner" Kent, a delegate from Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona. I rise to support this for the following reasons:

First of all, it is going to increase the Council, that's true. But what it does is it gives every Department a representation on the Council, and to my esteemed former Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, if it was not cost neutral, the Quartermaster General would not let us propose it, nor would I as the Adjutant General get up in support of it.

By not having the Council members as they are today, I don't have to pay for a Council member to go from the Pacific Areas to Alaska, or to Hawaii, or to Panama. I don't have to pay for a Council member to go from Europe to Delaware or Maryland. I don't have to pay for a Council member to go from one state to another state, because they are all going to be in one state.

As far as the travel, there is going to be a reduction of travel that Council members are going to be paid for.

The upcoming Commander-in-Chief decided the Council members and a lot of other people will not be paid to go to the Homecoming.

This gives the Department representation on the Council in between conventions.

The Council makes the decisions on how this organization is run between conventions. It seems as a no-brainer, as my Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief said, this old dumb Marine would like to have my own representation on a Council than have to worry about someone else representing me. I strongly urge the members of this convention to support this realignment of the Council of Administration. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

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

COMRADE MIKE MUSGRAVE (Post 2350 – Nevada): I rise in opposition to B-22. The voting strength of the Council should be in comparison to the Senate. If you have a representative on that Council, that representative should have one vote. That representative at a Council meeting is casting his own or her own vote; he is not casting necessarily the will of the Department.

At this time I may not be casting the will of my Departments when I am voting at a Council meeting. But they have to trust me to do that. I think that they should be able to trust me to do that one on one, not because they had more membership than another state. I think you ought to bring your population to a vote on the floor and we should have one man and one vote on the Council of Administration.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DONALD SMITH (Post 9669 – Colorado): I rise and oppose these amendments for the following reasons:

One was just expanded on by "Gunner" Kent. The Western Conference, we have an area of Alaska, Hawaii, Pacific and the Caribbean. The last time I looked at a map, the Caribbean is a hell of a lot closer to Florida than it is

to Alaska. Why not realign some of these?

We are presently involved — our District is Council 13, Kansas and Colorado. It works very well for us. Our Council member from Kansas comes to visit us, speaks to us about National issues. We get a consensus and we tell him what we want. He does what we ask.

Where it is Colorado's term, they go back and forth and they get a consensus altogether. The system that we have now is not broken. I don't know who has decided that it is broken. I would like to see financial papers put out that this change is going to save National funds. I firmly believe that eventually, maybe within the next year or two, National is going to come back and say each Department, you pay for this guy. That's what is going to happen. I again oppose this motion.

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

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): Right now I rise neutral. I have heard all this other discussion out here about the cost to the National Organization, and having been through Comrade Maher's speeches, I understand that he would never let anything come forward that would cost the National Organization any money.

We have the laws of unintended consequences, but I want to know about the laws of unmentioned things. To say the money for the National Organization, the questions that are coming from my constituents are, what is the cost to the Departments?

Such rumors as the Council member will not be paid to travel to the C-of-A's in each state. Now, I am helping you to help me do away with the rumor mill. I am hearing that, which means it will cost the Departments more money, and that is a good way to save money, shift it on to the Departments from the National Office.

These are the things we need to know -- the nuts and bolts of. I believe you are probably on line with what you want to do, but we need to know the whole nut. If the Adjutant General wants to tell us, that is fine, or if the Quartermaster General wants to clear those up, we will probably go ahead and go for it, sir.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: I will be glad to clear it up. I will clear it up as I know it. If there is anything I miss, you can let me know. Right now, Comrades, the Council of Administration, the way it is set up, if I have a member, except for the seven State Departments where the Council members travel within their own Department, for the Departments that are doubled up or tripled up or quadrupled up, the Council members basically can go in there twice per year and once as a National rep if so assigned, or as otherwise assigned by the Commander-in-Chief.

So, in other words, as the comrade stated, Panama is a great ways away, but it also costs money to fly from Florida to Panama. So, you have got a thing there also.

Anyway, under the new proposal, and some of these Departments' Council members get paid eight or nine or ten times on trips. Under the new proposal, there will be one Council member for each Department. They will be paid for one meeting in their Departments per year.

They will be assigned to a Department as a National rep if requested by the Department Commander, and they will be paid for that trip. They will be paid for the National Convention, the Washington Conference, and they will be paid to go into Kansas City.

When their Commander-in-Chief is the Commander-in-Chief from their

conference, they would then go with the Commander-in-Chief on the membership trip. So, it would be one trip per four years. The basic reasoning for all of this, comrades, is very, very simple. We are a multi-million dollar organization that now changes its Board of Directors by 50 percent every year. Half of our Board of Directors goes off every year.

The Quartermaster General's Budget Committee, 50 percent on that Committee is brand new. I am sure you have heard Council member after Council member at Council meetings say my first year was an experience because I didn't have any idea about what the Council was. The second year I learned what was going on, and then I was gone.

Comrades, that is no way to run an organization like the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Will there be less travel for the Council members? Yes, there will be less travel, paid travel for the Council member. But you don't have to get paid to go to everything in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I have spent many, many times in Arizona going to meetings, and I never got a dime for it, and I didn't get elected to an office to get a dime to go to a meeting. I guess my biggest problem with this whole thing is nobody has told me that this is bad for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. It may be bad for individuals, but not for the organization.

I hope I answered your question, Comrade Commander.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): All but one.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Which one did I not answer, Commander? I apologize.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): You kind of answered it. We are supposed to have a National rep come to my C-of-A to describe to us what is going on in the National Organization. Now, — I don't want to hear all this crap about paid travel and all that. When you were doing it, gasoline was 12 cents a gallon and it is now \$4 a gallon. That is a little bit to make you smile.

I expect my National Council member to come to my meetings four times a year. Now, I don't want to get into this National rep, either, except to say, when we ask for a National rep, we want somebody from our National line.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: When you ask for a National rep, you are going to have a National rep that is at each of your Council meetings. If it is a Council member, I am going to pay for it. If it is a Past Commander-in-Chief or line officers, I am going to pay for it. Every Department will have a National rep at every Council meeting that it has.

Now, if you have 15 a year, I am not going to send a rep there, no. If you are talking about the National Convention or your State Convention, your Mid-Winter Conference, your Voice of Democracy, whenever you have your Council meetings, Bobby, you are going to have a National rep there whether it be your Council member, a Past Commander-in-Chief or the line officers that are in position today.

Does that answer the question?

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): That answers the question, and finally I just ask that whatever we do in the future let's make sure we do not disconnect our National officers from our Departments. There is a worry out there that we will slide into the mode, that we have the National reps already in the states, we have got them now for four years; they can pass the word. That is their concern. It is not mine.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: I understand that. The problem is nobody has received aid where that has happened. I have no plans for that to happen. The Council members are there, and the only reason this came up, the By-Laws Review Group studied this in great amount of detail. This wasn't just thrown up on the wall and said, "Oh, that looks good. Let's try this, bad boy." That "ain't" what happened.

They looked at this every which way it is possible, and this was the best solution they came up with to give you, the membership of this organization, the greatest amount of representation on the decisions that are made two times a year when you are not in session.

They meet in Kansas City and they meet in Washington, D.C. They make the decisions that decide the fate of this organization between conventions.

Now, some people say they don't like the vote. Comrades, you get on this convention floor, and California has got more votes than Arizona. The other thing, they made it hard enough that it takes 15 states to get a roll call vote on the National Council. It only takes 10 out here.

But the other thing, too, on the vote, is Arizona right now, has got one-half of a vote on the Council. When they have their own Council, they have got two votes if it comes to a roll call vote. I don't understand it. I just don't understand it.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): Thank you, Adjutant General. That does answer my questions fully, and just remember all the consequences need to be spelled out to the troops out here, because not all of them were there when that white board was being done. I do that all the time. All we want to know is that you are doing it. Thank you.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander, we sent out a huge talking point paper that covered all that I just covered to every Department in this organization.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): I got it, and I still have questions.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: That is why you have got a telephone to call. We have got telephones. We have faxes, and we have got e-mails, and gas was a quarter when I was there. (Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): My primary concern is the voting. It should be one state, one vote. I know that you tried to make it so that it is difficult to go to a roll call vote, but still in the issue of fairness it should be one state, one vote. I think four years is too long. Maybe limit it to three years, but four years is an awful long time to hold this position.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: How many do you get every four years right now?

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Excuse me?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: What Department are you from?

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): I am from the Department of Maine. We alternate with New Hampshire.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: So, how long are you waiting between Council members, then?

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): The point is the person holding office holds it for two years and not four. You are asking a lot for somebody to hold that office for four years.

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

COMRADE JOHN RANSON (Post 6095 – Kentucky): I am John Ranson from District 7, a current Council member, representing the departments of Kentucky and Tennessee, and a member of Post 6095 in Kentucky. I rise in support of the motion regarding B-22, B-23 and B-24 as presented to the membership. I don't want to be redundant, but I certainly echo the comments of Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent. You hit it on the head in many cases.

For the Council members, it certainly is important. It is a training ground the first year. I know that from my own experience. You learn a little bit more as you go. There has been every one of us doing it, and that is why in the chairs, the Department commanders, the Past commanders, District commanders and the State commanders. Learning is important. Continuity of leadership is important. It is going to stop the redistricting merry-go-round we are going to experience. There are a couple of departments who are in risk of losing their individual status as representation on the Council of Administration. This will stop all that merry-go-round, and the comment by another comrade at another microphone about one Department, one vote, that is better representation.

Once again, comrade, I rise in support of the three By-laws written as I mentioned, and I urge your support. Thank you, sir.

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

COMRADE KENNETH WISEMAN (Post 970 – Hawaii): I support the Adjutant General's comments, and that might surprise a lot of people if you saw me last year. But I support the idea of having four years, because it gives continuity and I support the idea of actually having the Council member local. George Bartlett is my National Council member and I see him two or three times a week.

As a Senior Vice Commander for the Department and as a Post Commander, it really is nice to be able to meet face-to-face with my Council member. The only beef I have with this is when it starts costing us money. Correct me if I am wrong, please, Quartermaster General.

We run a multi-million dollar budget, \$88 million. I have asked George, our Council member, how much are we going to save here? He told me about \$40,000. If I am wrong, please take the microphone and tell me if I am wrong, because I want to know, when we are making a change for \$40,000 out of an \$88 million budget, when we take a cruise, when we pay matching 401(k), and a half-million-dollar corporate salary for some of our top leadership. Please tell me if I am wrong.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: Nobody has ever said that it was a \$40,000 savings here. Nobody said a savings. Every comment that has been made is revenue neutral. I had a CPA that ran the numbers and he has provided the numbers to the Adjutant General, and it is revenue neutral. The savings are going to be recognized from the cuts that we are making in the travel on one side, and keep the people from having to travel all over the Pacific Ocean, are going to be offset against the expenses of providing those five meetings a year for the new, if you will, members of the Council of Administration.

COMRADE KENNETH WISEMAN (Post 970 – Hawaii): I thank the Quartermaster General for clearing that up, because that was a question. I am glad we are not making a split decision for a small amount to this big budget. I support the motion and I thank the Adjutant General for his clarification, also.

Commander-in-Chief, thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WAYNE THOMPSON (Post 5061 – Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have had the honor to serve for the last 27 years as State Judge Advocate and twice as the National Judge Advocate General, and a member of the By-Laws Study Group. I can assure you we have given it a very hard look. It seems fair. Each one of our departments will have its own Council member to represent us, and the four-year term is one to help build the capability and the experience of our Council members working as part of the team for the conference.

When we look at the By-laws proposed changes, we are establishing elections based upon the current Council system which makes sense. There is also a provision in there that protects us, just in case we have some maverick that may be elected by mistake, to be our elected Council member.

We have the right to remove them at the Department level. Since we elect them, we can have the right to remove them. I urge that we support this. I think it is certainly worth a try, and I think it will improve the capability of the Council and it is certainly in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

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

COMRADE STEVE JACOBS (Post 9415 – California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am in support of this. I am a past Council member, and I will tell you exactly what our Adjutant General said. It is a learning deal the first year, and the second year is flying by you so fast, and you're really getting involved.

When I was a Council member, I could never understand why each Department was not covered; each Department was not spoken for. I think this will take care of that problem and you will have no more problems with the Department saying he is from someplace else and he doesn't care about us, he cares about them. He will be working for that Department. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JAMES COGGINS (Post 5080 – Georgia): I agree with this restructuring and realignment. I was a past Council member in 2006-2008, and it is best for the organization for each Department, in my opinion, to have their own Council member. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DALE NAGAN (Post 10708 – Europe): I rise in opposition to B-23 on only one fact. The idea of all three resolutions is good, but the way you have the election set up right now in B-23, you wipe out the entire institutional knowledge in one of the conferences every four years.

Why don't we elect prorated, one quarter of each of the four conferences each four years and every year you would have 75 percent institutional knowledge in each conference. Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS (Post 1736 – Louisiana): I don't want to go over all of the other comments the other speakers have made, because we have covered a lot of ground. I hope what we remember here is that what this debate is about, is good governance. You can nit-pick anything to death, and speaking for the Committee they have worked hard and considered a zillion different options to come up with ways that can

be brought to this convention that will give us the best chance to govern ourselves in the most effective way.

Now, what this resolution does, it actually empowers the states, because the vote is going to come down to whether you want a smaller or larger Council.

Quite frankly, it doesn't matter to me as a VFW member whether it costs us a little bit more money. The question is, is it good governance or not? Another \$10,000 if you are doing the right thing for the VFW makes a lot of sense. There have been a lot of questions about what will it mean, will the travel policy change?

Look, it is the Council that sets that policy. You are going to have a voice on that Council every year. "Gunner" is the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General doesn't set these policies, the Council does. The Council members vote on the travel policy, they vote on the budget, and you are going to be at the table.

Now, if we vote this down and if we keep the Council structure like it is, you are voting for a smaller Council, which means less direct governance by the states themselves.

We have got two Departments that are in danger of going below 70,000, and it will even shrink it down even further. The Commander-in-Chief appoints the Chief of Staff and Inspector General, and they are members of the Council and they get to vote. If you expand the number you have on the state level, you will have a greater say in how this National Organization works.

So, how could you not be supportive of something that you and your members and your delegates have a greater say in the day-to-day operations in the voice of the VFW is beyond me.

There is no hidden agenda here and there is not anything lurking the background to surprise you, because if it does, the Council member can come to the Council meetings and fix it. So, we tried to address a problem as the Committee did, and we think we have brought you the best thing that we can. It may not be perfect, and we will change it and fine-tweak it next year as we do these kinds of things.

I urge you to think about the governance and decide whether you want a smaller Council where your voice is even less than it is now, or do you want a Council where you have a Council member every year that can speak for you and bring your concerns? I urge you to pass this, it is all in the best interest of the organization, and certainly in the best interest of the American veterans. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Chief.

Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN GWIZDAK (Post 5080 – Georgia): I am John Gwizdak, a delegate from Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia. I have heard enough at this point, Commander-in-Chief, and I call for the question.

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

COMRADE JERRY CHAMLEE (Post 10047 - Nevada): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion made and seconded. We are going to need two-thirds on this. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

Now, the motion has been made for B-22, B-23 and B-24 to adopt. A

“yes” vote will mean to adopt and a “no” is to defeat it. Again, a vote of “yes” will be supporting it and a vote of “no” will be to not support it. All those in favor will signify by saying “aye” to support. Now, those opposed “no”. The “ayes” have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, comrades. The last set aside, as I recall, was M-15, and the Committee approves M-15, but as we were looking and getting ready for today’s meeting, it was brought to our attention that we made a mistake, that makes this fatal. So, we are going to ask you to reject it.

In essence, it is a word that says “insert.” It should have said “insert” and not “replace”. It deals with the rules of order for conducting Post meetings. If we adopt this, it will in essence knock out “Good of the Order”, because instead of the word “insert”, we have the word “replace”. If we replace, it takes the “Good of the Order” out of the order of Post business. So, we can’t really do that.

So, what we are going to do, we are going to ask this convention to reject M-15 and then we are going to redraft it and bring it to the Council of Administration because they can deal with the Manual of Procedure matters. So, that is why we set M-15 aside even though we passed it initially.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOSEPH ORLANDO (Post 5941 – New Jersey): I appreciate you relooking at that. That was our concern, and the issue is resolved as far as we are concerned. We hope to see the amended correction next year. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion was made to adopt, but we don’t want it.

COMRADE LEE PARKER (Post 1645 – Massachusetts): A point of order. Why don’t we just open it up and amend it on the floor and pass it as amended?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is part of the By-laws.

COMRADE LEE PARKER (Post 1645 – Massachusetts): A point well made.

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

COMRADE MIKE MUSGROVE (Post 2350 – Nevada): I make a motion to this amendment, to take out the words, to make it proper.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELICIC: It is a Manual of Procedure and we have to have certain days of notice. It can’t be done.

COMRADE RON RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460 – Connecticut): No, an amendment to the Manual of Procedure can be done by the convention floor, “Fritz”.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELICIC: One moment, please.

COMRADE RON RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460 – Connecticut): It is in the By-laws, too. In fact, if you remember, “Fritz”, two years ago I came to the floor and asked for a motion to allow us to amend, on the floor, because for years they had not let us do that. Then you, yourself, even said that is correct, we can amend on the floor, on the National floor, the Manual of Procedure.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELICIC: I point you to Section 1401. It is also in your Resolution booklets, where there has to be a 15-day notice before the assembly of the National Convention for any amendments to be made, so we are stuck with this. The Council of Administration can make this change at the next Council meeting.

COMRADE RON RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460 – Connecticut): I understand that they can, but also reject it and accept that. This body wants to deal with it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you for your comments, Ron. Anything else? All in favor will signify by saying “aye”; all those opposed “no”. The “nays” have it. It is rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: My comrades, there are no others. The others we have recommended for rejection, and hearing no motion to adopt any of those we will do that.

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

COMRADE PAUL MANLY (Post 1474 – Washington): I move for adoption of B-3.

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

COMRADE MARTIN SPANI (Post 1040 – Washington): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made and seconded.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Comrades, B-3 deals with allowing a Trustee to simultaneously hold the office of Chaplain, Surgeon and Judge Advocate General. The Committee's comments would be these: the position of Trustee is unique and critical as found in our National By-Laws as an individual responsible for auditing all Post books and records, including those committees chaired by the Chaplain, Surgeon and Judge Advocate.

The proposal is, in essence, a conflict of interest and dilutes the ability of the Trustees to be disinterested individuals. That's the reason we reject it.

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

COMRADE PAUL MANLY (Post 1474 – Washington): There are a lot of Posts where those offices do not have budgets, and that's why the provision is in there if the By-laws don't prevent it. It is an option for Posts that have trouble filling all their officer positions. Sometimes your best people get elected as Trustees and can't do any of those other positions. They can't hold office on a Committee that handles money and can't do anything but be a Trustee the way the By-laws are written right now.

So, the proposal here would allow them to hold an office such as Chaplain that would be critical to the Post and where you are having trouble filling those spots. One of the arguments against this, I heard, was if you can't fill your Post's positions, maybe you should close the Post. Even with a Post of 300, 400 or 500 people, sometimes you don't fill all of your positions every year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): Commander-in-Chief, I know that everybody is getting tired of hearing me. With all due respect to the last speaker, he kind of signed his own tombstone, but I want to go further with that. If you start amending the By-laws of this organization so you can fit non-members or non-availability of members into the chairs of the Posts, you will dilute the entire organization.

Therefore, I rise in opposition to this and hopefully our comrade will find members to sit in the chairs, or maybe they should consider consolidating with someone else. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

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

COMRADE MIKE MUSGROVE (Post 2350 – Nevada): Comrade Com-

mander-in-Chief, since membership is our goal and our backbone, our members should be participating in our Posts. Now, I am realistic. We have 285 members but we still get 25 to 26 members to a meeting all the time.

If you can't fill those chairs, you are not really a viable Post. If you have enough people interested enough to come to a meeting and hold an office, and those also are the members that will be out working in the community, in the schools and with our youth. I am fully opposed to allowing Trustees to hold any other office other than a Trustee. They should be there to audit the Post in general, the books of the Adjutant/Quartermaster and no conflicts other than that. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

I recognize Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CARLOS ALMEDA (Department of Washington): I am Carlos Almeda, Commander from the State of Washington. Nothing in this resolution says anything about having non-members. This is members only. So, for the benefit of my comrade, a while ago, who talked about filling in with non-members, no, only members. Thank you, comrades.

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

COMRADE RUFUS ALLEN (Post 10557 – Europe): Commander, I am highly opposed to this proposal and, for one reason being, you are helping one person holding two elected positions, and as Trustee you could bring in some kind of fraud and conflict of interest here. That is one of the reasons we oppose this. He should not hold two elected positions if he is the Trustee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you for that information.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PETE NICHOLSEN (Post 10127 – Florida): The position of the Post Trustee is a very important position, very important. We can't get them to do that job. If they don't do the audit, who does the audit in most cases? If they can't do that job, why give them another one? Thank you very much.

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

COMRADE THEODORE EATON (Post 2104 – Massachusetts): I move the previous question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: There has been a move for the question. It needs a second.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): I will second that. I would like to comment on it, though, if you don't mind.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: No.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): Okay.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: All those in favor to close debate will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It passes.

Now, all in favor of adopting B-3 will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". It is defeated.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, in order to complete the record, and for the purposes of the delegates, the Committee recommended for rejection C-1, B-3, B-4, M-2, M-3, M-4, M-5, M-6, B-10, M-7, M-8, B-14, M-10, B-15, M-11, B-16, B-26, M-16, B-27, M-17, M-18, B-28, M-19, B-29, M-20 and M-21.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LEONARD HENNIG (Post 1429 – New Jersey): I rise to talk

about C-1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have got to move for adoption first.

COMRADE LEONARD HENNIG (Post 1429 – New Jersey): I move to adopt C-1.

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

COMRADE LEONARD HENNIG (Post 1429 – New Jersey): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have information that it is in the wrong format and that is why it was rejected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: There has to be a second.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made and seconded. Now, the comment.

COMRADE LEONARD HENNIG (Post 1429 – New Jersey): The question, I was told that we cannot do it this way, that we have to pass a resolution to ask Congress to change it because it is a Constitutional motion. So, I move that motion. I ask that this body pass the General Resolution to petition Congress to amend the charter to restore “whomsoever”, where it was previously omitted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You are talking about a resolution?

COMRADE LEONARD HENNIG (Post 1429 – New Jersey): I am talking about a general resolution to petition Congress.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We can’t do that.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: The reason we recommend rejection is our charter is a Congressional Charter and we can’t amend our own charter. All we can do is to go to Congress and ask them to amend the charter. So, this is out of order in the sense it would take a resolution passed asking that change. We can go to Congress and request an amendment to our own charter. We can’t amend our own Congressional Charter, and that is why the Committee rejects.

COMRADE LEONARD HENNIG (Post 1429 – New Jersey): Commander-in-Chief, that is what I am trying to do is to pass a resolution.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELICIC: Comrade Commander, I refer you to CONVENTION Rule No. 4. “All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the Department Commander, or, if absent, 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 Tuesday, tomorrow, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Convention for consideration.”

So, you do have an avenue to get this done by preparing it in accordance with Rule 4 and get it to the Adjutant General before 4:30 tomorrow afternoon.

If that is done properly and sent to the Committee, it may come back to this convention. But for right now, what you are trying to do has been ruled out of order because of the convention rule.

COMRADE LEONARD HENNIG (Post 1429 – New Jersey): Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We are on C-1. We are talking about C-1 right now. On the motion to adopt, all in favor will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed “no”. The “nays” have it.

Now, are there any other motions to adopt? Any other motions to adopt? Seeing none --

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, that concludes the work of the Committee on By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. Thank you for the Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM BENNETT (Post 346 – Washington, D.C.): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Bill Bennett, Post 346, District of Columbia. I move to table B-14 and M-10.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You can move for adoption.

COMRADE WILLIAM BENNETT (Post 346 – Washington, D.C.): It has been referred to earlier that we could table.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have to move to adopt if you want it.

COMRADE WILLIAM BENNETT (Post 346 – Washington, D.C.): We wanted to table. I withdraw the motion.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELICIC: Comrade, you say you want to table, but it is not on the floor. It was rejected by the Committee. So, B-14 is not on the floor for discussion at all. There is no action that can be taken on it. If you want to talk about it, you can move to adopt B-14, but it doesn't make sense that you would want to talk about it if you want to table it. If you don't want anything to happen with B-14, then you just need to sit down. If you want something to happen, tell us you want something to happen.

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

COMRADE JOHN WOLFE (Post 4084 – California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John P. Wolfe, National Council member from District G. I would just like to comment on the great idea of having the Parliamentarian here to take a little pressure off for you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you. This old dumb Marine needs that.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, that completes the work of the Committee. What we are talking about up here is on the last one that was here, do you want to get this on the floor for discussion and debate? Is that what you wanted to do from the District of Columbia?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: They are gone.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: That concludes the work of the Committee, Commander. I thank you very much for such a great Committee and they did a tremendous job, and thanks for the opportunity to be of service.

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

COMRADE MICHAEL JOHNSON (Post 4992 – Washington): I would like to propose that we consider B-26, an amendment concerning the Ladies Auxiliary. I move to adopt B-26.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It died for the lack of a second, and the Committee has been released.

Next up will be the Report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization, John Moon.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN MOON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am John Moon, Post 2873, Ohio, a Past Commander-in-Chief. Jim Nier is my vice-chairman this year. We had 84 members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars meet at 2:00 o'clock p.m. yesterday to make the decisions on these. I note that Resolutions 201, 202, 203 and 204 were rejected in favor of consideration of By-law amendment proposal B-1. B-1 passed.

Resolution 205 was rejected due to the intent of the Adjutant and Quartermaster General to provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, et cetera, in the near future. This has been essentially accomplished.

Resolution 206 was deemed out of order.

Following that, the Commander of West Virginia proposed a resolution that we accepted and numbered as 207. This resolution is not in the binders but copies are with your delegations. After discussion of this new resolution, the Committee rejected it.

Commander-in-Chief, there is no motion for acceptance on any of these resolutions. That being the case, this completes our report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Any motions to adopt any?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DON YOUNG (Post 3466 – West Virginia): I move we set aside R-207, or adopt R-207.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion is to adopt R-207.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): I am going to ask that 205 be set aside, just nothing else but a point of clarification.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Resolution is set aside. We are still looking for a second on the other one for Don's motion.

COMRADE KELLY GODDARD (Post 4484 – West Virginia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We are going to do that one first, right? We will do 207 first.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Essentially, Resolution 207 is what is left of 206, and I read, "Therefore, Be It Resolved, the National Joint Committee to implement transition to one Auxiliary, the 'Auxiliary' of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States honors the service and sacrifice of all military service members, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender; and

"WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes the sacrifice made by the dependents of our military service members, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender; and

"WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States appreciates the significant contribution our Ladies and Men's auxiliaries make to our veterans and their families; and

"WHEREAS, two nationally recognized but separate auxiliaries has divided our dependents with questions of disparate treatment, and requires

significant duplication of administrative efforts, resources, and manpower;

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Commander-in-Chief and the Ladies Auxiliary National President create a joint committee to facilitate the transitional structure and generate the necessary By-law amendment proposal that would integrate the Ladies and Men’s auxiliaries to be voted on by the members of the National Convention no later than the close of the 115th National Convention.”

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Now, we are open for discussion. Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE KELLY GODDARD (Post 4484 – West Virginia): I stand in favor of Resolution R-207. Comrades, if you will remember back years ago when we had the debate on allowing women to join our organization, it was quite a battle. It took way too many years for us to allow women into our organization.

When they came into our organization, we didn’t change the name of our organization to the Men’s Veterans of Foreign Wars and we didn’t change it to the Women’s Veterans of Foreign Wars. Now, we have a Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and we have a Men’s Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I think a lot of us back then were afraid that someday we would have a female Post Commander or District Commander or Department Commander. Well, comrades, that has happened. We have that and it is not going to be too far in the future when we have a female Commander-in-Chief standing right up there.

As you said this morning, when that happens some of them out here are going to say “holy moly.” Right, Chief?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Wait, wait, I did not say it was going to be a woman Commander-in-Chief. I didn’t say “holy moly.” Let’s get our verbiage correct.

COMRADE KELLY GODDARD (Post 4484 – West Virginia): We are okay, Chief. I have been told the transition cost of this would probably be enormous, somewhere in the millions of dollars. What we are asking for, we would like to maybe specifically see what these costs are and kind of itemize them, and do a study and get with the Ladies Auxiliary.

I, for one, think that most of these costs would be absorbed by the local and the Department level, and not on the National level. So, you know, I think that this is just fear mongering without reality as far as the cost.

You know, I come from a small Post. We have a Ladies Auxiliary. My 34-year-old daughter can join the Ladies Auxiliary. My 42-year-old son cannot join, because we don’t have a Men’s Auxiliary. I think some of the fear from the ladies is that someday old Bob here just might be President of the Auxiliary.

They have got the same issues with that that we have with having a female Commander-in-Chief. So, we are just asking you to do the study.

Get back to us and let us know, because, Commander-in-Chief, it is going to happen. It will not happen today and it is not going to happen next year. But in two or three years, trust me, it will happen. You know why it is going to happen? Because, it is the right thing to do. Thank you, Chief.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JIM NIER: I have a clarification for the membership. The new “Be It Resolved” in Resolution 207, that replaced

it out of Resolution 206 does not mandate this will happen. It simply says "Create a joint committee to facilitate a transitional structure and generate the necessary by-law amendment proposal that will integrate the Ladies and Men's auxiliaries to be voted on by the members of the National Convention no later than the close of the 115th National Convention." Thank you, sir.

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

COMRADE MICHAEL JOHNSON (Post 4992 – Washington): I stand in favor of the West Virginia proposal. With our small Post, we voted two years in a row that this was a good idea. The time is right, the time is now for this particular proposal. We have got cooperation between the Auxiliary and our Post.

Our ladies at our specific Posts want to get more help. They would get more help if this proposal is studied and implemented.

With all the details of this specific proposal like this, it is going to take years and years and years. Are we a fast-moving organization or are we a slow-moving organization like an iceberg? That is the key question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DUANE SARMIENTO (Post 5579 – New Jersey): I stand in favor of this resolution, and I want to make a few simple comments. I consistently read in the VFW magazine that the message that will attract the new generation of veterans, which I believe I am probably in between the new ones and the older ones, that we have to make this a family organization.

Sometimes it can be tough when sometimes half the family is excluded. I know it is no simple answer. I have heard the comment we will start a Men's Auxiliary, start it. Sometimes that is not as easy as it sounds to do. It is almost like why don't you start another VFW Post? It is not that easy. As an organization, we strongly encourage women to join.

It was not too long ago, on this convention floor we passed to allow women in the organization, and now they are striving here and I am proud to call them all comrades. I have heard stories of the Vietnam veterans when they came back, how they weren't welcomed in this organization by maybe generations before them. But they kept the course and kept striving, and look at them today, they lead our Posts, our Districts, our Departments, and as I look up on the dais, you lead the organization.

With the growing pains, I am sure it was that way with every one of the things I just mentioned. We got through it and we struggled as an organization, and we are definitely better for it.

I would like to believe that the leadership in both organizations can see that this is a step in the future and this evolution is going to happen.

I agree with the other gentleman, I believe he was from Nevada. It won't happen this year, it won't happen next year, and I think a study group is a first start. I hope it just doesn't come back with money, saying we can't afford this. We have so much stock in the store with Auxiliary stuff that we can't do that. I hope that is not the answer coming back if this resolution passes.

Let's have the Committee take a look at it. I just want to thank you for giving me the opportunity, Commander-in-Chief, to speak.

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

COMRADE MIKE MUSGROVE (Post 2350 – Nevada): I rise in support of this resolution. It is high time that we at least set up the Committee

to work on the logistics of having one Auxiliary in this organization. The Men's Auxiliary is a Post function. The Men's Auxiliary members have no structure above a Post.

Our female veterans coming into our organization, relatives can join that Men's Auxiliary, but they can't go across the street to another Post and be accepted or across town or into another state because there is no National structure for it. I realize this. There is a lot of logistics to be considered. There is a lot of rewriting that needs to be done on the 98-year-old By-laws to combine these things. It is right for the VFW, it is right for our veterans and it is right for our veterans' spouses and children. I support this wholeheartedly. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

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

COMRADE PETE NICHOLSEN (Post 10127 – Florida): We have stood at this microphone from Florida in the past couple of years endorsing our great Men's Auxiliary. We have asked to have help from the National Organization to recognize Districts and other ranks to help them get along. It was refused.

So, now what are you trying to do? I support this legislation very much. However, you can't take an organization that is on a 20-inch bicycle with training wheels and try to get it to organize with an 18-wheeler. The Ladies Auxiliary is squared away. They have been here for 98 years. They have been here 98 years and do we want to push them? No, but it is about time that the National Organization recognizes them, give them their due and help them instead of hurting them. They do a great job in Florida and I am sure they will do a great job in other states as well.

On that fact, this convention approved the Men's Auxiliary, yet one state can have it and another state can't have it or doesn't have it. We have a Men's Auxiliary member perhaps going into a state that doesn't have it, and I am sorry, we don't accept that.

Here, take this social membership application for our Post. That is also against the law, but it is against the law to pass a red light, but if nobody enforces it, so be it, let it go. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE HERBERT MULLEN (Post 286 – Indiana): I guess I am going to be considered as meandering in the hall, but I feel this is a terrible idea for the men and women auxiliaries. They look at it different. The ladies have a tradition of doing things in their meetings their way, and we are going to try to stuff them full of men who are not going to put up with the way ladies do things.

That is going to hurt that organization and, furthermore, the men in Indiana, each Post has a choice to have a Men's Auxiliary or not have one. The Men's Auxiliary in my District, for those Posts that have them, depend on those Men's auxiliaries as much as they do the ladies. That is not for the same things, but both organizations are very helpful to us. Thank you very much, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DENNIS BICKING (Post 6495 – Pennsylvania): I am also going to be the devil's advocate. The Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW has a history with the VFW, a long history, and in two years it is going to be 100 years old. The Ladies auxiliaries to the VFW support every Post that has one. They are the backbone of the Post. When the Post needs something, they know

that those ladies will be there for them.

We just approved, a few years ago, having the Men's auxiliaries. All of the states have not accepted it yet, but I am sure it is going to happen. What we need to do is to have National accept more of the Men's auxiliaries, get behind them more and keep the men separate from the ladies. All they are going to do is get in there and bully them, and the ladies aren't going to put up with it. We will have a war on our hands. We will have World War III and World War IV combined. So, I oppose this amendment. Thank you, sir.

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

COMRADE DANA HUSSEY (Post 1772 – New Hampshire): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have heard talk about the money it is going to cost. I have heard talk about a 98-year-old charter and the main thing you are going to lose, and call it male chauvinism if you want, the biggest part of our workforce is our Ladies Auxiliary. Most Posts you go to, you have a lot more women working in that Post than you do the VFW, and it is that way in my Post and most Posts in my state.

They have already buried the line in the sand. If you do this, you are going to lose your workforce. I was opposed to the Men's Auxiliary in the beginning. I can see where they have a viable place now, not so much in the organization, but in their own organization. We need to move them from the Post level to the District level, start building some leadership. They are not ready yet for the National leadership, but start building leadership and maybe start eventually having their own charter but keep them separate from the ladies' charter.

That will not work to meld them together, because the ladies will rebel, and when they rebel, it is just like home, rebel is hell. Thank you.

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

COMRADE STEVE MILANO (Post 4647 – California): My Post has a Men's Auxiliary with a membership in excess of 100, close to 150 members. They get along well with our Ladies Auxiliary, which has a membership in excess of 400 members. I don't know about any other Posts, but there is nobody at our Post that can bully anybody in the Ladies Auxiliary. So, I stand in support of this resolution.

I don't see how the Men's Auxiliary will go in there and try to bully the Ladies Auxiliary. They just need the help for some of the very reasons some of our comrades are against this. The Ladies Auxiliary has been around for almost 100 years. The Men's Auxiliary, we have been trying to get them on track, we already have an auxiliary organization, but it is completely on track and can help the men if they are allowed into the auxiliary and it is one auxiliary for a common goal of helping veterans and their families. Thank you, comrade.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STANLEY BORUSIEWICZ (Post 1946 – Connecticut): I stand opposed to this. Of course, I kind of have to. Anyway, we hear a lot of what our comrades have to say back and forth, whether we are for or against it. We know the ladies are against it. Has anybody ever asked the Men's Auxiliary how they feel?

I have worked with our Men's Auxiliary for the last five years or so in Connecticut, and they have never asked a single time to join the Ladies Auxiliary. They wanted to help; they wanted to move up to the next level.

I have always explained to them that they need more Post level auxilia-

ries before they can go any farther. And they have to work to help themselves to that goal. So, it is not fair to the ladies to turn around and just shove in the Men's Auxiliary, when they are not even trying to help them to move up.

You can blame National all you want for not having the structure for them, however, sometimes I do that myself, and nobody wanted them in originally. There was no structure. Let's give each ten to 15 years to see if they can get up to the next level. As far as I can see, they are not even helping themselves to do that. It is not fair again to shove them in with the ladies when they are not helping themselves.

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

COMRADE HUGH LONG (Post 4302 – Mississippi): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I rise in opposition to this amendment for the following reasons:

First, the Ladies Auxiliary is against this. We need to let the Ladies Auxiliary buy in on men joining if that is going to eventually happen. If the Men's Auxiliary wants to become a part of the Ladies Auxiliary, let those two auxiliaries work it out. We should not tell the Ladies Auxiliary who can belong to their organization. Thank you.

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

COMRADE DON YOUNG (Post 3466 – West Virginia): Chief, I grew up in the 1960s when separate but equal was the way our culture ruled its life. Depending on your skin color, you couldn't drink out of a water fountain or sit down in a restaurant and have a decent meal. You had to go somewhere where your own kind were served.

The VFW is not separate but equal. All of us serve this organization with pride regardless of our race, religion or gender. We should not allow an auxiliary to exist if they don't adopt the same principles that we do, that our country does. Our dependents were left behind when we deployed to go fight for our country. They were sons and daughters, wives and husbands. For many years, female soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines, their husbands couldn't shop in the commissary and the exchanges because they were girls. That was wrong and it changed.

The military is a poor forward-thinking organization, and they realized the error of their way and changed that. It is time for the VFW to look forward and quit looking back. The Ladies Auxiliary is a fantastic organization. They would even be better if they included all of our dependents. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

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

COMRADE CORRINE DeLUCA (Post 7609 – Ohio): One VFW, one Auxiliary, this resolution is in regards to developing a Committee to work towards a joint organization. It is not saying if we accept it, it proves the men are going to be part of the Ladies Auxiliary. I think people are missing the point.

Some are saying, well, the guys don't have a charter so they can't do this. This is only asking to start a Committee to help establish what needs to be done. Just as it took until 1972 to allow females in the VFW. I joined the VFW. I did not join a female VFW or a male VFW. I joined the VFW because I am a Veteran of Foreign Wars.

My husband is a spouse of a veteran. My son is the son of a veteran. The Ladies Auxiliary right now is a very well-established unit, just as the Veterans of Foreign Wars before 1972 was a well-established unit. With

their support, I as a female veteran, am now growing and in a position of a Post, County and District Commander.

This is a committee to help develop it so that we can continue to be one VFW, and hopefully to grow to one Auxiliary. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN WRINKLE (Post 4108 – Oregon): I have an Auxiliary in my Post. I support this because I am tired of being asked when can I become a lifetime member? When can I do this? It is time for action. It is not time to sit back and say ten years from now we will get together and we will come together and we will meld. It is time for action now, comrades.

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

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 – Pennsylvania): Sixty-five years in this organization, Commander, and I have seen many changes. The greatest change I see is all those vacant seats back there. We have said, in the last 65 years that I have belonged to this organization that the greatest asset to the Veterans of Foreign Wars was its Ladies Auxiliary.

My concern, leave it alone. I can't imagine someday a man being the President of the Ladies Auxiliary organization. We gave them their rights to conduct their by-laws and charter according with our approval. If it is not broke, don't try to fix it. We can use all the concepts in the world but my son can't belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I am thankful that my son can't belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am thankful that he belongs as a social member and participates in the organization and participates in my organization as much as I do. If I go to wash the dishes, my son has been there with me.

My friends, I can't visualize us making a change and saying to the Ladies Auxiliary we are going to allow men now to come in to your organization. Let them decide that. That is their organization.

For 65 years, it has been good for our organization. I stand in opposition to this recommendation, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

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

COMRADE MICHAEL JOHNSON (Post 4992 – Washington): What I am hearing today is fear. That is the fear of transition cost, transition time, the time is not right, and if they have men in the auxiliary, they will overtake the women; there are too many factors to consider and the time is not right.

The only thing we have to fear is all these fears. We have got to keep it simple, a key phrase. Combine the men's auxiliary and the women's auxiliary. That will be simple. Keep the ideas flowing, and that will improve the membership.

I vote against fear, I vote for this proposal.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RON RUSAKIEWICZ (Post 9460 – Connecticut): Just an aside. I was going to say thank you very much to the Department Commander of Florida for letting us know he had associate members, but I guess I will have to extend that to Pennsylvania now, too. I would like to know how we are doing it. Connecticut would sure like to do it.

Commander-in-Chief, I, too, stand opposed to this resolution. I can't imagine that the way the women have worked for us and what they have done for the Veterans of Foreign Wars for all these years that we are going to inject something into their organization that I don't believe they want.

I think it will be difficult, too, for us when we say, "Gee, we have got a District meeting coming up Friday night. Could you girls and guys please

make us some cookies and cakes”, and that’s going to happen. I just don’t see it melding well. I don’t see the two getting along together. I see that as nothing but like a fox in a henhouse, and it just isn’t going to work.

I think most importantly for every single comrade in this room who is married and has a wife, a daughter or a sister in the Ladies Auxiliary, if we pass this resolution, God help us all when we get home.

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

COMRADE JOE DeSHIELDS (Post 9934 – California): I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do we have a second?

COMRADE MATT COULTER (Post 9534 – Europe): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have got a motion and a second. The motion passes. We need one more rephrase.

COMRADE JOE DAVIS: I have been asked, comrades, by the Parliamentarian to restate once again the new “Be It Resolved” in 207 that was changed from 206, which was ruled out of order.

“Be It Resolved by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that the Commander-in-Chief, with the Ladies Auxiliary National President, create a joint committee to facilitate a transitional structure and generate the necessary by-law amendment proposal that will integrate the Ladies and Men’s auxiliaries, to be voted on by the members at the National Convention no later than the close of the 115th National Convention.”

This is not a mandate; it is a recommendation for a committee to look into it. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, if we vote “yes” on this, you are going to create a committee. If you vote “no”, you will not. So, with that, we need to vote.

Let’s get back to my confusion again. The motion, if we vote “yes” on this, will mean that we do want to get a committee. A vote of “no” means no. All in favor of having this committee say “yes”; all those opposed “no”. It is without a doubt. It is rejected.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE KELLY GODDARD (Post 4484 – West Virginia): I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We will need ten states to stand up there. Have you got them?

COMRADE CHARLES ABSHER (Post 9808 – Virginia): I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is three.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JERRY CHAMLEE (Post 10047 – Nevada): I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BERT KEY (Post 4273 – Oregon): I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is five.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ED CROUCHER (Post 1548 – Montana): I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is six.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DUANE SARMIENTO (Post 5579 – New Jersey): I call for a roll call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: One more time, anybody else? Seeing none, it failed.

I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): I ask that 205 be set aside for a point of clarification. Do I need to make a motion to adopt?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Yes, a motion to adopt.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): I so move. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do we have a second?

COMRADE EARL FULK (Post 9934 – California): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Okay. For clarification, Jim.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, what I think I heard up there was that was going to be handled administratively between the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General, that we were going to be given the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses perhaps through Post query or some other median. Is that what I heard stated at the beginning?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: In the “Be It Resolved”, it states that the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters be directed to modify the OMS on-line support providing roster information.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): Past Commander-in-Chief, if I might interrupt, that is not my question. I wrote it so I know what it says. My question is when the resolution was being presented, the reason it was rejected was because I thought you said the headquarters staff was going to take care of it administratively.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, will speak on it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: The recommended rejection is recently a message was sent that clearly established the intent of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General to have this functionally available to all Departments sometime soon. That unspecified time estimation was because there are significant security concerns specifically related to this application being made available to all Posts that must still be addressed. Thank you, sir.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): Thank you, Chief. The functionality that I am asking for already exists. The difference is we have to play “captain, may I” to excuse the expression. I can go to the membership and get this information. I don’t have a problem if it is available to me as a Department Adjutant/Quartermaster to disseminate to my Posts.

I think those of us who are in our respective Departments are entrusted to do the right thing for the right reasons. All I am asking for, if there are members in our state, granted they belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, all I am asking for is why we are making membership more difficult by withholding e-mail addresses and phone numbers? Already you are giving us the names and addresses. Why not the e-mail addresses and phone numbers? That is all we are asking for in this resolution.

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

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER (Post 7356 – Missouri): I think,

Jim, we are going to be in a position to provide the Departments that information in a reasonably short time. I have a concern about this particular resolution, because it extends to the Posts. There are some security issues with respect to sending it to the Posts at this time that have to be resolved. So, I want to be very cautious in that regard.

Secondly, and I make this observation not because we are not going to eventually provide e-mail addresses and telephone numbers, but there is a big difference between providing e-mail addresses and telephone numbers, and providing the mailing information that we presently provide. That is, it is more easy to use.

I really do have a concern that eventually some of this information is going to get out, the e-mail addresses and telephone numbers, that will bounce back against us.

So, I think we want to be sure as we provide that information that it is adequately secured and we have at least some protection against that information being made available by some unscrupulous Post officer to people in the marketing area.

I am not sure how we are going to get to that point, but that is my big concern. So, I think, as I understand it, we are in a position to make that information, and we will be in a position to make that information available to the Departments, and if the Departments want to take the responsibility under the presently-existing laws with respect to the security of that information, of providing it to the Posts, then that is your responsibility at that point.

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

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): I don't want to dispute what the Quartermaster General is saying, but I do have an understanding of PII and its ramifications. My point is you get the Posts or you get the members' home address, their name and phone number and e-mail address from the information that the Post gave you. You do it by mail, which is much more insecure than it is by scripted e-mail or via an account. I do have some reservations about the National Office calling possibly a Post Commander's integrity into question.

Now, I have worked in the government, I have worked for the United States Navy, and we have to deal with PII every day. Simply said, if the Quartermaster signs the security things that they are supposed to sign once a year, if you are going to have a PII, that should cover it. Now, if you are going to secure it electronically, that is a different thing and you could sit on a security thing for years and never have to provide it, and just keep saying we don't have the technology available or we can't afford it.

Trust me, that stuff is expensive if you want to get into PKI and all this other kind of stuff. So, you want us to go out and hammer our Posts to recruit. If our Posts have for whatever reason not been able to compile their phone numbers together and make sure that they have it, it is the responsibility of the National Organization to either get it to me as the Department Commander or my Adjutant/Quartermaster. You can do that now.

We can sign security documents now that makes us responsible and not have to wait eight to nine years, eight to nine months, eight to ten days to do that. That is my point. We do it in the government. Why can't we do it in the VFW?

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

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): This is a general

resolution. It is not a By-law. If it would be acceptable to the Quartermaster General, and I am going to get into semantics here, if the opposing view here is the word "Post", then take it out and make it available to the Departments within the next 90 days. I would be satisfied with that if you-all could be satisfied with it. I wrote it 90 days, I believe.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: They are good with that, Jim.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): There is a motion on the floor. Can I amend the motion?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Make a motion to amend.

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): I make a motion to amend to strike the words "to assist Departments", take out the words "Posts and".

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER (Post 7356 – Missouri): I will second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have heard the motion and the second on the amendment. We are voting on the amendment. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "nay". The "ayes" have it. Any further discussion on that resolution, as amended? Any further discussion?

We will now vote on the resolution, as amended. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes our report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: A good job, John. You have been dismissed, and a great job that you did. Thanks.

We will have the Report on General Resolutions by Jack Carney and his committee.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The General Resolutions Committee met 124 strong yesterday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock. I was privileged to have as the vice-chairman Past Commander-in-Chief John Furgess, Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas, Past Commander-in-Chief John Smart. We also were privileged to have with us as a staff representative Steve Van Buskirk.

The General Resolutions Committee recommends for adoption Resolution 305 and Resolution 309, as amended, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have heard the Committee's report.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: I will clarify 309, as amended. We took out the words "financial assistance." That cannot be approved at this convention in accordance with Convention Rule No. 7.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have heard the motion and the second. Any discussion? All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: The Committee recommends rejection of Nos. 301, 302, 303, 304, 306, 307, 308. That is our report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Are there any motions to adopt any of those?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): I move to adopt Resolution 307.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do we have a second?

COMRADE EARL FULK (Post 9934 – California): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second. We can now open it up for comments.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): Hopefully, this is the last time I will speak today, but today I'm very passionate, this particular motion. I want to read you a letter that will set the background. It is dated January 29, 2004. It is a "Dear John" letter. It is a little bit of a joke. It was to John Lowe, then Adjutant/Quartermaster Department of California VFW, Sacramento, California.

"Dear John: The office is in receipt of an oral request to use the VFW name and the logo in conjunction with the formation of the Department of California VFW Motorcycle Club.

"It is a mutual understanding that the use of the name and logo will conform to accepted standards and specifications of the National Organization.

"The manufacturing of all items bearing the official name and logo will be purchased through the National Emblem and Supply Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. In view of the nature of the above circumstances of the request, permission is granted as outlined above." In 2004, John Senk, Past Adjutant General had the vision and understanding that this organization was going to have changes in some of the units that it does.

Now, it is 2011. Back in those days, we went through three years of arduous back and forth with the National Headquarters to get permission to form the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of California Motorcycle Club. Now, understand when this amendment came up yesterday, I was unfortunately in another resolution place, where it was hot, but when it came up yesterday the excuse I heard from the Committee was that they didn't understand it or it didn't make sense.

Is that true, Chief?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: I didn't get that impression.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): So I want to clarify to the membership, the membership that is sitting on this floor, because this is to you that I am speaking to. It involves a unit in the Department of California that has served honorably to our Department for the last eight years and has not soiled any reputation of the VFW whatsoever. There was an incident, reported on the floor of the Council of Administration, in front of our National Rep at a meeting two years ago.

That incident was that the motorcycle club was not going to allow a peace officer to join. The National Rep left. After he left, the Department of California stood the Chairman, or President, of the VFW Motorcycle Club in front of it and directed that it will conform to the regulations that we have set forth, which means that you will allow peace officers to join.

Last year at the National Convention, most of us weren't allowed to talk if we had anything other than the riders groups involved. I got screamed and other people got screamed at. My feelings are not hurt.

You had to get something done and you did. I am standing for this group of people behind us, all 8,000 of you, and telling you we want our VFW motorcycle club to exist as it does, and it will conform to the regula-

tions as set forth in that resolution. It is our motorcycle club. We run it, and if I make a mistake running it, then you hold me accountable. Until then, I ask that you not dissolve my VFW club. Thank you, Commander.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Let me read our reason for rejection so we can clarify this. Resolution 308 passed at the 111th National Convention officially defined the rules for all VFW rider groups. Our specific guidelines are that the VFW motorcycle groups may not affiliate with any other motorcycle club. The intent of that guideline was a strong concern for our professional image. This resolution is an attempt to skirt that guideline.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVE RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): I am the State Chairman of the VFW Warriors motorcycle organization in Colorado. I understand California's desire to be grandfathered in. I want to make sure that it is clear this resolution does not change the intent to not have new motorcycle organizations BMCs. That is not what they are trying to do.

They are simply asking that their organization, that has been in existence for ten or 11 years, that has done a lot of really great things. I have seen the patch and I know they do good things. They went through a lot of difficulties to be able to be designated as an MC. They are just asking to be grandfathered in. I, therefore, am in favor. Thank you.

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

COMRADE BRUCE EDWARDS (Post 2417 – North Carolina): Commander-in-Chief, I was a member of that Committee, along with Commander-in-Chief Carney, and just to let the comrades know, one of the main objections of the various Committee members who recommended rejection of this proposal was that, whether it is true or not and whether it was perceived or not, there was the problem of the word "club" associated to the California organization, as good as it is, with the Confederation of Clubs, whatever that organization is.

It also contains a small amount of outlaw motorcycle clubs. We were concerned that the perception would be with the name "club" that they would be affiliated with that organization.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EDWARD BANAS: Comrades, Resolution 307 specifically puts my name in here as the Commander-in-Chief, Edward Banas. It says under the authorization signature of John J. Senk, then the Adjutant General. I don't know who has that authorized signature or where it is, but I can tell you as the Commander-in-Chief in the year 2003-2004, I was not aware of this and do not really like my name on this paper.

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

COMRADE JIM ROWOLDT (Post 10040 – California): One of the problems, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, is not the fact that it exists, that is not the real underlying problem here. The real problem, however, is the fact that the National Headquarters finally caught up last year to having motorcycle groups within the Veterans of Foreign Wars. So, the rules were established, and I commend the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for that.

But we already had something in place, and I am not afraid to tell you while I was on staff there were numerous calls. I was even in Korea one time and one young man came up to me and showed me Legion Riders,

and he said, "When is the Veterans of Foreign Wars going to start something like this?"

I actually think between Colorado and New Mexico, I drafted some dummy by-laws that maybe gave some structure if they chose to use it. The point is, we have an organization that is doing well within the State of California, and to put it bluntly, we just want to have something in place to allow them to continue to exist under our jurisdiction as they have for the past seven or eight years.

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

COMRADE TEX HUGHES (Post 5996 – South Carolina): I have a VFW Riders Group in my Post. They do great work. They abide by the By-laws and they work with other motorcycle groups. I have Rough Riders that are going to have a big fund-raiser for my Post coming September 10th. We get along well with all the locals, the Confederates and with the Hell's Angels. You name it; they get along good with all of them.

The big thing I want, I want my people to keep growing. They are abiding by the rules. They are a one-patch unit. They cannot be a three-patch, and they are riding not an MC, they are RC. If you put MC on there, everyone is going to come after you because they are the ones that approve anything that is MC. I am all for the VFW Riders Groups getting all the support they can get because they help us out financially.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you for the information.
Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): Through the chairman, to my Chief in 2004, when I was District Commander, I did use your name in there. I probably shouldn't, but I will say this, as a Commander-in-Chief and your reporting Adjutant General, at my level I have to assume that you were the captain of the ship. If that was put out, you are responsible for it. That is what we live by. I apologize, I shouldn't have put your name on it because I didn't have the letter in front of me, sir, with all due respect.

I want to say one more time, California is not skirting around the regulation that came up with 308 last year. In fact, we probably concur with it. If we had had that discussion in 2004, or actually 2000 when we began the process of getting the VFW agreement, and the agreements of the area, we probably would have had a motorcycle group. But it ended up as an MC because that is what was available. There was nothing in our By-laws to tell us what to do.

We had authority from the National Headquarters, and I want to say one more time I understand the concerns of the Committee. Show me a document, a complaint to the National Headquarters that my VFW MC has dishonored this organization with hanging around with one-percenters or anything like that. Show me that and I will shut the heck up.

I am again asking you, they have been there for eight years and they have not dishonored this organization. They have done a whole lot of work for the Department of California. I ask again, please allow us to continue with our VFW MC grandfathered as being authorized prior to the adoption last year.

That's it. I am done. Thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: With your permission, Commander-in-Chief, let me clarify something. I have heard this two or three times now. Keep in mind when you use the terminology "grandfathered in"

that is across the board. That may be you are just talking about California. In this organization, across the board means every Department.

COMRADE BOBBY PRICE (Post 2111 – California): May I respond?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: No.

COMRADE JAMES HESSELGRAVE (Post 5518 – Minnesota): I have been with this National Ride all but two years. I can remember when the National Ride was basically populated by the combat veterans. At one point, they were allowed to wear the Cross of Malta. We discontinued that.

For the following eight years, we have struggled to create national recognition of the VFW Riders Group. Thanks to the wisdom and the cooperation of our National Headquarters, we got Resolution 308. We have got a set of guidelines which structures that Riders Group, which restricts them to be a Committee of the Post, which they should be.

Now, what has been in the past is in the past. If California and other MCs or other groups want to comply with the VFW Riders Group, I see no problem with that. But I think they should comply with the guidelines that were set forth by the National Organization, and I have put as much time into this whole Riders Group as anybody in this room, and I ask you to comply with Resolution 308, the guidelines set forth by this organization, no MCs, just Riders Groups. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM BLEILER (Post 10886 – New Jersey): I am Father Bill Bleiler, Past National Chaplain and President of the State Chaplains of New Jersey, the Eastern States Chaplain, Post 10886. From what I am hearing, I am in favor of this proposal. I want to bring out a person, a close friend of mine, a great man, Howard Vander Clute.

Howard Vander Clute was a Past Commander-in-Chief, Past Adjutant General, and after he retired from the top order of the organization, he became a member of a motorcycle club. He was very proud to be a member of that club. I am surprised when he got into that kind of lifestyle, but he was very passionate with that.

I am not a member of the club, but I do know professional people in the club. I admire them. One of them is a lawyer. I just want to throw that out as a member of the club; I am in favor of the club.

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

COMRADE MARILYN MAXWELL (Post 3787 – California): I am very proud to be a member of the California Veterans MC. We have done nothing but good things for the VFW, the National Home, and now we are participating in Wounded Warriors events. Also, you have to realize that the Riders Association's groups have also gotten themselves bad names. The American Legion has gotten into trouble in the past.

We do ride. If we are going to support the different veterans organizations, like the Wounded Warriors and those things out there, we are all around the outdoor clubs. We are around Christian clubs that form the Confederation of Clubs. We are not out to disgrace this organization. We are proud of what we do.

Wish more of my brothers would be here. I am the only sister at this time. I am proud to be a club member. I cannot belong to any of the other clubs or organizations. It has to be property of, or I would have to be an association rider or associate rider. I could belong to the Hog Group. That is not what I want to be. I want to stay as a VFW California MC and continue to support this great organization. Thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Let me read the “Be It Resolved” as it was submitted by California.

“Be It Resolved, that those motorcycle clubs, groups and associations that existed with authorization from the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States prior to the adoption of Resolution 308 at the 111th National Convention, be allowed to continue to exist providing they adhere to the guidelines provided for in Sections 708 and 709 of the National By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.”

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

COMRADE DAN FERGUSON (Post 10342 – Arizona): Commander-in-Chief, at the time of this resolution last year, the only Department that had a motorcycle group running as an MC was California. So, this would apply only to California and not to the other 53 Departments. They have done many public events. I am a former Marine, and I retired out of Pendleton and I watched them as they formed as a group. I retired and moved to Arizona. I am a charter member and helped start the VFW Riders in Arizona.

These patches cost \$50 apiece. They are quite expensive to replace and change. I have watched when I ride out to California to visit my family that is still there. I have watched some of their events and I have ridden in a couple of their events. They are treated with respect by American Legion riders and other MCs. Yes, they run into Hell’s Angels territory, so do I. We are accepted by being VFW Riders. They went through the process.

At the time, they were told they needed to become an MC. They went through the rigmarole and they ran that way for several years. They have been accepted, and I understand the resolution now changes that, but they were doing it. They were representing us well.

Last year, I didn’t go to the National Convention. My daughter had just passed away. They rode the Memorial Ride with my riders in California. I have talked with them numerous times since then. They are good people, they are good comrades. It is one group and they are being watched like a hawk. I don’t see an issue with it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVE RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): I move to call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: There has been a motion to call for the question. Is there a second?

COMRADE RON SMITH (Post 8892 – Massachusetts): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It has been moved and seconded. It will need two-thirds. All those in favor will signify by saying “aye”; all those opposed “no”. The “ayes” have it.

Now, we are going to move to adopt 307. All those in favor will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed “no”. The “ayes” have it.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, we are going to continue to go ahead. We have to finish these this afternoon, because we have a packed schedule with committee meetings all day tomorrow. So, I indulge you to be with us, stay here with us and get the business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars done and we can get done as fast as we can. That is why we come to these meetings to offer our discussions. We win some and we lose some, but here is where we need to do our fighting. Let’s just stick it out here and get this done. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The Report of the Committee on

National Security and Foreign Affairs will be given by its Chairman, Walter G. Hogan.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. It is my pleasure to report that the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs convened and had a very productive meeting. Your instructions were read, roll call was taken, and the business proceeded on voting on the resolutions submitted to us.

For the support and wisdom and guidance, I also want to thank Vice-Chairman George Lisicki from the great state of New Jersey, Past Commander-in-Chief, the Chairman of the POW Subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak, and I also want to thank the Vice-Chairman, Tommy Tradewell, from the State of Wisconsin.

To all the members of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee and the POW Committee, I would like to thank them for their deliberation and for their active support in these resolutions.

We were also privileged to have a representative from the Republic of China and two representatives from the Russian Federation. Commander-in-Chief, the Committee deliberated carefully each resolution, and I will now move forward with the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee's recommendations. I would ask that each delegate, if they want something set aside, wait until I finish those that have been approved, and then make your motion to set aside.

I will now read the resolution numbers that the Committee recommended for approval as submitted.

The following resolutions recommend for approval:

Resolutions Nos. 401 through 411. That is 401 through 411. If I am going too fast, holler.

Resolutions 413 through 421, and Resolutions 427, 428 and 430.

I move for adoption of these resolutions as submitted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE LISICKI: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made and seconded. Does any need to be set aside?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): I request that 415 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: 415 is set aside.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE PAUL STEVENSON (Post 10046 – Alaska): I request that Resolution 401 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Resolution 401 is set aside. Any others? We will vote on the ones that they recommended for approval.

All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: We recommended 401. It is up for discussion.

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

COMRADE PAUL STEVENSON (Post 10046 – Alaska): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the reason that I would like to have this discussed

further is that, number one, I really believe in the spirit and intent of this resolution. I have no problem with supporting our brave men and women unequivocally in the war on terror.

I take issue with the word “unequivocally” support the President. I think that as a Marine combat veteran in Vietnam I know what it feels like to have a President that prosecutes a war for politics rather than victory. I would like to have a motion to delete the part of the resolution that says “The President of the United States” and leave it otherwise intact so that we support unequivocally our brave men and women fighting the war on terror for the United States. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I am looking for a second to that amendment. Seeing none, it dies.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BILL THOMSON (Post 6192 – New Jersey): Thank you, Chief. I second that amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE (Post 1851 – New Jersey): When a nation goes to war, the Commander-in-Chief that leads them to the war is the President of the United States. It doesn't matter if it is a Democrat or a Republican. This Nation is at war and we have to support the Commander-in-Chief and the troops. We have to do that. That is what we stand for. He is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. That is what we have to do. In my opinion, we have to support the President of the United States because he is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I recognize Microphone 2.

COMRADE PAUL STEVENSON (Post 10046 – Alaska): I do not say we should not support the Commander-in-Chief. I want to remind you what the word “unequivocally” means. It means absolute, unwavering or unchanging, and that means without question. I don't believe in supporting a politician without question. We need to question all of our politicians, every single one of them.

I believe in unequivocally supporting our brave men and women fighting the war on terrorism unequivocally, but not the President necessarily if the President, if he is not or she is not doing the job that we expect them to do, and that is win the war on terror.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We are going to vote on the amendment first.

COMRADE JAMES CARLISLE (Post 10097 – Florida): I didn't particularly like that statement. It seems like that delegate here was going against our President. I think he has done a terrific job.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrade, no attacking of a delegate.

COMRADE JAMES CARLISLE (Post 10097 – Florida): Anyway, I think our President has done a terrific job. He is the one that got Osama bin Laden and fighting two wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrade, respect. He has a right to his opinion, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DON SMITH (Post 9669 – Colorado): I believe the amend-

ment needs to be restated. I think what he wants to eliminate is the word “unequivocally”.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is what we are talking about right now.

COMRADE DON SMITH (Post 9669 – Colorado): I know that, but it seems to me the rest of the people are looking at it in a different way. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BILL THOMSON (Post 6192 – New Jersey): Commander, I could care less whether somebody is a Democrat or a Republican. I think that the amendment that we asked for was just to strike that, so we are saying that we are supporting our troops unequivocally.

I think the atmosphere in this country, that we hesitate to back anybody unequivocally in Washington, D.C. But I think we should support our troops. I think that is what the amendment asked for regardless of any politicians.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I recognize Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JOHN McNEILL (Post 5412 – Virginia): You need to read the whole sentence here. It is a complete sentence, if I might state that. If you take the word “unequivocally” out, you take out everything else in that sentence, that we unequivocally support the President and the brave men and women in uniform; it would be we unequivocally support the brave men and women in uniform who prosecute the war on terrorism.

If the President is not prosecuting the war on terrorism, sure we can criticize him, that is what that statement says. If he is prosecuting the war on terrorism, we unequivocally support the President. If you take the word “unequivocally” out you don’t likewise do so for the men and women in uniform. Unequivocally needs to stay in.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): I would like to amend this by removing “unequivocally to support the President” to “support the President and unequivocally support the brave men and women in uniform.”

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We are working on this amendment right now, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RICHARD RASKIN (Post 7589 – Virginia): I think we are misinterpreting the word “unequivocally.” It simply is there to strengthen the word “support”. It in no way takes away or adds to whether we are going to support the war, or support the President, or support the troops, or whatever. Removing that word from this resolution, by no means will take away our support from either the President or the troops.

I think we are sitting here arguing over semantics. We are not really going to accomplish anything by leaving that word there or taking it out. The resolution with or without the word “unequivocally” in it will be just as strong. So, I vote in favor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVE ALLISON (Post 2427 – Texas): I am wondering why this resolution is even on here. Who in this hall or who in the United States of America, or who in the standing Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force or Coast Guard think that this group, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, does not unequivocally support them in anything they

do? Why do we even have this resolution?

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

COMRADE DALE SMITH (Post 3783 – California): I call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do I have a second?

COMRADE ED FORD (Post 7635 – California): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made and seconded. It takes a two-thirds vote to close debate. All in favor of closing debate will say “aye”; all opposed “no”. It carried.

Now, we are going to vote on the amendment to delete that word. The “ayes” will delete the word and “nays” will not. All those in favor of deleting that say “aye”; all opposed “no”. The “nays” have it.

Now, on the motion to accept the resolution, all in favor will signify by saying “aye”; all opposed “no”. The “ayes” have it. It is so ordered.

Resolution 415 has been set aside. Is there a motion?

I recognize Microphone 3.

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): I rise to discuss this resolution in the fact that although I have made —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have got to have a motion.

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): I rise in opposition to this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: This is not on the floor yet.

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): I would make a motion to amend Resolution No. 415.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You can’t amend something that we are not talking about yet. Is there a motion to accept?

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): I make a motion to accept Resolution 415.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do we have a second?

COMRADE RON SMITH (Post 8892 – Massachusetts): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second. It is open for discussion.

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, this resolution tries to accomplish a very lofty goal in preventing an ex-spouse from being able to take the child away from a deployed service member, but it falls short.

The way it is currently worded is that we are asking that the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act be worded in such a way to prevent the permanent transfer of custody of a child of a service member that has been deployed. However, it does not prevent the temporary transfer of custody. So, what you are doing in effect is that you are having the service member deployed, three days later his former spouse petitions to the court for a change of custody and gets a temporary order granted and the child lives with the spouse the entire time the service member is deployed, and then that service member has to fight to regain custody of their child once they return.

This resolution should be worded in such a way that the word “permanent” is not even there. It should be worded that the Service and Sailors Civil Relief Act prevent the change of custody arrangements while the service member is deployed, period.

COMRADE JOE DAVIS (Post 3391 – Virginia): The reason why we have this in there is because right now, we have a lot of single parents in the

United States military. Some of you have to have -- in your deployment preparations, you have to make provisions for your children. A lot of these single parents let the ex take the child while they are deployed for seven months or a year.

During that time, in certain states, the ex files for permanent custody. That's why we have the word "permanent" in there. They already have temporary custody, because that was in part of their deployment preparations. We are trying to make sure that we restrict it to the state side and take it out of these liberal courts out there, a political statement, but we want to make sure there is no permanent removal of that child from the veteran, from the person that is deployed.

Does that explain things?

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

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): I understand your explanation on a voluntary transfer to an ex-spouse, the way this is written it still allows an involuntary transfer of custody where the service person would have to come back and go through court and go through litigation to get return of custody.

COMRADE JOE DAVIS (Post 3391 – Virginia): I fail to understand what you are trying to say. Right now, if I am deployed and I give my child to my ex-spouse, and she files for permanent custody, depending on the state I am residing in, that judge could basically make a permanent change, and I can't be re-deployed back from Afghanistan to state my case. That is what this resolution is all about.

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): Comrade, if what you are saying is, if you voluntarily give transfer of custody. What I am saying is okay, in the family care planning, a service member leaves their child to like a parent, and as soon as that service member deploys, that ex-spouse can go to court and file for custody.

Where this only says "permanent", if we deleted that and it just said "no transfer of custody could be done," they couldn't even take the child away from the parent on a temporary basis.

COMRADE JOE DAVIS (Post 3391 – Virginia): Let me read the Resolved one more time.

"Be It Resolved", by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the service members Civil Relief Act to prevent permanent changes to child custody arrangements while service members are deployed." It has nothing to do with these temporary arrangements, because that is required. The permanent change is done in a court of law. That is what we want changes to.

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

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I mean I understand what the representative of the committee is saying, but we are still going back to the same point. He just said that this does not even deal with the temporary transfer of custody, which if it happens while the service member is deployed, that service member has to come back and go to court in order to regain custody of their child.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Any other discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAN FERGUSON (Post 10342 – Arizona): If the Family Care Plan by a service member planning to deploy, say a single parent

due to divorce, they do a Family Care Plan where their children are going. Those Family Care plans are secured by a temporary power of attorney for custody of the child. It is temporary.

I work on an Army Base. I have seen the soldiers give their ex a temporary power of attorney, and while they are gone the spouse goes to court and gets custody things in a temporary nature, which then results in one heck of a cat fight in court when they come back.

What my esteemed colleague is trying to do is to take out the word any type of changes for custody. That way it protects our service members who are deployed and defending their country. We are not worried about the word "permanent". We just want to take the word "permanent" out, period, so it prevents any type of change of custody through the court systems service.

COMRADE JOE DAVIS (Post 3391 – Virginia): Comrade, would it be acceptable if we changed the verbiage to say, "We urge Congress to amend the Service Members Civil Relief Act to prevent any changes to child custody"?

COMRADE CHRIS KOZAKIEWICZ (Post 9907 – Arizona): Comrade, that is what we are exactly requesting.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has already been made as a member of the committee.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAN FERGUSON (Post 10342 – Arizona): I will second that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made and seconded. This will be on the amendment. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. Is there any further discussion?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LEE PARKER (Post 1645 – Massachusetts): I think everybody is looking at this in a very small window. You need to look more than just dealing with parents or whatever. You need to deal with catastrophic occurrences that leave the child without any support whatsoever.

If you pass something that says you can't have a permanent custody, a family driving or a wife or a husband left back, while someone else, their spouse has deployed, has a traffic accident and dies, what is going to happen to the child? Or if you have a state involved, state child care involved in taking children away, and you are sitting there, and we are involved and we don't want any changes of custody, it just doesn't work out. We need to look at all the picture, the total picture dealing with children. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BEVERLY McLAUGHLIN (Post 6978 – Indiana): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am one of those veterans that had to leave my child IN temporary custody with my ex-husband. During my deployment, my training here in San Antonio, my ex-husband asked for custody, permanent custody of my daughter, and it took me five years to get her back.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do I have an understanding you are for the resolution?

COMRADE BEVERLY McLAUGHLIN (Post 6978 – Indiana): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Okay. Any other comments? We are going to be voting on the amendment. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I will now ask Vice-Chairman Lisicki to present the amended resolutions and those that were rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LISICKI: Resolution 412 was a major rewrite to include a title change, to stop erosion of military retirement benefits. This was required to counter congressional efforts to pay for ten years of war by reducing or eliminating ten military or veterans services and programs.

Resolution 429, entitled "Hold and Try Terrorists at Guantanamo Bay" was amended to change the word "Muslims" to "radical and/or religious extremists."

Resolution 435, which was introduced by the Commander-in-Chief after the resolution booklet went to print, is for legislation to make the position of Chief of the National Guard Bureau a permanent member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I now move for adoption of Resolutions 412 and 429, as amended, and for the adoption of Resolution 435 as submitted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: As a delegate from Post 4698, Wisconsin, I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any set asides of those three? Seeing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those against "nay". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LISICKI: I will now read the list of four resolutions that the committee recommends be rejected and the reasons why. After the list is read, you will have an opportunity to move for the adoption of any of these resolutions. Each motion will be taken up and disposed of in order.

If no motion is made, the resolutions will be under our convention rules, automatically rejected by this convention.

Resolution 431, "Concurrent Receipt of Military Longevity Retirement Pay and Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Compensation", this was rejected in favor of Resolution 417.

R-431 is similar to the Commander-in-Chief's R-417.

Resolution 432, "Terrorists Found Guilty in Military Courts Under Military Law Should get the Death Penalty." This was rejected for the death penalty without possibility of appeal is too absolute and certainly not the appropriate punishment for property destruction. The committee found this resolution unrealistic.

Resolution 433, "Reactivate the Selective Service System"; this was rejected. This resolution calls for reinstatement of the draft to reduce the number and duration of deployments on all volunteer forces. The committee found this resolution unrealistic.

Resolution 434, "Cease Foreign Aid Until Health Care Act of 1996 is Enforced." This was recommended for rejection. This resolution called to end all foreign aid to help balance the nation's budget and to pay honorary discharged veterans into the new VA Health Care services. Aside from the VA not having the capacity to triple their customary workload, the committee found this recommendation unrealistic.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Are there any motions to adopt those?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE MARTIN SPANI (Post 1040 – Washington): I move adoption of Resolution 433.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made to adopt Resolution 433. Do we have a second?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PAUL MANLY (Post 1474 – Washington): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It has been seconded. We will do that one first.

Microphone No. 3, any questions or comments?

COMRADE MARTIN SPANI (Post 1040 – Washington): Our men and women of the armed forces, at the present time, are going through multiple deployments. This is causing severe hardship, not only on the servicemen, but on their families. It is time for the Veterans of Foreign Wars to walk the talk and support these troops by passing this resolution. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Anybody else on that resolution?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE KEN WISEMAN (Post 970 – Hawaii): I am Kenneth Wiseman, Post 970, Hawaii, and I am also an active E-5 in the United States Navy. I am here to tell you right now we don't need quantity, we need quality. For those of you who were drafted and served in Vietnam, Korea, World War II, you will remember the ones who didn't want to be there in the beginning, and they are a bigger threat, those that don't want to be in uniform are a bigger threat to our troops than the enemy rifles that are facing us.

As we look at a military, we have the most highly-trained, well-paid, best-educated, best-led force the world has ever seen. But yet instead of using nuclear weapons to get our way, we send hospital ships to save the world. I have the Humanitarian Service Medal, and as we go around the world and do the things we do because we are the only ones that can do it, then we need the quality troops and we need their AP scores to be solid and we need college and high school educated people.

My comrade up there on the podium, Joe Davis, made a great point to the committee. Almost 75 percent of America's youth is too fat to be in the military. That's true. Their obesity is an issue. I teach the Pacific Fleet of the United States Navy and Coast Guard Fire Fighters, because I am a Navy Fire Fighter, a damage control man.

I see our sailors and Coast Guardsmen every day and I know by my working up in Schofield Barracks with the Marines, we have the quality of troops we have. They volunteered to come back into combat because they love their brothers in arms and their sisters as well. We need quality and not quantity. I am wholeheartedly opposed to these draftees of today being forced in the military. They don't want to be there.

There was a comment made about the travesties of World War II. I am here to tell you that was a different time. Our greatest generation did what they did in World War II, and at home afterwards and saved our Nation. And that was a different generation.

As much as I love my generation, I can tell you, my grandfather's generation is not the same as mine. I don't think instituting the draft is going to do us any good.

The Vietnam veterans are paving the way helping us so when we come home we don't get called baby killers, and we don't get stuff thrown at us. Those draftees in Vietnam are not the same as the draftees you see today. Comrades, listen to this sailor, vote against the resolution and let's continue

a voluntary military force.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Anybody else on that, discussing that resolution?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ED CROUCHER (Post 6786 – Montana): I also rise against this motion, but not for the reasons stated. I have a difference of opinion on what the draft did for us during the Vietnam era. I am a disillusioned, a long-way from Montana boy at the age of 17, given the opportunity to serve in the United States Marine Corps.

I rose from the rank of Private up to the lofty rank of Chief Warrant Officer. At that time, I was promoted to the lowly rank of Captain and I retired. However, that being said, I am opposed to the resolution because it addresses the wrong reasons. I support a draft. I believe that every young American has an obligation to serve this country in some way and the challenges they would present to our military leaders are not new challenges. They have had that.

The military, right now, would absolutely disagree with this. They would say we want the quality people we have nowadays, but the fact remains that the constituents, the people I work with, the veterans I work with all do support this. They support a draft but for not the reason stated. I urge you not to pass it. We need to go ahead and relook at this sometime in the future, but not the present time. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MICHAEL ALLISON (Post 1922 – Texas): Chief, I am also against this resolution. My son is in Afghanistan for the fourth term. Chief, he is a volunteer.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JUSTICE BIGBIE (Post 1820 – Texas): With all due respect to the previous speaker, I served with draftees. They are wonderful people. We have skinheads that were RAs and U.S. and regular Navy and so forth and so on. I am in favor of this motion. It probably won't pass, but I have written the President of the United States on a number of occasions telling him if he really wants to do something for the armed forces, he might consider bringing the draft back. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Any other discussion on that resolution? Seeing none, all those in favor of Resolution 433 will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". It failed.

Do we have anybody else to bring up one of the rejections?

I recognize the speaker at Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE EARL COURTER (Post 3620 – NEW JERSEY): I move adoption of Resolution No. 432.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do we have a second?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOSEPH ORLANDO (Post 5941 – New Jersey): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second. We will open it up for discussion.

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): I would move to amend this resolution with the following words: under the section "Be It Further Resolved, that when found by a military tribunal to not be a soldier of a foreign country, or under orders of a foreign country, but to be an

individual terrorist who has attempted to, or killed or wounded an American serviceman, civilian, and/or destroyed American property, the penalty should be death, provided that the full process of legal appeals has been exhausted."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion was to amend. Do we have a second?

COMRADE EARL COURTER (Post 3620 – New Jersey): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrade, do we have that in writing so we have the words to that?

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): I will get you a better copy of it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Get to the microphone. We need the copy now.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): Okay. I do have it in writing.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We will not be able to vote on that right now until we get that in writing. We are going to the other ones right now. Any other ones? Seeing none, we will move on.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELIC: To the comrade with the amendment, we are going to get to that today. When I look at what you had, you had two separate pieces of paper and inserts and lines. Write it out clearly. We have got other ones to do. We will get to yours, but write it out clearly so we can actually address it to the rest of the convention so they know exactly what you are talking about.

COMRADE DENNIS CLARK (Post 2433 – New Jersey): I will do that right now.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

Next up is the Report on the Subcommittee on POW/MIA, John Gwizdak, Chairman.

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW-MIA

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you so much, Commander. I am pleased to report on the POW-MIA Subcommittee of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee. We convened at the San Antonio Convention Center on Sunday, August 28th, 2011. The instructions were followed. All members were present, and action was taken on all Resolutions assigned to this Committee.

I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman of the POW-MIA Subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell for his expertise and extensive knowledge on this issue. I also extend the Committee's gratitude and my personal appreciation to our advisors, Joe Davis, from the Washington Office, and Deborah Anderson from the National Headquarters, as well as to the Department of Minnesota for their submission of this resolution.

We had one guest speaker for the meeting, Mr. Johnie Webb, the Deputy to the Commander of the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command in Hawaii, who provided an updated briefing on JPAC activities and future operations.

Commander, the Committee carefully reviewed and deliberated on each Resolution. I also will advise the delegates that all resolutions for

POW-MIA action that were submitted last year and approved are still in effect.

I will now read the Resolution numbers that the Committee recommends for approval, and those that were recommended for approval, as amended, at the same time.

If any delegate would like a Resolution set aside for discussion, please so indicate after I have completed the approved statement of the report, and move for adoption.

Resolution 422, it was approved as amended. It is entitled "POW-MIA Full Accounting Mission Funding."

Resolution 423, "Remove POW-MIA discussions with North Korea." It was approved.

Resolution 424, "Call for Vietnam POW-MIA Unilateral Action," approved.

Resolution 425, "Preserve Integrity of U.S.-Russia Joint Commission." It was approved as amended.

Resolution No. 426, "Call for Vietnam POW-MIA Unilateral Action," approved.

I now move that these resolutions be approved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TOMMY TRADEWELL: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion has been made and seconded. Seeing nobody at the microphones, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Commander, this concludes the POW-MIA Subcommittee Report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Are you ready down there? No. We will have the Report of the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions by Chairman Gary Kurpius.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Everybody please remember how smoothly that last committee went. (Laughter)

Commander-in-Chief Eubank, let me report that your Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions met at 2:00 o'clock p.m., Sunday, August 28th.

The Committee was divided into three subcommittees to carefully deliberate each of the four Resolutions that were assigned. I would like to express my appreciation to each of the Subcommittees for the excellent job they did. I also wish to express thanks and appreciation to Bill Bradshaw, Director of National Veterans Service, and Ray Kelley, Director of National Legislative Service for their valuable, technical guidance, which they and their staff provided to the committee.

I also want to thank Past Commander-in-Chief James Mueller from Missouri for serving as vice-chairman of this very important convention committee, and to Dawn Jarik, from the NVS staff that served as the committee secretary and coordinated the results of our deliberation.

I will now proceed with reading the resolution numbers that the committee recommended for approval as written. This is all in the 600 series. They are 601, 602, 604, 605, 606, 607, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 627, 630, 639, 641, 644, 646, 647.

Commander, I move we accept the Committee's recommendation.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JIM MUELLER: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Any of those to be set aside? Seeing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Commander-in-Chief, I will now read the Resolution numbers that the Committee recommends for approval, as amended. They are Resolutions 603, 608, 625, 626, 628, 629, 631, 632, 635, 636, 637, 642, 645.

I move to accept the Committee's recommendation and approve those resolutions as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Any questions on the amendments? Are there any set asides? Seeing none, all in favor of the resolutions, as amended, will say "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: I will now read the resolution numbers and the titles that the committee recommended for rejection, and most of these are rejected in favor of some other ones, so I will let you know which ones they were.

Resolution 623, that was rejected in favor of Resolution 645.

Resolution No. 624 was rejected in favor of Resolution 647.

Resolution 633 was rejected in favor of 616.

Resolution 634 was rejected. It pertains to Veterans' Preference in Federal Employment. It was rejected.

Resolution 638 was rejected in favor of 646, and 640 was rejected because it "required the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to pay interest to the claims that are appealed." It was rejected because of the claims process and not the federal process.

Resolution 643 was rejected in favor of Resolution 629.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Are there any that need to be set aside. Any motion to accept any of those?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: That concludes the Committee's Report on Veterans Service, and I do.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Cont'd.)

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELICIC: We are coming back to Resolution 432. As you recall, there was a motion and a second, and then there was a motion and a second to amend. We have the amended language now from our comrade from New Jersey, and a member of the committee will now read the amended language.

COMRADE JOE DAVIS (Post 3391 – Virginia): Comrade, what was amended in Resolution 432 was the third "Be It Resolved." It has been amended to read: "Be It Further Resolved, that when found by a military tribunal to not be a soldier of a foreign country, or under orders of a foreign country, but to be an individual terrorist who had attempted to, or killed, or wounded an American serviceman, or civilian, the penalty shall be death provided the process of legal appeals has been exhausted."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Do we have any discussion on the amendment? Seeing none, we are going to be voting on the amendment. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The

amendment passes.

Now, we are going to vote on the resolution, as amended. All those in favor will say "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I want to thank you, I think, for this appointment. This now concludes the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee report. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I want to thank all the members for standing by their committees and doing the job that they are here to do. They did a great job. I want to personally thank everybody that stayed in here to fight for what they thought was correct.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please perform the Closing Ceremonies for today's business session.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, please rise.

National Chaplain.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Almighty God, we thank You for this day. Help us to go forth, aware of the opportunities that each one of us has to serve others in their need and thus serve you. You remind us that, inasmuch as You have served the least, You have served me.

Guide us in unity and harmony. That greatness is achieved through service. Watch over those who guard the gates of freedom in various parts of the world. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, facing the Flag of the United States, please join me in the salute.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. We are recessed until tomorrow morning. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 5:30 o'clock p.m., to reconvene on Tuesday, August 30th, 2011, at 8:00 o'clock a.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2011

(The Second Business Session of the 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank, presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I will now reconvene the 112th VFW National Convention.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please conduct the opening ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. National Officers and Comrades, please rise for the Opening Prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

Comrade National Chaplain.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Our God and Father, as we give thanks for the opportunities of this day, we pause to ask your blessing and guidance. We are reminded, that except the Lord's guidance, our labor will ultimately fail.

We, as Americans, veterans and soldiers, have been entrusted with a great mission to uphold liberty, a liberty that stands for justice, truth and the value of one individual.

While we have had to take up arms, our goal is peace. A peace not only in the world, but a peace with our God and a peace with ourselves. A message of peace and goodwill that brings light and hope into a world too often ruled by war and suffering. A message of life, liberty and the following of our dreams to many who have only known suffering and fear.

We thank you that our country does not seek to overcome others to rule over them, but to bring the promise that every man would be free to make choices and live in peace.

For these and all other blessings, we give thanks in your name. Amen.

SALUTE TO COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, please face the Flag of the United States and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance were given at this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the reconvening of this convention has been completed and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Everyone be seated, please.

I would now like to call on Betty Gripp for the Report of the Credentials Committee.

COMRADE BETTY GRIPP (Department of Arizona): Good morning, comrades. At the close of business yesterday, August 29th, 2011, the total delegate strength was 9,134. The total Department Commanders, 36. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 25. Total officers, 38. That is for a grand total of 9,233.

INTRODUCTION OF SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: A trip to almost any VA hospital will reveal the importance of the work of the Military Order of the Cootie. Each year, the Cooties spend thousands of hours bringing comfort 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 91st Supreme Scratch in Indianapolis in August 2010.

Please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States of America, George Dennis, from the Silver State of Nevada. (Applause)

REMARKS – MOC SUPREME COMMANDER GEORGE DENNIS

MOC SUPREME COMMANDER DENNIS: Wow! I am standing up. I figured you would ask me that. I am the guy with the two first names. Some call me George, some call me Dennis, some call me Dennis the Menace, some call me Denny. I have a lot of nicknames. I don’t care what you call me but I am not going to tell you what my wife calls me. (Laughter)

It is a pleasure to wear this Cootie hat. Of course, we all wear so many hats, but I will wear this one today representing the Military Order of the Cooties. I would like to mention that the Cooties this year, their slogan was “We are the We Team.”

The “We Team” is the Veterans of Foreign Wars first, and then the Military Order of the Cootie. There is no “I” in “Team”. Our team was that if there is a job to do, we will get around to it, and we had a local token that is a round token in our pocket to remind us of that.

The Cooties this year had a little upsetness when we lost our Quartermaster. He passed away. It left us sort of in a dilemma. The one thing we will have to do this year is to elect another Supreme Quartermaster. Every time that the Cooties elect a Quartermaster, they move the headquarters to where that person resides. I believe that this is the proper thing to do, and I am looking forward, we have a lease on the building for another two years, and my hope is that we can move the headquarters to Kansas City, Missouri, where we belong.

After all, we are an auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I personally believe that is where our headquarters should be. I am going to fight like the devil to make that change come true.

Like I say, we wear many hats. This year, I am wearing this particular one. I feel out of place here. I feel like I am not in my VFW uniform where I should be. So, as soon as this is over, I am going to get back in the grays

and the blues.

So, you have probably heard rumors that the Cooties are strictly for themselves and not the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I would like to make that a myth. I can do that by changing another hat that I have. I have another hat here that states I am a Veteran of Foreign Wars All American Commander from the Department of Nevada. I have a little pin on my hat in the shape of a crown, and I am a Triple Crown All American Commander, which I am proud of. (Applause)

So, I think that would be proof that the Cooties are not strictly for themselves.

We are very highly-dedicated working Veterans of Foreign Wars people.

So, now, those chairs are getting a bit hard. It seems like we hardly left here last night and we are back here again. I will be brief and crunch some numbers for you so that will give you an idea of what the Cooties have done this past year for our parent organization.

The Cooties have a program called the "VFW Booster Program", where we recruit new and reinstated members for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. This particular year, even though our membership is way down, we have signed up 3,444 members for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We have traveled 37,000 miles to accomplish all of our efforts that we do for hospital work.

We have made 7,500 new visits to hospitals, nursing homes and rehab centers visiting our VFW patients. We also donated \$85,000 toward things that we do in giving our gifts and stuff to the hospital patients that we visit. We also try to make them happy in their beds of white.

We also donated \$20,000 to a special fund for the Supreme Commander. Each year he has a special fund at the National Home. So, we donated \$20,000 for the rehabilitation of their animal 4-H barn and built them a platform and grooming stations so they can practice taking care of their animals.

These young people, they have animals that they raise and they take them to the county fairs, and they make quite a bit of money. They are really entrepreneurs.

We have a Scholarship Fund, and this year we donated \$4,000 for a young man from the home that wants to continue his education. Then there are other monies that we donate also to the National Home.

We have the regular donations that go to the general fund, and then each state that has a home at the National Home, we donate the money for the maintenance, upkeep and taking care of that. There is quite a bit done.

In this particular year, we had another donation at the National Home where we wanted to bring up the guest house, that is our little 16-unit motel there, and that had to be refurbished. We made a big donation towards that also. So, between the Veterans of Foreign Wars membership and visiting the patients in the hospitals, and doing all the fun traveling and gifts, we take real good care of the National Home.

We make sure that we also have our annual trek to D.C. for the placement of the wreaths at the Arlington Cemetery.

I think I have taken up enough of your time. We were here so late last night, it seems like we hardly got back. I am going to leave you now. Thank you very much for your time today. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THOMAS TRADEWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: During his 40-plus year association with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell amassed a distinguished record of service to our nation, community and to our organization.

As VFW Commander-in-Chief, Tommy was stalwart and unwavering in his commitment to America's veterans and to our nation's service members. Throughout his year as VFW National Commander-in-Chief, Tommy proved to be an aggressive spokesman for all those we serve.

For that, and his many years of dedicated service, we owe a forever lasting debt of gratitude to him. Please join me in honoring Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Distinguished Service Medal and Citation awarded to Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.

"In lasting appreciation and spirited recognition of an extraordinary record of outstanding and stalwart service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. His many accomplishments as an exceedingly involved and active member, including successful duties as Post, District and Department Commander ultimately culminated as the Commander-in-Chief.

"Through his outstanding endeavors, he also earned positions of National Inspector General and as a National Council of Administration representative.

"His laudable and noteworthy commitment to the VFW, along with the especially professional presence with which he performed his duties, are in the finest 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 30th day of August, 2011."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: "Gunner" said I had to say good morning. Good morning. "Gunner", thank you for your help, and Mr. Maher and the staff in Washington, D.C., my year was successful because of all of you. I thank every one of you that work for the VFW in your communities and your Posts and your Districts, and I thank our officers, Richard Eubank, Richard DeNoyer and John Hamilton, and, of course, Glen, who was before us and led the way for us, started our charge.

I thank all of you. God bless each one of you, God bless our troops, and God bless the USA. (Applause)

FLAG PRESENTATION FROM VFW POST 837

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Now, I am honored to welcome the VFW Post 837 Commander, from San Antonio, Texas, Russ Crain.

Commander Crain is here today to present Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank with a very unique flag. This flag was recently flown over the

Alamo and represents the great state of Texas.

Please welcome Russ as he honors our Chief with this very special gift.

COMRADE RUSS CRAIN (Post 837 – Texas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank, as Commander of Post 837 in San Antonio, Texas, and on behalf of our members and auxiliaries, the City of San Antonio and the great State of Texas, it is my distinct honor and privilege to present this flag flown over the Alamo with a certificate to you.

What we would like to do is to read the Certificate, and if the Alamo Ranger would approach with the flag, please.

This Texas flag proudly flew over the Alamo August 8, 2011, and is presented by VFW Post 837, San Antonio, Texas, to Richard L. Eubank, VFW National Commander, for your Marine Corps service, leadership and your love for the American veterans.

On this certificate, it has the official seal of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, signed by Melinda Navaro-Elmo, Committee Chairman, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Our Post felt that it might be very appropriate for the Commander-in-Chief to take a small part of Texas home with him. (Applause)

Commander-in-Chief Eubank and our comrades from over our 50 great states, thank you for affording me this time.

I would like to present a donation to the Alamo. I would like to introduce the former President General of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Mrs. Virginia VanCleave and Mr. Tom Hyer, as the Chief Alamo Ranger.

On behalf of Post 837 and its auxiliaries, we would like to present you this check for \$1,000. We hope this donation will help in preserving the legacy of the Alamo in the great State of Texas. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE TO 2010 CONVENTION COMMITTEE

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Yesterday, we were going to give an award to the Department of Indiana, Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock, and there was a mix-up on our part on that. So, this morning we are going to make that presentation and we will present it to the Department of Indiana.

It is now my distinct pleasure to present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 111th National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's very successful National Convention in Indianapolis. Here to accept the award on behalf of the Committee is the Department Commander of the Department of Indiana, and one of the Committee Chairmen for the 111th National Convention.

"Certificate of Appreciation presented to the 111th National Convention Committee in extraordinary appreciation and recognition of its outstanding dedication and persistent drive to ensure the success of the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 21-26, 2010.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 20th day of August, 2011."

It is signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Our next guest is the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Scott Gould.

The Deputy Secretary serves as the Chief Operating Officer of the federal government's second largest department that provides a nationwide system of health-care services, benefits programs, and national cemeteries for America's veterans and their dependents.

Secretary Gould is a veteran of the U.S. Navy, having served aboard the guided missile destroyer Richard E. Byrd. He was also recalled to active duty after 9/11 to support Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom.

To say he and the VA have their hands full is an understatement. The United States has more than 140,000 troops currently stationed on two very dangerous war fronts. We have more than two million more who have already served and separated or retired, many of whom will require a lifetime of care for their injuries. Plus, we have an aging veterans' population from previous wars and conflicts.

Add to this workload a national debt crisis, with some in Congress continuing to eyeball the programs and services the VA provides to America's disabled veterans and their survivors.

Mr. Secretary, your task is difficult, but please know that the VFW has got your back when it comes to properly taking care of America's veterans and their families. The VA's mission is certainly a benevolent one that perfectly dovetails with ours.

Comrades, please welcome Deputy Secretary Scott Gould. (Applause)

REMARKS – THE HONORABLE W. SCOTT GOULD

VA DEPUTY SECRETARY GOULD: Good morning. Thank you. Thank you very much. It is a privilege and honor to be with you this morning.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Eubank, for your very kind introduction and for your leadership over the past year. Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief DeNoyer, on behalf of Secretary Shinseki, whom I represent today, please accept the very best wishes as you prepare to assume the command of the VFW.

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Hamilton and Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent, thank you for all you do for the VFW and for our veterans.

Executive Director Bob Wallace, with whom I meet regularly, to work on the issues before us, Veterans Service representative Bill Bradshaw, thank you for your contributions to our communities across the nation. You are truly a national organization.

To Auxiliary President Cortina Barnes, Senior Vice-President Rankin and members of the all-important Ladies Auxiliary, members of the VFW, good morning, everyone.

Thank you for the invitation to address this 112th National Convention, a tribute to more than a century of service to America's veterans.

Now, what I want to do today is very simple. Secretary Shinseki and I began by listening. We understand that we cannot do our job without you.

What you told us two and a half years ago in part set the agenda that I would like to describe to you today, both the problems that you told us we needed to address, the actions we have taken since then, and our plans for the future.

You are a powerful voice, a powerful voice in helping us understand as well as Congress and the American public with what the needs are for the veterans and their families and their survivors, for every man and woman who serves in uniform, and for Americans from coast to coast who benefit from your civic community and charitable contributions.

The way I see it, you-all figured it out at some point. Somebody you knew gave their life in service to the country. You, yourself, stood in harm's way and you made a decision: How am I going to use that freedom in the country that I served to protect?

By any measure, the choice that you made to serve has been remarkable. Thirteen million volunteer hours donated to the cause of veterans, much of that service in VA facilities, which we thank you for.

Two and a half million dollars each year to college scholarships given to deserving high school students, and leading the way during the National Volunteer Week and make a difference today, the VFW truly makes a difference in the lives of so many people.

I am indeed honored to join you today. I think it is entirely appropriate for me to be speaking at your convention's business session. I know that scares away a lot of folks early in the morning.

When you get right down to it, the VA is in the business of serving veterans with programs and services that, taken together, are the envy of the world. Our bottom line is veterans first, last and always.

Here is a quick snapshot of our operations. Of our country's approximately 23 million veterans, eight million are enrolled in the VA health-care system today. Six million veteran patients walked through our doors last year alone. Annually, over four million veterans and survivors received VA compensation and benefits. Almost one million veterans and family members are being educated under the post 9/11 GI Bill and other VA educational assistance programs.

And 1.4 million veterans have zero down payment home loans guaranteed by the VA. Approximately, 100,000 veterans and family members are laid to rest each year in 131 of our national cemeteries. It is all supported by \$126.6 billion in congressionally-appropriated revenue. That is a pretty big business by any measure. It is larger than my old company, IBM, and it makes our size and scope and budget on a par with the top ten corporations in America.

Almost three years ago, our CEO, if you will, President Obama, directed Secretary Shinseki to do only two things. First, make things better for veterans. In other words, improve our quality of services, and while we are at it, improve our customer service level second to none.

Second, to transform the Veterans Affairs into a 21st century organization for our 21st century veterans.

Now, the President not only provided that superb guidance, but he also provided his personal support. He did it with more than that, he provided the much needed resources to get the job done.

When Secretary Shinseki and I first came on board in 2008, the VA budget was \$99.8 billion. The following year, President Obama increased that amount by 16 percent to \$115 billion, the largest single year budget

hike in 30 years.

This year, the 2011 budget, the one we are executing now, grew to \$126.6 billion, and the President's 2012, next year's request currently before Congress is for \$132.2 billion.

I don't need to tell you that very few organizations, public, private, non-profit, enjoy that kind of resource growth particularly in these difficult economic times. Every dollar of it is needed to fix and resolve the long-standing issues before our Department.

Let me describe what I perceive to be some of those issues and see if you can hear in your own voice and guidance to the Secretary and me two and a half years ago. I am talking about things like equity and access to VA's care. Say, for veterans living in my home state of Massachusetts, and for veterans living in Big Sky, Montana, distance and convenience to the nearest VA facility is an issue.

The fact is, we have close to a thousand veterans living in the Northern Mariana Islands who have to travel by air all the way to Guam to an outpatient clinic for care and treatment.

For those of you who have traveled in the Pacific, you know how big those distances are. I am talking about outreach and access in terms of tele-health. We need VA care right into a veteran's home.

They told us we have a claims process that is difficult to navigate, a broken system some say, with a backlog that has been years in the making. Here is an eye-opening statistic. In the last decade, 2000 to 2010, incoming disability claims grew by a staggering 106 percent more than double over ten years. The average number of issues within each one of the claims has doubled as well.

There is the scourge of veterans homelessness that is made all the more stinging by the fact that the nation, at the same time, is at war. There is the long-standing perception that the VA has an attitude problem. In some quarters, we are seen as an adversary, not as an advocate.

Added to that, we are working in a rapidly-changing environment, not waiting for us to catch up.

Veterans' needs and expectations are changing. The state of the art in health care is changing. Some would say it is a rapidly-moving target.

Technology itself is changing. The budget environment is changing. There is growing demand for our services as economic uncertainty forces more veterans to turn to the VA for care. So, what have we done so far to address those issues?

Since Secretary Shinseki and I first came through the doors of the VA's central office over two and a half years ago, our byword has been "transformation". More than a band-aid approach to fixing problems, both old and new, we really tried to drill down to the systemics, to the root causes. We have taken a tough hard look at our current organization from top to bottom, to identify areas for improvement in quality, access, value and service.

More than that, we have applied common sense changes to the way we manage it. We set our course for the future by building strong, yet flexible management systems, by putting the right people and policies in place to ensure our functions from human resource to resource management, all working in synchronicity to the highest standards.

We have retooled our government's process to promote transparency and accountability, and we have worked to dismantle historic organizational stovepipes so that our employees can work together, to effectively

collaborate task-oriented teams to serve our veterans. That's our one goal.

In every junction, we challenged our assumptions about programs and services. Does that make sense? Is it happening in the right way? How will it ultimately benefit the veteran?

We have measured the worth of our plans, innovations and initiatives by asking one question: Do they measure up in terms of being veteran-centric, results-driven and forward-looking?

Now, let's take a look at access to the VA services. We made good progress in reaching out to veterans, rural veterans, women veterans, veterans who were not aware of their earned benefits, and veterans who just plain lost faith in us a long time ago.

I can tell you a short story. Secretary Shinseki and I travel a lot to get out there and listen and bring that information back to headquarters and try to get us moving in a new direction.

As a skilled flying officer, kind of looking out around down in Florida, I will not say what branch of the service, I noticed a young man, kind of hesitant, a little bit pausing. I went over to him and shook hands and struck up a conversation there, a skilled E-5 battle-hardened Afghanistan veteran. He said, "I am so proud. I am the first one of my generation to go to college, but I don't know how I am going to pay for it."

All that work, all of the work you have done, all of the initiatives to create the new GI Bill, and this young man didn't know it was there to help send him to school. I hope we made him happy that day. But it shows you the tremendous work that we have to do, all of us have to do working together to reach out to this community.

So, veterans who weren't aware of their earned benefits, and veterans who just plain lost faith in us a long time ago. For example, our initiatives to improve access to health care have upped the number of enrolled veterans by -- any idea how much -- 800,000 in the last two plus years. That's a 10-percent increase in the number of veterans that we are serving today.

We have hired 3,500 mental health professionals so that all veterans with emergency needs can be seen immediately and so that no veteran waits more than 14 days for follow-up care at their convenience. We have opened 64 community-based outpatient clinics, between January 2009 and March 2011, filling them with new equipment, bringing some 197,000 veterans shorter drive times to get the health care they have earned.

We have increased our investments in tele-health to reach veterans wherever they live and to maintain, on our end, qualified leadership in this field.

We stepped up the tempo to serving women. They are now 14 percent of our active duty and 18 percent of our Guard and Reserves. Compare that to 1950, when the percentage of women in uniform was just two percent.

We are adjusting both to the surge in numbers and to the complexities of their needs, the nature of warfare itself, and our military's war fighting doctrine of putting women on the front line as never ever before. As a result of this, they have sustained injuries similar to their male counterparts, both in severity and complexity.

So, what have we done to respond to this changing dynamic? We have instituted comprehensive women's primary health-care programs at all of our facilities. We have staffed our medical centers with women veterans program managers in our regional offices with women veteran coordinators.

We have accelerated women's health research across the board and significantly expanded our prosthetic program to meet both their medical and cosmetic needs. We have enhanced women's marketing presence in print, in social media, and public service announcements, all part of our strategic communications effort, and through our national women's veterans summits giving them even a larger voice in determining the services that the VA provides.

We are getting the word out. We can't maximize VA care in a vacuum, and that is true for all veterans, men and women. Access to benefits has also improved. We put \$2 billion in the hands of 85,000 Vietnam era veterans who applied for Agent Orange disability benefit, and we did that in just two years. With two operational campaigns still underway in Southwest Asia, with continuing academic learning here at home, it is essential that we be more demanding of ourselves as an organization.

We have to be rigorous in our stewardship of resources. We can't leave any single dollar on the table unless we get the biggest bang for the buck from the investment we have made on behalf of our veterans.

When the last combatants come home from Afghanistan and Iraq, the DoD's mission may be over in that part of the world, but the demands on VA will just be starting.

As requirements for Post warfare and services are all likely to grow, another decade of services will be needed to meet those needs.

We will turn to the third priority. Homelessness is one of the VA's greatest priorities. Two and a half years ago, we found there were 131,000 veterans homeless in this country. Today, that estimate is about 80,000. We intend to take that number below 60,000 by June of next year, and the goal of ending this national embarrassment by 2015.

To give you a sense of the leader that I work for, Secretary Shinseki insisted that we set a challenging time phase and measurable goal to end homelessness. Some would say in government that was foolish. Commit to spend money, commit rhetorically to do something about a problem, but don't commit to solve it by a definite time.

The President grasped that idea, fully supports that notion, and has funded our effort to end homelessness. We are making good and measurable progress.

Since 2008, we have helped permanently to house more than 28,000 homeless veterans, and an additional 30,000 have been directly assisted through our homeless call center. We have hired 330 homeless or formerly homeless veterans to provide peer support to those who are living on the streets. Much of our progress is due to greater partnering, collaboration and teamwork across the federal and the state levels, as well as with non-profit partners at the local level, who are on the ground and know the homeless situation firsthand and with you.

Now, the VA has a two-prong mission in the homelessness arena. The first, the one that grabs all the headlines are street rescues. The second is the robust prevention initiative to protect that at-risk population suffering from depression, suffering from substance abuse and unemployment from becoming homeless.

So, what we are doing is leveraging the substantial capabilities of VA in terms of primary medicine, dental and mental health care, substance abuse, education, case management, housing and job counseling. We are taking action to size the homeless veterans population accurately so we

can accurately anticipate, plan, resource and execute interventions over the mid and long term.

So, we are working with our partners in government, HUD, the Department of Labor, Education and the Pentagon, as well as with state and local governments, non-profits and volunteers, to determine a comprehensive reliable national registry of homeless veterans.

In this day and age of I.T. support, why shouldn't we have a registry that shows the viral picture and the history of every man and woman in America who is a veteran and has been homeless, so then you can encounter them on the street, whether they are in New York in the summer and Florida in the winter, you know something about their history, their background, their families and the treatments they have received. So, that is what we are doing.

A lot has been done, but there is very clearly a lot more to do. Then there is the frustrating claims backlog. Secretary Shinseki has committed to breaking the backlog by 2015 by putting in place an automated system that processes all claims in no longer than 125 days, with 98-percent quality. That is an ambitious goal.

Of VA's challenges, there is no question this is the one requiring the most time to gain traction. The good news is that we have a set of promising options that are being piloted today, and a number of them are delivering very good results.

I will give you an example. We have already designed, built and tested an electronic benefit management system that has processed 5,000 claims with an average processing time of 90 days.

One-third of those claims were processed in ten days. We expect to see some payout for our efforts next year, in 2012, as we begin to fully automate the claims process. We have to build it, we have to get it tested and then you have to scale it. We have had success in the past with our Agent Orange claims, for example, and we are confident we can do this.

Even more telling, we can look at our record in implementing the Post 9/11 GI Bill. After a rocky start, a standing start, we fast-tracked the development of those I.T. tools, which today administer the education of over 518,000 veterans and family members.

When VA's other educational assistance programs are added into the mix, that number jumps to 840,000 veterans and family member students in schools supported by a fully-automated VA system that did not exist two years ago.

This fall we will expand the G.I. Bill program. Starting October 1st, it will also encompass vocational training and other non-degree job opportunities for veterans who want to expand their credentials, but who are not necessarily interested in spending four years in a college classroom. We are confident we can soon scale our solid success in this area to our claims backlog.

I want to talk a moment about Veterans Employment initiatives. There is no doubt about it, these are different times for our veterans.

As of June, a million veterans were unemployed, and the jobless rate for Post 9/11 veterans, the highest category, was about 13.3 percent. In doing its part to turn this around, VA is heavily invested in promoting and supporting veterans and service disabled veteran-owned businesses.

We recently conducted our National Veteran-Owned Small Business Conference in New Orleans. Over 4,300 companies attended. They offered

veteran entrepreneurs an unprecedented opportunity to build, to grow their businesses, and to connect directly with the VA procurement decision-makers.

I found building a growing business to be difficult enough in my own private sector. Doing bids with the government is hard and you have to learn how to do it. We created a conference where that learning could take place and we brought the buyers into New Orleans so that an owner could sit down across from a VA decision-maker. No other partners are providing the services and supplies that underpin our network of care.

Now, do you know how much money we spend in the private sector every year at the VA? It is about \$17 billion. It is a third of our discretionary budget. We don't do this inside the VA; we get it from the private sector. In 2010, the VA spent 38 percent of every afforded procurement dollar with small business. There is value added to that partnership because historically veterans do what? They hire veterans. So, by boosting the number of veteran-owned small businesses and by contributing to their expansion, we can potentially increase job opportunities for veterans.

Another facet to veterans' employment is the President's Veterans Employment Council, which Secretary Shinseki co-chairs. It is aggressively working to establish the federal government as the model employer of veterans. Today, more than one in four federal workers is a veteran.

Compared to the private sector, government hires three times the percentage of veterans, seven times the percentage of disabled veterans, and ten times the percentage of severely-injured veterans. Incidentally, one-third of the VA's own workforce is made up of veterans. That is over 100,000 employees, and we intend to up that to 40 percent over the short term.

President Obama again recently demonstrated his unwavering support for and concerns about veteran employment opportunities by announcing several new initiatives.

Very briefly, the returning heroes tax credit for firms that hire unemployed veterans, increases the existing Wounded Warriors Tax Credit for firms hiring veterans with service disabilities, who are considered long-term employable.

Secondly, we have created a more career-ready military. You-all will remember when you came out of the service, it might have been easy for you to find a job, because you had maintained some connection back in your hometown or with a friend, and you got an interview and, boy, this man or woman is good, and they served their country and let's do an interview. That doesn't happen as much as it should in the private sector today.

It's hard to get work when they come out. It is hard for them to translate when they get to that job interview. I remember when I left the service, 28 years old, and a year and a half later I was out in the job market, with an MBA, a Doctorate, a great Navy experience, and I thought I could really add value.

I can't tell you the number of people I had an interview with that said, "What, leadership management? You just tell people what to do, right?" It was just unbelievable the gap in understanding between the private sector of people who had not been in the military and folks like us who have.

Third, we need to do an enhanced career development. So we spend a lot of time to get them in the service and teaching them everything they know and they have a great experience, and they come out and can't trans-

late and don't know enough about how the private sector works, to get it.

Then, lastly, the President has turned to the private sector and said, "Look, these are not all going to be government jobs, these have to be private sector jobs. We want you to hire or train 100,000 unemployed veterans or their spouses by the end of 2013."

As we continue to transform the VA to the benefit of veterans, we are addressing some cultural issues as well, particularly with regard to training and developing our employees to excel in accomplishing VA's mission of service. The fact is as they go about doing their jobs, they shape how our veterans, how the American people and the nation's decision-makers see our Department, either positively or negatively.

We want veterans to see and experience our Department in the best light possible, and so in our ongoing transformation, customer service is job one for the VA. In general, customer service, government-wide, lags behind in the private sector. How many of you here would think that the government was a leading provider of customer services?

The American Customer Satisfaction Index went out and did a survey. Do you know what they found? They found that the government is at a ten-year low. But there are exceptions. The VA's National Cemetery Administration, for instance, do you know what their ranking is in the country competing against the best firms in America, GE, IBM, Google? They are number one. They are number one in the country on customer satisfaction. They have been that way for many years, almost a decade.

Our mail order pharmacy program, it was recently recognized by J.D. Power Customer Service as a champion for 2011, one of only 40 in the country to earn that distinction.

So, the idea is simple. In your culture, if you are already doing it, if you are already showing that you can make a difference and serve at the highest levels, how do you take that capability and translate it to the rest of your organization and department-wide? So, to do that, we are leveraging our technology footprint, we are improving the speed and efficiency of our services, and we want each and every veteran's experience with VA to be the smoothest, the most responsive and the most user friendly it can possibly be.

However, it is hard to do this in a world where you do literally 19 million visits a year, where you do 200 million lab studies a year. Guess what? The best companies in America, the ones functioning at the highest standards for performance are going to get one in a million of those wrong. You do the math. Those are the stories that tend to come out.

What we miss is the balance of the good work that is being done beneath that. So, we are engaging in a collective and new thinking, internally and externally, to have a better idea and new approaches to serve our veterans and their families.

We are casting a live net to capture the best practices from all sectors, and we are maximizing the people factor across our administration. By that, I mean that we want to engage veterans as individuals.

We are a big organization. What matters is the guy in the front row, third from the center aisle, when he steps before the VA, is he getting the service that he needs? We have got to cut to the basic principles that define optimal people-to-people interactions, and we have to advocate effectively and efficiently on their behalf.

In an effort to achieve long-term culture change, we developed five

core values that underscore our obligation to them.

More than just words, we believe that they cut to the core of VA's mandate for service. By that, I mean service marked by integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence.

Taken together, the first letter of each of those five words, stands for ICARE.

For our 300,000 employees, that acronym comes down to this: Integrity, acting in accordance to the highest ethical and professional standards, the ones that you keep when no one is looking.

Commitment, working diligently to serve veterans driven by a strong belief in VA's mission and mandate.

Advocacy, fully considering and also appropriately advancing their interest and those of their families.

Respect, treating veterans with dignity, concern and compassion at all times.

Last, excellence, strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement in service.

Secretary Shinseki and I hope that you are going to see clearly those core values at work in the VA, in our daily conduct, and most importantly, through the personal example of our employees from Maine to Manila.

I am not saying there are not employees, many of them, the large majority of them in the VA who are not already exhibiting these attributes. They are. And I say that from firsthand experience.

Let me take a moment to explain to you my own motivation for serving at the VA. One of my principal reasons for leaving active duty in the Navy was a call I got from my father when I was 28 years old. He was a veteran of World War II, and in Korea. He never asked me for anything in his life.

He got me on the phone and he said, "Son, I have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and I need your help, and I want you to come home."

I responded to that and I was his permanent care-giver for 14 months. The day came when that 200-pound man just couldn't be managed in the home alone. We had to admit Dad to a VA facility. I will never forget the morning we rolled up in a car to that facility in Bedford, Massachusetts. He couldn't even take his own seatbelt off or find the handle to the door to open it.

When the team came out to the curb, and they brought a wheelchair and they took him in, I thought for sure he will last maybe a year or two. He spent 11 years of his life in that facility.

During that long goodbye, I tell you I had a lot of contact with the people that make the VA a great organization, the nurses, the orderlies, the folks mopping the deck to try to keep it clean, the people that bathed him at night and ground up his food and spooned it to him. They took great care of my Dad.

I get a fancy office at 810 Vermont Avenue, with a lot of oak paneling. What I think of when I go to work is the next family that is rolling up with that set of needs that we had, and I would like the VA to be there for them.

I would like them to be there for the veterans both today and tomorrow. So, a few weeks from now, we as a nation will reach a poignant milestone with the tenth anniversary of 9/11. For nearly a decade now, our nation has been at war, the longest in America's history. More than five million veterans are veterans of this war. Three million joined after 9/11 knowing full well that they would be deploying to combat.

Hundreds of thousands of them have deployed multiple times. I know you are proud of them. I know you can recite their accomplishments, unseating the Taliban, capturing Saddam Hussein in that spider hole and driving Al-Qaeda from its hiding place, and delivering justice to Osama bin Laden, and training Iraq and Afghan forces to defend their own countries.

The veterans of the 9/11 generation with their families, have borne a heavy burden on behalf of the nation. I can assure you VA is there for them and for you. There is much more to be done as VA pursues its ambitious agenda of transformation, but we are committed to staying the course for positive change at the VA, and above all, we are committed to America's veterans from our greatest generation to our latest generation.

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to speak to you here today on behalf of the administration and Secretary Shinseki. I thank you all. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF 2011 VFW CITIZENSHIP AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is my distinct honor to introduce and recognize the recipient of this year's VFW Citizenship Award, Carolyn Blashek, President and Founder of Operation Gratitude, which sends 100,000 personalized care packages to our troops each year.

Carolyn's journey toward creating this great program began following the events of 9/11. She was so moved by the enormity of that tragic day she even tried to enlist in the military at age 46. She was sent home.

But Carolyn is a person of such good stock that she could not sit idly by and do nothing while our nation's young men and women willingly left everything behind to fight for the rest of us.

In 2003, Carolyn founded Operation Gratitude when she sent her first package to an unknown soldier serving in the Iraq war. Friends and community members would soon join in her mission helping to gather items, packed boxes and shipped the packages.

Today, Operation Gratitude has grown so immensely that volunteers have shipped more than 675,000 packages to American troops deployed overseas, and is now the largest military support organization sending personalized care packages to deployed troops in United States history.

The packages are filled with snacks, entertainment items and personal letters of appreciation addressed to individually-named U.S. service members deployed in hostile regions, to their children left behind and to Wounded Warriors recuperating in transition units.

Operation Gratitude's mission is to lift morale, bring a smile to a service member's face and express to our armed forces the appreciation and support of the American people.

Through collection drives, letter-writing campaigns and donations of funds for shipping expenses, Operation Gratitude provides civilians a way to express their respect and appreciation to the men and women of the U.S. military in an active, hands-on manner. What great people we have in this country that Carolyn so well represents.

Comrades, I present to you the recipient of the 2011 VFW Citizenship Award, Carolyn Blashek.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "VFW Citizenship Award, Gold Medal of Merit and Citation Award to Carolyn Blashek.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation for founding Opera-

tion Gratitude, our nation's largest military support organization sending personalized care packages to deployed troops.

"Operation Gratitude provides patriotic citizens throughout America a means to express their respect and appreciation to the men and women of the U.S. military in a hands-on manner.

"Her exemplary dedication toward lifting morale, expressing appreciation to our armed forces is true to the ideas, traditions and values of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and has earned our deepest appreciation and respect.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 30th day of August, 2011. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

This award comes with a \$2,500 honorarium. (Applause)

RESPONSE – MS. CAROLYN BLASHEK

MS. BLASHEK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Eubank, and thank you to the 2.1 million members of the VFW, and especially to all of you here today. I am honored to receive this beautiful award in the company of so many American heroes.

Here is just one of my co-award recipients today, General James Conway.

All of us have dreams, but none of us can achieve them on our own. I have been very blessed to have my family and friends who support me in all my endeavors.

The ultimate success of Operation Gratitude and my deepest thanks are owed to the thousands and thousands and thousands of devoted volunteers all across this nation who come from very different walks of life, different colors, different religions, different sizes, and different ages, and yet, in fact, very different politics, but who are all joined together in a common cause to put a smile on a serviceman's face and let everybody in our military know they are respected, remembered and appreciated by the American people.

It really brings me to the reason I am here today. That is that this award rightfully pays tribute to all of our veterans, to each and every one of you and to all of our current warriors, because all of you inspired each of us to a cause greater than ourselves.

I accept this Citizenship Award in your honor. I dedicate it to those who sacrificed all. I give you my personal pledge that forevermore the civilian population of this country will always have an avenue to express their appreciation and gratitude to those who wear our nation's uniforms so proudly, and who sacrificed so that we can continue to pursue our dreams.

Thank you again for your kind recognition and for your generosity. Thank you. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF ARMED FORCES AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: For nearly 50 years, the VFW Armed Forces Award has been presented annually to military members in order to recognize extraordinary achievement to the Armed Forces of the

United States.

Today, I take great pleasure in introducing our next guest, General James T. Conway.

General Conway is a retired United States Marine Corps General, who was the 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps for four years.

Upon receiving his college degree from Southeast Missouri State University, he was commissioned as an infantry officer in 1970 beginning a career with the military spanning four decades.

General Conway's very first assignment was command of a Rifle Platoon with the Third Battalion, First Marines at Camp Pendleton, where he also served as the battalion's 106mm Recoilless Rifle Platoon Commander.

Later, he served as Marine Executive Officer aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, and as Commanding Officer of the Sea School at Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego.

Shortly after, he commanded two companies in the Second Marine Regiment's Operations and Security section. He also taught tactics at the basic school. He continued to serve as Operations Officer for the 31st Marines Amphibious Unit in Lebanon.

Once he returned to the United States, he was assigned as Senior Aide to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for two years. He graduated from Marine Corps Command and Staff College with honors and took command of the Third Battalion, Second Marines through its eight-month deployment to Southwest Asia during the Gulf War.

After the war, he was promoted to Colonel and assigned Command of the Marine Corps Officers Basic School.

In 1995, General Conway was promoted to Brigadier General and again assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff where he was promoted to Major General with following command of the First Marine Division. He was then promoted to Lieutenant General and assumed command of a Marine Expeditionary Force in 2002 where he led 60,000 troops through two combat tours in Iraq.

In 2006, General Conway was nominated by President Bush and confirmed by the Senate to be the 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

With over 25 awards and decorations, General Conway has much to be proud of, particularly his combat service. His rapid movement through the ranks year after year and graduating with honors many times over truly reinforces the verity that he is a "Marine's Marine."

General Conway epitomizes the U.S. Marine Corps creed of "Semper Fidelis" through his always faithful and loyal service, especially a sense of duty to our nation and to the Marines he served with and so well beloved.

Comrades and sisters, today we recognize an intrepid Marine who fulfills the honorable tradition of extraordinary achievement represented by this award.

It is my great privilege to welcome the recipient of the 2011 VFW Armed Forces Award, General James Conway. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Armed Forces Award, Gold Medal and Citation awarded to General James Conway.

"In special recognition and appreciation of his exemplary military career spanning four decades beginning in 1970 as an Infantry Officer for the United States Marine Corps and culminating upon his retirement after serving four years as the 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

"Throughout his superlative career, he embodied all that epitomizes a

brilliant military leader, admirably serving his nation through many challenging assignments and positions.

"He has dedicated his career to enhancing the performance and welfare of United States servicemembers, especially to his beloved Marines and their families.

"Always upholding the core values of the United States Marine Corps, General Conway has earned the greatest respect and admiration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 30th day of August, 2011. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – GENERAL JAMES CONWAY

GENERAL CONWAY: Thank you, gentlemen and ladies, for this incredible honor. It is especially meaningful to me that it comes from you. But I accept that you are presenting it to me in recognition of those hundreds of thousands of great Marines and the sailors that support us, that are out there day in and day out doing such tremendous work.

In that context, again I am a very honored recipient. I wasn't going to do so, but before we stepped up, Joe Davis asked me to give you just a couple of words on my background. When I became a commandant, I did not come from some of the same background and relationships that some of our previous commandants.

I had no former relations who had been colonels or generals in the Corps. I had not graduated as was usually indicated from the Naval Academy. In fact, I came from Northeast Arkansas and the great State of Missouri.

Those of you who are from those states will understand, and I will tell you the rest of you when the movie *Deliverance* came out a lot of folks where I was from thought that was a great little love story. (Laughter)

I remember after about ten years, Annette and our boys and our young daughter at that point went back to visit our folks in Arkansas. I had just made Major, and I was very proud of what we were doing at that point.

My granny met us on the porch, gave me a big hug and said, "Are you a sergeant yet?" I said, "No, granny, I don't think I will ever make sergeant."

She said, "Well, I hate that. I guess if you would make sergeant you would amount to something." (Laughter)

At that point my Uncle Bob chimed in. This is my same Uncle Bob who spent three days in the United States Army. He went off to boot camp, and he said on the first day they gave him a toothbrush, and that afternoon they pulled seven of his teeth. He said the next day they gave him a comb, and that afternoon they cut off all of his hair.

He said on the third day they issued him a jock strap, and he went over the hill that night and never did go back. (Laughter) He said, "These people are crazy. I am not going to do that."

So, that is some of my background. I just want you to know who you are giving this wonderful award to. I assume you got the right guy. You know, General Eisenhower retired from the service back in the late '40s, and about that same time the Board of Regents at Columbia University were looking for a new president.

They met one morning in a heated discussion and debated back and forth as to who it would be, and he came out of the room and the President of the Board of Regents said to the Registrar at Columbia, "Our man is Eisenhower. Get out the invitation right away."

A couple of days later, he was reading the letter, he grabbed it off his desk and went up to the Registrar's Office and he said, "You idiot, you offered it to the wrong Eisenhower." This is going to General Dwight David Eisenhower. We wanted it to go to Milton S. Eisenhower, his younger brother, who is President of Kansas State University.

They gathered the Board back and discussed it and they said, "Well, let's not embarrass the university here. He is not qualified to do this job, so we will assume he will turn it down."

Well, within a few days, they got a letter from General Eisenhower and it said, "Gentlemen, I regretfully find myself woefully unprepared to assume this role, but I will accept your gracious offer and do the best job I can."

The rest is history. Yours is an incredible organization. I have watched it, of course, for my entire time both in the service and really before, because there was a Veterans of Foreign Wars organization in our hometown of Sainte Genevieve, Missouri.

It is just great to watch what you do out there for the community, both in terms of the activities, the grants, the scholarships, but also just in terms of bringing communities together, sort of the social fabric, if you will, of each and every community where you guys and gals are from. It is marvelous to watch you work. You are a model.

I mean, I was told on the way in, there are people from other nations who are here looking at how you run a large organization and how you remain an icon in American society. You work tremendously with those primary issues at the national level that are important to veterans and people who are in uniform today, who will be veterans pretty soon.

There is one other thing I think is especially unique about this organization, at this point in time. About 50 percent of you folks, my research tells me, are Vietnam veterans, and I think what is unique about that is contrast the reception you are given today to our veterans, to the wounded, to all those great young and women that are serving today, you contrast that to the reception that you received when you came back with the original comparison. There is a certain amount of individual and organizational generosity in that that really needs to be recognized.

I want to tell you as I stand here today, thank you for that, because it means a great deal to the leadership to be able to convey those things to those young men and women that are over there fighting for us that they are going to be well-received when they get home. (Applause)

On the topic of Vietnam veterans, let me spend just a moment to tell you about my proudest day in uniform. I will tell you it wasn't in the time that I was commandant, it wasn't on the battlefield, it was, in fact, after we got home from Iraq having taken Baghdad and sort of between deployments, as we got ready to go back over. I was the Marine Expeditionary Force Commander. I had a call one morning from the Mayor of Oceanside, which is a little town outside of our base on the West Coast, at Camp Pendleton.

He said, "Jim, we want to hold a parade for you-all and we would like to have 20,000 Marines to march down our streets on a Saturday morn-

ing.” I said, “Well, Mr. Mayor, we can do that, but the number is going to be about 22,500, because I want every Marine that went over there to be a part of that parade and feel the warmth and goodness coming from their fellow citizens.”

He said, “If you can do that, I will get you 80,000 on the streets of Oceanside that will be from all over Southern California.” So, we locked in the deal.

The night before the parade, I was sitting at home and thinking about what I was going to say. They wanted me after the parade to go down to a large amphitheater on the beach and offer some comments to the assembled folks, both military and civilian.

I was in a contrast, the welcome that we were getting to what our Vietnam veterans had not received. As I sat there, I thought to myself, why just talk about it, why don't you do something about it?

So, I called my Chief of Staff. I said, “I want you to have our guys in graphics make me a very professional-looking sign five feet by forty feet that says ‘Vietnam Veterans.’”

The next morning, when we arrived, I put a squad on either side of the street, and they worked about 20 blocks, and they policed up every Vietnam veteran they could find. There were about 200 of them. They were in suits, and they were in wheelchairs, and mainly shirts, ball caps, shirts identifying their unit. But there were about 200 of them.

When that parade kicked off, I led it, my staff was right behind me, the band was right behind them, and then there was this huge banner that said Vietnam Veterans, and there were 200 proud guys marching.

Ladies and gentlemen, the crowd got it. They understood what we were attempting to do. I could hear it when I was told by those that watched the whole parade that the applause for that unit was as great as it was for any unit that marched with us into Baghdad. That was a good day for everybody. Those 200 at least finally got their parade. That was my proudest day in uniform. (Applause)

I also believe that those Marines that were in that formation that day, and everyone, marine, soldier, sailor, airman and coast guardsman who has joined since are truly a special generation. They really are.

I will tell you this. We didn't always think that. Some years ago, when some of us old gray-haired guys sat around and talked about it, we were a little bit concerned about this new generation. Are they going to make good soldiers and marines? Do they have what it takes if we go into a fight?

You know, too much time with the joystick in their hand and too much time indoors and not outdoors, and maybe not enough discipline, were they tough enough? We didn't know. I will tell you we were wrong. They are incredible. I have seen them in combat and on a couple of separate occasions. They are well-encouraged; their sense of team play, their self-sacrifice again just brings tears to your eyes.

This is a great group of Americans and we are honored, we are privileged to have them where they are today, and this country is going to be great for a long time to come as these people grow up and take on increasing levels of responsibility.

Now, there are those that would demean them and say, “Well, they are in the military because they can't find a job. It is the economy that drives them and that is why they are in.” That is pure B.S. Those kids are there because the nation is at war and they know we need them there and that is

why they raised their right hand and marched on. (Applause)

I had met a young man as we had chow in sort of a bunker location in Ramadi. This was in 2006. The heavy fighting was mostly over, but there were still some things going on there. As I went around the room and talked to these 18 or 20 young marines, one Lance Corporal said it better than everybody else.

I said, "Why did you join the Corps, Tiger?" He said, "I will tell you what. I was 11 years old when they hit the towers, and I was scared. I had no idea if our country could sustain blows like that inside our borders. By the time I got to be 13, I was pissed off. Now, I am 18, and I am doing something about it."

That is why they are there. That is typical of these great young kids out there and that is that young generation that you-all support so very, very well.

I am going to stand down, but I want to issue a challenge to you folks before I do. You people represent the knowledge of the military in your various communities like no other. Too few people today serve, and although our country-at-large is very appreciative, so very few really understand what it is, and in some cases why we are doing what we are doing today.

My belief, and I hope to share it by and large, is that Afghanistan is important to us. You know, we didn't start this fight, and al-Qaeda weren't necessarily in Iraq when we invaded there, but it didn't take them long, and they were there in weeks after we arrived. My Division Commander, a guy by the name of Jim Mattis called me on his way to Baghdad; he was about 60 miles out of the city. He said, "General, we are in a tough fight this morning and these are not Iraqis. We don't know who they are, but they are not Iraqis."

He called me back about two hours later and we had killed about 300 of them, but the last 12 died charging a tank. As they went through the pocket litter there, they were Syrians, they were Egyptians, and they were Yemenis, and they were from all over the Middle East. They were fanatics, and they were the beginning of the al-Qaeda organization that we eventually defeated in Iraq.

So, the momentum was in the right direction. Now, we are facing a similar situation in Afghanistan. My view is we need to leave Afghanistan when we can call it a win or we can feel good about the fact that so much has been accomplished there. (Applause) We need to keep the momentum going. If we were to pull off and then somehow destroy the concept and convince people they chased us out of Afghanistan would mean that the al-Qaeda and the extremists would be able to say in one generation we beat the Russians and we beat the Americans with NATO. That is momentum in the other direction. We don't need that.

This war will not be over when we leave Afghanistan. You don't need to look at Iraq and Afghanistan as wars. Those, ladies and gentlemen, are battles, what is probably going to be a 60 or 80-year war against extremists. We can't necessarily win it. It will take a modern religion, and we will again regain control of these people.

I am encouraged by what we see with the Arabs, but it's too early to say, but it offers certainly another option to people that are out there generally unhappy in life.

But the fact is that we have to maintain the momentum to make sure we don't give them an easy win simply because we are engaging in what we

do based on a timeline or an election.

Secondly, our nation is in fiscal crisis. There will have to be some tough decisions made out there, hopefully by intelligent people in relatively short order.

The Defense Department, I think, has probably close to 50 percent of the discretionary money on an annual basis that you find in government. The Defense Department is going to have to be a part of the solution, but it cannot bear the brunt of the solution. It can't be that place where we go to strip back and say, and avoid some of the other hard decisions that have to be made.

There is no peace dividend out there. There is no opportunity to down-scale like in the wake of World War II or even Vietnam. It is a dangerous world right now. The Iranians are going to have nuclear weapons in probably four months. The Chinese would welcome the opportunity in the Pacific to attempt to intimidate us and our allies if our strength goes weak and are allowed to do so.

If you parallel the surge on the national and international level of the United States, it matches to some greater or lesser degree on military power. So, I don't believe that we can afford to gut defense. I think again it has to be part of the solution, but it can't be that we simply ignore our responsibilities on the global scale, cut back defense to the point where we then would have hollow services, I think we would all pay a very unfortunate price if that were to occur.

That is my challenge to you. I hope you agree with those thoughts and I hope you are not the least bit hesitant to educate your fellow citizens as to the importance of a strong national defense.

Again, my wife and I are honored to be with you this morning. Thank you so very much for this tremendous award. God bless you all, and "Semper Fidelis".

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

INTRODUCTION OF JACK McDERMOTT, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA RETIREMENT HOME

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Please join me in welcoming VFW Life Member of Post 9610 in Lake Park, Florida, who daily goes above and beyond his duties as a VFW member. This man is a patriot through and through.

Jack McDermott has been a member for 30 years and has spent every one of those years serving this organization and its members. Currently, Jack is a District representative to the VFW National Home.

Jack is also a Board member of the VFW Home in Florida, a retirement home fully funded by the Department of Florida. It is in that capacity that Jack is here today, to tell us a little more about the Florida Home and its initiatives.

He is accompanied by the Home Director, Lieutenant Colonel Al Lugo, Jr., from Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Jack, thank you for all of your hard work and dedication over the years. It is not overlooked and it is very much appreciated by all.

Please assist me in welcoming an outstanding fellow comrade, Jack McDermott, with Al Lugo. (Applause)

REMARKS BY COMRADE JACK McDERMOTT

COMRADE JACK McDERMOTT (Post 9610 – Florida): Good morning. Thank you, Chief. My name is Jack McDermott, and I am proud to be serving on the Board of Directors for the Department of Florida Retirement Home in Fort McCoy. It is a hidden jewel in Florida.

I want to thank the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW National organization and officers, and the Department of Florida for their support of our retirement home, and in particular the inquiries and support we have received since we were given permission to speak at last year's National Convention.

The retirement home in Fort McCoy receives no federal funding. Our annual budget is close to \$1 million this year. Ninety-five percent of that directly comes from the rents that our residents pay. The other five percent directly comes from fund-raisers and donations.

I extend to all of our National officers, all our members to visit our home. Just contact our Director, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Al Lugo, who will be happy to assist you.

Three years ago, we were fortunate enough to interview a young man who was ending his military career at the Pentagon as his last duty station. He was not fully ready to retire yet. The military's loss was certainly Florida's gain, as Colonel Lugo has brought our home in the limelight and to the forefront of retirement communities in the state of Florida.

It is my pleasure not only to introduce our Director, but my friend, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Al Lugo, who will give you a little additional information on our home. Thank you for your consideration. (Applause)

REMARKS BY COMRADE AL LUGO

COMRADE AL LUGO: Thank you, Jack. Commander-in-Chief Eubank, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief DeNoyer, and from our own Department of Florida, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton, our National Adjutant General, National Quartermaster, National officers, State commanders, particularly a special welcome to the Florida delegation, thank you, my friends and comrades.

Jack McDermott pointed out that I am Al Lugo, and it is an honor and privilege to be here to talk a little bit about a place that the Department of Florida built about 20 years ago to take care of veterans. It was built by veterans, it is run by veterans, and it takes care of veterans, and that is the Department of Florida VFW Retirement Home.

We receive zero funding from the local, federal or state governments. We are able to survive on the rent and the determination from the VFW membership and the Ladies Auxiliary, and friends of the home. This year, we celebrate our 20th year anniversary.

Let me tell you, as the Chief was able to witness a few weeks ago, everybody there is happy and well taken care of, and they are just honored and glad that the VFW has a place for them to retire and live happily. The home sits on 42 acres. It currently has 71 rooms fully furnished and a top-notch complex. We have a 24-hour staffed kitchen. We provide transportation, housekeeping, and we provide three home-cooked meals a day and snacks.

Every room is equipped with a television, free cable, telephone, free

long distance and Internet capabilities. There is no minimum age to get there. All you have to be is a member of the VFW. We also welcome snow-birds. We love to have you come by. There is no age requirement.

Currently, we have 17 states represented with veterans living at the home, and the Department of Florida has so graciously opened to everybody in the country that want to come and join us there in our little part of paradise in Florida. I ask you guys to look us up on the website. We are on Facebook, VFW Retirement Home, and we are also on the website Time and Home as well. Look us up.

Our delegation here has some business cards. I will be coming out and if you see me, we have some brochures floating around the place here. If you are interested, let us know.

I want to thank the VFW membership and the Department of Florida for everything they have done for other veterans.

Before I depart from the podium, I want to do a special presentation to the Chief. The Chief was there about three or four weeks ago. He had a firsthand operation of what we do for veterans. He is truly amazing. We always speak about taking care of veterans, but we actually put our word and deed in hand.

Chief, I want to present to you a photograph. This photograph we have of a World War II veteran, Mr. Jim Gurlan, a lifetime member from Orlando, Florida, and he presented the Chief with a key to the home. Also, on the back of this picture there is a signature and letter signed by all 19 members of World War II who live in the home, thanking the Chief and the VFW organization for not forgetting about them and looking out for their best interest in their golden years.

Chief, on behalf of the Retirement Home, I would like to present this to you. (Applause)

Again, Chief, thank you very much and thank you for the opportunity to be here today. God bless you all.

COMRADE JACK McDERMOTT (Post 9610 – Florida): Thank you, Florida. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, we are still waiting for the next guest. At this time, let me introduce some of our Past Chiefs. We have Past Commanders-in-Chief Jack Furgess, James Nier, John Gwizdak, George Lisicki, John Smart, Cliff Olson, "Doc" Wasylik, George Cramer, Paul Spera, Tom Pouliot, Gary Kurpius, Tommy Tradewell, Wally Hogan, Jack Carney and John Straum. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF ROCKY BLEIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, it is my privilege to introduce to you a decorated Vietnam veteran and football legend, Robert Patrick Bleier, better known as "Rocky" Bleier. Rocky got his nickname when his father used to tell his friends that his son looks like a rock sitting in his crib as a baby.

Sure enough, he grew up to be rock solid. He proved his stature while growing up playing high school football in Wisconsin; college at Notre Dame, where he was a starting member of the 1966 National Champion-

ship team; in the National Football League; and, ultimately as an infantry soldier in the United States Army.

He was drafted by the United States Army in 1968, and volunteered for service in 1969 in the Republic of Vietnam where he served with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

While bravely and selflessly serving his country, he was wounded when his platoon was ambushed while on patrol; he was severely wounded by both a rifle bullet and shrapnel from an enemy grenade. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star for his gallantry and courageous spirit. Doctors told "Rocky" it was unlikely that he would play football again due to his combat wounds.

Rocky, being the rock that he is, showed up at the Pittsburgh Steelers training camp one short year later. Although he could hardly walk without feeling pain, Rocky pushed through and for two years fought for a spot on the active roster. He never gave up on his dream of playing professional football again.

In 1974, Rocky started for the Pittsburgh Steelers and continued on to play in the Steelers' first four Super Bowl victories. After fulfilling his dreams to be a Super Bowl champion, he retired in 1980 and wrote a book called "Fighting Back: The Rocky Bleier Story," which recounts his heroic story of struggling to overcome his war wounds to achieve his goal to be an NFL star.

Today, Rocky is deeply involved in many endeavors, but perhaps most notable are his steadfast efforts to support and motivate United States servicemembers. Rocky is an avid supporter of the Wounded Warriors project and he serves as a great example and true inspiration to all of our wounded service members.

He shares his poignant and triumphant story while traveling to military bases, conferences and various other military and football-related events as a motivational speaker.

He served his country in war and continues his service today as an exemplary role model to the thousands of recently-wounded service members from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rocky is also the official spokesman for Matthews International, a new partner of the VFW store. Matthews International is a world-renowned bronze and metal casting company offering a complete line of distinctive plaques, signs and medallions for VFW Posts. This is a partnership everyone at the VFW is very excited about.

It is, therefore, a great honor to introduce to you a Vietnam and fellow combat veteran, and an NFL legend, VFW Life Member of Post 5756 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Mr. Rocky Bleier. (Applause)

REMARKS – COMRADE ROCKY BLEIER

COMRADE ROCKY BLEIER (Post 5756 – Pennsylvania): Thank you. Commander-in-Chief Eubank, thank you very much. Commanders, members of the VFW, it is my pleasure for me to be able to be here. I know you are in trouble or at least I know I am in trouble when the introduction was longer than the actual speech that I am going to give today. (Laughter)

So, it was a wonderful introduction. Thank you. All the facts are true. (Laughter) You know, I want to thank all of you sitting out there, to all those veterans, thank you for your service, and more importantly to all these Viet-

nam veterans out there, welcome home, brothers. It has been a long time coming. (Applause)

Serving in the military, one of the things that one percent of our population has given the other 99 percent, and that is basically a platform of opportunity. If you think about it, the freedoms that you have fought for, the rights that you have given us, lays that foundation of just that, a culture, a culture of opportunity and not necessarily a culture of entitlement. That's based on the simple premise as long as we have choices within our lives, and basically if you think about it, we are a free people. But with choice comes a responsibility. That responsibility is, one, to be informed, to know more about what has taken place within your communities, within your Posts, on a National basis with Veterans Affairs, within the politics of our country.

Secondly, to have the courage to act on that information. So, if we have choices within our lives, then basically we only have two choices. One is to be less than we are capable of being, to do less, to be less involved, or secondly, to do more, to be more involved, more informed, to take more action to stand up for what is right for this country, for your Posts, for the VFW and for people.

The choice is important. That responsibility is one which we have. So, we only have one choice from my point of view, and that one choice is to be the best that we can be. But it raises for me the question of why then as we look around within our society, why is it that some people succeed when others seem to fail and why is it in the world of sports, some win and some lose, what are those ingredients that help us to reach that potential that we have?

Obviously, as you well know, most of my life has been involved in the world of sports on one level or another, football primarily. Even though it has been my life and my focus and my passion, I also have come to realize that I do share this world with some people who could care less about what is happening in the world of football. Some of those people may be sitting right in this audience this morning.

Now, whether or not you like the game of football, you have at least admitted to yourselves it has become part of the fabric of our lives. Now that the season itself is beginning, high school, college or on the professional level, it is a game we have experienced that is on television 24 hours a day.

It is in all the papers, on the radio, and television. It has become a topic of conversation within our home and within the workplace.

Some of have played the game, friends have played the game, our family has played the game, and our kids have played the game, and football is much like life if I can make that analogy.

Why is that? Well, if you think about it, whether a game or a season, there is a beginning, there is a middle and there is the end, there is birth, there is life, and there is death, and depending on how your team has performed there is a mourning period, and then there is a renewal.

I will repeat that process week after week, and in season after season, and it creates one word, football does, much like life, and that one word is hope.

I hope we can win, I hope we have a good team this year. Boy, I hope nobody gets hurt. I hope we get the right players. I hope we have a great draft. My kids had a great experience, and I hope we get into the playoffs. I hope we are in the championship game. I hope we can get to the Super

Bowl.

Maybe if your team doesn't get to the Super Bowl, you hope the team you like the least beats the team you hate the most. So, hope becomes a very central part of our lives, and that is one of the things you, as veterans, and the VFW fought for, that creation of hope in what we can become and the dreams we had coming out of service, the opportunities that exist.

All our lives are built on hope; you may know that. I mean, no man is an island. We didn't get to where we are to stay by ourselves. We got there because of an opportunity, an open door. We got here because of a shove, a push, a kick in the rear end because of a drill sergeant, a mom or a dad, a coach, somebody to show you the way. But the hope has to start somewhere, that ingredient, that opened doors.

For me, just briefly, I have to tell you, in all honesty, it started with the greatest football game I ever had the opportunity to play in. I was nine years old. I was playing with Dicky Wyster, my next door neighbor, born and raised in that Midwestern town of Appleton, Wisconsin. For you cheeseheads, football was a big part of our lives. There is not a lot to do up there.

Dicky and I had some sense of a schedule. We had at-home and away games. Now, this particular Saturday afternoon happened to be an away game for me, so I had to go across the street to pick up Dicky and play on his side's rumble. But let me tell you, what a game. I scored 51 touchdowns that afternoon. I gained a little over 500 yards rushing, but more importantly I shut him out. I mean, the sucker did not score, and I knew I had his number. Now, just because Dicky was five should not take anything away from my personal achievement. (Laughter)

He was a big five. He was a tough kid for his age. Dicky and I had dreams and we had hopes, but because of a coach and organization, because of an opportunity we got to move on and to move forward, a chance to play, a chance to prove yourselves in high school and college, and ultimately on the professional ranks.

But the turning point becomes a turning point in our lives as we well know, that one time, that one person, that one opportunity that changes the course of our lives.

In the book "River Horse", the author, William Least Heat-Moon, wrote that our physical components change every seven years. So, the brains continuously pass memories off to a complete stranger, who we have been as just now a fellow mostly traveled. If memory were total and complete, perhaps we would be one person from start to finish, but forgetfulness cuts us off from who we have been so that hourly we are reborn.

It has been 31 years since I last wore a uniform in the world of football. What took place 42 years ago in the jungles of Vietnam and who I was at that moment in time has faded, but the incidents that took place, the action that took place are forever etched in our memories, the same actions that we have in all of our memories of a time and a place, of a turning point. A decision by a point man that led us into an ambush, a fire fight that left me wounded in both legs, a platoon that fought its way down to and dragged me out of there. Four guys carried me and left me, and two guys picked me up and continued on and left me, and out of the darkness, a hand reached down and pulled me off of the ground. Like every hand that had lifted me off the playing field, securing that period of my life, a fellow teammate, a soldier, a comrade, a brother, who threw me on his shoulders and carried

me the rest of the way to the helicopter. He took me to an aid station, a turning point in my life.

The doctor said I would never play again when asked that question. Two days later, a telegram came from the Steelers' owner, Art Rooney, and it said, "Rock, the team is not doing well. We need you." That was a turning point. We all need to be needed and we all want to be wanted. All they provided was an opportunity to come back and put me in the Steelers' reserve and I made the squad the following year, and bought me two years and an opportunity to prove what one can do.

Because of an injury, I got a chance to play. Because of a talent, I got a chance to start, and I played in four Super Bowls, and I played 11 more years and retired, and then thereafter.

So, what I tell this convention here is just that: the dreams and hopes and visions that you have in your Posts to the impact that you make are so very important. The opportunities that exist today, take advantage of, the freedoms that you have provided for us are so very crucial.

I am very happy to be able to be here and to represent Matthews International, as the Chief mentioned. You see, it is an opportunity, I think and we believe, for the VFW and the partnership that has been created to be able to help raise funds, give you ideas, and create some hope within what can take place and what the future holds.

I will be there all afternoon, so I invite all of you to stop by their booth to say hi, swap some stories, and hopefully there will be a turning point within your lives for I know the experience will be terrific. With that, I thank you. God bless and we will see you later. (Applause)

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT MUSEUM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Our next guest has a great new initiative he would like to share with you-all today. Craig Floyd is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, a non-profit organization established in 1984 to honor the services and sacrifices of America's law enforcement officers.

As more and more veterans return from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, we see a larger number of those veterans moving into the law enforcement profession. It is yet another way they can serve their country and their communities.

After the 9/11 attacks, we witnessed police officers risking their lives to help the victims of that disastrous day. Tragically, many lost their lives and each day, law enforcement officers risk their lives as they strive to keep our cities and towns safe. It is important their valor and heroism are appropriately honored and their stories are told. That is exactly what Mr. Floyd does on a daily basis.

Craig is here today to talk about the National Law Enforcement Museum, which is set to open in 2013 in the heart of Washington, D.C., near the United States Capitol. The museum will be the largest, most comprehensive law enforcement museum in the world. It will tell the stories of officers through the museum's interactive and educational exhibits.

Over the past 25 years, Craig has been one of law enforcement's leading advocates, delivering speeches, hosting radio shows, publishing books, and now spearheading the National Law Enforcement Museum Project.

Craig, we commend you for your tremendous efforts and we are ex-

tremely honored to have you with us today.

Please welcome this extraordinary individual, Mr. Craig Floyd. (Applause)

REMARKS – MR. CRAIG FLOYD

MR. FLOYD: Jeremy Henwood was a United States Marine combat veteran. He served two tours in Iraq and another in Afghanistan. He had seen the ravages of war up close and personal. But unlike many of his fellow Marines, he had come home alive and whole.

When he recently returned from Afghanistan as a Captain in the Marine Reserves, he resumed his duties as a police officer with the San Diego Police Department. Tragically, though, it was this other war, the war on crime and terror being waged on the streets of America that would claim this Marine's life.

Three weeks ago, as Jeremy sat in his marked cruiser at a traffic light, a felon, who was fleeing police pulled up alongside him. Before Officer Henwood even had a chance to look over, the two-bit thug with a gun fired a shotgun blast at his head. Jeremy died the following day.

Ironically, a security camera at the local McDonald's had captured Henwood's final moments before the shooting. He was buying lunch when a 13-year-old boy named Damon Tinsley approached him and asked him if he could borrow a dime to help him buy three cookies. Officer Henwood was moved to do more and treated the boy to a meal.

He then turned the encounter into a teaching moment. He asked young Damon what he wanted to do with his life. Damon said he wanted to be an NBA basketball star. Officer Henwood encouraged this young friend to follow his dream, to say that anything was possible as long as you worked hard at it.

With that, Officer Henwood left. Three minutes later, he was shot and would soon die, one of 128 officers killed in the line of duty already this year.

Thousands attended Jeremy's funeral. His sister, Emily, fought back tears as she called her brother a great man and a hero to our country. His last act of kindness is summed up the way he lived his life. This Marine combat veteran, this San Diego police officer, simply wanted to serve his country and his community so he could help make the world a little better than he found it.

Robert Cottle was no different. This Vietnam law enforcement professional was a member of the Los Angeles Police Department Elite Squad Unit. He has been there when his friend and colleague, Randy Simmons, was gunned down in 2008.

He had survived the war here at home, but Robert Cottle was also a Sergeant Major with the Marine Corps. Last March, he was in Afghanistan battling the Taliban when he was killed by an IED. One of his police colleagues called Robert a very, very special guy. He is going to be missed. The same could be said about any of the more than 19,000 law enforcement professionals who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of duty, or the more than one million American combat veterans who never made it home alive.

The line between law enforcement and military service is often blurred. Many veterans of foreign wars turn to policing when they come home.

Many police officers are military reservists.

When it comes to helping others in need and securing cherished freedom, the location of the war or the type of service is not what is important to our men and women in uniform. It is only the cause that matters.

When it comes to honoring and remembering the fallen, nobody does it better than law enforcement and the military.

I will never forget my Uncle Jack's funeral. He was a quiet and humble man with few close friends outside of his family. When he died of cancer more than a decade ago, I was saddened and disappointed to see such a sparse turnout for his funeral service.

But my uncle was an Army veteran of World War II. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge, the largest and bloodiest battle of the war, with 19,000 Americans killed. He may have been forgotten by distant friends and business colleagues, but the Army he served never forgot him.

When we got to the Veterans cemetery, an Army Honor Guard took over to ensure a noble send-off for this veteran of a foreign war. I will never forget the ceremonial folding of the flag and presentation to his wife, nor will I ever forget the 21-gun salute.

My uncle would have never said it himself, but the gun send-off he received that day, I knew we had just said goodbye to an American hero.

Just as there are war memorials and monuments designed to honor those who died serving our country abroad, there is also the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., to honor those who died at home fighting the war on crime and the war on terror.

Dedicated in 1991, there are 19,298 names inscribed on those marble walls, dating back to the first death in 1791, a Revolutionary War veteran and New York Sheriff named Cornelius Hogeboom.

Sixty-one of those names on that memorial belong to men and women who were serving with U.S. military agencies when they died. Many other veterans of foreign wars, and just as museums have been built to educate citizens about wars and military service throughout history, we are now building the first ever National Law Enforcement Museum. It is right across the street from the National memorial.

Today, some 800,000 men and women in law enforcement strap a gun to their side, place a badge over their heart, and put the safety of our nation's citizens on their shoulders. They know the dangers of the job, but they never waver in their call to duty.

Unfortunately, many Americans take their service and sacrifice for granted. That is why this museum, like our nation's Military museums, is so important.

High tech interactive exhibits, including a forensic lab and the 9/11 Emergency Call Center, a Use of Force Judgmental Training Center and simulator will allow visitors to walk in the shoes of a law enforcement professional when that museum opens.

Thousands of artifacts will also help to recollect the law enforcement's proud past of a history filled with incredible deeds and supreme sacrifice.

The heart and soul of the museum will be the Hall of Remembrance where visitors will learn the inspirational stories behind the more than 19,000 fallen heroes whose names are engraved on the walls of the National Museum, giving a credence to one of the monument's poignant inscription.

"It is not how those officers died that made them heroes, it is how they

lived.”

Authorized by the United States Congress in 2000, all of the money to build this museum must come from private donations. With the generosity of our supporters, we have raised \$43 million to date of our \$80 million goal. Law enforcement officers and organizations have raised more than \$14 million to build the museum.

Former President and VFW Houston Post member, George H.W. Bush, is one of the leaders of the museum campaign, along with former President Bill Clinton. They co-chair our National Honorary Campaign Committee.

An American icon, Clint Eastwood, recently joined as the Museum’s Honorary Chairman.

Ground breaking occurred last October, and the construction commenced in earnest in January. The museum is expected to open by 2014.

Knowing the generosity and patriotism of the people in this room, I am confident that many of you are already part of the four million Americans who have donated to the Memorial Fund throughout our history, and are now helping to build that museum. However, I would like to invite all two million members of America’s largest organization of combat veterans, as well as the more than 7,600 VFW posts to consider making a donation to this museum campaign in honor of the law enforcement officers serving and sacrificing in your communities.

To find out how you can help, go to our website, very simple, www.lawenforcementmuseum.org.

I would like to conclude with one final story that I believe is particularly topical this year, the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001.

Let me offer an important reminder. Since 9/11, there has not been another foreign terrorist attack on American soil. Clearly, it is the extraordinary service and sacrifice of our nation’s military and law enforcement ranks, working as partners that have made that claim possible.

Just a few days after 9/11, I was invited to Ground Zero to meet with many of the rescue workers and the families of 71 officers who died that morning on that day. All I observed and experienced will be forever etched in my memory.

One of those memories involves a conversation I had with a New York City police officer named Scotty Williamson. He said, “Craig, I lost a lot of good friends on 9/11, but I am comforted by one thought: My friends were right where they wanted to be, doing exactly what they wanted to be doing when they died. That is what they lived for, helping innocent people in need, no matter the dangers they might face.”

What all of our citizens need to do is believe the incredible law enforcement service and sacrifice they witnessed on 9/11 occurs every day in communities across America.

Thanks to our U.S. military, that same courage and valor has been on display for centuries around the world. An inscription on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Museum sums up the meaning of the heroic and selfless deeds performed by law enforcement and military professionals. It reads, “In valor there is hope.” As long as there are men and women amongst us, like all of you, who are willing to put your lives at risk for our freedom and safety, there is indeed great hope for the future of our nation and our world. Thank you, Commander Eubank, for the time you have given me here today, and may God bless all of you and all of the

military and law enforcement professionals serving around the world for everything that you have done and continue to do to keep America safe and secure. Thank you. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF VFW NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: One of the stand out icons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary is the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The National Home is a profound example of veterans helping veterans.

This morning we have with us the home's wonderful leaders, Board President Donna Knapper of New Hampshire, and Executive Director Patrice Greene, and most importantly, our 2011 Buddy Poppy Child, Kristina Marier, who resides in the Illinois House on campus.

Once again, in keeping with one of our great time-honored VFW traditions, our 2011 Buddy Poppy Child will circulate among all of the generous comrades in the room and "pass the hat" on behalf of the National Home. So, please, stick around and reach deep into your pockets. Your donation to such a worthy cause will help put a big smile on Kristina's face this morning.

REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT DONNA KNAPPER

MS. DONNA KNAPPER: Good morning, everyone. Commander-in-Chief Eubank, on behalf of the children and families we serve at the VFW National Home, thank you for inviting us to visit with you today. It is truly an honor to serve as President of the VFW National Board of Trustees. We have 12 elected Trustees who serve their National Home Districts and there are also five ex-officio Trustees who include your Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent, your Quartermaster General Larry Maher, and, of course, the Commander-in-Chief, Richard Eubank.

You provide a great service as Trustees of the VFW National Home for Children. I thank you for all of your hard work, your commitment to the children and the families of our veterans.

Commander, thank you for your leadership to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and for your vision when you created the 2010-2011 Department Commanders Endowment Fund, together with our National President, Cortina Barnes. You challenged each of your Commanders to give to a special permanently restricted fund for the National Home that will provide income to the general operations, and over \$33,000 was given. This is truly a wonderful example of building a strong foundation for the future.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees at your VFW National Home, we thank you. We also thank all of you for the generous and loyal members of the VFW across the country.

As a Trustee, I am able to meet all the children and families that you are helping. I can tell you, as members of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary, we can be very proud of what we do at our VFW National Home for Children.

Now, I would like to introduce to you all our National Home Executive Director, Patrice Greene. (Applause)

REMARKS BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PATRICE GREENE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREENE: Thank you, Donna. Commander-in-Chief Eubank, we congratulate you and thank you for your service on behalf of America's veterans. This year the VFW National Home for Children is in its eighty-sixth year of caring for children and families of our nation's veterans. That is a wonderful tribute to all of you and all of those who went before you who established the home with great forethought back in 1925.

I am so happy to report to all of you that just this last May during our Annual National Home Orientation for Junior Vice Department commanders and presidents, we held a ground-breaking ceremony for another new duplex at the National Home. This is the third new duplex we have added in recent years in order that we can expand and help more families of American veterans, and without all of you, it would not be possible.

Again, today is a wonderful opportunity for us to thank you for what you do. The new duplex is well underway and on October 22nd, when the Board of Trustees will be meeting, we will have an annual meeting of the Life Membership, we will be holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Each and every one of you is invited to come. If you come, please RSVP so we will know how much food to bring.

Over the years, there have been so many grateful people who have overcome hardships and were strengthened with the help of the National Home. Everyone who visits is in awe of all that you have done.

Thank you for your loyalty, for your hard work and for your commitment.

Tomorrow, Wednesday at 1:00 o'clock, we are going to have a workshop, and it is important that you come and bring some of the newer veterans, the newer members of the VFW so they, too, can learn about the wonderful services that you offer at the National Home. So, we hope you can come to that.

At this point, I would like to call forward the members of the National Home Chorus led by Chorus leaders Misty Botke and Brian Lorente.

MRS. MISTY BOTKE: Good morning. Thanks again for inviting us. We are always excited when we get this opportunity to represent the National Home, and it gives us a chance to say thank you to all of you people. We are just really excited about this. This is the first time for some of us to be able to fly and just to be in Texas. Thanks a lot for letting us come again.

(Whereupon, the members of the chorus were introduced at this time.)

MR. BRIAN LORENTE: I am Brian Lorente. I have been a staff member at the National Home for about 11 years. I spent a lot of time as the youth worker in the Illinois II House. Hopefully, we will see you guys tonight for the show.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREENE: You can see it is a bunch of lively kids, and this year is the first time we have had a young man join the chorus in many years. We have had one. They are going to do a wonderful job tonight at the Patriotic Rally. Make sure you come and cheer them on.

Now, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce the 2011-2012 Buddy Poppy Child, Kristina Marier.

REMARKS BY 2011-2012 BUDDY POPPY CHILD – KRISTINA MARIER

BUDDY POPPY KRISTINA MARIER: Hello. My name is Kristina Marier,

and I am ten years old. I live in the Illinois I House with my mother, father and two brothers. We are especially happy that we are living in the Illinois Home. My mother works for Harmas School, and my father is a military policeman in the Army National Guard, and he is a full-time college student.

I love to play the piano, read, sing and dance. My mother was a dancer and a gymnast, and I would love to follow in her footsteps.

I love living at the National Home. This summer I was in 4-H and raised my pig "Hammie", which won third place at the fair.

I take piano lessons with my great teacher, Miss Rhonda, and I am Junior Vice-President in the Junior Girls.

I also love living at the National Home because of what it has done for my family. We have lots of friends, places to play, and we are happy again.

My great-grandfather was a Navy veteran who served in World War II. My uncle was an Army veteran who served in Vietnam. My uncle is an Air Force veteran who served in Operation Desert Storm, and my father is a Marine and Army veteran who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and continues to serve now.

I am very happy to be the National Buddy Poppy Child so I can show all my appreciation for all the veterans and also make the veterans in my own family proud. Thank you. (Applause)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREENE: Commander, we have a gift to present to you. This is the last thing I have to present. In 2008, the National Home began a tribute brick program. I just want to mention to all of you that as of this time we have well over 2,000 bricks that have been inscribed and placed in the walkways of the National Home. Commander, I hope that this gift in the walkway in honor of your service will hold a special place in your heart. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, she is going to be walking around and nobody better leave. You get all of these people up here, all these rich people first. Get all of the Past Commanders, too. All of you give to this great fund.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE MITT ROMNEY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Mitt Romney, former Governor of Massachusetts, has long been an advocate for our men and women in the military, and is unwavering in his support of them. In fact, he was the first Governor in Massachusetts' history to appoint a Secretary of Veterans Affairs to his cabinet.

Governor Romney championed several key pieces of veterans legislation while in office, including the "Welcome Home Bill" and the Massachusetts Military Enhanced Relief Individual Tax (Merit) Plan.

The "Welcome Home Bill" increased benefits for Massachusetts National Guard members by providing them with reduced life-insurance premiums, free tuition at Massachusetts universities and community colleges, increased the daily state active-duty pay rate, and increased the death benefit paid to families of Guard members killed in the line of duty. The legislation provides a \$2,000 benefit for Gold Star spouses and increases the Gold Star parents' benefit. The Bill also stated that high school diplomas be granted to veterans who dropped out of school to enlist in World War II, the Korean or Vietnam Wars.

Governor Romney's Massachusetts Military Enhanced Relief Individual Tax (Merit) Plan increased property tax exemptions for disabled veterans and grants spouses of veterans killed or missing in action since September 11, 2001, full property tax exemptions for five years. After five years, the spouses receive an annual \$2,500 exemption under the legislation.

His efforts to assist Massachusetts service members have been recognized by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, which presented him with the Patriot Award and the 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

Please join me in welcoming Governor Mitt Romney. (Applause)

SPEECH BY THE HONORABLE MITT ROMNEY

MR. ROMNEY: Thank you so much. Thank you so much. What a generous introduction, Commander. I appreciate that very much. Congratulations also to your incoming Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer. As you know, he hails from the great State of Massachusetts as you can see right there. My guess is he is like me, rooting for the Red Sox as they play the Yankees.

It is absolutely a privilege for me to be addressing the veterans who defended our liberty in the past and who defend the memory and dignity of every veteran today.

I was born in 1947, am a quintessential baby boomer. I grew up in the shadow of World War II, and then came the wars in Korea and Vietnam. As a boy, I knew it was American soldiers and sailors and Marines and airmen who had saved us from German Fascism, and who protected us from Soviet Communism. You were our heroes then, and you are today.

You know better than most that the world is still infected with purveyors of hate and oppression. Some are jihadists, some are communists, and some are simply tyrants who clothe themselves in any convenient political manifesto. And so once again, American heroes are called upon to defend liberty.

We rightly call our fathers and mothers the "Greatest Generation", but every man and woman who has or now defends American liberty, from the beaches of Normandy to the Mekong Delta, to the valley of the Hindu Kush, shares in their heritage of greatness. Every veteran is the greatest of his generation.

The quiet heroes who have fought for our country come from the most diverse backgrounds imaginable: from farmers and subway riders, Ph.d.'s and high school graduates, and from every ethnic background of the American melting pot. But they are united by far more than what divides them.

They believe in America. I believe in America. We believe in freedom and opportunity. We believe in the inherent dignity of every human being. We have a deep and abiding faith in the goodness and the greatness of America.

But today we are united not only by our faith in America, we are united also by our concern for America.

Twenty-five million Americans are out of work, or have stopped looking, or have only part-time jobs but want full-time work. Home values have dropped more than they did during the Depression. National debt is almost as large as our entire economy, and we owe a huge chunk of it to China. Incredibly, unfunded government promises now total about \$530,000 per

American household. This cannot possibly stand as the legacy we will leave the next generation.

And the peril of this mismanagement may even be more eminent. We stand near a threshold of profound economic misery. Four more years on the same political path could prove disastrous.

I am a conservative businessman. I have spent most of my life outside of politics, dealing with real problems in the real community. Career politicians got us into this mess and they simply don't know how to get us out. (Applause)

To win this fight for America's future, we will have to rise above politics. When members of Seal Team Six boarded their helicopters, they did so not as Republicans or Democrats or Independents, they did so as Americans. And the final image that Osama bin Laden took with him straight to "hell" was not a party symbol, not a Republic elephant or a Democratic donkey, but an American flag on the shoulder of our straight-shooting United States Navy Seal. That's the way it ought to be. (Applause)

I start with the fundamental conviction that America is the greatest nation in the history of the world and a force for good. And while we are not perfect, I will not apologize for America! (Applause)

Our President has taken a different approach. Have we ever had a President who was so eager to address the world with an apology on his lips and doubt in his heart? He seems truly confused not only about America's past but also about our future.

So critical was President Obama of America before the United Nations that Fidel Castro complimented him for his "courage" and "brave gesture." And Venezuelan dictator and thug Hugo Chavez joined in on the praise.

We can't lead the world by hoping our enemies will hate us less. Ronald Reagan rallied America with "Peace Through Strength."

American strength is the only guarantee of liberty. American strength turned the Cuban missiles around. American strength caused the collapse of the Soviet Union. American strength yanked Saddam Hussein out of his spider hole. With freedom as our cause, strength is our only sure defense.

Today, President Obama is on a different course.

First, the White House proposed cutting military spending by \$400 billion over the next 12 years. Then, President Obama agreed to a budget process that could entail cutting defense spending by \$850 billion.

The incoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has called a cut of that magnitude "very high risk." Defense Secretary Panetta has warned that it could have "devastating effects on our national defense." And that's coming from a guy who works for President Obama.

This is the first time in my memory that massive defense cuts were proposed without any reference to the missions that would be foreclosed and the risk to which our country and its men and women in uniform would be exposed. Cuts of this magnitude can only be the product of one of two mistaken beliefs.

On the one hand, it is wishful thinking that the world is becoming a safer place. The opposite is true. Consider simply the jihadists, a near-nuclear Iran, a turbulent Middle East, an unstable Pakistan, a delusional North Korea, an assertive Russia, and an emerging global power called China. Now, the world is not becoming safer.

And so, on the other hand, that leaves us with the belief that America should become a lesser power. It flows from the conviction that if we are

weak, tyrants will choose to be weak as well; that if we could just talk more, engage more, pass more U.N. resolutions, that peace will break out. That may be what they think in that Harvard faculty lounge, but it's not what they know on the battlefield.

But American leadership is more than a budget fight. America must lead with clarity of intent, a commitment of purpose and unlimited resolve. Unfortunately, when we look around the world today, we see a muddled picture of America's policy and power.

In the Mid-East, we are pressuring our closest ally Israel to make concessions while putting almost no pressure on the Palestinians. The administration was quick to criticize Israel and slow to confront Syria's strongman Bashar al Assad, even though he facilitated arming Hezbollah, allowed terrorists to cross his border into Iraq to attack and kill U.S. troops, and turned weapons on his own people. Instead of calling Mr. Assad a reformer, the administrator should have labeled him a killer.

President Obama's reticence to criticize Mr. Assad echoes his unwillingness to say a harsh word about the ayatollahs of Iran when they engaged in a bloody crackdown on the dissidents who bravely protested the stolen 2009 election. The White House was so tentative in its criticism and so eager to continue its policy of "engagement," that Iranian protestors questioned whether President Obama was with them. What a disgrace.

Now, we have an unfolding revolution in Libya. First, President Obama acted as if it were a great surprise that a rebellion erupted, even though the Arab Spring was already in full swing in Tunisia and Egypt. Our involvement in Libya was marked by inadequate clarity of purpose before we began the mission, mission muddle during the operation, and ongoing confusion as to our role in the future.

Today, Qaddafi is on the run and we congratulate the Libyan people and the extraordinary professionalism of our men and women in the armed services. But when a President sends our men and women into harm's way, we must first explain their mission, define its success, plan for their victorious exit, provide them with the best weapons and armor in the world, and properly care for them when they come home. Anything less is not befitting a great nation.

In Afghanistan, the President has chosen to disregard the counsel of the generals on the ground. I don't know of a single military advisor to President Obama who recommended the withdrawal plan the President has chosen, and that puts the success of our soldiers and our mission at greater risk.

Across the globe, China is becoming not only an economic powerhouse, but also a military super-power. Properly considered, China's military spending is nearly half our own. Its military build-up should give us pause.

As America's veterans, you understand better than anyone that weakness invites aggression and that the best ally of peace is a strong America.

Did you know, our Air Force is now older and smaller than it has been for decades. Our Navy has fewer ships than it has had since World War I. The Navy says it needs 313 ships to fulfill its missions around the world. Today, it only has 284 ships and we are on track to drop down to the low 200s.

And while our output has declined, the bureaucracy has increased. There is enormous waste. Let me give you an example: during World War

11, we built 1,000 ships per year with 1,000 people in the Bureau of Ships -- the Purchasing Department, if you will. In the 1980s, we built 17 ships per year, with 4,000 people in Purchasing. Today, for 9 ships a year, it takes 25,000 people.

Let me tell you, as a conservative businessman who has spent most of his life in the private sector, I look at that kind of inefficiency and bloat and I say, "Let me at it."

I will slice billions of dollars in waste and inefficiency and bureaucracy from the defense budget. I will use the money we save for modern ships and planes, and for more troops. And I will spend it to ensure that veterans have the care they deserve. (Applause)

The sacrifices made by our soldiers inspire. As Governor, I had the honor and privilege of visiting our wounded in military hospitals, both here and abroad. I walked room to room and bed to bed, visiting with these young heroes. Their courage and determination extends beyond the battlefields, to these hospitals, and then to their homes. Amputees who fought for America now compete for America in the Paralympic Games. A young father holds his child with prosthetic arms.

Others were not wounded but they sacrificed in other ways. They missed a birth or birthdays. They endured financial hardship and lost opportunity.

As Governor, I attended a great many funerals and wakes. I met with families, parents, wives, husbands and children. As you know too well, it is heart-wrenching.

I met with our soldiers in the anxious days before deployment to dangerous places. I welcomed them home, sometimes in celebrations; sometimes in caskets.

I remember one day toward the end of my term as Governor when my office got a call telling us that a soldier's body was being returned to our state from Iraq, coming in on a U.S. Airways flight. The soldier's family had not been notified in time to get to the airport to receive the body; I was asked if I would go to the airport in their stead. Of course, I said yes.

We drove to the airport and the police car took me out on the tarmac. The jet came in and the people disembarked and then the luggage came down the conveyor, and finally, the casket came down, too. And the State troopers who were there with me all saluted, and I put my hand on my heart. And I happened to glance up at the terminal. There is a big wall of glass at the U.S. Airways terminal in Boston right where the plane had come in, and the people coming off the plane had seen all the police cars, so they had stopped to see what was going on. And the people walking down the hall saw the people leaning up against the glass, so they pulled up behind them. A huge crowd had formed up there.

Every single person I saw had their hand on their heart. And I couldn't see tears on their faces through the glass, but I could see the faces, the sorrow, the admiration, the appreciation for that young soldier.

We are a patriotic people. We face extraordinary challenges. The American people rise to the occasion. They only ask for a leader who will tell them the truth, who will live with integrity, and who will actually lead them in the direction that will preserve this great nation.

We have lost a couple of years, but we haven't lost our way. The principles that made America the hope of the earth are the principles that will keep us the great shining city upon a hill.

It's time for us to come together and to carry our message across this country, that we are taking back America, that we are restoring those principles that made America the great nation that it is. Because we believe in America, we are going to keep America strong and worthy of the great sacrifice of America's veterans and those young men and women who put their lives on the line for us even today.

This is the greatest nation on earth. God bless them, God bless you and God bless the United States of America. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Sergeant-at-Arms, we will have the closing.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.
Comrade National Chaplain.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Let us go forth into the world in peace and dedicated to your service, O Lord. Let us hold fast to that which is good, render to no person evil for evil, strengthen the faith-hearted, support the weak, help the needy and the afflicted, and honor all people.

Let us love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of his spirit. And may God's blessing be upon us and remain with us always. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, facing the Flag of our country, please present.

(Whereupon, the Salute to the Colors was had at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. We are in recess until 8:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 11:00 o'clock a.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2011

(The Third Business Session of the 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, I will now reconvene the 112th Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will, please, conduct the Opening Ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, please rise for the Opening Prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Our God and Father, with hearts humble and the awareness of our responsibility, yet proud of the confidence placed in us by our comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, with a vision for the rich heritage bequeathed to us by our Fathers, yet also determined to be ever vigilant to preserve it, we ask your blessings, O God, on this National Convention.

That it may be fruitful in its accomplishments and lasting in the good effects. Be with us, O God, in our deliberations. Inspire us with your wisdom, direct us in our thinking, and guide us in the great work we have been entrusted with by your grace, for our nation, our comrades, and their families. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the opening of this session has been completed, and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Bryan. Please be seated.

I will now call on Betty Gripp for the report of the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE BETTY GRIPP (Department of Arizona): As of the close of business, August 29th, 2011, total delegates registered with the Credentials Committee are: Delegates 9,281.

The Department Commanders, 36. Past Commanders-in-Chief, 25. National Officers, 38. The grand total is 9,380. That is my report, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Betty.

Adjutant General.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, yesterday afternoon, the Department of New Jersey submitted a resolution for consideration by this

convention. The resolution was submitted in time according to the Convention Rules, so at this time I call Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief John Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas, and Past Commander-in-Chief John Furgess to come to this microphone to receive this resolution.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I ask that the General Resolutions Committee meet me back there in the back by the concession stand right now.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Once the Committee has met, made their deliberations, then the chairman will come forward and then we will discuss this resolution.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, standing behind me are the elite, our VFW National Sergeants-at-Arms. I want to express my appreciation to this group of comrades we see annually at our National Convention and our Washington Conference. They are the first ones in the hall, and among the last to leave. They work long hours in order to ensure the success of our national meetings.

These comrades are strictly volunteers; so obviously, this is mostly a labor of love for them. I am sure that everyone recognizes what an outstanding job they do for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

It is my privilege to introduce the National Sergeant-at-Arms and Life Member of Post 2394, in Melrose, Massachusetts, Bryan P. O'Brien.

Bryan has been a member of the Sergeants-at-Arms for 12 years. He is a Past All State Post Commander, Past District Commander and Past County Council Commander.

In 1982, Bryan was named the VFW's National Young Veteran of the Year. He is a member of the Massachusetts Policemen's Association and has worked for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority for 27 years as a senior controller in Boston. Bryan is simply an outstanding leader with an ultimate character and integrity. (Applause)

Gary Barringer has been a Sergeant for 17 years. He is a Life Member of the VFW and the Military Order of the Cootie, DAV, AmVets, and the National Guard Association. He is also a member of the American Legion and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

He retired from the North Carolina National Guard after 34 years of service and is also retired from the Norfolk Southern Railroad. He is a Past Department Commander of North Carolina and is currently serving as the Quartermaster of Post 9134 in Rockwell, North Carolina.

Gary is a VAVS representative for the Department of North Carolina at the W.G. "Bill" Hefner VA Medical Center in Salisbury, North Carolina. (Applause)

Joy Ausman has been a member of the Sergeants-at-Arms for 16 years. She is a Life Member of Lewiston, Idaho, Post 10043 and Cloquet, Minnesota, VFW Auxiliary to VFW Post 3979.

She is a Past District Commander and Quartermaster and Past Post Commander. She is employed by Syngenta as the Health, Safety and Environmental Manager for North America. (Applause)

Joe Schirmers is our resident golden boy because he has been a Sergeant for 50 years, that's right, 50 years, and that deserves a special ap-

plause. (Applause)

Joe is a Life Member of Post 4847 in Saint Cloud, Minnesota. His volunteer work spans decades: Minnesota State Surgeon General for 19 years, State Chaplain for 12 years, Big Ten Sergeant-at-Arms for 49 years, and District 6 Officer-of-the-Day for 49 years.

He retired from Burlington Northern Railroad with 35 years of service. As a result of more than 48,500 hours of volunteer service at VA Hospitals, he has received the VFW National Hospital Award, Volunteer of the Year Award and the Cootie Supreme Award. (Applause)

Jim Galen has been a Sergeant for 10 years and is a Life Member of Post 6802, Richmond, Michigan. He is a Past All State Post Commander and Past All State Post Quartermaster. He served as the Post Quartermaster for 18 years.

Currently, Jim is serving as Michigan District 5 Commander. He retired after 30 years of service from General Motors. (Applause)

Lonnie Garza has been a Sergeant for six years and is a Life Member of Post 3413, San Marcos, Texas. He earned All American Post Commander honors four times and the National Recruiter Sentry Award 16 times.

Lonnie retired from the Army in 1987 with 22 years of service as an infantryman. He presently works for the National Guard's "A" Company of the 636 Military Intelligence Detachment in New Braunfels. (Applause)

Keith MacDonald has been a Sergeant for 18 years. He is a Life Member of Post 2275 in El Cajon, California.

Keith retired from the U.S. Navy after nearly 24 years as a Senior Chief Petty Officer. Keith is currently employed by Intellisolutions, Inc., as a DoD contractor at the Space and Naval Warfare Center in San Diego, California. He is a past All American Post and All American District Commander. (Applause)

George Lott is our newest Sergeant-at-Arms. He has been a Sergeant for one year. He is a Past District Commander. He is a Life Member and Past Post Commander of Lieutenant Robert A. Madden VFW Post 10152 in Ogdensburg, New Jersey.

He was a U.S. Army Drill Sergeant. He currently serves as the Department of New Jersey's Sergeant-at-Arms and has held that position for more than 20 years.

He retired as Chief of Police in 2008 after 34 years of service to the Ogdensburg community. Welcome aboard, George. (Applause)

These are the comrades we depend on so much. Sometimes, we forget to express our gratitude, so at this time I want to publicly say "thank you" to each and every one of you. All of you do a superlative job for all of us.

I am proud of the professional way in which you always conduct yourselves and I am honored to have the opportunity to serve with you. On behalf of the entire organization, thank you again for your service.

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

Bobby, Joe became a Sergeant-at-Arms when gas was five cents a gallon. (Laughter)

At this time, the Commander-in-Chief will be escorted by two sergeants-at-Arms over to address the Ladies Auxiliary, and the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief will assume the podium.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief DeNoyer assumed the chair.)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER: I would like to

introduce Department Commander of the Pacific, Barry Hirshbein. Is Barry here? Barry, please.

REMARKS BY COMRADE BARRY HIRSHBEIN, DEPARTMENT OF
PACIFIC AREAS, WORLD WAR II VALOR IN THE PACIFIC MEDALLION

COMRADE HIRSHBEIN (Post 3457 – Department of Pacific Areas):
Thank you, Chief. Comrades, thank you for giving me this time this morning to present to you a program that we have in the Pacific, and particularly in my home Post in Saipan.

I am here as the Department Commander, and I want to tell you the Department has some great programs at Post 2485 in Angeles City. We have the grave diggers who take care of Clark Cemetery, and they do a great cleft palate repair program.

From Saipan, I am a member of Post 3457, and I bring you greetings from our Post Commander. Saipan is a beautiful island. Among other things, we enjoy clean air, year-round warm weather, beautiful beaches, and some of the greatest diving in the world, and great golf, and we don't wear suits.

Of course, it didn't look like that in June 1944, when around 71,000 troops from the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions, and the 27th Infantry hit the beach. At that time what they saw was a battlefield nightmare.

Over 30,000 fanatical enemy troops well-entrenched, having prepared for ten years for that day's battle with artillery, tanks and mechanized support, varied terrain, steeper ravines, steep slopes and hidden caves.

On July 9th, when the hostilities ended, virtually the entire Japanese garrison of 30,000 was wiped out. U.S. troops suffered more than 13,000 wounded and 3,400 killed in action. They are remembered in Saipan by our American Memorial Park.

The success of that battle gave the United States the runway on Tinian, which is our neighboring island. From that runway, the Enola Gay took off on August 6, 1945, to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Just how much loss of life and limb was saved because of that event will never be known. Prior to the planned invasion of Japan, the U.S. military had 500,000 Purple Hearts made in anticipation of the casualties that would be endured during that campaign. They were never needed, and we are very grateful for that.

Those same awards are still being issued and awarded today in Afghanistan and Iraq. Every year, World War II veterans have returned to Saipan as part of the battlefield tour of the Pacific Areas.

As part of their visit to Saipan, the government, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas had medallions issued and prepared, and they looked like this (indicating).

I am hoping you will be able to see them on the screen. These were given to those servicemen and veterans who returned to the battlefields of the Pacific.

Over the years, fewer and fewer World War II veterans have been able to make that trip back out to the Pacific. In 2004, our Saipan Post took over the cost of making these medallions and presenting them. Our Post member, Pete Callahan, has expanded the program to include veterans who could not make the trip. Things really took off in 2005 when I was Post Commander and VFW Checkpoint published a very comprehensive article

about what we were doing there in the Pacific.

Here is how it works. If a VFW Post Commander will attest to a veteran service in the Pacific Area during World War II campaign and sends us the information, the name of that veteran and the address of the Post, we will send the medallion to your Post free of charge, postage included, for you to present to that veteran.

The only thing we ask in return is that you take some photos or have some press coverage, send us the pictures and copies of any newspaper articles, and we will add them to our ever-growing archives of World War II veterans who are still being honored.

We have awarded over 3,200 medallions to veterans in 570 cities in the United States, from all 50 states, and five foreign countries.

So, I know there may be some among you now who know the names of your World War II veterans who served, and I will be happy to take back that information with me when I return to Saipan and we will get those medallions off to you as soon as I can. We are hoping this will lead to a resurgence and a demand for these medallions, we want to present.

If it gets big, we hope you will understand there may be some delay in delivery. If there are any circumstances, such as injury or illness for that veteran, please let us know and we will make an effort to get them to you as quickly as we can. I thank you all very much. Thank you, Chief. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER: Comrades, our Adjutant General will make an introduction.

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BILLY RAY CAMERON

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, it gives me a great, great deal of pleasure to introduce to you at this time the Past Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Billy Ray Cameron from the great State of North Carolina. (Applause)

At this time, I call on Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney and his committee to the microphone for the resolution that was submitted by the Department of New Jersey yesterday afternoon.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS (Cont'd.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: The total committee met in the back of the hall, and I would like to read the resolution since it was just submitted last night. I will be pleased to read it to you.

Resolution No. 310, "Amendment to Section 230102 of the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a National Association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen served this nation in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters, is a federally-chartered corporation; and,

"WHEREAS, its members and officers have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America from all enemies and to preserve and protect the institution of American freedom;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States petition the Congress to

amend Section 230102 of our Congressional Charter by inserting the following words 'whomsoever, foreign or domestic' at the end of the phrase under Item 7."

Commander-in-Chief, the Committee rejected Resolution 310.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER: Does anyone want to move to adopt? I see none. It will not be considered.

To Past Commander-in-Chief Carney, you and your Committee are dismissed.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, I will now read the nominations for the National Home Trustees:

District Nine for 2011-2012, and representing Minnesota, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Thomas Tweet of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. Thomas has been a VFW National Home Life Member since October 19, 1989. He is endorsed by the VFW Department of Minnesota.

There are three nominations for District Twelve for 2011-2012, and representing California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Washington:

Virginia Carmen of Renton, Washington, has been a VFW National Home Life Member since May 19, 1977. She is endorsed by the Ladies Auxiliary to the VFW, Department of Washington.

Richard J. Haake of Kahului, Hawaii, has been a VFW National Home Life Member since 1991 and is endorsed by the VFW Department of Hawaii.

Steven O. Stetson of Vancouver, Washington, has been a National Home Life Member since 2002. He is endorsed by the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary Department of Washington. Those are the National Home candidates.

At this time, now to announce the 2011 National Buddy Poppy Contest winners is Steve Van Buskirk, Director of Programs, along with the Chairman of the Buddy Poppy Committee, Dick Whipple of the Evergreen State, Washington.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BUDDY POPPY AWARDS

COMRADE STEVE VAN BUSKIRK: The Buddy Poppy is, without question, one of the most recognizable symbols around the world. To VFW members, it symbolizes the commemoration of our war dead and our service to living veterans. For decades, VFW members have distributed the beloved Buddy Poppy to millions of Americans each year.

Today, we are taking a few moments to honor those who have taken Buddy Poppies to the next level. These are individuals and Posts who have used our Buddy Poppies in the creation of inspirational and exceptional works of art and display.

The entries were judged by the National Buddy Poppy Committee Chairman Dick Whipple and Vice Chairmen Bill Barlow, Tom Brennick, Betty Gripp and Kim DeShano. The displays were judged on effectiveness, clarity of theme, suitability, originality, beauty and the number of poppies used.

Category 1 is for the Public Promotion of a Poppy Campaign.

Honorable Mention goes to Oregon Post No. 8739, Oregon, Illinois.

Third Place is to Ladies Auxiliary to the Okolona Post No. 8639, Okolona, Kentucky.

Second Place goes to Ladies Auxiliary to the Pikes Peak Post No. 4051, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

And the First Place in Category 1, Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign, goes to the Ladies Auxiliary to the George H. Elliott Post No. 7902, Osakis, Minnesota. (Applause)

Category 2 is for Memorial or Inspirational Displays.

Honorable Mention goes to Avra Valley-Marana Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 5990, Marana, Arizona.

Third Place goes to United Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 2975, Beresford, South Dakota.

Second Place goes to Delma Barbour Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 5080, Lake City, Georgia.

The First Place winner in the Memorial or Inspirational Displays is the Ladies Auxiliary to the J.L. Thomas Post No. 7320, Saraland, Alabama. (Applause)

Category 3 is for Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies:

The Third Place winner is Sergeant Charles E. "Tye" Evans Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 6760, St. Joseph, Missouri.

Second Place is Hugo Matejcek Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 3723, Owatonna, Minnesota.

The First Place winner in Category 3, Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies, is George O. Breece Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 401, Albuquerque, New Mexico. (Applause)

Category 4 is Memorial or Inspirational Displays by Junior Girls Units/Sons of the VFW.

Honorable Mention goes to Junior Girls Ladies Auxiliary to the Twin Cities Post No. 3085, Hartshorne, Oklahoma.

Third Place goes to Junior Girls Unit Ladies Auxiliary to the Ralph Fulton Post No. 6423, Erlanger, Kentucky.

Second Place goes to Junior Girls Ladies Auxiliary to the Clarence Hoyt Post No. 9217, Liberty, New York.

The First Place winner in Category 4, Memorial or Inspirational Displays by Junior Girls Units/Sons of the VFW, goes to Junior Girls Unit Ladies Auxiliary to the Temple and Welden Harris Post No. 4149, Midland, Texas. (Applause)

The Director's Award is given to the Buddy Poppy display that, in the judges' opinion, most creatively and effectively represents the intent of the Buddy Poppy Program. This year's recipient of the Director's Award is Hugo Matejcek No. 3723, Owatonna, Minnesota. (Applause)

SILENT AUCTION DONATION TO THE VFW NATIONAL HOME

This year marks the eleventh consecutive silent auction we have had at the Convention. This year, 50 Departments donated items, many reflective of their home states and commonwealths. The purpose of the auction is to raise money for issues that are close to the hearts of the VFW and its auxiliaries. And this year's recipient will be the VFW National Home for Children.

I am proud to announce that this year's auction garnered a total of \$7,024.59, and I am pleased to present this check to the 2011 Buddy

Poppy child, Kristina Marier, and Board of Trustees Vice-President Dave Havelly. (Applause)

BUDDY POPPY KRISTINA MARIER: Thank you very much.

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT
AND CITATION TO REVEREND DR. SO, KANG SUK

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER: Today, I have been graced with the opportunity to introduce Dr. So, Kang Suk who undoubtedly deserves this award. The Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit Award and Citation is awarded to individuals to recognize their exceptional service rendered to their country, community and mankind on a national or international level.

Dr. So's exceptional service is one of international magnitude and importance, and for that we owe thanks and gratitude.

Dr. So has tirelessly promoted diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea by organizing major events which include his annual American Veterans of the Korean War event.

This and many other events serve as an important bridge between the United States and the Republic of Korea. Since 2007, Dr. So has invited American Korean War veterans to visit South Korea to reunite with Korean veterans. Through these events, Dr. So's intentions are to show, to American veterans, the Korean deep appreciation and sincere gratitude for their sacrifices.

On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I thank you for your persistence and genuine efforts in fostering unity among the United States and Korea, and for promoting national security and patriotism.

It is my honor to introduce and award Reverend Dr. So, Kang Suk with the VFW Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit and Citation Award.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to Reverend Dr. So, Kang Suk.

"In respected recognition and heartfelt appreciation for his selfless and dedicated service to the United States veterans of Korean service. His steadfast commitment to promoting diplomatic relations between the United States and the Republic of Korea through the organization and execution of major Korean War events is truly magnanimous and worthy of exceptional recognition.

His tireless efforts have brought honor to both nations and represent a standard of rarely seen world-class citizenship. The unity and brotherhood he has fostered stands as a living legacy to personal generosity and exemplary character.

All U.S. veterans of Korean service and the more than 2.1 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliaries extend heartfelt gratitude and deepest affection to Dr. So.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 31st day of August, 2011."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – DR. SO, KANG SUK

DR. SO: Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank, incoming Commander-in-Chief Richard L. DeNoyer, and ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honor to represent the Republic of Korea and the Sae Eden Church to say “thank you” for awarding me the Veterans of Foreign Wars’ “Commander-in-Chief’s Gold Medal of Merit.”

Whenever I think of the United States, I am very grateful. Korea could never have achieved economic prosperity without the United States troops coming to Korea to save us from the North Korean communist aggression.

Without American young men and women fighting in Korea during the Korean War, democratic and free Korea would not exist today. The Republic of Korea owes much to the United States for your assistance in helping Korea achieve the prosperity it enjoys today.

At this time, I would ask all Korean War veterans to please stand. On behalf of the Korean people, I salute you. When I think of the tears and blood they shed during the Korean War, I am thankful to them so much.

In recognition of American Korean War veterans’ sacrifice, over the past five years, our church has invited 50 to 100 Korean War veterans from the United States to visit us each year.

Under the invitation program, we provide them with full expenses during six days of their stay in Korea, help them visit Korean War battlefields, sites demonstrating our economic development, and modern Korea. We are grateful to Dr. Paul Jhin of Malibu, California, for his help with this program.

In addition, the United States provided economic assistance to our country, when my country was destroyed by the war. I also heard my parents had milk and corn soup which was provided by the United States.

United States also allowed the immigration of Koreans to America; and helped them settle and lead happy lives. With the help of the United States, Koreans settled as successful Korean-Americans in the United States of America.

In the year of 2006, the Senate and the House of Representatives enacted and declared Korean-American Day, the first of its kind for a minority group in the United States. The action enhanced the status of Korean-Americans in this country. That’s why we Koreans are grateful to the United States.

On behalf of the 50 million Korean people, I express my deep appreciation to your senators and congressmen of the United States who helped pass this Bill. The Korean-American Day became reality with the strong support of the Korean War veterans in the United States.

Korea and the United States are strong allies because United States servicemen and women shed their blood for Korea. About 35,000 young Americans lost their lives during the Korean War. So, our two countries are blood-tied brothers.

According to the Bible, the promise between God and us is also made through blood. The promise was made through blood of animals in the Old Testament Time and through the blood of Jesus Christ in the New Testament Time. So, the relationship between God and us cannot be broken.

The same goes for the relationship between two countries. Therefore, we cannot abandon or betray each other because we are brothers through blood.

In Northeast Asia now, the Chinese economy is growing rapidly. World economy watchers predict that China will be a strong rival to the United States. It is in the best interest of the United States to keep close ties with Korea, if it expects to maintain leverage in Northeast Asia. Korea also needs to hold the United States as a close ally to keep security and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

However, there is a more important alliance. It is the spiritual or faith alliance. In the coming decades, the viewpoints of national interests may differ. However, when two countries are allied spiritually in the faith of God, the alliance will not be changed nor broken.

The United States sent a lot of missionaries to our country providing the gospel and building churches, schools and hospitals. The United States went further to protect our country in the Korean War and provided economic assistance after the war.

The United States should continue to be strong and wealthy; to be a significant force in keeping world peace and spreading the gospel to the world. That's why Korean churches keep praying for the United States.

Now the United States is in a difficult situation, but I have no doubt about your leadership for this world economically and diplomatically. Even impact of China, Japan and Germany are becoming strong, but they can never be the same as the United States of America.

These nations' contributions to the world was for their own benefits. It is not the same as what United States has invested to this world. The United States wasn't afraid to participate to the wars to protect world peace, and poured millions of dollars and sacrificed so much to protect human rights and true democracy.

This unconditional contribution to the world that has brought financial difficulties to the United States, but what the United States did for world peace, human rights and true democracy will be remembered. Now, I believe that your impact and leadership will be known all over the world.

We have learned so much from your rich history, and I am so proud to be with the greatest people in this world at this time. You, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, have fought for the peace, freedom, democracy of the people around the world. You are heroes of the freedom-loving people around the world.

I salute you. It is the greatest honor in my life to be honored by the VFW to receive the Commander-in-Chief's Gold Medal of Merit. May God bless you, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the United States of America and the Republic of Korea. Thank you very much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Eubank assumed the chair.)

PRESENTATION – DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO DOMINIC ROMANO

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is an honor to introduce our next guest to you though many of you already know him extremely well. Dominic Romano joined the United States Navy at 18 years old, with service aboard the USS Vammen-DE644, from 1945-1948.

He joined the VFW just three short years later in 1951. But Dominic didn't simply join our organization. His distinguished VFW career began in 1955 when he was elected Post Quartermaster of Oakville, Connecticut VFW Post 7330, a position he held until June of this year.

Subsequently, Dom achieved All American Post Commander status five times.

In 1971-'72, he achieved All American State Commander and in 1986-'87, he reached All American District Commander status.

Having distinguished himself on all three levels of state command, Dominic is one of the very few in the distinguished "Triple Crown" club.

For recruiting 50 new or reinstated members, he achieved State Aide-de-Camp Recruiting Class 46 times during his 60 years of VFW membership.

And in 2010-2011, he was awarded his eleventh Century Recruiter Award for recruiting more than 100 members. That's right, comrades and sisters, eleven Century Awards, 46 State Aide-de-Camp Recruiting classes, and seven All Americans.

And that still has not limited Dom's desire for involvement. He concurrently served as Quartermaster of the Department of Connecticut from 1980 to January of this year.

One thing is clear from his 60 years of service to the VFW, he is truly an outstanding leader and recruiter. That's why I am proud to present one of the best ever in the VFW, Dominic Romano, with the 2011 VFW Distinguished Service Medal. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Distinguished Service Medal and Citation awarded to Dominic J. Romano.

"In esteemed recognition and sincere appreciation for his 31 years of selfless and dedicated service as Quartermaster of the VFW Department of Connecticut. Beginning with his distinguished naval service during World War II, receiving the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal, China Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal and World War II Victory Medal, and throughout his 60 years of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Dominic Romano has demonstrated exemplary faithfulness and unwavering integrity.

"He achieved the coveted All American status seven times and is among the few 'Triple Crown' All Americans: Post, District and Department, in this great organization.

"He has recruited more than 50-plus members 46 times during his 60 years in the VFW. His unwavering commitment to the Veterans of Foreign Wars stands as a powerful testimony to all who would aspire to greatness in our beloved order.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 31st day of August, 2011."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE DOMINIC ROMANO

COMRADE ROMANO: In the year 2006, I had the pleasure of receiving my seventh All American cap and a "Triple Crown" from our distinguished Past National Commander James Mueller. I wish to thank National Commander Eubank for the honor he is presenting me today with this Distinguished Service Medal.

I wish to thank "Gunner" Kent and his staff for all they have done for us all through the years. I also wish to thank Bob Crider for bringing together

to our National Commander my record for the last 60 years. I thank our Chief from the bottom of my heart for the honor he has bestowed to me on this day.

When I met him in Massachusetts years ago, he was out recruiting members that day, and it was a real bad day, and he brought them back to the Department of Massachusetts.

I will always treasure this honor you have bestowed upon me, and I will wear it when appropriate. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and may God bless you always. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT CORTINA BARNES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Now, for a really fun event for me, I am extremely pleased that here to visit our convention today is a lady that I was proud to serve with during the past year.

Cortina has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary for many years and has left a tremendous legacy for others to follow for years to come. I admire her deeply. She is a true compatriot and an outstanding leader.

Please welcome a wonderful lady from the Washington, D.C., area, Cortina Barnes, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

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

Comrades, please be seated. Again, let's listen to what our great National President of the Ladies Auxiliary has to say. I want to let you know that she has my heartfelt feeling and spirit of this organization in her heart.

GREETINGS – LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT CORTINA BARNES

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BARNES: Thank you so much for the honor of bringing me in and also the honor of allowing me to speak this morning.

To all of the National officers and VFW members, it is a privilege for me to be with you this morning, and I recognize that. It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to greet you as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

My theme this year was "United by Love for our Veterans and Country." I consider unity to be a powerful force.

We know by experience that a group unified can do amazing things. For the past 98 years, our Ladies Auxiliary and the VFW have been unified in their common goals of taking care of veterans, active duty military and their families.

From that unity, we have moved legislation, financially assisted thousands, and served our communities with millions of hours and millions of dollars. Yes, unity is a powerful thing.

I believe that those who have been in the military know more than the average person about the power of unity. You know that your missions could only be successful if you were unified as a group. You put yourself aside and you worked for the good of the unit.

So, I say to all of you, our veterans, thank you, thank you, thank you for your service to our country, and thank you for continuing to serve as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

May God bless us all and may God bless America. Thank you very much. (Applause)

When the Commander-in-Chief visited the Ladies Auxiliary this morning, he presented me with a gift, a beautiful Native American vase that was wonderful. I will treasure it always.

The Ladies Auxiliary presented him with a flag set that we are going to ship to his house, and I hope he will be able to use it as a symbol of the freedoms of our country. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you. I will.

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BARNES: You know, I didn't come in here alone. I don't know if you saw this, I had two very special ladies with me this morning. One you probably recognize very much, and that is the wife of our Commander-in-Chief, Celeste Eubank. She is a very loyal member of the Ladies Auxiliary, and so she was over in our meeting this morning and I just dragged her over here.

Do you want to say something?

SISTER CELESTE EUBANK: Well, I would actually like to say thank you that I will get Richard back, but I have been around him when he has done construction projects and he kind of believes in the VFW. So, I just wanted you to know that I love him and I will support him in anything he wants to do, and I do love all of you guys, too. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Does that mean I can have a Corvette now? (Laughter)

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BARNES: With us this morning is National Chief of Staff, Dee Guillory from the Department of Virginia.

LADIES AUXILIARY CHIEF OF STAFF GUILLORY: I was going to ask where are my guys from Virginia sitting? (Applause) Thank you, guys and girls, for all the support that you give to me, and a special hello to somebody special to me from my own District, my Council member, Hal Roesch. Hi, Hal. (Applause)

LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT BARNES: Commander, thank you for this time in allowing us to come this morning, but more importantly thank you for the unity we have shared this year and for all the support that you, your line officers and the VFW have given to the Ladies Auxiliary. We are here to serve you, we are here to serve the veterans, and we appreciate that we have been able to work together this year, and I think that we have been successful in doing that because of your leadership. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I do believe in the Ladies Auxiliary. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort these fine ladies from our convention floor.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir.

...Convention Announcements...

PRESENTATION OF LEGION OF HONOR BRONZE MEDAL FROM
CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, at this time, we will have a presentation by Past National Chaplain Ted Bowers to Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank.

PAST NATIONAL CHAPLAIN BOWERS: Comrades, I am the representa-

tive for the Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia.

On January 23rd, 1943, the U.S.A.T. Dorchester carrying troops left New York harbor bound for Greenland. Just after midnight on February 3rd, an enemy submarine fired a torpedo. It struck the Dorchester. Many on board died instantly, some were trapped below deck.

The testimony of the survivors tells us that the sole order and fragment of hope during this chaos came from four chaplains, who calmly guided men to their boat stations. They opened the storage locker and distributed jackets. When the supply of life jackets was exhausted, the four chaplains either gave away or forced upon other young men their own life jackets.

As the Dorchester sank, the chaplains gathered together and led the men around them in a prayer and a hymn, and they linked their arms together in brotherhood, and with their heads bowed in prayer they sang "Beneath the Waves."

It was a heroic act and it was especially significant because of the identity of the four young men: two Protestant ministers, a Catholic priest and a Jewish rabbi.

The Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia serves as a memory of these brave men and carries their message of inter-faith, cooperation and selfless service to every part of our country.

To recognize and encourage acts of volunteerism, brotherhood and sacrifice among Americans of every age and every station in life, the chapel established the Legion of Honor Program. The Legion of Honor Award is given in recognition of the exceptional selfless service on the part of an individual which contributes to the well-being of his or her community, and to a spirit of inter-faith cooperation.

It is my proud honor to present the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion Award to our Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Richard L. Eubank. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO ROBERT WOODS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce a true patriot, Robert Woods.

Over the years, Bob has demonstrated exceptional service to his country and community on a national level. Drafted in 1970, it was through his service to his country that he realized he could achieve a great deal when given the opportunity. He developed a sense of pride for his country and learned there is great satisfaction in helping others.

An extraordinary example of this occurred in 1971 in Vietnam when Bob refused to leave a wounded comrade after enemy combatants attacked his convoy and killed a fellow soldier. Bob insisted on remaining behind until that wounded soldier was evacuated from the battlefield.

When he returned to his base, Bob was awarded the Bronze Star. He went on to earn several more medals, including the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Medal with Palm.

Since his time in the service, Bob has worked tirelessly to ensure veterans, service members and their families are taken care of through his involvement in a variety of volunteer work.

Bob is the State Ride Captain for the Ohio Patriot Guard. Along with

other Patriot Guard volunteers, he stands in flag line formation at military funerals for both veterans and those killed in action while serving their country.

Bob also coordinates Patriot Guard "Welcome Home" and "Send Off" events for active-duty troops.

In addition to this, he manages a program called "Help on the Home-front." Through this program, Patriot Guard members work to meet the needs of returning wounded soldiers while hospitalized in the United States and when they are discharged to their home state. The program has provided a custom home for a wheelchair dependent soldier, constructed a handicap ramp for another veteran, and provided a homeless veteran with an airline ticket so he could visit his hometown and family on his birthday.

Bob also serves as a volunteer in public and community affairs at the Veterans Medical Center in Cincinnati. Under his guidance, veterans events held there each May and November have grown tremendously.

Bob was also made an honorary Blue Star Dad by the Blue Star Mothers group. The group, comprised of mothers whose children actively serve in the military, provides support, information and comfort to our military mothers and their children.

The volunteer work Bob performs doesn't stop there. He is in constant contact with 20 to 30 active-duty service members, many of whom are a part of Operation Enduring Freedom. He focuses on what they need and how he can be of assistance, especially as it relates to supporting their families at home.

In 2009, Bob was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. Inductees are recognized for their work in their communities following their military service. Bob now serves on its Executive Committee.

I am very pleased to now present the VFW Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit to my exemplary comrade Robert Woods. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to Robert Woods.

"In honored recognition and genuine appreciation of his unmatched dedication and endless patriotism. His tremendous volunteer work reflects his dedication and unique vision, and serves as a shining example of selfless service.

"His wealth of experience and long-time commitment to the objectives of the VFW, as well as his remarkable leadership among and to the VFW community, has justly earned him the highest level of admiration, respect, and gratitude of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 31st day of August, 2011."

This has been signed by Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMRADE ROBERT WOODS

COMRADE WOODS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Commander, thank you for the honor you have bestowed upon me. I am very humble. Ladies and gentlemen, I have just got something to say just really quick.

You know, we have all heard the expression "the greatest generation." I

believe each and every one of us sitting here and each and every active-duty troop around the world comprises those that make the greatest generation. Every day, when they get up, they go to war. We all have been there, we all know what it is like to wake up and not know if that is going to be your final day.

But the awesome thing about our careers in the military is we are not going to let the government get away without taking care of our current troops, and we need to fight hard for them. We need to make sure they do not suffer like we did when we came home as Vietnam and Korean War veterans, the forgotten veterans. Gentlemen, the Vietnam veterans have never forgotten you. With that said, God bless America and thank you each and every one of you for letting me be here. (Applause)

PRESENTATION BY THE 2010-2011 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The 2010-2011 State Commanders are now gathering here on the stage for a special presentation. Jerry Chamlee, Past Nevada State Commander, is the representative.

REMARKS – COMRADE JERRY CHAMLEE

COMRADE CHAMLEE (Department of Nevada): Good morning. Recently, the Department Commanders of 2010-2011 got together to decide what kind of gift we would like to give the Chief. The Commander from Idaho suggested we get him a sheep. Naturally, I had to let him know that Montana had already given him one. (Laughter)

Do you still have that one, Chief? Then the Commander from Rhode Island suggested we give him a Wal-Mart gift card, but we considered that and we realized we didn't have enough money. We couldn't get a very big collection. I am sorry, Chief.

So, finally, we decided on the perfect gift. The Order of the Sword is the highest award to be given to a Commander from his troops. On behalf of the 2010-2011 Department commanders, I would like to present the Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank the Order of the Sword. This is a Marine NCO sword engraved with the United States Marine Corps emblem and to, Richard L. Eubank, Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars 2010-2011. It also is engraved with God, Country and Veterans.

Commander-in-Chief, this is presented by the 2010-2011 Commanders and I present you this gift.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: For all of those of you who voted against me on some stuff out there, be aware. (Laughter) Let me thank each of you for not only the opportunity to serve as your Commander-in-Chief, but most of all as friends. I know you have done everything that we have asked you to do. We lead by example, and we do the things we are supposed to be doing for veterans.

I want to remind everybody again at the close of business, 2046 is the room. If you do not show up, you do not get a gift. This means (indicating) yes, and this means (indicating) no. Thank you so much.

NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF NORRIS: Wait a minute. Whoa. What is up with you guys? You guys are so cheap, all that money you collected and you don't have anything left?

COMRADE CHAMLEE (Department of Nevada): I think we did have a little change left over, so on behalf of the 2010-2011 Department Commanders, as well as our Chief of Staff and Inspector General, all departments contributed to this one with the exception of the District of Columbia. They didn't fulfill their obligation. This is the change we had left over from the sword, and these are minted proof coins. We would like to give this nice set of coins to you.

NATIONAL CHIEF OF STAFF NORRIS: Wait a minute. Come on. You took up more money than that. I know you did.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I am not getting my Corvette after all. (Laughter)

COMRADE CHAMLEE: Wait a minute, Chief, these coins are from 1968 to 2010. It is the full set of minted and proof coins uncirculated. They are nickels, pennies, dimes, quarters, half dollars and dollars, a full set from 1968 to 2010. We thank you for your great leadership.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That is definitely overwhelming. Thank you. (Applause)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE VFW 112TH NATIONAL CONVENTION BE SUBMITTED TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 112th National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law 620, of the 90th Congress, approved October 22, 1968, and entitled as Title 44, United States Code, Section 1332.

COMRADE JOHN McNEILL (Post 5412 – Virginia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, you have heard the motion and you have heard the second. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The "ayes" have it.

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, we will now go into nominations of officers. Boy, I am ready. Lord, have mercy on my soul.

I want to start off with the nomination of Commander-in-Chief. Nominating Commander-in-Chief Richard R. DeNoyer will be by Paul Spera of VFW Post 144, Massachusetts, seconded by Walter Gansenberg, VFW Post 834, Massachusetts, and Aaron Richardson, VFW Post 697, Massachusetts.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Good morning, comrades. Several years ago, the members of the Department of Massachusetts Veterans of Foreign Wars presented to our comrades in the Eastern States Conference our candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of our great organization. We sent him forward to campaign in our conference, secure in the knowledge that anyone who looked at his record would agree that we had an individual that demonstrated leadership beyond compare.

When you try to decide who you wish to support for any given office, you stop at that moment in time and you look back over your shoulder and you see what their record is.

In the instance of this comrade, it was an enviable record. At 17 years old, in the words of our Ritual, he marched off with an abiding faith in his

God and his country, and at 17 he joined the United States Marine Corps. (Applause)

I knew the Marines were out all night drinking, so there are not many in the hall. Do you want me to try it again? He joined the United States Marine Corps. That is much better.

For the last 22 years, he rose through the ranks from an enlisted man to retire as a First Lieutenant. He worked in ordnance of the United States Marine Corps. Those of you who were in that field, he was the guy that made sure you had those bullets to keep you firing to keep you alive.

For 22 years, he and his wife, Theresa, traveled from post to post, and when he finally retired he wasn't done serving America or America's heroes.

He got a job as a service officer and he began another career, a career of caring for those who have borne the battle. He began a career that spanned the next 20 years, ending up in the Paralyzed Veterans of America responsible for nine offices around New England and other parts of the country.

When we presented him as a candidate, we knew that anyone who looked at his record, anyone who had the opportunity to stand and talk to him, to find out what he believed, to find out what he was willing to do to accomplish the mission, we were sure they would be impressed and we were not wrong.

The Eastern States Conference then came to the National Convention and said to all of you delegates, this is our choice. And you accepted that choice and for the next two years as the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, he has served this organization well.

He has traveled around the world, but most importantly he has come to your states, to your posts, to your events. He has talked to your members, he has told them what he believes. He has found out what they believe.

He brings to the job of Commander-in-Chief a unique background. He knows what it means to be deployed. In 1966 and 1967, he earned his eligibility to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the Republic of Vietnam. He knows the hardships that the military faces when they have to pack up all their belongings and move to the next duty station. He has sat across from disabled veterans who have come in looking to get those benefits that they are entitled to, and he has worked diligently to make sure that that happens. He has done all that.

He has served at the Post, the District and the Department level. He has been Chairman of the various committees in our organization, and as I said, for the last two years, he has served you as a National Officer.

Today, we stand on the edge of tomorrow. All that has gone past is just history. Today, we are asking you to consider and elect this individual as the leader of our organization. We are confident that with all that he has done and all that he has been, he will bring to this office a strength of character and a commitment to America's heroes and to our nation.

So, on behalf of the Department of Massachusetts and the Eastern States Conference, I very proudly stand here this morning and place in nomination for the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Richard DeNoyer. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The second will be done by Walter Gansenberg.

COMRADE WALTER GANSENBERG (Post 834 – Massachusetts): My name is Walter Gansenberg, Post 834, Massachusetts. I do hereby second the nomination of Richard DeNoyer.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have Aaron Richardson from VFW Post 697, Massachusetts, for a second.

COMRADE AARON RICHARDSON (Post 697 – Massachusetts): Good morning, comrades. A special good morning to all my comrades out there. How do you follow Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera? It makes it really difficult.

Unlike Chief Hamilton, our incoming Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is not a professional wrestler, but he is a fighter, a true veterans' advocate. I am honored and proud to second the nomination of Richard L. DeNoyer for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you. Nominations will remain open until tomorrow for Commander-in-Chief.

Now, for the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, nominations are now open for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. The nomination will be by Jack Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, a member of VFW Post 4643, Florida.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to have this opportunity this morning to place in nomination a dedicated strong VFW member, a man who believes that the best interests of this organization can only thrive as long as its members stay strong.

I am pleased to nominate John E. Hamilton from the Department of Florida and the Southern Conference for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief 2011-2012.

John has traveled extensively this past year, and each and every one of you that have had the opportunity to meet John and talk to him understand his position on the major issues affecting this country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

John enlisted in the Marine Corps for three years in September 1968. He served in Vietnam with the Marine Corps. He was discharged in 1970. His first job in the civilian world was that as a carpet worker selling carpet. Eventually, he bought that company and later sold it.

In 1974, John embarked on a great career. For 15 years, he served as a professional wrestler, starting as "Johnny Montana" and his greatest fame was "Masked Dr. Death." He also began working as a manufacturer's representative for Dynaserv Chemical Corporation in Baltimore in 1976.

John started his own company, B.H. Hamilton Enterprises, Inc., a janitorial supply company in 1984. He eventually sold it in 2004.

He is a Gold Legacy Life Member of Post 7909 in Jacksonville, Florida. He joined the VFW in 1974. He was a Post Commander, a District Commander and an All American District Commander, and he served as an All American Department Commander.

At the National level, John has served on many Committees, realizing the need to have proper leadership and working with the members. He has served as Chairman of the Veterans Service Committee and Vice-Chairman of both the POW-MIA and Legislative committees.

He had an urgent desire to join on the Board of Trustees of the National Home for Children, and he certainly worked hard in the best interest of the home, having the privilege of serving as Board President.

John has two sons, Eric and John. I am telling you that this comrade is pleased to join the leadership of our incoming Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer, and he always will be available.

So, I am pleased to place in nomination John E. Hamilton from the Department of Florida for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief 2011-2012. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The second will be given by Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, a member of VFW Post 8919, El Paso, Texas.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Good morning, comrades. Comrades, I rise this morning to second the nomination for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the name of the comrade now serving as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of our National Organization.

He has served with distinction during his first year in the National chairs. He has traveled the country and he has traveled the world as an ambassador of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and the good things that we stand for and accomplish on behalf of veterans and their families on a daily basis.

Those of you who know John Hamilton as I do, or who have had the opportunity to visit with him at your Post or Department, at the convention or elsewhere, know that he is a true veterans' advocate.

If you have heard him speak, you know and understand his unparalleled passion for our great organization and the sincere heartfelt compassion that he has for those that we serve.

He is a proven leader in every sense of the word. During his chairmanship and term on the Board of Trustees of the VFW National Home, a negative financial situation that was at the home was necessarily and successfully turned around.

As a businessman, he understands budgets. He understands long-range planning, business operations. This is so important. He has a leadership role in our organization, because our VFW is, in fact, big business. He has a vision for our National organization that addresses many issues and concerns to include those that have been deliberated at this convention. He will never be satisfied with the status quo, but instead will always be looking to the future for better and innovative ways to accomplish our goals with an ever-present priority of what will be best for the entire organization.

That compassionate caring visionary leadership style, along with his no-nonsense approach to the challenges we face as an organization, give him an uncanny ability to rally the support not only for himself but for other members of the leadership team, to make those changes and to implement new initiatives that are necessary to strengthen the VFW in years ahead.

He has demonstrated over and over, particularly this past year, that he is eminently qualified to be elected to the next higher position in our National organization. He will represent us the way we would expect him to and he will truly make us proud. Therefore, it is a high honor and distinct privilege for me to second the nomination of my friend, Comrade John E. Hamilton, Post 7909 of Florida, for the position of Senior Vice Commander-

in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for 2011-2012. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Again, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

Nominations are now open for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. David Lantz, Past State Commander, VFW Post 1130, Indiana, will make the nomination.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMRADE DAVID LANTZ (Post 1130 – Indiana): Most of you in the Big Ten have heard all of this information in regard to Bill, but there are many out there that have not, so I am going to tell you a few things about Bill.

Bill enlisted in the Navy for two years and went on active duty in June 1969. He served as a Machinist Mate Third Class aboard the USS America off Vietnam on the Gulf of Tonkin on Yankee Station for pipelines, a period of 100 days total.

On May 26, 1970, the aircraft carrier's squadron inundated a flow of war material south. Thien was discharged in March 1971. He returned home to Indiana. He got married and re-enlisted in February, '72. He spent the next two years serving aboard the USS Coronado and the USS Blandy based in Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia. Thien was discharged from the Navy in May 1974.

During his time at the utility company, Bill attended Indiana University Southeast in New Albany in 1978, and joined the Indiana National Guard in 1987.

He trained as an Infantry Sergeant and Forward Observer until 1992. As a Life Member of Post 3281 in New Albany, Bill joined the VFW in 1971. He started his leadership career in 1990-'91 as Post Commander, earning All American honors, and again in '96-'97, and '99 and 2000, Bill earned All State honors as the Commander of the 8th District in '94 and '95, and was All American Commander for Indiana in 2003-2004.

Thien also represented District 5 on the National Council of Administration from the years 2007-2009.

Bill Thien and his wife, Linda, were married on March 24, 1972. They have four children: Denise, Melissa, Chawanda and John, and six grandchildren.

Before I get into the actual nomination, there are some things I would like to say. Mr. Bill, as I refer to him, I would like to tell of some of my personal experiences with Bill. The word "comrade" is one of my favorite words when speaking of war veterans. That is because it includes both male and female veterans. Ladies, I didn't forget you.

I cannot help but notice the dedication that Bill had when I ran for State Commander. Thus, I made him my Membership Chairman, and he worked not for me but for Indiana. I had no idea that the pay-back would be for me to travel with Bill for three years through the Big Ten so he could become nominated for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I must say it was a very enjoyable time.

Throughout our travels and more than 200,000 miles, we spent a very small amount of money. That was almost a three-year time span. That made me a record in frugality. My point being is Bill is frugal. Did we enjoy our-

selves? You bet we did. We actually had one meal that cost more than \$4.

Next and most importantly is the fact that Bill got most of his support from the grassroots members. Bill most definitely respects National, State and District officers, but I have to say most of his time was spent talking to Post members, the comrades at the Post level, and those are the ones that voted for him and thus elected him in the Big Ten.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars starts at the Post level, and then to the District, and then to the State, and then to the National level. All levels are hugely important, but without posts, we have no organization. That being said, now I will do my nomination.

I want to start by saying thank you for the honor I feel standing in front of this very elite group of people, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. That title in itself makes me very proud to be a member. There is not a person in this room that does not feel the same pride as I do. Each of us here today is a patriotic American who fought during a time of conflict to preserve our American freedoms. We all love and care about the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Every one of us has sometime in our VFW careers done something that we are most proud of. Today is that moment for me.

It is with a great deal of pride that I nominate William "Bill" Thien for the high office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief at this 2011 National Convention. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, David.

Past Commander-in-Chief Art Fellwock, VFW Post 1114, Evansville, Indiana, will second the nomination.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: Thank you. My name is Art Fellwock. I am a member of VFW Post 1114 in Evansville, Indiana, a Past Commander-in-Chief. In fact, I think am the only Past Commander-in-Chief that is a veteran of World War II. (Applause) It is a pleasure to be here.

I was on my way home, and drove through Bill Thien's hometown and passed the VFW hall. I thought I would just stop and go in the VFW hall. It was about 11:00 o'clock one morning, and I went into the Post, and the Post Commander came out and said, "Chief, I want you to meet somebody. We just signed up a member this morning, just signed him up this morning, and I would like for you to meet him." I said, "Sure."

We went back into the meeting hall and they were setting up for bingo that night. There was Billy Thien helping the Post Officers set up the tables and chairs for the bingo. He started working on his very, very first day in the VFW, and he has never stopped working since.

It is a great honor for me to second the nomination of Billy Thien for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, a great leader and a hard worker. Thank you so much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Again, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

Nominations are now open for Quartermaster General. Larry Maher will be nominated by the 3rd Marine Division it looks like. Dave Havely, Stan King, Precilla Wilkewitz, Larry Longfellow and Rob Weiss.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMRADE ROB WEISS (Post 2406 – Michigan): Good morning. Larry Maher earned his eligibility by serving in the United States Navy in the waters off Vietnam. Our friend, Larry, has guided this organization through

some financially-tough times in the past six years, and we are now here today to support Larry to continue as our Quartermaster General.

It is, therefore, my honor and privilege to nominate Lawrence M. Maher to the high position of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: That was Rob Weiss, the Department of Michigan, VFW Post 2406.

Stan King, Quartermaster, Department of Massachusetts, Post 2346, will second the motion.

COMRADE STAN KING (Post 2346 – Massachusetts): I am very proud and honored to second the nomination of Larry Maher to continue his work as the Quartermaster General. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I recognize Precilla Wilkewitz, Adjutant/Quartermaster of the Department of Louisiana, VFW Post 4224, Louisiana.

SISTER PRECILLA WILKEWITZ (Post 4224 – Louisiana): Thank you, Chief. I am Precilla Wilkewitz, representing the Southern Conference, and I second the nomination for Larry Maher for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Larry Longfellow, VFW Post 1087, Montana.

COMRADE LARRY LONGFELLOW (Post 1087 – Montana): Thank you, Chief. It is truly an honor and privilege to be able to second the nomination of Larry Maher for the office of Quartermaster General. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: So, we are done on the seconds. Again, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

For National Chaplain, Reverend John Holland will be nominated by Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas Pouliot, Department of Montana, VFW Post 1116.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. Good morning, comrades. I rise at this time to nominate an outstanding comrade for the office of National Chaplain for the ensuing year, John Holland from Colorado. John Holland is a Marine. From 1966 through 1970, he was a Sergeant with the 1st Marine Air Wing, Marble Mountain, Republic of Vietnam. He earned the Vietnam Service, Vietnam Campaign Medal and Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

Leaving the service, the first thing he did was join VFW Post 6616 in Colorado.

Serving as Post Commander, after a while he received a call to the ministry. After seminary studies for several years, he was ordained. He served many years as District Chaplain and many times as the State Chaplain. He has served as our Western Conference Chaplain and continues to serve this day as State Chairman for the National Military Services.

I have admired his record of service and his continuing service to our organization and everything that he has done he has proven himself.

He has memberships in the American Legion, the Military Order of the Cootie and the 1st Marine Division Association.

He and his wife, Marsha, reside in Colorado. We are proud to bring John Holland with us to all the other conferences. Many of you have

known him over the years and many of you have met him. I will ask him to rise at this time so that those of you who do not know him can see who we are talking about.

It is my honor and pleasure at this time to nominate John Holland for the office of National Chaplain 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The second will be performed by David Norris, Department of California, VFW Post 52, also the National Chief of Staff.

COMRADE DAVID NORRIS (Post 52 – California): I rise before you this morning to second the nomination of John Holland for the high position of National Chaplain. Having served in that position myself, I know what it would take to fulfill that position. John has demonstrated that through his years of tireless work as being a Chaplain and working with us. He is an approachable type of person so that if you do have a problem or you do need to talk to a Chaplain, John will be there for you.

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to second the nomination of John Holland for National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The nominations for Chaplain will remain open until tomorrow.

Nominations are now open for Judge Advocate General. Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic will be nominated by George Cramer, Past Commander-in-Chief, Post 3873, Illinois.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CRAMER: Good morning. I am George Cramer, a delegate from Post 3873, Naperville, Illinois, and also a Past Commander-in-Chief. I rise to place in nomination the name of Matthew M. “Fritz” Mihelcic for the position of Judge Advocate General for the year 2011-2012.

“Fritz” earned his eligibility for the Veterans of Foreign Wars while serving with the Air National Guard as a Security Policeman during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield, in 1990 and 1991.

In addition to his personal awards and decorations his unit received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with “V”, Valor, Device. He was medically-discharged from the Air Force as a result of injuries he received in combat.

He currently serves as our National Parliamentarian and also as the Department of Illinois Junior Vice Commander, having been elected at the State Convention this year. Previously, he was the State Judge Advocate, a position he held from 1999 to 2011. He has been elected twice as the National Judge Advocate General, in 2003-2004 and 2007-2008. He has held many elected and appointed positions at all levels of the organization, from Post to National.

“Fritz” is currently employed by the Department of Defense as an Air Staff Counsel in the Communications Law Division of the Air Force. His practice is focused on communications, information technology, and he is a leader in the field of biometrics on the battlefield to ensure the safety of our troops, both overseas and at home.

Prior to this, he was an Administrative Law Judge for the State of Missouri and in private practice. He received his Bachelor’s Degree in Philosophy in 1982 and his law degree in 1985.

"Fritz" is a Gold Legacy Life member of Sugarloaf Memorial Post 6368, and resides in Dupu, Illinois. It is an honor for me to rise to nominate Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic for the high office of Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: To do the second for Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic is William Phillips, Department Commander of Illinois, VFW Post 4079, Illinois.

COMRADE WILLIAM PHILLIPS (Post 4079 – Illinois): I am honored to second the nomination of Matthew Mihelcic for Judge Advocate General for 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Nominations will still remain open until tomorrow.

Nominations for Surgeon General, for "Doc" Bohlman will be given by Glen Gardner, Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW Post 3359, Texas.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Commander-in-Chief and comrades, the Southern Conference is proud to present once again this year for your consideration for Surgeon General a comrade who is a medical doctor. Curtis "Doc" Bohlman is a Life Member of VFW Post 1335 in Woodward, Oklahoma.

"Doc" Bohlman graduated from Oklahoma University School of Medicine in 1965. After graduation, he enlisted in the United States Navy Reserve. He volunteered for service with the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam where he was assigned as a Flight Surgeon for VMO-2, First Marine Division, Marble Mountain South Vietnam, where he served in 1967 and '68.

"Doc" served one year in Vietnam. He retired from private practice as a medical doctor after 38 and a half years in 2004. "Doc" has served the organization on the Post, District, Department and National levels, where he has always done an outstanding job

"Doc" Bohlman served on the Board of Directors for the National Home for Children, Eaton Rapids, Michigan, for six years.

"Doc" has served this great organization five times as a National Surgeon General. He and his wife, Juanita, continue to live in Woodward, Oklahoma. It is with a great deal of pride and pleasure that I, on behalf of the Southern Conference, nominate our candidate for Surgeon General for the year 2011-2012, Curtis O. "Doc" Bohlman, VFW Post 1335, Woodward, Oklahoma. Thank you, comrades.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It will be seconded by Robbie Clark, District 10 National Council Member, VFW Post 4876, Oklahoma.

COMRADE DONALD FENTER (Post 5263 – Oklahoma): I am Don Fenter, Past State Commander from Oklahoma, VFW Post 5263, Lawton, Oklahoma. I want to personally tell you Robbie had to leave because of an emergency in his family. His wife's brother died, so he had to leave late last night.

I am here to second the nomination for "Doc" Bohlman.

"Doc" has been a diligent, loyal and hard worker for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I would strongly encourage each and every member to vote for and support "Doc" Bohlman for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Also, Emmitt Humphrey, Commander of the Department of Oklahoma, Post 1320, Oklahoma, will have a second.

COMRADE EMMITT HUMPHREY (Post 1320 – Oklahoma): I am the Commander of the great State of Oklahoma, and it is an honor and privilege just to second the nomination of “Doc” Bohlman for Surgeon General for the year 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Again, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

At this time, “Gunner” Kent, Adjutant General, has a few announcements.

...Convention Announcements...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: At this time Bob Greene will come to the podium for a presentation.

COMRADE BOB GREENE (Department of Kansas and Assistant Quartermaster General): Thank you, Chief. Good morning, comrades. I, for one, think this has been just a wonderful convention. We all know that it takes hundreds of staff and volunteers hundreds of hours to pull off a successful convention, but there is only one person designated chairman.

The chairman for this 112th National Convention is Glen Gardner. Glen, will you come forward, please. The VFW store would like to present -- well, Glen has been working so many hours on this convention that his golf game has suffered. The VFW store would like to help Glen to get back on track by presenting him this very special and unique, one-of-a-kind, putting green that he can take back and get his game back in order.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you very much. As I said the other day, it is all the volunteers, and if you see anyone who is a volunteer, today thank them for the great job they have done, because they have once again done an outstanding job here in San Antonio hosting this convention. Thank you very much.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, before we have the Chaplain come up to do the Benediction, remember you must be at the Installation tomorrow to receive your reception ticket. We will use the escalators to get out of here. The staff will be at the top of the escalators to give you a ticket so that you can come to the reception.

Also, all officers that received nominations today need to make sure that they have somebody on the floor tomorrow to make a motion to close the nominations and have the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot if we don't have any run-offs. Thank you.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now have the closing.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, please rise for the Closing Prayer and then a Salute to our Colors.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Our God and Father, help us to go

forth into the world in peace and dedicated to your service, O Lord. May we hold fast to that which is good, render to no person evil for evil, help us strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the needy and the afflicted, and honor all people.

Let us love and serve in the joy of his spirit. May God's blessing be upon us now and forever. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, facing the Flag of the United States, please join me in this salute.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the closing of this business session has been completed and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Bryan. Thank you, Sergeants-at-Arms. We are in recess until 8:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 10:00 o'clock a.m., to reconvene on Thursday, September 1, 2011, at 8:00 o'clock a.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

(The Fourth Business Session of the 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Richard L. Eubank presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades and guests, I will now reconvene the 112th VFW National Convention.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please conduct the Opening Ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Comrades and friends, please rise for the Opening Prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Comrade National Chaplain.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Be with us, O Lord, as we gather for this National Convention. May your wisdom and counsel guide us as we seek to develop and support programs to benefit the citizens and especially the veterans of our great nation.

Teach us to think wisely and carefully before we speak, to act with courage and conviction for the good of all rather than simply for our views, and to deal with mutual respect for one another's views.

Grant that we may seek and serve your will in spirit and truth, that the end result of our efforts will be in the spirit of charity and justice and bring credit to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and help those we seek to serve, to your great honor and glory. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades and friends, please face the flag of the United States and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the Colors were had at this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Opening ceremonies for this business session has been completed and your orders have been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I will now call on Betty Gripp for the final report of the Credentials Committee.

FINAL REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE BETTY GRIPP (Department of Arizona): Good morning, delegates. At the close of business, 12:00 p.m. yesterday, August 31st, 2011, the total delegates registering their credentials are: Total Delegates, 9,334.

Department Commanders, 36. Past Commanders-in-Chief, 25. National Officers, 38.

Commander-in-Chief, this is my final report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you. Again, Betty, you have done an outstanding job and over the past years, you have done a great, great service.

Having no further responsibility, it is now my pleasure to dismiss the Committee on General Resolutions. As always, a job well-done by you, Chairman Jack Carney, Vice-Chairmen Ed Banas, John Furgess, John Smart and the good members of your committee.

And, my many thanks to all the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and to all the members of each committee for your time and dedication to these reports.

COMPLETION OF CONVENTION BUSINESS

Other than the Election and Installation of Officers, is there any other business to come before this convention? Any other business? Any other business? Hearing none, I will call on the Adjutant General for any announcements he may have.

. . .Convention Announcements . . .

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We will now proceed with the Election of the 2011-'12 National officers.

ELECTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I will reopen the nomination for the office of Commander-in-Chief. Richard L. DeNoyer from the great state of Massachusetts has been previously nominated.

Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief? Any there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WALTER GANSENBERG (Post 834 – Massachusetts): I make a motion that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Richard DeNoyer for Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have heard the motion. Do we have a second?

COMRADE AARON RICHARDSON (Post 697 – Massachusetts): I proudly second the nomination of Richard DeNoyer for Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Richard L. DeNoyer as Commander-in-Chief.

All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of “aye”; all opposed “no”. The “ayes” have it.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Richard L. DeNoyer for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2011-2012 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, I present to you the Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Richard L. DeNoyer. Congratulations, Commander DeNoyer. (Applause) We are going to have Theresa place the cap and badge on our incoming Commander-in-Chief.

(Whereupon, presentment and placement of the cap, pin and badge were done by Theresa DeNoyer at this time.)

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

Would you like to say a few words, Commander Richard?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT DeNOYER: Very few. It goes without saying that you can rest assured that it is my honor to be allowed to serve you this coming year. Thank you, and more extensive comments will be made later. Thank you very much. (Applause)

ELECTION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I will now reopen the nomination for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. John E. Hamilton, from the great state of Florida, has been previously nominated. Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I am proud to make a motion that we cast one unanimous ballot for John E. Hamilton for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JIM NIER: Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Nier, a delegate from Post 8919, Texas. I proudly second the motion, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for John E. Hamilton as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for John E. Hamilton for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2011-2012 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, you have elected John E. Hamilton as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

John, would you like to say a few words?

(Whereupon, the placement of the cap, pin and badge was done at this time.)

REMARKS BY SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT HAMILTON: Thank you, Chief. Good morning, it is great to be here. It is a great day in the VFW. God bless America. (Applause)

ELECTION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The name of William Thien from the great state of Indiana, was placed in nomination for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DAVID LANTZ (Post 1130 – Indiana): I move nominations cease and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for William Thien as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the 2011-2012 year.

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

COMRADE CHUCK SIMONS (Post 1693 – Indiana): I proudly second the nomination of Bill Thien for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for William Thien as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of “aye”; all those opposed “no”. The “ayes” have it.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for William Thien for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2011-2012 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, you have elected William Thien as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

(Whereupon, the placement of the cap, pin and badge was done by Linda Thien at this time.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Would you like to say a few words, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Thien?

REMARKS BY JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT THIEN: Thank you, Chief. I appreciate it. Good morning. Wow, you know, dreams do come true. You have bestowed upon me an honor and a privilege that is truly appreciated from my heart.

I will be brief, but there are a few people I have to recognize. One that sometimes we forget, we take advantage of, that is my wife, Linda. She stayed home and took care of the children while I was in service, and she took care of the home when I was doing VFW work. She definitely is my best supporter.

And Tonya, my daughter, and Ryan, my future son-in-law, -- I just put him in a bind there, -- but I am glad that he had an opportunity to come from Elkhart, Indiana, to come to this occasion. I don't know if Art Fellwock is in the room. He has been one of my mentors for many years, and I certainly want to recognize Past Chief Art.

Past Commander Dave Lantz, we spent three years on the road working. He never complained one time. I thank you, Dave.

To Post 3281 in New Albany, thank you for being supportive of me all these many years.

To my District, to my great Department of Indiana, I want to thank you,

and the Big Ten Conference for all your support. I appreciate it. I appreciate the Ladies Auxiliary for all the work that you do. I want to say that because I don't think we say it enough.

To my Junior vices coming in from the departments, the more I get to know you, the more excited I get to be in this position. I look forward to working with you. I am proud to be a member of the outstanding team of DeNoyer and Hamilton. I don't know why that also sounds like a law firm.

I am proud and they have been my mentors, also.

I am going to close with this. God bless each and every one of you, our troops, this great organization and the United States of America. Thank you. I love you. (Applause)

ELECTION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The name of Larry M. Maher from the great state of Missouri was placed in nomination for Quartermaster General. Nominations are now again open for Quartermaster General. Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE OLIN PARKS (Department of Missouri): I move the nominations cease and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for Quartermaster General Maher for the ensuing 2011-2012 year.

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

COMRADE JESSIE JONES (Post 2657 - Missouri): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Larry M. Maher as Quartermaster General.

All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Commander-in-Chief, pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Larry M. Maher for the office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, you have elected Larry M. Maher as Quartermaster General.

(Whereupon, the placement of the cap and badge was done by Judy and Molly Maher at this time.)

Would you like to say a few words, Larry?

REMARKS BY QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT MAHER: Do you have 20 minutes?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have 20 minutes. (Laughter)

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT MAHER: Comrades, sisters and special guests, thank you for the trust you have placed in me again by making me your Quartermaster General. I will again try not to let you down. I am like the holy-moly. The VFW has suffered through some difficult times over the last four years, but I think we have ridden the ship and got back on track.

I was in the Navy and I worked for a railroad, I thought I would work those two things in. Now, we must stay on track and that will take everyone's best efforts. I promise I will continue to do everything I can to assure that the organization has a secure financial future.

I want to thank Richard Eubank for his leadership this year. I look forward to working with Richard DeNoyer and the rest of his team, Hamilton and Thien, and "Gunner" Kent.

It is comforting to know that I have another Navy man to try to keep these Marines in line. To the delegates, thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your Quartermaster General. Thanks to the Department of Missouri and my Post 7356 in Parkville.

As I said when I got up, if you have any questions, comments, complaints or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or members of my staff. We are here to serve you and we will do everything we can to justify the trust you have placed in us. Thank you very much.

ELECTION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The name of Reverend John J. Holland from the great state of Colorado was placed in nomination for Chaplain. Are there any other nominations for Chaplain? Are other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TOM POULIOT: I am, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tom Pouliot, a Past Commander-in-Chief, Post 1116, Montana. I move the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General be directed to cast a unanimous ballot for John Holland for National Chaplain for the ensuing year 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The motion is on the floor. Is there a second?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DAVID NORRIS (Post 52 – California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dave Norris, a delegate from Post 52, Stockton, California. I second the nomination of John Holland for National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Reverend John J. Holland as National Chaplain.

All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Reverend John J. Holland for National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2011-2012 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, you have elected Reverend John J. Holland as Chaplain.

(Whereupon, the presentment and placement of the cap and badge was done at this time by Marsha Harrison.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Would you like to say a few words, John?

REMARKS BY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT HOLLAND: Good morning. So many thanks, so little time. I would be remiss, however, without mentioning Marsha, my inspiration. Thank you all. God bless us, God bless those that protect us, and God bless the United States of America. (Applause)

ELECTION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The name of Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic, from the great state of Illinois, was placed in nomination for Judge Advocate General. Are there any other nominations for Judge Advocate General? Any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE TERRY VANCE (Post 9789 – Illinois): I move the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic for Judge Advocate General for the ensuing year 2011-2012.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE CRAMER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I, George Cramer, Post 3873, Naperville, Illinois, and a Past Commander-in-Chief proudly second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, George. We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Matthew M. Mihelcic as Judge Advocate General.

All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2011-2012 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, you have elected Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic as Judge Advocate General.

(Whereupon, the presentment and placement of the cap and badge was done by Judy Maher.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Would you like to say a few words, "Fritz"?

REMARKS BY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT MIHELICIC: I want to thank you all for your support again. I guess I get to do this again. But especially to my comrades from Illinois, I want to thank you for all the support you have given me throughout all the years. To all of the comrades out here, it is my honor to serve you. Thank you very much. (Applause)

ELECTION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: The name of C.O. "Doc" Bohlman, from the great state of Oklahoma, was placed in nomination for Surgeon General. Are there any other nominations for Surgeon General? Any other

nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GLEN GARDNER (Post 3359 – Texas): I move that the nominations cease and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for C.O. “Doc” Bohlman for Surgeon General for the year 2011-2012.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

COMRADE RON GIMONDO (Post 1719 – Oklahoma): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Ron Gimondo, a member of Post 1719, Oklahoma. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We have a motion and a second that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for C.O. “Doc” Bohlman as Surgeon General.

All those in favor will signify by the usual sign of “aye”; all opposed “no”. The “ayes” have it.

Comrade Adjutant General, you will do your duty.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for C.O. “Doc” Bohlman for the office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2011-2012 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, you have elected C.O. “Doc” Bohlman as Surgeon General.

(Whereupon, the presentment and placement of the cap, pin and badge was done by Juanita Bohlman.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Would you like to say a few words, “Doc”?

REMARKS BY SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT BOHLMAN: Yes, sir. I have a few words. Thank you so much for your support and your confidence in me, putting me in this position. In 1967, I graduated from the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute in Pensacola, Florida, and was awarded my Naval Flight Surgeon Wings. I ended up pretty high in the class, so I had a good choice of billets.

I made a decision at that time, and as it turned out, it was one of the greatest decisions that I ever made. It affected the rest of my life. That was I signed up and volunteered to go with the Fleet Marine Force to Vietnam. I was assigned for a year to VMO-2, which was a Marine helicopter gunship squad at The Marble Mountain Air Facility near DaNang, and in I Corps. During that year, I took care of my pilots and my crew members, and the guys that did the mechanical work, and I came to know those Marines.

I am not a Marine, I am a Navy man. I will tell you during that year I came to love the Corps, came to love those Marines, 23 of whom did not make it back, and now have their names inscribed on that black wall in Washington, D.C. So, it is particularly gratifying for me today to become a member of this current leadership team for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer, Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton, Allen “Gunner” Kent, our Adjutant General, and Bob Wallace who leads the Washington office in D.C., each and every one of you are a proven leader, each and every one a Marine. I want to thank you again for this opportunity. I think you are in very good hands. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I will now call upon the Adjutant General to announce the newly-elected National Council of Administration members.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: All Council members move to the front of the room and assume your seats. The Commander-in-Chief-Elect will now present caps and badges to the newly-elected Council members. They are as follows:

District No. 1 - Thomas R. Lussier
District No. 3 - Otto A. Gollon
District No. 5 - Richard M. Faulk
District No. 7 - John H. Scott, Jr.
District No. 9 - Francis M. Fogner
District No. 11 - Allen W. Kochenderfer
District No. 13 - Ronald J. Lattin
District No. 15 - Raymond Thomas
District No. 17 - H. Merle Jackson
District No. 21 - Dan G. Petersen
District No. 23 - Russel L. Dramstad
District A - Robert C. Eiler
District B - Jules "Butch" Spindler
District C - Ronald J. Bush
District G - Jack Turner
District J - A.E. "Gene" Hall

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Let me, please, call on Commander-in-Chief-Elect Richard DeNoyer for his announcement of appointed officers for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT DeNOYER: My appointments for the term for which I am elected are:

Adjutant General, Allen F. "Gunner" Kent of Arizona.

Chief of Staff, Walter Gansenberg of Massachusetts.

Inspector General, John Biedrzycki of Pennsylvania.

John has recently had surgery and was not able to make the convention. My first assignment will be in Pennsylvania, in Pittsburgh, where John lives. I assure you I will swear him in at that time and congratulate him on behalf of the membership.

Sergeant-at-Arms, from my Department, the Department of Massachusetts, Bryan O'Brien.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: We will now proceed with the Installation of Officers.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the Installing Officer to a position on my right.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have

the honor to present Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief Clifford G. Olson, who has been officially appointed the Installing Officer for this year, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Bryan.

(Whereupon, Installing Officer Olson assumed the chair at this time.)

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the term for which you and your subordinate officers were elected or appointed has now expired. It is my duty to ascertain the following. Have officers for the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: Have the books of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: He does.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: Have you the Charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: I have.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: You will now surrender the gavel to me.

Commander-in-Chief Richard L. Eubank, you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is proper to remind you that in assuming the chair of Past Commander-in-Chief, it will be your duty and privilege to counsel and otherwise assist your successor through the experiences you 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 altar, as the Assistant Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be installed.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL McNEILL: They are as follows:

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief – John E. Hamilton

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief – William A. Thien

Adjutant General - Allen "Gunner" Kent

Quartermaster General - Lawrence M. Maher

Chaplain - Reverend John J. Holland

Judge Advocate General – Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic

Surgeon General – C.O. "Doc" Bohlman

Chief of Staff – Walter Gansenberg

Inspector General – John A. Biedrzycki

Sergeant-at-Arms - Bryan O'Brien

District No. 1 - Thomas R. Lussier

District No. 2 – Vito S. DeMarco

District No. 3 – Otto A. Gollon

District No. 4 – Charlie W. Smith

District No. 5 - Richard Faulk

District No. 6 – Harold J. "Hal". Roesch

District No. 7 - John H. Scott

District No. 8 – Dean E. Smith

District No. 9 - Francis M. Fogner

District No. 10 – Robert A. “Robbie” Clark
 District No. 11 - Allen W. Kochenderfer
 District No. 12 – Gary M. Mathisen
 District No. 13 - Ronald Lattin
 District No. 14 – George C. “Corky” Berthiaume
 District No. 15 - Ray Thomas
 District No. 16 – George F. Barlett
 District No. 17 – H. Merle Jackson
 District No. 18 – Stanley W. Borusiewicz, Jr.
 District No. 19 - Wayne Aldridge
 District No. 21 - Dan Petersen
 District No. 23 - Russel Dramstad
 District A - Robert Eiler
 District B - J.D. “Butch” Spindler
 District C - Ronald Bush
 District D – Roger A. Frye
 District G - Jack Turner
 District H – Eliseo “Al” Cantu, Jr.
 District J - A.E. “Gene” Hall
 Past Commander-in-Chief – Richard L. Eubank.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Installing Officer of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the officers-elect are in proper position for installation.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: National Officers-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will now administer to you the Officers' Obligation. You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, the following Officers' Obligation was given at this time: “I do hereby solemnly promise, that I will faithfully discharge, to the best of my ability, the duties of the office to which I have been elected or appointed, according to the 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.”)

As you were. Parade rest.

Comrade Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: 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 amongst us, grant wisdom unto them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor Thee, our glorious country and to better our organization.

May Thy strength sustain them, may Thy power preserve them, may Thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: As you were. National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations.

(Whereas, all officers returned to the places.)

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 your appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties. You may be seated.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the Commander-in-Chief-Elect to the rostrum.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect Richard L. DeNoyer, before administering your Obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties.

You will be held personally responsible for the charter of this organization, and 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. Strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You will be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You are expected to make a special study of the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Ritual of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important questions referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade Richard L. DeNoyer, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT DeNOYER: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER OLSON: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left hand, give your name as I touch your hand and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Installing Officer Olson administered the Obligation to Commander-in-Chief-Elect DeNoyer as follows:

“In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, Richard L. DeNoyer, do 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 By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

“I solemnly promise, that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, the National Charter, all records, money and other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control.

“I do further solemnly promise that I will be fair and impartial in my actions towards all comrades, and I will always strive to promote the best interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. So help me God.”)

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession our

Charter. Also, I present you with this gavel, which is the emblem of your authority. Use it firmly, but with discretion.

All National Officers, please stand, stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me:

"Comrade Commander-in-Chief Richard L. DeNoyer, to you I pledge my sincere allegiance."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Officers and Delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I now proclaim the National Officers duly installed and this organization in working order for the ensuing year. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN
AND GOLD LIFE MEMBERSHIP CARD TO
PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER: It gives me a great honor and privilege at this moment to present to Past Commander-in-Chief Richard L. Eubank, from the great state of California, his Gold Membership Card. I would like to invite his spouse, Celeste, if she would come forward and pin the Past Commander-in-Chief's Pin on Richard, if you would. He is going to have to wear this thing, too.

There is a presentation now by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton, from the Department of Florida, and myself to Past Commander-in-Chief Eubank. The inscription reads, "Richard L. Eubank, our Commander-in-Chief, God, Country, Veterans, your Combat Team, Richard L. DeNoyer, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, John E. Hamilton, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief." That is a Marine thing and you will understand that. God bless you, Chief.

Now we have to switch my pin to the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief will switch his pin to the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER: Thank you, comrades. Thank you for this great honor and trust. I will not let this great organization down.

Before I begin, I must first thank my great Department of Massachusetts, District 18, and my Post 1012 in Medford, Massachusetts, for your faith and support.

I also extend my sincere thanks to Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson for swearing me in today.

To Past Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell and Past Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank, thank you for your guidance, leadership and friendship.

I want to congratulate the new Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton from Florida, and welcome aboard new Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien from Indiana.

I also want to congratulate new VFW Ladies Auxiliary President Gwen Rankin from California. I look forward to working with you to better both our organizations.

I want to thank some great friends for their support and counsel over the years, Paul and Cathie Chevalier, Ronnie and Carol Cuff, Yolanda Parrenti,

new National Chief of Staff Wally Gansenberg, and Annette Scoppa, Past Commander-in-Chief George Lisicki, and his wife, Gloria, and Mary Martin and my brother-in-law, Lou Stifano.

To my children, Rick and Annette, daughter-in-law Margaret, and my son-in-law Mario, and my grandchildren, Johnny, Vickie, Josh, Julie, Livie and Richie, thank you for sharing this great day with us. It means so much to have you here. (Applause)

And last but not least, to the love of my life, my wife, Theresa. Thank you for your support, for your love, and for your equally great service to this great organization. (Applause)

Comrades, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was born 112 years ago during a time of war. When our founders returned home, there were no government programs to care for their disabilities or their rehabilitation, no VA, no G.I. Bill, no home loans, and virtually no quality of life programs for those who stayed in uniform.

Now fast-forward to 2011. We are still a nation at war, but our departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are the envy of the world for the programs and services they provide to the people who take care of the mission.

But what the world doesn't know is that it took a concerted effort by your VFW to force the United States government to take care of those she sends to war.

And what the world also doesn't know is that our fight is far from finished, especially during these challenging economic times where some now equate national sacrifice to the size of health-care premiums.

Regrettably, even though our all-volunteer military has shouldered a multi-theater war all by themselves for almost ten years, even as we meet, some in Congress have proposed plans that would leave America's military and her veterans to shoulder more of the national debt.

Indeed, there is, in fact, a "ten for ten" plan currently in Congress. That plan, if enacted, would cut ten specific benefits to pay for the ten years of wars our troops have borne the responsibility of fighting.

Inconceivably, in spite of their magnificent service and tremendous sacrifice to themselves and their families, some in Congress are seeking to:

- Increase health-care premiums for military retirees on TRICARE.

- Increase pharmaceutical fees for troops, families and retirees.

- Eliminate presumptive service-connected conditions for disabled and ill veterans.

- Lock out or increase fees for Department of Veterans Affairs Priority groups 7 and 8 veterans.

- Reduce cost-of-living allowances.

- Freeze military pay.

- End government subsidies to military commissaries.

- Eliminate Department of Defense elementary school stateside.

- Eliminate the 20-year military retirement plan.

- Eliminate DoD tuition reimbursement programs for service members.

The sheer magnitude of these cuts and the potentially damaging and far-reaching consequences they would impose upon our military and veterans are of historic proportions. We fully understand the difficult fiscal decisions our nation must make, but the programs and benefits veterans and military families have earned and deserve have already been paid for through their honorable service and sacrifice.

In no uncertain terms, this is a betrayal of the highest degree. It is purely unconscionable and we cannot and will not sit idly by while the men and women who have served our great nation so well are asked to sacrifice even more.

Comrades, no one was there for our founding fathers when they returned home from their wars and, in this instance, we have an obligation to see to it that history does not once again repeat itself.

It is vitally important for the VFW to remain strong nationally, to ensure that Congress, DoD, the VA and other government agencies continue to honor our nation's commitment to those who have borne the battle.

I am asking all of you to join with me in the weeks and months ahead as we work to compel Congress to do the right thing, to ensure proposed fiscal reforms do not adversely affect troops, veterans or their families.

That's why it is so important for the VFW to remain strong locally, and why we must see to it that those who return from war are properly welcomed home.

Comrades, I want you to imagine your community without the VFW. Up in South Berwick, Maine, Post 5744 helped to bring the Pledge of Allegiance back into their local high school.

Over in Portales, New Mexico, Post 9515 sponsors monthly "Hail and Farewell" ceremonies on Cannon Air Force Base.

Up the road about 400 miles is a city cemetery in Lubbock, Texas, where Post 2466 has been working for three years to identify and mark almost 175 veterans' gravesites that had fallen into serious disrepair. (Applause)

And Marine Corporal and new Life Member Justin McCloud is extremely happy that the VFW is here. Post 2593 in Arnold, Missouri, along with a half dozen other VFW posts, helped to raise almost \$60,000 for Justin, who at age 23 is a triple amputee from a landmine explosion in Afghanistan last year. (Applause)

These four examples are just a snapshot of the thousands of great community events and sponsorships our VFW posts conduct every year.

Unfortunately, 136 posts closed their doors last year. Forty-three were able to merge with others, but the net loss still means 93 cities and towns are now poorer because they no longer have the VFW to be the backbone of their community.

That was at the local level. Now, I want you to imagine our nation without the VFW:

No Department of Veterans Affairs.

No G.I. Bills, disability compensation, health-care programs or survivor benefits.

No Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act.

No Enhanced Quality of Life programs for our military services.

Just 30,000 registered lobbyists pitching Congress on everything except veterans, service members and their families.

Comrades, our great organization has been at a crossroads since 1992, which was our last membership increase.

Since then, we have gone from almost 10,900 posts to below 7,600 Posts today. That's a 31-percent drop.

We also decreased from almost 2,170,000 members to below 1,450,000 today. That's a full one-third drop.

Comrades, our ranks are thinning.

We lost our last connection to World War I when Mr. Frank Buckles passed away in February.

Our World War II generation, once 16 million strong, is now 2 million.

The Korean War generation has dropped from almost 6 million to 2.5 million.

My Vietnam generation has dropped from almost 9 million to 7.5 million.

Of course, not all these veterans are eligible for the VFW, but my point is the future of this great organization resides in recruiting, embracing and trusting the post-Vietnam generation. (Applause)

There are 30 leadership positions at the National Headquarters and Washington offices, a number that includes the Adjutant General, the Quartermaster General, the Washington office Executive Director, and all their program directors, deputy directors and assistant directors.

Only 16 of these positions are filled by Vietnam veterans. The other 14 are all post-Vietnam, to include three Iraq war vets. (Applause)

As far as numbers are concerned, the Vietnam generation is the largest, but our average age is nearing 65. We need new blood because the future of our great organization lies in recruiting the future generation.

Folks like Tasha DeBois, an Army National Guard MP who served in Iraq from 2009 to 2010, she just took command of VFW Post 794 in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, at the ripe old age of 20.

Or Matthew Stuart, the new Department Commander of Utah, who served in Kosovo and Iraq.

Or like OIF veteran Tim Borland, who just became the Department Commander of Arizona.

Or Ken Wiseman, who did counter-narcotics operations off the coast of Columbia in the Navy. Ken is the new Junior Vice Commander from Hawaii.

The future of the VFW lies in embracing the new generation, and lucky for us, most of them have not yet considered joining just any organization.

In a Military Times survey earlier this year, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans were asked if they were members of any national veterans organization.

Thirteen percent of the respondents said yes, and that they got a lot out of their membership.

Twenty-four percent also said yes, but they didn't get much out of it.

Eleven percent of it said no, because the organization didn't offer what they wanted.

And 52 percent said they haven't considered joining yet.

Comrades, within the four-question survey lies the future of the VFW, because we are 100-percent dependent on membership who feel welcomed and who believe they can contribute and move us into the future.

The 24 percent who belong, but don't get much out of their membership, are the folks who are almost guaranteed to drop out the backdoor at the end of their one-year membership.

Nationally, we increased our membership by more than 102,000 members last year, but our overall net loss of 24,000 was because of 44,000 deaths and 82,000 non-renewals.

Let me repeat that number: 82,000 non-renewals over the past year. An even more shocking number is how many non-renewals we have had over the past five years – 435,000.

Comrades, we need to do everything within our power to get these folks

to renew their memberships, to become Life Members, to transfer posts if need be to become members-at-large, to feel like they belong and can contribute.

For the whopping 52 percent who haven't considered joining any organization, they are a recruiter's dream, and that's why every VFW member must also be a membership recruiter, but you have to do it smartly and not just shove an application into someone's hands.

I served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967 with the 3rd Marine Division. But I didn't join until my brother-in-law, Lou Stifano asked me when I came home on Christmas leave in 1980.

Lou was going through the chairs at the time. I knew him, I trusted him, and better yet, he didn't just shove an application into my hands and expect me to join based on what I thought the VFW was about.

He showed me what the VFW was all about, and it is why I have chosen to commit myself to this organization over the eight others I belong to.

The VFW is the most military of all veterans' organizations because eligibility is based entirely on having served in harm's way. Every member shares that common experience. Every Ladies Auxiliary member has shared the same anxiety that comes from sending a loved one to war.

That's what makes us so relevant to today's Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. We have been there and done that, and we came home and got on with our lives.

After ten years of war, the new generation hasn't yet had much of an opportunity to get on with their lives, but they will, and they will inherit the obligation to "pay it forward" just like we and our forefathers have been doing for 112 years.

When you talk to potential members, you have to educate them about who the VFW is, what we do, and who we do it for. We must also hammer home our uniqueness.

Only the VFW can claim we are the nation's largest war veterans' organization, and only the VFW can say we are the nation's oldest major veterans' organization. These are bragging rights that only we own.

You also have to explain why the VFW remains important, and remains relevant to America's veterans, service members and their families.

Our Washington office helps to enact great legislation like the Family Caregiver Bill, Traumatic Injury Insurance, and to create and improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The Washington office also oversees a nationwide network of service officers, who last year helped almost 100,000 veterans to recoup more than \$1.4 billion in earned compensation and pension.

The National headquarters oversees great troop support programs, like Unmet Needs, which has dispensed more than \$4 million in grants to help almost 3,000 military families through emergency financial situations; and provide almost six million free phone connections to deployed personnel and their families. They have hosted two million military families to farewell, homecoming and other troop support events, plus donated more than \$100,000 to help military families in nine states who were victims of the savage tornadoes this spring.

Comrades, one day our current wars will end and our troops will return home. And just like America has done time and time again, we will downsize our military, close more installations, and try to ship more costs on to the backs of military retirees and service-connected veterans.

It will be far more difficult for the VFW to push a veterans' agenda when the nation's priorities will have moved on to domestic issues.

A strong membership helps us to keep the veterans' agenda on the table. A strong membership gives the VFW a seat at the table, which is vitally important now, and will be even more so after the last shots are fired.

Comrades, these wonderful veteran and troop support programs are possible only because of a strong and vibrant membership at every VFW level.

I ask for your support to push that sense of ownership and responsibility down to every member and out to potential recruits, because we are far more than just the building down the street with a canteen.

The VFW is a strong supporter of the military, national security, and veterans' issues.

The VFW is responsible for helping to get virtually every significant piece of military and veterans' legislation signed into law in the 20th and now the 21st century.

This is who we are, America's oldest and largest combat veterans' organization. (Applause)

I also want you to recruit more women to our ranks. Fifteen percent of the armed forces are women, yet according to our Membership Department, less than one percent are VFW members.

Comrades, we have to do far better than that, and if you need some help, contact VFW Post 12097 up in Buffalo, which had 34 women charter members, or the 59 members of the VFW Women's Veterans Committee, to include Marlene Roll, who recently testified before Congress about the recent GAO report on sexual assaults at VA facilities.

Along with reaching fellow veterans, we also need to spend more time getting the word out to the American public about who the VFW is and what the VFW does.

Publicity brings recognition, and recognition helps to boost recruiting and keep our organization strong. There is strength; in membership, therefore, every member has an obligation to convince prospective members to join our great organization.

Before I conclude, I want to recognize an unknown comrade who may be in the audience today, someone who may have a spark in his or her heart to one day become Commander-in-Chief of this great organization. My advice is to follow your dream.

Serving in the chairs has been one of the most rewarding and satisfying experiences in my life, and I am convinced it will be for you as well.

It has enabled me to shake the hands of thousands of VFW and Auxiliary members around the world, to tell them "thank you" for what they do daily for America's veterans, service members and their families.

It has enabled me to reconnect with my past, like Mr. Michael Caldwell from Howard, Ohio, who recently wrote to thank me for my leadership as his drill instructor 41 years ago at Parris Island.

It has enabled me to shake the hands of thousands of military members, to tell them "thank you" for what they do daily on behalf of America.

It has enabled me to walk peacefully where I once went to war, to shake the hands of military and civilians assigned to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, to tell them "thank you" for what they do daily on behalf of the families of America's 83,000 missing in action.

And it has allowed me to tell MIA family members that the VFW will

always be by their side to ensure our nation never forgets her sacred pledge to return their loved ones home from the battlefield. (Applause)

This responsibility includes ensuring the Defense Department doesn't reduce POW/MIA funding or lessen the impact or resolve of the U.S. Russia Commission.

Serving the VFW has provided me the opportunity to live my motto of "Service With Pride," which I started in the United States Marine Corps, continued as a service officer, and am now blessed to share with my entire VFW family. I thank you once again for your support and confidence. May God bless you, our wonderful organization and the United States of America.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: At this time, we will entertain a motion to adjourn the convention.

Microphone No. 2.

MOTION TO CLOSE CONVENTION

COMRADE KEVIN JONES (Post 7356 – Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, there being no further business to come before this convention and the officers having been duly elected and installed for the ensuing year, I move that the 112th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed.

COMRADE DAVID NORRIS (Post 52 – California): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have before you a motion, properly seconded, to close the 112th VFW National Convention. Is there a question on the motion? Is there a question on the motion? Is there a question on the motion?

Hearing none, all those in favor will please signify by the usual sign of "aye"; all opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. The motion carries.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will proceed with the Closing Ceremonies.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, Commander-in-Chief. Captain of the VFW National Honor Guard, advance and retrieve the flag of the United States of America.

(Whereupon, the Colors are retired at this time.)

Comrade Chaplain Holland, the Benediction, please.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN HOLLAND: O God, as you reveal yourself, the God of people and nations, we pause at the close of this meeting to acknowledge again your sovereignty over our lives and our country.

We remember our comrades who have departed from this life. We honor them and their families for their loyalty to God and country, for their deeds and friendship.

May they rest in peace and may the virtues and works they stood for be a source of inspiration to us to make our nation and world better. May the grace and peace of God keep our hearts and minds in your name. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for the 112th National Convention have been completed, and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

ADJOURNMENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you. On the way out, don't forget your tickets for this afternoon's reception. The 112th National Convention is closed. We are adjourned sine die.

(Whereupon, the 112th National Convention was duly adjourned sine die at 10:15 o'clock a.m.)

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS & MANUAL OF
PROCEDURE AND RITUAL CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL
111TH NATIONAL CONVENTION, AUGUST 27-SEPTEMBER 1, 2011
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

C-1 (Proposed by Department of New Jersey)

**CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER
Sec. 230102 – Purposes.**

Amend Sec. 230102 - Purposes., Congressional Charter, by adding the word “whomsoever” at the end of the phrase under item 7. (Disapproved)

B-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

**ARTICLE I - MEMBERS
Sec. 105 – Members in Good Standing.**

Amend Sec. 105 – Members in Good Standing., National By-Laws, by adding the following third paragraph:

“Subscription Dues. Effective no later than January 2014, a member’s dues will be for a full twelve (12) months based on the actual month that the member paid.” (Approved)

M-1 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

**ARTICLE II - POSTS
Sec. 210 – Surrender of Charter.**

Amend Sec. 210 – Surrender of Charter., Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last section titled **“Disposition of Property.”** (Approved)

B-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

**ARTICLE II – POSTS
Sec. 212 – Defunct Posts.**

Amend Sec. 212 - Defunct Posts., National By-Laws, by deleting the second paragraph and replacing with the following:

“Disposition of Property. In all cases of surrender, revocation or forfeiture of a charter, title to all real and personal property shall immediately pass to the Department who shall take possession and control for disposition as directed by the Department Council of Administration for the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter. In addition, the books and records of the post shall be recovered by the Department.

In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, the Department Council

of Administration in the case of trust funds or trust property, or both, shall carry out the intent and purpose of such trust to the extent of such funds or property, or both.” (Approved)

B-3 (Proposed by Department of Washington)

ARTICLE II - POSTS
Sec. 215 – Eligibility to Office.

Amend Sec. 215 – Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, by adding the following at the end of the second sentence in the first paragraph:

“...except, that a trustee may simultaneously hold the office of Chaplain, Surgeon, or Judge Advocate provided that the Post by-laws do not otherwise prevent it.” (Disapproved)

B-4 Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE II – POSTS
Sec. 217 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Sec. 217 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., National By-Laws, by adding the following sentence at the end of the second paragraph and adding a new paragraph:

“Absentee ballots and proxy votes are prohibited.

Term of Office. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year except that three trustees shall initially be elected for terms of one (1), two (2) and three (3) years and thereafter one (1) trustee shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Officers shall assume their duties at the close of the National Convention. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.” (Disapproved)

M-2 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE II – POSTS
Sec. 217 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Sec. 217 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., Manual of Procedure, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“Order of nominations and elections. The order of nominations and elections shall be Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Chaplain, Judge Advocate, Surgeon and Trustee(s).

Nomination. Post officer nominations may be opened at a meeting prior to the election.

A member must be nominated to be elected. Any nominee shall have the opportunity to decline nomination for the office to which he has been

nominated before nominations are closed. A member making the nomination of an absentee for any office shall have presented to the Adjutant, in writing, the consent of the member being nominated prior to the closing of nominations. Nominations shall remain open until the Post election takes place.

Election. Post officers shall be elected in May.

Balloting: Shall be conducted by open vote or written or printed ballot at a regular Post meeting. A majority vote of all votes cast, except where otherwise designated, shall be necessary to elect. If there be no election on the first ballot, the name of the comrade receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.

Challenging Election Results. If irregularities are claimed with respect to the election to any office, such challenge must be made in a writing containing specific details concerning the irregularities, signed by the challenger, and forwarded to the Department Commander, mailed no later than ten (10) days after the election.

Installation of Officers. Post officers may be installed before the adjournment of the meeting at which elected, but no later than the start of the Department Convention. The installation shall be conducted by a member in good standing who holds or has held an office equal to or higher than Post Commander. The Post Commander-elect shall select the installing officer. An officer who may be absent for good and sufficient reason or cause shall be installed at any succeeding regular or special meeting of a unit of the organization within sixty (60) days of the date of installation. If not then installed, the office will automatically become vacant." (Disapproved)

M-3 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE II – POSTS

Sec. 218 – Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

Amend Sec. 218 – Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(1) h., by substituting with the following:

"Assure that all dues and other monies due are forwarded promptly to National Headquarters, Department, District, or County Council, as appropriate, along with accurate reports and returns pertaining thereto." (Disapproved)

B-5 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE II – POSTS

Sec. 220 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.

Amend Sec. 220 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members., Manual of Procedure, by adding a third paragraph under

the section titled “**Vacancies...**” to read as follows:

“The Post Commander shall be responsible for the notification of all post members within ten (10) days of vacancies in any elected Post office below Senior Vice Commander and concurrently announce the upcoming nominations and elections of a replacement in accordance with the provisions of Section 203.” (Disapproved)

M-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE II - POSTS

Sec. 221 – Voting.

Amend Sec. 221 – Voting., Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last two sentences in the section. (Disapproved)

M-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE II – POSTS

Sec. 222 – Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.

Amend Sec. 222 – Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions., Manual of Procedure, under section (c), by replacing the first sentence with the following:

“Post delegates and alternates to the National Convention shall be elected at their respective May meeting of each year with one delegate and one alternate for each thirty members or fraction thereof in good standing in the Post at the time of the election.” (Disapproved)

B-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS

Sec. 403 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Amend Sec. 403 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees., National By-Laws, in the fourth paragraph titled “Convention.”, by replacing “seventy-five (75)” with “forty-five (45)”. (Approved)

B-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS

Sec. 404 – Governing Body; Composition.

Amend Sec. 404 – Governing Body; Composition., National By-Laws, item 7, by deleting “...Section 421 of the By-Laws.” and replacing with “...Section 222 of the Manual of Procedure.” (Approved)

B-8 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS
Sec. 410 – Surrender of Charter.

Amend Sec. 410 - Surrender of Charter., National By-Laws, by deleting the section titled “Disposition of Property.” (Approved)

B-9 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS
Sec. 412 – Defunct Districts.

Amend Sec. 412 – Defunct Districts., National By-Laws, by deleting the second paragraph and adding the following:

“Disposition of Property. In all cases of surrender, revocation or forfeiture of a charter, title to all real and personal property shall immediately pass to the Department who shall take possession and control for disposition as directed by the Department Council of Administration for the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter. In addition, the books and records of the District shall be recovered by the Department.

In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, the Department Council of Administration in the case of trust funds or trust property, or both, shall carry out the intent and purpose of such trust to the extent of such funds or property, or both. (Approved)

B-10 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS
Sec. 417 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Sec. 417 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., National By-Laws, by adding the following as the last paragraph:

“Term of Office. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year except that three trustees shall initially be elected for terms of one (1), two (2) and three (3) years and thereafter one (1) trustee shall be elected each year for a term of three (3) years. Officers shall take office at the close of the National Convention. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.” (Disapproved)

M-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS

Sec. 417 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Section 417 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., Manual of Procedure, under the section titled “**Challenging Election Results:**”, by replacing “three (3)” with “ten (10)” and removing the last section titled “**Term of Office.**” (Disapproved)

B-11 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS

Sec. 420 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.

Amend Sec. 420 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members., National By-Laws, by substituting with the following in the first paragraph titled “**Vacancies...**”:

“**Vacancies.** All vacancies occurring in the elective offices of the District shall be filled in accordance with Section 420 of the Manual of Procedure at the next stated meeting of the District or special meeting called for such purposes as prescribed in Section 403 of the Manual of Procedure.” (Approved)

M-8 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS

Sec. 420 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.

Amend Sec. 420 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members., Manual of Procedure, by adding a third paragraph under the section titled “**Vacancies...**” to read as follows:

“The District Commander shall be responsible for the notification of all individuals identified in National By-Laws section 404, sub-paragraphs 1 through 6, within ten (10) days of vacancies in any elected District office below Senior Vice Commander and concurrently announce the upcoming nominations and elections of a replacement in accordance with the provisions of Section 403.” (Disapproved)

M-9 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 510 – Surrender of Charter.

Amend Sec. 510 – Surrender of Charter., Manual of Procedure, by deleting the last section titled “**Disposition of Property.**” (Approved)

B-12 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS
Sec. 511 – Suspension and Revocation of Charter.

Amend Sec. 511 - Suspension and Revocation of Charter., National By-Laws, under (d) **Property and Funds.**, by deleting "...510 of the Manual of Procedure." and replacing with "...512 of the By-Laws." (Approved)

B-13 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS
Sec. 512 – Defunct Departments.

Amend Sec. 512 - Defunct Departments., National By-Laws, by deleting the second paragraph and adding the following:

"Disposition of Property. In all cases of surrender, revocation or forfeiture of a charter, title to all real and personal property shall immediately pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. who shall take possession and control for disposition as directed by the National Council of Administration for the purposes set forth in the Congressional Charter.

In case of surrender or forfeiture of a charter, the National Council of Administration in the case of trust funds or trust property, or both, shall carry out the intent and purpose of such trust to the extent of such funds or property, or both." (Approved)

B-14 (Proposed by Department of District of Columbia)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS
Sec. 512 – Defunct Departments.

Amend Sec. 512 – Defunct Departments., National By-Laws, at the end of the first sentence, by deleting "ten (10)" and replace with "five (5)". (Disapproved)

M-10 (Proposed by Department of District of Columbia)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS
Sec. 512 – Defunct Departments.

Amend Sec. 512 – Defunct Departments., Manual of Procedure, in the first sentence, by deleting "ten (10)" and replace with "five (5)". (Disapproved)

B-15 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS
Sec. 517 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Sec. 517 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., National By-Laws, by adding the following paragraph:

“Term of Office. Department Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and shall assume their duties at the close of the National Convention.” (Disapproved)

M-11 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 517 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Sec. 517 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., Manual of Procedure, by deleting the section titled **“Term of Office.”** (Disapproved)

M-12 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.

Amend Sec. 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, by replacing under (4) **Quartermaster.**, the duties of the Department Quartermaster, section “k.” titled **“Budget.”**, in its entirety with the following:

“Prepare a tentative balanced budget for the financial operations of the ensuing year. The budget once adopted by the Department Council of Administration shall be forwarded to the Adjutant General within 15 days.” (Approved)

M-13 (Proposed by Department of Pacific Areas)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 520 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.

Amend Sec. 520 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members., Manual of Procedure, under **Vacancies.**, paragraph 3, item 2. by substituting in its entirety with the following:

“In lieu of calling a special meeting, the Department Commander may notify all members of the Council that the vacancy exists and names of nominees are being accepted. Fifteen (15) days thereafter, the Department Commander shall advise the Council of the names of comrades presented for the same. Members of the Council may vote to fill such vacancy by written ballot, submitting as directed by the Department Commander by mail and forward to the Department Adjutant. These ballots shall be tallied at a time specified by the Commander by tellers appointed by him in the presence of such Department officers as the Department Commander may designate. The comrade receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared duly elected to the office designated, with results of election being posted in the minutes of the next Council meeting.” (Approved)

B-16 (Proposed by Department of Vermont)

ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties.

Amend Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties., National By-Laws, in item (a) **Composition.** by deleting the words “the four (4) immediate” in the last sentence and replace with “all”. (Disapproved)

B-17 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties.

Amend Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties., National By-Laws, under (c) **Budget.** by deleting the first sentence and replace with the following:

“The Council of Administration shall approve an annual budget by October 31 covering the financial operations of the Department for the ensuing year.” (Approved)

B-18 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 604 – Governing Body; Composition.

Amend Sec. 604 – Governing Body; Composition., National By-Laws, under item 2., by deleting the second word “Regional”. (Approved)

B-19 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 615 – Eligibility to Office.

Amend Sec. 615 – Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, by deleting the first word in the third sentence, “Regional”. (Approved)

B-20 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 617 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Sec. 617 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., National By-Laws, by adding the following third paragraph:

“Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year. National Officers

shall assume their duties at the close of the National Convention.” (Approved)

M-14 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 617 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.

Amend Sec. 617 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., Manual of Procedure, under the section titled “**Installation.**”, by deleting the second sentence and replacing with “The Commander-in-Chief elect shall select a Past Commander-in-Chief as the installing officer.” Delete the section titled “**Term of Office.**” (Approved)

B-21 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 619 – National Committees.

Amend Sec. 619 – National Committees., National By-Laws, by deleting “**d. Political Action Committee.**” in the first paragraph and deleting section (d) **Political Action Committee** in its entirety. (Approved)

B-22 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 622 – National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties.

Amend Sec. 622 – National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties., National By-Laws, by replacing sections (a) **Composition:** and (b)(12) **Voting:** with the following new sections:

“(a) **Composition:** There will be a National Council of Administration which shall consist of all elective National Officers, the Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, Inspector General, the immediate past Commander-in-Chief and members elected by departments as prescribed in Section 623 of the By-Laws.”

and

“(12) **Voting:** Each member of the National Council of Administration present at a meeting shall be entitled to one vote. If requested by at least 15 members of the council, a roll call vote shall be taken. Each council member shall receive a pro-rata share of votes based on one per 25,000 members or fraction thereof, based on the Quartermaster General’s records as of June 30. On matters requiring action by the National Council of Administration between stated meetings, the Commander-in-Chief may direct the Adjutant General to conduct mail ballots, the results of such mail

ballots shall be reported for the record at the next stated meeting.” (Approved)

B-23 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL
Sec. 623 – Regional National Council of Administration Members
-How Elected.

Amend Sec. 623 – Regional National Council of Administration Members-How Elected., National By-Laws, by replacing the title and the entire section to read as follows:

“Sec. 623 - National Council of Administration, Department Members—
Election, Vacancies and Removal.

At the close of the 113th National Convention, each Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be entitled to a member on the National Council of Administration.

Election: Following the completion of the transitional rule in Section 624, members will be elected to a four year term. Said member shall be elected at the Department Convention preceding the National Convention at which the term is to commence, in the same manner and at the same time as Department officers are elected and shall be installed into office at the National Convention.

These members shall be initially elected for terms of one, two, three and four years beginning in 2012 and thereafter shall be elected to four-year terms.

Transition Schedule:

<u>One Year Term</u>	<u>Two Year Term</u>	<u>Three Year Term</u>	<u>Four Year Term</u>
Connecticut	Alabama	Illinois	Alaska
Delaware	Arkansas	Indiana	Arizona
Dist. of Col.	Florida	Iowa	California
Europe	Georgia	Michigan	Colorado
Maine	Kentucky	Minnesota	Hawaii
Maryland	Louisiana	Missouri	Idaho
Massachusetts	Mississippi	Nebraska	Kansas
New Hampshire	North Carolina	Ohio	Latin Amer/Carib
New Jersey	Oklahoma	South Dakota	Montana
New York	South Carolina	Wisconsin	Nevada
Pennsylvania	Tennessee		New Mexico
Rhode Island	Texas		North Dakota
Vermont	Virginia		Oregon
	West Virginia		Pacific Areas
			Utah
			Washington
			Wyoming

Removal: The Department Commander may, with the concurrence

of two-thirds of the Department Council of Administration, remove their elected National Council of Administration member who fails to fulfill the duties of his office as required by Section 622, provided that such member has been given seven (7) days written notice that removal will be sought, including the reasons for removal, and the member is provided an opportunity to be heard by the Department Council at a regular meeting or special meeting called for that purpose, prior to such removal.

Any National Council of Administration member removed by the Department Commander for reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section, shall not be eligible to serve in any National office in the same administrative year in which the officer is removed.

Notification of Removal: Such actions and reasons therefore, shall be in the form of a Special Order, and delivered personally or by certified or registered mail at the removed member's last known address. The special order shall advise the member of his rights to appeal under these By-Laws.

Vacancies: All other vacancies occurring in the office of National Council of Administration, shall be filled by the Department Council of Administration in accordance with section 520 of the Manual of Procedure." (Approved)

B-24 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Add Sec. 624 – Transitional Rule., National By-Laws as follows:

"Sec. 624 – Transitional Rule.

To accommodate the transition period, the 2011-2012 council shall be comprised of members as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Maine, New Hampshire | 15. New Mexico, Arizona |
| 2. Vermont, Massachusetts | 16. Latin America/Caribbean, |
| 3. Maryland, New Jersey | Pacific Areas, Alaska, Hawaii |
| 4. District of Columbia, | 17. Utah, Nevada, Oregon |
| Delaware, Europe | 18. Connecticut, Rhode Island |
| 5. Indiana, Missouri | 19. Louisiana, Mississippi |
| 6. Virginia, West Virginia | 21. Minnesota, Nebraska |
| 7. Tennessee, Kentucky | 23. Michigan, South Dakota |
| 8. Georgia, Alabama | A. Pennsylvania |
| 9. South Carolina, North Carolina | B. Illinois |
| 10. Oklahoma, Arkansas | C. New York |
| 11. Wisconsin, Iowa | D. Ohio |
| 12. North Dakota, Wyoming | G. California |
| 13. Kansas, Colorado | H. Texas |
| 14. Montana, Washington, Idaho | J. Florida" |
- (Approved)

B-25 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS
Sec. 702 – Politics.

Amend Sec. 702 – Politics., National By-Laws., by changing “Section 3” to “Section 230102” in the last paragraph. (Approved)

M-15 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE X – RULES OF ORDER
Sec. 1004 – Order of Business-Posts.

Amend Sec. 1004 – Order of Business-Posts., Manual of Procedure, under No. 6., by replacing “candidates” with “applications” and replace No. 18 with “Nomination, election and installation of officers”. (Approved)

B-26 (Proposed by Department of West Virginia)

ARTICLE XI – LADIES AUXILIARY

Amend **Article XI – LADIES AUXILIARY**, National By-Laws, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“ARTICLE XI—THE AUXILIARY
Sec. 1101—Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliaries.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a national association of eligible members heretofore chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief and the National Council of Administration.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be governed by such By-Laws, Rules and Regulations and Ritual as may be adopted by it and by the lawful orders issued by the National Officers of the Auxiliary, provided such By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, Ritual and orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may issue charters to Department, District, County Council, and Post Auxiliaries, provided that the establishment of such Auxiliary shall have been approved by the respective Department, District, County Council or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control. Formation, control and disbandment of auxiliaries as well as suspension or

cancellation of charters shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

Auxiliary officers shall make such reports as may be required in the Manual of Procedure.

Sec. 1102—Eligibility.

Membership in the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be limited to spouses, widowed spouses, parents, step-parents (who have performed the duties of parent), grandparents, offspring, grandchildren, foster and step children (who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) and for whom the duties of parent were performed), siblings, half siblings, and foster and step-siblings (who attained that status prior to age sixteen (16) of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be not less than sixteen (16) years old.

Sec. 1103—Ritual, By-Laws and Regulations.

The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may adopt By-Laws, a Ritual and such Rules and Regulations as are deemed necessary and may authorize Department, District, County Council and Post Auxiliaries to adopt By-Laws. In the event any part of the By-Laws, Ritual and Rules and Regulations so adopted are inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the respective Department, District, County Council or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

Sec. 1104—Incorporation.

(a) The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is authorized to incorporate under appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws, provided such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by a two-thirds vote of the National Convention of the Auxiliary and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.

(b) The Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may, by duly approved amendments to its By-Laws, authorize Department Auxiliaries and Post Auxiliaries to incorporate under appropriate not-for-profit corporation laws and may adopt such Rules and Regulations as are appropriate concerning such incorporation, provided that the respective Department or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States approves such incorporation, which approval shall be given in the same manner as for initial formation of an Auxiliary, and, provided further that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure. Should any state law prohibit the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation-

tion, it shall be permissible to change the provision sufficiently to conform to state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purpose of the Manual of Procedure provision. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter.” (Disapproved)

M-16 (Proposed by Department of West Virginia)

ARTICLE XI – LADIES AUXILIARY

Amend **Article XI – LADIES AUXILIARY**, Manual of Procedure, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“ARTICLE XI— THE AUXILIARY

Sec. 1101—Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliaries.

(a) **Formation.** Auxiliaries shall be hereafter formed and approved in accordance with the following provisions. These provisions shall not be retroactive and auxiliaries approved and chartered prior to the adoption of these provisions need not be reapproved.

(1) **By Departments.** No auxiliary to a Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved by two-thirds vote of the delegates assembled at an annual Department Convention. Each Department of the Auxiliary shall be identical in geographical limits with the respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and shall be known and identified by the same name as the Department whose name it bears.

(2) **By Districts.** No auxiliary to a District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved at a regular or special meeting by two-thirds of the Posts in such District. Notice of the proposed formation of an auxiliary to the District shall be given all Posts in the District in writing at least two weeks prior to any meeting during which a vote to determine the formation of an auxiliary to the District will be made. Each District of the Auxiliary shall be identical in geographical limits with the respective District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and shall be known and identified by the same number as the District whose number it bears.

(3) **By County Councils.** No auxiliary to a County Council of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved at a regular or special meeting by two-thirds of the Posts in such County Council. Notice of the proposed formation of an auxiliary to the County Council shall be given all Posts of the County Council in writing at least two weeks prior to any meeting during which a vote to determine the formation of an auxiliary to the County Council will be made. Each County Council of the Auxiliary shall be identical in geographical limits with the respective County Council of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and shall be known and identified by the same name as the County Council whose name it bears.

(4) **By Posts.** No auxiliary to a Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be formed unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the Post membership present at a regular or special meeting, due notice of the proposed formation of an auxiliary 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 Auxiliary shall be assigned the number of the Post with which it is affiliated.

(b) **Governance.**

(1) **Governance of Department Auxiliaries.** Department Auxiliaries shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Convention and Council of Administration of the respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Department Auxiliaries shall be governed by the By-Laws, Ritual, and Rules and Regulations of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department Auxiliary and lawful orders issued by their respective officers, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws or Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and By-Laws of the Department whose name it bears or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration or the Department Council of Administration.

(2) **Governance of District, County Council and Post Auxiliaries.** The Auxiliary to a District, County Council or Post shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the respective District, County Council or Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States whose name or number it bears.

Such auxiliary shall be governed by the By-Laws, Ritual and Rules and Regulations of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Department Auxiliary and lawful orders issued by their respective officers provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws or Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department By-Laws or the By-Laws of the District, County Council or Post whose name it bears, or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, or the Department Council of Administration.

(c) **Suspension and Discontinuance.**

(1) **National.** The Commander-in-Chief may suspend the Charter of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of the Foreign Wars of the United States if he believes its conduct, or that of its officers or Council of Administration, to be detrimental to the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The Charter of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may not be suspended by the Commander-in-Chief for a period longer than thirty (30) days without the consent of the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such consent shall be given only if a majority of the members of the Council

determines that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to suspend the Charter for a longer period of time.

While the Charter of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is suspended, its officers shall have no authority and shall not issue any orders other than those necessary to keep a National Headquarters office in operation.

(2) **Departments.** The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension of the charter of any Department Auxiliary upon the recommendation of the National President of the Auxiliary or the Commander of such Department when it is shown to the satisfaction of the Commander-in-Chief that the conduct of such Department Auxiliary, or its officers or Council of Administration, is detrimental to the interests of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. A Department Auxiliary charter may not be suspended by the Commander-in-Chief for a period longer than thirty (30) days without the consent of the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such consent shall be given only if a majority of the members of the Council determines it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to suspend the charter for a longer period of time.

(3) **Districts, County Councils and Posts.** The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension of the charter of any District, County Council or Post auxiliary for a definite or indefinite period of time and may order the National President to order the cancellation of the charter of any District, County Council or Post auxiliary if he believes the conduct of such auxiliary or its officers is detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(d) Requesting Cancellation of the Charter of an Auxiliary.

(1) **By Departments.** A Department may, by a vote of eighty percent of the delegates assembled at an annual Department Convention, following a printed or written notice mailed or delivered to each Post in the Department at least ten (10) days before such Convention, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefore. If the Department votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary, the Department Commander shall certify that action in writing and forward such certification to the Commander-in-Chief. If the Commander-in-Chief believes it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, he shall direct the National President to cancel the charter of the Department Auxiliary.

(2) **By Districts or County Councils.** A District or County Council may, by a vote of eighty percent of the Posts at a regular or special meeting following a printed or written notice to each Post in the District or County Council at least ten (10) days before such meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefore. If the District or County Council votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander who

shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with their recommendation. If the Commander-in-Chief believes it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, he shall direct the National President to cancel the charter of the District or County Council Auxiliary.

(3) **Disbanding of Auxiliary by Post.** A Post may, by vote of eighty per cent of its

members present at a meeting following a printed or 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 Auxiliary. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefore. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its Auxiliary, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with their recommendations. Upon a review of the matter, if he believes that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the National President to cancel the charter of the Post Auxiliary.

(e) **Disposition of Property.** In the event of the surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of the Charter of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, its records, monies and all other property shall immediately become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

In the event of the surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of the charter of the Auxiliary to a Post, County Council, District or Department, all monies, official records and all other property shall immediately be surrendered to such officer or officers as may be provided by the By-Laws and Rules and Regulations of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for disposition in accordance with those By-Laws and Rules and Regulations. Notice of such contemplated action shall be given to the Post, County Council, District and Department Commander thirty (30) days prior to the surrender or cancellation of an Auxiliary charter.

(f) **Reports.**

(1) **National.** The National President of the Auxiliary shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Commander-in-Chief an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Auxiliary for their information and for submission by the Commander-in-Chief to the National Council of Administration. The National Treasurer of the Auxiliary shall prepare a quarterly report for the National President and the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary, and submit copies thereof to the Department Presidents of the Auxiliary and to the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The National Treasurer also shall prepare for the National President, before each National Convention, a list showing the Auxiliaries in good standing and the number of delegates to which each is entitled.

Budget. No less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting of the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary at which the annual budget is

adopted, the National Treasurer shall submit a proposed budget to the National President, and each member of the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary. Immediately following the adoption of the annual budget by the National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary, the National Treasurer shall submit a copy of the approved budget to the Commander-in-Chief.

(2) **Department.** The Department President of the respective Department Auxiliary shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Department Commander an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Department Auxiliary for their information and for submission by the Department Commander to the Department Council of Administration.

(3) **Districts, County Councils, Posts.** The President of the Auxiliary to a District, County Council or Post shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Commander of the respective District, County Council or Post an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the auxiliary over which the President is presiding officer. Such reports will be acknowledged by each respective Commander during the next regular meeting and may be read to the members assembled.

(g) **Liaison.** There is established a committee composed of the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant General who shall meet with a corresponding committee composed of the Senior Vice President, Junior Vice President and the National Secretary of the Auxiliary. This combined committee shall meet each year, at the call of the Commander-in-Chief, to consider all matters affecting the welfare of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The purpose of the committee shall be to coordinate the activities of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the activities of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and to insure full compliance with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and the mandates of the National Convention and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Sec. 1102—Eligibility. (See Section 1102 By-Laws)

Sec. 1103—Ritual, By-Laws and Regulations.
(See Section 1103 By-Laws)

Sec. 1104—Incorporation.

(a) The Articles of Incorporation of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:

(1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(2) This incorporated organization shall be and remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

(3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, or the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and the forfeiture of the Charter issued to it by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, title to all of the assets shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be disposed of according to its By-Laws. At no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.

(4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.

(b) The Articles of Incorporation of any Department or Post Auxiliary, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:

(1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the (Auxiliary to the Department of _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Auxiliary to Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States).

(2) This incorporated organization shall be and at all times remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, National President and National Council of Administration of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the (Department of _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) and subject to the By-Laws and Rules and Regulations of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the Charter, By-Laws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, all the assets shall be the property of (Auxiliary Department of _____ or the Auxiliary Post _____, and in the event of any dissolution of their corporation and the forfeiture of the charter issued by the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States entitled to all assets of this corporation shall pass through the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the Auxiliary Department to be disposed of in accordance with the By-Laws, rules and regulations of the Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and at no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.

(4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property." (Disapproved)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Delete **ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY**, National By-Laws, in its entirety. (Disapproved)

M-17 (Proposed by Department of West Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Delete **ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY**, Manual of Procedure, in its entirety. (Disapproved)

M-18 (Proposed by Department of Connecticut)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries.

Amend Sec. 1301 – Organizations and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries., Manual of Procedure, under (d) **Reports**, by removing the words “which information shall also be provided to National Headquarters” at the end of the last sentence. (Disapproved)

B-28 (Proposed by Department of Washington)

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Amend **ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**, National By-Laws, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“ARTICLE XIV – NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Sec. 1401 – Formation.

(a) The four conferences (Big Ten, Eastern, Southern and Western Conference) shall be associations separately constituted as subordinate units to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(b) Each conference is authorized to conduct meetings for the purpose of selecting candidates within their conference for consideration of National elected positions.

Sec. 1402 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business.

The By-Laws adopted by each conference shall not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.” (Disapproved)

M-19 (Proposed by Department of Washington)

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Amend **ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**, Manual of Procedure, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“ARTICLE XIV – NATIONAL CONFERENCES
Sec. 1401 – Formation.

Upon approval by two-thirds (2/3) of the body at the National Convention, there shall be four (4) subordinate conferences that will fall under the national organization. They shall be as follows:

1. Big 10
2. Eastern
3. Southern
4. Western

Under each conference shall be the following departments:

Big 10 Conference – Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin

Eastern Conference – Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Europe, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont

Southern Conference – Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia

Western Conference – Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Latin America/Caribbean, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Pacific Areas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming

Sec. 1402 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business.
(See Sec. 1402 By-Laws)” (Disapproved)

B-29 (Proposed by Department of Washington)

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Amend **ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**, National By-Laws, by identifying as **ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS**. (Disapproved)

M-20 (Proposed by Department of Washington)

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS

Amend **ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**, Manual of Procedure, by identifying as **ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS**. (Disapproved)

M-21 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS
Sec. 1401 – Amendments.

Amend Sec. 1401 – Amendments., Manual of Procedure, by deleting Section “618” at the end of the first sentence in the first paragraph and re-

placing with Section “622”. Amend the last sentence of the last paragraph to read as follows:

“All proposed amendments originating from the National Council of Administration or a National officer will be made available to Posts by the Adjutant General at least ninety (90) days before the assembling of the National Convention for those amendments being proposed for consideration at the convention. All proposed amendments to be considered at the National Convention that originate from a Post, District, County Council, or Department, will be made available to the Posts by the Adjutant General no less than fifteen (15) days prior to the convening of the National Convention.” (Disapproved)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AT THE
112TH NATIONAL CONVENTION, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

Resolution No. 201 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FOR NEW AND REINSTATED MEMBERS TO
BE 12 MONTHS IN DURATION

WHEREAS, when a new or reinstated member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is signed up in our year-around membership campaign that is supposed to begin or renew a veteran's membership in our great organization, that member genuinely expects to be a member with all rights and benefits for a full year; and

WHEREAS, under our current system of having all annual memberships expire on 31 December, new and reinstated (N/R) members signing up in February through June of each year do not receive a full year's membership despite paying a full year's dues; and

WHEREAS, N/R members recruited during the aforementioned period may very well question the integrity of the organization in their understanding of what constitutes an "annual" membership; and

WHEREAS, that N/R member thus being denied access to the full membership benefits to which they had full expectations after having paid a year's membership dues, creates a bad impression of the VFW, and may very likely, as evidenced many times in the past, not renew their membership in our organization; and

WHEREAS, such practices adversely impact on the Posts and/or the VFW as a whole by reducing the viability of any recruiting efforts that might raise our membership levels to what they should be; and

WHEREAS, current technology exists to allow for more efficient tracking of membership as opposed to what was in place when the current annual membership policy was established; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Department of Virginia, urge that the membership policy of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States as it relates to "annual" members be changed so that new or reinstated members have their annual membership renewal dates calculated through the end of the month in the year following the completion of application processing together with a membership card reflecting same; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Section 105 of the National By-Laws be changed to read: "A Member whose current dues are paid to date is in good standing and is entitled to all membership rights, unless suspended or terminated, in accordance with the National By-Laws"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the first sentence of Section 106, of the National By-Laws be revised to read: "A member whose dues are unpaid

ceases to be a member in good standing and loses all rights and privileges of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.”
(Disapproved)

Resolution No. 202 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUBSCRIPTION DUES

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States operates under three calendar systems, fiscal (September 1 through August 31) for financial purposes, program (July 1 through June 30) for program purposes, and membership (January 1 through December 31) for dues payment purposes; and

WHEREAS, Posts, in many cases, are hesitant to transmit new or reinstated member transmittals during the months of April, May and June in favor of offering eighteen (18) months of dues as a result of our calendar and membership program dates disparity; and

WHEREAS, members joining or reinstating their membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States after January do not receive the full twelve-month value of the dues payment; and

WHEREAS, a person joining or reinstating in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States during and after the month of July receive a twelve (12) to eighteen (18) value in their dues payment; and

WHEREAS, a more reasonable approach to paying annual dues for new or reinstated members would be for a process similar to a magazine subscription where a member is offered a full twelve (12) month membership based on the actual join date; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars follow the findings of the “Proposed for Subscription-Based Annual Dues Program” study and proceed with Subscription-Based Dues payment system for New, Reinstated and Annual members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States assembled at the 112th National Convention in San Antonio, Texas enact a Subscription-Based Dues system and convert the annual dues year from the current calendar year basis to a subscription year basis and to develop a dues collection process to accommodate such a change. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

SUBSCRIPTION DUES

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States operates under three calendar systems, fiscal (September 1 through August 31) for financial purposes, program (July 1 through June 30) for program

purposes, and membership (January 1 through December 31) for dues payment purposes; and

WHEREAS, Posts, in many cases, are hesitant to transmit new or reinstated member transmittals during the months of April, May and June in favor of offering eighteen (18) months of dues as a result of our calendar and membership program dates disparity; and

WHEREAS, members joining or reinstating their membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States after January do not receive the full twelve-month value of the dues payment; and

WHEREAS, a person joining or reinstating in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States during and after the month of July receive a twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months value in their dues payment; and

WHEREAS, a more reasonable approach to paying annual dues for new or reinstated members would be for a process similar to a magazine subscription where a member is offered a full twelve (12) month membership based on the actual join date; and

WHEREAS, a logical time frame to implement the transition from the current Dues structure to a Subscription Dues system would be eighteen (18) months or less; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars follow the findings of the "Proposed for Subscription-Based Annual Dues Program" study and proceed with Subscription-Based Dues payment system for New, Reinstated and Annual members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States assembled at the 112th National Convention in San Antonio, Texas enact a Subscription-Based Dues system and convert the annual dues year from the current calendar year basis to a subscription year basis and to develop a dues collection process to accommodate such a change within an eighteen (18) month time frame (or January 1, 2013). (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 204 (Submitted by Department of Nevada)

SUBSCRIPTION DUES

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States operates under three calendar systems, fiscal (September 1 through August 31) for financial purposes, program (July 1 through June 30) for program purposes, and membership (January 1 through December 31) for dues payment purposes; and

WHEREAS, Posts, in many cases, are hesitant to transmit new or reinstated member transmittals during the months of April, May and June in favor of offering eighteen (18) months of dues as a result of our calendar

and membership program dates disparity; and

WHEREAS, members joining or reinstating their membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States after January do not receive the full twelve-month value of the dues payment; and

WHEREAS, a person joining or reinstating in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States during and after the month of July receive a twelve (12) to eighteen (18) value in their dues payment; and

WHEREAS, a more reasonable approach to paying annual dues for new or reinstated members would be for a process similar to a magazine subscription where a member is offered a full twelve (12) month membership based on the actual join date; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars follow the findings of the "Proposed for Subscription-Based Annual Dues Program" study and proceed with Subscription-Based Dues payment system for New, Reinstated and Annual members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the National Headquarters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States assembled at the 112th National Convention in San Antonio, Texas enact a Subscription-Based Dues system and convert the annual dues year from the current calendar year basis to a subscription year basis and to develop a dues collection process to accommodate such a change. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 205 (Submitted by Department of California)

RELEASE OF MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FROM NATIONAL HEAD- QUARTERS

WHEREAS, the backbone of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is membership and programs; and

WHEREAS, National leadership continues to promote the importance of recruiting new and reinstated members into the Veterans of Foreign Wars as well as the retention of our current members; and

WHEREAS, this task of recruiting and retention is performed primarily at the Post level of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and

WHEREAS, the information, to include names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, etc., from the membership application forms as submitted by the Posts or Departments within the Veterans of Foreign Wars is entered into a data base at National Headquarters; and

WHEREAS, National Headquarters currently provides membership rosters on line that do not include telephone numbers or email addresses; and

WHEREAS, the program which provides rosters containing names, ad-

addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses already exists and can be provided to Posts and Departments by making a request to National Headquarters staff; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters be directed to modify the OMS on-line support providing roster information to include names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses to assist Departments in their recruiting and retention efforts for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this modification be completed within ninety (90) days of the close of the 112th VFW National Convention. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 206 (Submitted by Department of West Virginia)

NATIONAL JOINT COMMITTEE TO IMPLEMENT TRANSITION TO ONE
AUXILIARY, "THE AUXILIARY" OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States honors the service

and sacrifice of all military service members, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes the sacrifice made by the dependents of our military service members, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States appreciates the significant contribution our Ladies and Men's auxiliaries make to our veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, two nationally recognized, but separate auxiliaries has divided our dependents with questions of disparate treatment, and requires significant duplication of administrative effort, resources, and manpower; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Commander-in-Chief direct the Adjutant and Quartermaster General to form a joint committee consisting of an equal number of members from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Ladies Auxiliary, to develop a plan of action that will culminate in the formation of one auxiliary "The Auxiliary" to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, no later than the 2014 National Convention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this joint committee will, in the interim, report to the National Convention each year concerning their findings and progress. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 207 (Submitted by Department of West Virginia)

NATIONAL JOINT COMMITTEE TO IMPLEMENT TRANSITION TO ONE

AUXILIARY, "THE AUXILIARY" OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States honors the service

and sacrifice of all military service members, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes the sacrifice made by the dependents of our military service members, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States appreciates the significant contribution our Ladies and Men's auxiliaries make to our veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, two nationally recognized, but separate auxiliaries has divided our dependents with questions of disparate treatment, and requires significant duplication of administrative effort, resources, and manpower; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Commander-in-Chief with the Ladies Auxiliary National President, create a joint committee to facilitate a transitional structure and generate the necessary by-law amendment proposal that will integrate the Ladies and Men's auxiliaries, to be voted on by the members of the National Convention no later than the close of the 115th National Convention. (Disapproved)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 301 (Submitted by Department of Arizona)

**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INCLUDE 74 SAILORS KILLED ON USS
FRANK E. EVANS ON THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL "WALL"**

WHEREAS, Public Law 96-297, (94 Stat, 827), authorized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to construct a memorial to honor and recognize armed forces service in the Vietnam War, and

WHEREAS, the memorial fund relied upon the Department of Defense to compile the list of names and the criteria for those persons to be memorialized; and

WHEREAS, as of February, 1981, the Department of Defense established four distinct criteria for names to be included on the memorial; and

WHEREAS, Secretary of Defense shall (as defined in Section 101 (2), of Title 38 United States Code), veterans who died as a direct or indirect result of military operations in Southeast Asia and whose names are eligible for inclusion on the memorial. Congressman Adam B. Schiff presented evidence and petitions in an audience with The Secretary Of The Navy Mabus.

The evidence submitted of the tragic accident that destroyed the Frank E. Evans and killed 74 of her Sailors on June 3, 1969. The evidence included actual position, course, and reason for being there, Secretary Mabus whole heartedly agreed. He is currently petitioning the Secretary of Defense, whose office serves as the final decision authority, to review the case and consider the points we have raised; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we fully support a favorable decision to the Department of Defense to include the 74 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 302 (Submitted by Department of New Hampshire)

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, it is now evident to the NH VFW leadership, that the VFW has been subjected to extreme negative publicity throughout the Department and Nation, and the recent endorsement decisions have, in fact, harmed the VFW's reputation and future ability to fulfill our mission; and

WHEREAS, what our members have accomplished for many people for many generations the NH VFW and its many missions of service has never been predicated upon loyalty to any political party, persuasion or philosophy; and

WHEREAS, due to the process and decisions made by PAC that failed to represent the best interest of VFW members and have significantly failed the organization and could ultimately hinder the ability of the VFW to fulfill its mandate of service to our nations' veterans, service members and their families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that VFW- PAC be dissolved IAW their bylaws. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 303 (Submitted by Department of New Hampshire)

NATIONAL FLAG TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THOSE WHO DIED WHILE SERVING IN AMERICA'S MILITARY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States honors the service and sacrifice of all military service members, especially those who have lost their lives in service to the nation; and

WHEREAS, there has never been an officially recognized symbol that serves as a daily visible reminder for those who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, an "Honor and Remember" flag has been created as a daily reminder for the American public to acknowledge the ultimate price of freedom; and

WHEREAS, the "Honor and Remember" flag will recognize, not only

those killed in action during war, but all service members who died in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, this flag will serve as a symbol of national gratitude, value each American life given for our freedom, and give comfort to the families who lost a loved one during military service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to establish a national flag to honor and remember all who gave their lives in military service to this nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Congress to adopt the flag created by the Honor and Remember organization to serve as the national flag. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 304 (Submitted by Department of North Carolina)

USE VFW COMRADES AS MENTORS FOR RETURNING OIF/OEF VETERANS

WHEREAS, the early and accurate screening, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD, depression, substance abuse, and other mental health disorders, yields optimal patient outcomes; and

WHEREAS, left untreated or poorly treated, these mental health disorders can and are leading to increased suicide attempts; and

WHEREAS, the growing number of suicides in the military due to the stress of service in Iraq and Afghanistan is producing much apprehension among the civilian population and causing great strife in military marriages; and

WHEREAS, comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars are uniquely qualified because of their own combat experiences to “bond” with other combat veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is the purpose of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to “Honor the Dead by Helping the Living”; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, supports the concept of posts and comrades assisting current OIF/OEF veterans to successfully integrate mentally back into society and encourages posts and comrades to seek out such current OIF/OEF veterans and act as mentors, to include a combination of visits, sabbaticals and spiritual connections with their neighbors and local community. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 305 Submitted by Department of Illinois)

ADOPT THE GIRL SCOUTS AS A YOUTH ACTIVITY

WHEREAS, Girl Scouts of America promote good citizenship, patriotism, community involvement, personal integrity and personal excellence;

and

WHEREAS, the VFW should be willing to support and encourage any youth program that does the above; and

WHEREAS, many female veterans, some members and some considering membership in the VFW, are involved themselves or have daughters involved in Girl Scouting; and

WHEREAS, the accomplishments for Girl Scouts of America's Gold Leadership Award is comparable with those who have received the Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout Award, Sea Scout Quartermasters and the Venture Silver Award; and

WHEREAS, Posts benefit immediately from supporting Girl Scouts of America because of the girl's service projects, involvement in patriotic events and assistance with other Post community activities. In the long run, many of these young ladies may serve in our military and become eligible for this organization; and

WHEREAS, through working with local scout groups, VFW will be able to assist them in achieving the highest awards given to scouts and encourage the scouts to work towards an eagle scout or attain the gold leadership award in girl scouts enhancing the VFW's presence in the community as a family organization; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, adopt the Girl Scouts as a youth activity and that Girls Scout Gold Award recipients should be allowed to compete for THEIR RESPECTIVE VFW Scout of the Year Awards. (Approved)

Resolution No. 306 (Submitted by Department of Idaho)

GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA ANNUAL AWARDS

WHEREAS, the Department of Idaho, has stipulated a primary consideration to maintain integrity and fair play to the VFW and its image as core factors to the Girl Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Idaho, through the VFW "She Serves" Program has developed an appropriate Awards Program for Girl Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Idaho must encourage and assist the National VFW Awards Programs Manager to develop a necessary Award Program for the Girls Scouts of America at the VFW National level; and

WHEREAS, the program must be designed to honor Outstanding Departmental Girl Scouts with the same type, kind and value of awards as presently offered in the Boy Scouts of America annual competition program; and

WHEREAS, proposed guidelines will mirror those guidelines established

for the Boy Scouts of America with the changing of the titles to those of the Girl Scouts of America that are equivalent in rank to the Boy Scout Eagle Scout or Sea Scout such as Senior Girl Scout Troop and GS Ambassador; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that National Guidelines will be established that will standardize the Awards Program for both Girl Scouts of America, et al and the Boy Scouts of America, et al and mandate that both programs be promulgated throughout the VFW. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 307 (Submitted by Department of California)

MOTORCYCLE CLUBS, GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

WHEREAS, prior to the adoption of Resolution No. 308 at the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States August 23, 2010, motorcycle clubs, groups and associations existed as units of Posts with authority of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and

WHEREAS, these units be they motorcycle clubs, groups or associations have been operating for periods since 2003 (in the case of VFWCA MC) under the authorization signature of John J. Senk, Jr. then Adjutant General under the command of then Commander-in-Chief Edward S. Banas, Sr., Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and

WHEREAS, these units have been vital to bridging the gap and enticing membership between war veterans of the WWII, Korean and Vietnam conflicts and newer war veterans of the post Vietnam era; and

WHEREAS, these units have not caused any discredit to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States nor the sponsoring Posts; and

WHEREAS, temporary coordination between these motorcycle clubs, groups and associations may have and was required prior to the establishment of said clubs, groups and associations with members of the "Confederation of Clubs" for the purpose of ensuring the safety of riders and no further contact after such coordination has existed; and

WHEREAS, there is a pride in the current existence of these motorcycle clubs, groups and associations that has been instilled for years and has brought pride and comradeship amongst our younger members; and

WHEREAS, these units have existed and are controlled under Sections 708 and 709 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National By-Laws; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that those motorcycle clubs, groups and associations that existed with authorization from the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States prior to the adoption of Resolution 308 at the 111th National Convention be allowed to continue to exist providing they adhere to the guidelines as provided for in Sections 708 and 709 of the National By Laws

of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Approved)
Resolution No. 308 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

VFW RIDERS GROUP APPAREL AND PATCHES

WHEREAS, Rockers, alone, do not identify a motorcycle group as a member of an MC Confederation/Organization at any level; and

WHEREAS, the use of a top rocker, on a one piece patch, would allow room for the words "Veterans of Foreign Wars"; and

WHEREAS, the use of acronyms such as "VFW" is detrimental to indentifying our organization in the general public; and

WHEREAS, the use of a bottom rocker, on a one piece patch, would allow branch of service affiliation; and

WHEREAS, only the use of geographical location on a bottom rocker would give the appearance of claiming territory and therefore the appearance of an MC vice a riders group thus jeopardizing the safety of the member; and

WHEREAS, Rockers are clearly used on the existing one-piece VFW Riders patch on page 50 of the 2010-2011 VFW Store Catalog; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Motorcycle Riders Groups Resolution 308, adopted 23 August 2010, section 6 of the VFW Motorcycle Riders Groups guidelines Logo's, Apparel's and Patches, remove the words "the use of "rockers" is deemed unacceptable"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Section 6, Logos, Apparel's and Patches of the VFW Motorcycle Riders Group guidelines would then read:

"Logos, Apparel and Patches

The use of the VFW logos and VFW trademarks are protected under Sections 803 and 805 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

Each VFWRG may adopt a one-piece back patch or other apparel that will promote its group in a safe and respectable manner. The patch(s) may use the member's appropriate logo (i.e. VFW Member wears VFW logo; auxiliary member wears the appropriate auxiliary logo. All articles of clothing worn by "Supporting Riders" using any logo or trademark, when authorized by the VFW, shall contain the word(s) "I support" or "Supporter".), Post/District/Department affiliation or be of creative design. In all instances, the design shall be subject to the approval of the Department having jurisdiction and that of the Commander-in-Chief, with the authority to manufacture in accordance with section 803 of the Manual of Procedure. Under no circumstance shall a VFWRG adopt a three-piece patch." (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 309 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICANS IN WARTIME

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is the oldest Congressionally Chartered organization of American overseas combat veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has a long and noble history of originating, endorsing, and providing leadership and resources to monuments, museums, and living memorials dedicated to remembering the sacrifices of America's wartime veterans; and

WHEREAS, a new, interactive museum - the National Museum of Americans in Wartime (a 501(c)3 organization) - is being developed to honor those who served in all branches of the United States Armed Forces and on the home front from World War I to the present; and

WHEREAS, the National Museum of Americans in Wartime is dedicated to educating the public, especially young Americans about the personal experiences, depravations, and realities of war both at home and overseas, as well as the sacrifices of Americans striving to preserve our freedoms and those of our allies; and

WHEREAS, the National Museum of Americans in Wartime has been granted seventy acres of land in Prince William County, Virginia, near the Quantico National Cemetery and Museum of the Marine Corps, within the Military Corridor of Freedom that stretches from Fredericksburg to Arlington, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the National Museum of Americans in Wartime required continued, wide-spread successful support of the veterans community if it is to open as scheduled on Veterans Day 2014; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the VFW Department of Virginia supports the continued development and timely completion of the National Museum of Americans in Wartime through programs and personal assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW Department of Virginia urges other Departments and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to support this resolution with similar means by endorsement during the VFW National Convention in San Antonio in August 2011. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 310 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

AMENDMENT TO SECTION 230102 OF THE CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a national association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen served this nation in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters, is a federally chartered corporation; and

WHEREAS, its members and officers have sworn to uphold and defend the constitution of the United States of America from all enemies and to preserve and protect the institutions of American freedom; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in conjunction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, petitions the Congress to amend section 230102 of our Congressional charter by inserting the following words; whomsoever, foreign or domestic at the end of the phrase under item 7. (Disapproved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Resolution No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE TROOPS AND THEIR MISSION IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the President of the United States and our military and intelligence agencies in their mission to identify and destroy terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that the Administration and Congress provide the military with the resources necessary to succeed in battle, as well as to properly care for their families and those who return home wounded; and

WHEREAS, it is equally critical that U.S. intelligence agencies be properly resourced in order to identify threats to U.S. security by organized extremist groups or lone individuals, both foreign and domestic; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that the Administration and Congress heed the expert counsel of field commanders regarding future troop buildups and reductions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally support the President and the brave men and women in uniform who prosecute the war on terrorism; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to provide the military and intelligence agencies the necessary resources to secure victory.

The intent of this resolution is:

To support and fund the troops and intelligence agencies prosecuting the U.S. war on terrorism. (Approved)

Resolution No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SECURE AMERICA'S BORDERS

WHEREAS, U.S. citizens continue to be targeted by domestic and inter-

national terrorists, as evidenced by the failed Times Square car bombing attempt in May 2010, the failed Christmas Day 2009 airline bombing attempt over Detroit, the discovery of al-Qaeda terrorist cells on American soil, and the capture of suspected terrorists attempting to cross U.S. borders; and

WHEREAS, homeland security is also threatened by foreign nationals intent on doing us harm who enter the U.S. illegally, as well as those who enter legally but intentionally overstay their work, education or tourist visas; and

WHEREAS, homeland security threats can also come from U.S. citizens who belong to organized extremist groups or who act as lone wolves for a variety of reasons, to include religious, ideological and personal; and

WHEREAS, physical barriers are erected along less than 30 percent of our 2,000-mile border with Mexico, and are virtually nonexistent along the 5,000-mile U.S.-Canadian border, plus the U.S. needs to secure more than 16,000 miles of coastline and all airports and shipping ports of entry; and

WHEREAS, current initiatives have more than doubled the size of the Border Patrol, and increased intelligence collection assets and financial support to border states, which has reduced violent crime and led to the deportation of almost 195,000 illegal immigrants who were convicted criminals in 2010; and

WHEREAS, more must still be done to secure America's borders; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to fast-track funding for the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice to expedite all initiatives to secure America's borders from all threats, foreign and domestic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we insist the U.S. government aggressively work to identify and deport illegal aliens who commit crimes.

The intent of this resolution is:

To secure America's borders from all threats, foreign and domestic, and to identify and deport illegal aliens who commit crimes. (Approved)

Resolution No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HALT ROGUE NATION WMD PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the greatest threat to American security are weapons of mass destruction—and the technology by which to make and employ them—in the hands of North Korea and Iran, as well as terrorist organizations and rogue nations who support them; and

WHEREAS, the Administration and Congress must remain suspicious of the actions and motives of North Korea and Iran, who have both rejected diplomatic attempts to reduce tensions and normalize relations; and

WHEREAS, in May 2009, North Korea broke an earlier agreement by conducting an underground nuclear detonation, test fired missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, and stated it would no longer honor the 1953 armistice, which is a direct threat to South Korea; and

WHEREAS, Iran has become a military dictatorship through the Revolutionary Guard's rise in economic and political power, and Iranian officials have confirmed that North Korea is assisting them in the development of nuclear weapons technology; and

WHEREAS, nonaligned terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda, continue to demonstrate with deadly consequences their ability to strike globally without remorse; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to do all within their power to halt the nuclear weapons development programs of North Korea and Iran, and to stop the transfer of nuclear weapons technology and material to terrorist states and organizations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support and encourage the U.S. Government to penalize all American companies and corporations that conduct business with North Korea and Iran.

The intent of this resolution is:

To halt the nuclear weapons programs of North Korea and Iran, stop the transfer of technology and material to terrorist states and organizations, and penalize all companies and corporations that conduct business with North Korea and Iran. (Approved)

Resolution No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE THE DEFENSE BUDGET

WHEREAS, America's number one priority is to provide for the defense of the nation and security of its citizens, and this is provided by a properly funded military establishment that can defeat all enemies, as well as safeguard vital U.S. interests around the globe; and

WHEREAS, defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continues to be less than it was 25 years ago, or approximately 4.6% of GDP in a wartime 2010 compared to 6.2% of GDP in a peacetime 1985; and

WHEREAS, the military service chiefs have repeatedly called for the need to reconstitute and modernize the force as a result of the wear and tear on equipment after almost 10 years of war; and

WHEREAS, even with temporary manpower plus-ups in the Army and Marine Corps, the drawdown of experienced personnel over previous years, coupled with repeated deployments, is wearing out active-duty and Reserve Component forces, which negatively impacts moral, and will

inevitably lead to retention and recruiting problems; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to offset the costs of weapons systems and other programs, the Department of Defense has in the past repeatedly called for raising the annual premiums of Tricare healthcare insurance for military retirees; and

WHEREAS, if the defense budget is not significantly increased, it is inevitable that the military will shrink in terms of both material and manpower, and America's security will be jeopardized; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Administration and Congress to provide adequate funding for the readiness, training, modernization, healthcare, and quality of life initiatives for our armed forces.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge the Administration and Congress to provide adequate funding for readiness, training, modernization, health care, and quality of life initiatives for our armed forces. (Approved)

Resolution No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE IS A NATIONAL SECURITY PRIORITY

WHEREAS, the Russian ballistic missile threat to the United States has decreased in recent years because of changes in our strategic relationship and the declining numbers of nuclear weapons in the Russian inventory; and

WHEREAS, because of worldwide proliferation, new ballistic missile threats to the United States and our allies have emerged; and

WHEREAS, according to National Intelligence Estimates, the United States will likely face intercontinental ballistic missile threats from China, North Korea and Iran; and

WHEREAS, China has been modernizing its long-range strategic missile force since the mid-1980s, and by 2015, the number of Chinese ballistic missiles—estimates range from a low 240 to 1,300—is projected to significantly increase; and

WHEREAS, many nations, including Pakistan and India, and some not friendly to the U.S., have or are developing ballistic missiles capable of being armed with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads; and

WHEREAS, new missile defense systems have proven in recent flight tests to be able to detect, intercept and destroy ballistic missiles in flight. Yet despite the growing threat of rogue nations and unstable third world countries, the United States still has no strategic missile defense system to protect this country and its citizens from nuclear, chemical or biological

attack; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the continued development, testing and deployment of ballistic missile defense systems to protect our country and our deployed military forces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Congress to fully fund ballistic missile defense Research & Development programs as a national security priority

The intent of this resolution is:

To support a ballistic missile defense system and urge Congress to fully fund R&D programs. (Approved)

Resolution No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT NATO EXPANSION

WHEREAS, in the midst of the rapidly changing political situation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has remained a stable, steadying influence in the region; and

WHEREAS, since 1992, the former Warsaw Pact countries of eastern Europe have thrown off the yoke of communism and reestablished democratic governments, and since 1998, virtually every Eastern European country has been admitted to NATO; and

WHEREAS, all 28 NATO member nations have had military forces in Afghanistan, and 23 NATO nations have contributed to the training effort in Iraq with troops or through financial or equipment donations; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of NATO has not caused Russia and the other former Soviet Union countries to form an opposing political or military alliance; and

WHEREAS, the eastward expansion of NATO provides political and strategic benefits to the United States by bringing security and stability to the region, and serves as a catalyst for further democracy in Russia and former Soviet Union countries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the continued expansion of the NATO Alliance to ensure the future security of Europe, as well as U.S. strategic interests in the region.

The intent of this resolution is:

To support the continued expansion of NATO to ensure the future security of Europe, as well as U.S. strategic interests in the region. (Approved)

Resolution No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea is a historic and democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and key link in the northeast Asia defense chain; and

WHEREAS, numerous treaties are in force with the Republic of Korea concerning, economic and technical cooperation, education, maritime matters, trade and commerce, and the Mutual Defense Treaty, that was enacted on November 17, 1954; and

WHEREAS, South Korea and North Korea signed an Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation on December 13, 1991, although a year later the North Korean nuclear issue halted progress on that agreement; and

WHEREAS, North Korea continues to maintain an extremely large and forward-deployed military force capable of launching offensive operations against South Korea on short notice; and

WHEREAS, North Korea has produced nuclear material for the development of nuclear weapons, and is developing long-range missiles that could reach potential targets in the United States, particularly Alaska; and

WHEREAS, North Korea has escalated tensions in the region by test launching missiles, and periodically deploying armed forces along the demilitarized zone and Joint Security Area at Panmunjom; and

WHEREAS, the presence of a large contingent of U.S. ground and air forces in the Republic of Korea serves as a constant deterrent to North Korean aggression; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the government of the United States to maintain a substantial military presence in South Korea, and to increase military aid and assistance through modern weaponry and technology to help promote peace and stability in the region.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge the U.S. government to keep a military presence in the Republic of Korea, and to increase military aid and assistance to help promote peace and stability in the region. (Approved)

Resolution No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

WHEREAS, the Republic of China on Taiwan is a historic and democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and key link in the Western Pacific defense chain; and

WHEREAS, the Peoples Republic of China continues to oppose the admission of Taiwan into the United Nations, and has continued its military

buildup, including the deployment of short and medium-range missiles across the Formosa Strait from Taiwan; and

WHEREAS, the Taiwan Relations Act (PL 96-8) codifies the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character to bolster peace and stability in the cross-strait environment; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1979, then-President Carter terminated diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan, and established diplomatic relations with Communist China in an attempt to help maintain peace, security and stability in the Western Pacific; and

WHEREAS, this loss of diplomatic status prevents the President of Taiwan from receiving the same respect and courtesies afforded other Heads of State who visit the U.S.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale of state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons and technology to maintain an adequate defense capability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to support the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations, and to afford the President of Taiwan the same respect and privileges due other visiting Heads of State.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge the Administration and the Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act, to urge the U.S. government to employ its full range of influence to contain aggressive posturing of the Peoples Republic of China, and to afford the Taiwan Head of State equal respect and privileges. (Approved)

Resolution No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

RAISE MILITARY BASE PAY TO EQUAL PRIVATE-SECTOR WAGES

WHEREAS, military pay raises are linked to the increase in private-sector wages, as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI). Unless specifically increased by Congress, annual military pay raises were capped in the 1990s at one-half percent below private-sector growth, which in 1999 resulted in a military pay gap of 13.5 percent below private-sector wages; and

WHEREAS, to help close the gap, Congress directed that military pay raises from FY 2000-2006 be automatically one-half percent above private-sector wage increases, and raises from FY 2007-forward would automatically match the increase in the ECI, unless Congress authorized a further increase; and

WHEREAS, the FY 2010 pay raise of 3.4 percent was 2.4 percent be-

hind private-sector wages. The FY 2011 pay raise of 1.4 percent was the lowest since 1962. And though the recommended 1.6 percent for FY 2012 matches the ECI, it is not enough to close the exiting military pay gap; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to achieve full military base pay comparability with private-sector wages; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a slow economy is not valid rationale to underpay a military that has singularly borne the brunt of 10 years of war.

The intent of this resolution is:

To achieve full military base pay comparability with private-sector wages. (Approved)

Resolution No. 410 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LOWER THE RESERVE COMPONENT RETIREMENT PAY AGE

WHEREAS, current law stipulates that Reserve Component members who complete 20 or more qualifying years of honorable service must wait until age 60 before they are eligible to receive military retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, after a decade of conflict, the Reserve Component evolved rapidly from a strategic reserve to an operational force that provides a quarter of all ground troops and half the airlift to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, yet the retirement age requirement did not evolve accordingly; and

WHEREAS, the FY 2008 defense bill did reduce the retirement pay age by 90 days for every 90 activated, but only for those Guardsmen/Reservists who earned active credit after Jan. 29, 2008, thereby discounting the equally honorable service of hundreds of thousands of Reserve Component members who were activated between 9/11 and Jan. 28, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the active force cannot meet its national military commitments without the 1.1 million men and women who serve in the Reserve Components—the Army and Air National Guard, Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve—who collectively represent one-half of America's total military strength; and

WHEREAS, a truly seamless and integrated total force is one that does not make rigid distinctions among active, Guard and Reserve forces, and one that provides a retirement benefit equal to their contributions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to lower the Reserve Component retirement pay eligibility age from 60 to 55.

The intent of this resolution is:

To support legislation that will lower the Reserve Component retirement

pay eligibility age from 60 to 55. (Approved)

Resolution No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CORRECT THE FY08 NDAA RESERVE RETIREMENT PAY PROVISION

WHEREAS, since September 11, 2001, America's reliance on its Reserve Component at home and abroad is unprecedented in our Nation's history; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) allows National Guard and Reserve members to receive retirement pay earlier than the normal age 60 by three months for every 90 days served on active duty after January 29, 2008; and

WHEREAS, more than 800,000 Reserve Component members have served on active duty since Sept. 11, 2001—including more than 150,000 who have served two or more tours overseas; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming majority of these Reserve Component members are ineligible to credit their active service toward an earlier retirement because it occurred prior to the NDAA's Jan. 29, 2008, implementation date; and

WHEREAS, this inequity shamefully overlooks the dedication and sacrifice of our Reserve Component members serving at home and abroad; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to retroactively grant early retirement credit to all Reserve Component members who were activated in support of a contingency operation from 9/11 forward, as outlined in the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge Congress to retroactively grant early retirement credit to all Reserve Component members who were activated in support of a contingency operation from 9/11 forward, as outlined in the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. (Approved)

Resolution No. 412 (Submitted by the Commander-in-Chief)

STOP EROSION OF MILITARY RETIREMENT BENEFITS

WHEREAS, the Defense Department claims that one-fourth of their total budget is consumed by military and retiree pay and benefits, and in an attempt to offset some of these personnel expenses, DOD proposed increasing annual TRICARE enrollment fees and deductibles for working age military retirees under age 65. DOD is also considering a Defense Business Board recommendation to eliminate the automatic receipt of military retirement pay and replacing it with a corporate 401(k)-style system that would provide more incentives for midcareer officers and NCOs to sepa-

rate instead of staying 20 or more years; and

WHEREAS, in its FY 2012 budget submission, DOD proposed increasing TRICARE enrollment fees for working age retirees by 13 percent, then to link future increases to double-digit medical inflation, which could raise fees so high that some retirees might disenroll and seek healthcare coverage elsewhere. Congress accepted the 13-percent increase recommendation, but chose instead to link future TRICARE increases to annual military retirement pay Cost-of-Living Adjustments, which in 2010 and 2011 was zero; and

WHEREAS, the proposal to change the military retirement system comes from a civilian advisory group that is charged with bringing “best practices” from the corporate world to the military, even though no civilian organization has the mission responsibility and inherent occupational danger as America’s Armed Forces. The pay proposal is about money, not about people, and could signal an end to the All Volunteer Force, which is an expense this nation can ill afford to pay; and

WHEREAS, DOD may further attempt to balance its budget on the backs of military retirees through a further erosion of benefits. The military retirement system is just one of 10 services and programs that the VFW believes Congress or the Administration want to reduce or eliminate to help pay for 10 years of war; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose the further erosion of military retirement benefits as well as efforts to restructure the current military retirement system after civilian models.

The intent of this resolution is:

To oppose the further erosion of military retirement benefits as well as efforts to restructure the current military retirement system after civilian models. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REFORM THE UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER SPOUSES PROTECTION ACT

WHEREAS, in 1981, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *McCarty vs. McCarty* that military retirement pay is not divisible as community property in divorce proceedings; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Congress adopted the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act to circumvent the Supreme Court decision, thereby allowing military retirement pay to be divided in divorce settlements; and

WHEREAS, thousands of military retirees are now under court-ordered garnishment because state courts have ruled military pay to be a property asset, causing military retirees to pay a court-ordered percentage of their retirement pay to former spouses regardless of fault, merit or need, and

regardless of whether the former spouse remarries; and

WHEREAS, certain inequities exist in the USFSPA, including the “wind-fall provision,” which grants divorce awards based upon the pay on the date of retirement, as well as a provision that requires servicemembers with more than 20 years of service to divide their expected retired pay before their actual retirement date; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to reform the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act to include granting divorce awards based on the service member’s rank at the time of divorce, and to not require servicemembers with more than 20 years of service to divide their expected retired pay before they actually retire.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge Congress to reform the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act to grant divorce awards based on the servicemember’s rank at the time of divorce, and to not require servicemembers with more than 20 years of service to divide their expected retired pay before they actually retire. (Approved)

Resolution No. 414 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

WHEREAS, the Council of State Governments, in cooperation with the Defense Department Office of Personnel and Readiness, drafted an Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children to address inequities military schoolchildren face when they relocate across state lines; and

WHEREAS, the Interstate Compact would allow the laws of the “sending” state to apply to transferring students from military families in the schools of the “receiving” state for such policies as graduation requirements, Advanced Placements, and the age of student enrollment; and

WHEREAS, the Interstate Compact would apply to the children of active duty members of the uniformed services, including members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders; veterans who are severely injured and medically discharged or retired for a period of one year after medical discharge or retirement; and members of the uniformed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty for a period of one year after death; and

WHEREAS, the Interstates Compact is currently active in 35 states, who account for more than 80 percent of the total number of military children educated off base; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of the Interstate Compact by every state government will address key child educational issues encountered by all

military families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon 15 State Governments—Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming, plus the District of Columbia—to expeditiously adopt the language of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

The intent of this resolution is:

To call upon all state governments to adopt the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. (Approved)

Resolution No. 415 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION FOR DEPLOYED SINGLE PARENTS

WHEREAS, there is no legal safeguard that protects single military parents from being sued for permanent custody of their children while they are deployed; and

WHEREAS, single military parents are required to have a family care plan to delegate caregiver responsibilities—not legal custody—of their minor children to aunts and uncles, grandparents, or former spouses or in-laws, for example; and

WHEREAS, during child custody challenges, some civilian courts have ignored family care plans even though the single military parent is deployed and cannot appear in court to defend his or her right to custody; and

WHEREAS, each State approaches family law differently, which makes it impossible for the military to create one document that would be legally binding nationwide; and

WHEREAS, child custody challenges put undue mental stress on deployed servicemembers, which could negatively impact their duty performance; and

WHEREAS, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act does not adequately protect servicemembers from child custody challenges while deployed, therefore, a need exists for more federal guidance so that no court at any level can permanently alter an existing child custody agreement while a military parent is deployed; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to prevent any changes to child custody arrangements while servicemembers are deployed.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge Congress to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to any

changes to child custody arrangements while servicemembers are deployed. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MILITARY ABSENTEE VOTING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to ensuring that all military personnel have the opportunity to vote in Federal elections; and

WHEREAS, the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act of 2009 removed many obstacles to voting by mandating all absentee paper ballots be mailed at least 45 days in advance, making electronic ballots available for downloading, eliminating the notarized or witnessed ballot requirement, and expanding the acceptance of federal write-in absentee ballots; and

WHEREAS, despite the MOVE Act, a national study by The Pew Center found that military voters from 18 States were still unable to vote due to insufficient time allotted to apply for, complete, and return absentee paper ballots in time to be counted; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Voter Assistance Program needs authority to institute greater oversight and accountability measures to ensure ballot access for overseas military voters, as mandated by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; and

WHEREAS, State and Federal government agencies have a moral obligation to provide the means necessary to enable all armed forces personnel the timely opportunity to take part in all federal elections, regardless of location; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that our Department Legislative Committees will work with the State governments of Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin to ensure they adopt all corrective measures as expressed in the MOVE Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Federal government to assess monetary penalties against those States who fail.

The intent of this resolution is:

To have our Department Legislative Committees work with 18 State governments to ensure they adopt all corrective measures as expressed in the MOVE Act, and for the Federal government to assess monetary penalties against those States who fail. (Approved)

Resolution No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY AND VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, in 2004, Congress passed legislation that allowed for the gradual phase-in of full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for service-connected injuries or disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the passed law phases out the VA disability offset by 2014, which means military retirees with 20 or more years of service and a 50-percent or higher VA disability rating will no longer have their military retirement pay reduced by the amount of their VA disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, the current law does not provide the same equity to those service-connected disabled military retirees with VA ratings of 40 percent or below, or Chapter 61 retirees, who were medically retired with less than 20 years, regardless of VA disability rating; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation for the full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of rating percentage.

The intent of this resolution is:

To support legislation for the full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of the rating percentage. (Approved)

Resolution No. 418 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXPAND ALL MILITARY TRICARE PROGRAMS OVERSEAS

WHEREAS, military retirees eligible for Tricare health benefits have dutifully served our country with distinction and honor; and

WHEREAS, the provision of healthcare our grateful nation bestows upon military retirees should not be contingent upon where they choose to live after completing their military service, especially when the retiree chooses to return home to an American territory, such as Puerto Rico, the American Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands; and

WHEREAS, the Tricare health programs provided to overseas retirees varies greatly, depending on the availability and accessibility of U.S. military treatment facilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Defense to expand Tricare Prime and Tricare Plus programs to all overseas areas where U.S. military treatment facilities are located.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge DOD to expand Tricare Prime and Tricare Plus programs to all overseas areas where U.S. military treatment facilities are located. (Approved)
Resolution No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SPACE-AVAILABLE TRAVEL FOR 100% DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the military Space A travel program aboard military and military-contract aircraft is a valuable by-product of moving cargo and duty passengers throughout the United States and world; and

WHEREAS, the Space A program is a privilege, not an entitlement, provided to military servicemembers, dependents, retirees, Medal of Honor recipients, certain categories of Defense Department civilians and non-appropriated-fund employees stationed overseas, and foreign cadets and midshipmen attending U.S. service academies, among others; and

WHEREAS, the Space A program organizes passengers into one of six categories of eligibility, with Category 1 passengers (servicemembers on emergency leave status) having travel priority over Category 3 (servicemembers on normal leave status) and Category 6 (military retirees); and

WHEREAS, there is no guarantee a military or military-contract aircraft will have Space A seats available, nor is there anything that protects one eligible traveler from being bumped at the last minute by another traveler in a higher category; and

WHEREAS, as of March 31, 2010, there were 285,103 honorably discharged, 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans, as rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs who are issued DD Form 2765, "Department of Defense/Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Cards", and their dependents are issued DD Form 1173 identification cards, which entitles them to all military service programs and privileges, except Space A travel; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to amend Title 10, U.S. Code, by adding 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans and their eligible dependents to the Space A flight eligibility list.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge Congress to amend Title 10 by adding 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans and their eligible dependents to the Space A flight eligibility list. (Approved)

Resolution No. 420 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ALLOW SECOND POV SHIPMENT TO ALASKA, HAWAII

WHEREAS, the Defense Department does not authorize a second Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) to be shipped by military members being reassigned to Alaska and Hawaii, even though the government will ship

motorcycles and boats, provided the servicemember's maximum weight allowance is not exceeded; and

WHEREAS, the great majority of military families are two-income families with two vehicles, yet this restriction places an unnecessary roadblock in their ability to quickly assimilate into a new assignment; and

WHEREAS, not allowing a second POV shipment adds the additional requirement of having to purchase another vehicle on top of traditional moving stresses, such as locating housing, schools, churches, grocery stores and spouse employment; and

WHEREAS, not allowing a second POV shipment to Alaska and Hawaii is a negative impact on a military family's Quality of Life; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Defense to amend the Joint Federal Travel Regulation to permit military personnel being reassigned to Alaska and Hawaii to ship a second Privately Owned Vehicle, provided their maximum weight allowance is not exceeded.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge DOD to permit military personnel being reassigned to Alaska and Hawaii to ship a second POV, provided their maximum weight allowance is not exceeded. (Approved)

Resolution No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LIMIT IMPACT OF "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL" REPEAL

WHEREAS, the 18-year-old Public Law that prohibited homosexuals from serving in the military and the Defense Department policy that banned homosexuals from serving openly in uniform is scheduled to officially end 60 days after the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President certify to Congress that repeal will not negatively affect military readiness; and

WHEREAS, military life is fundamentally different from civilian society in that the military has its own laws, customs and traditions, to include numerous prohibitions on personal behavior that are not punishable under civil law or penalized by civilian employers; and

WHEREAS, the military service chiefs said they would move forward and ensure its successful implementation through educational awareness programs and strong commander involvement; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Defense Department to implement the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" with the least distractions on the force.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge the Defense Department to implement the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" with the least distractions on the force. (Approved)

POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of America's 83,000 missing servicemen that include 73,000 from World War II, 8,000 from the Korean War, 1,680 from the Vietnam War, 120 from the Cold War, and one each from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the FY 2010 Defense Authorization Act mandate for the Defense Department to begin identifying a minimum of 200 sets of remains by 2015 will require additional funding and personnel; and

WHEREAS, without additional resources, DOD could begin passing up difficult recovery sites in Southeast Asia for more productive locations just to meet the new goal—such as mass burials if and when North Korea operations begin again. Proper funding will enable the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing from all wars; and

WHEREAS, beginning with FY 2012, the Administration has proposed significant budget increases for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) from \$104.1 million in FY 2012 to \$143.9 million in FY 2016; and

WHEREAS, for the first time, the Administration's FY 2012 budget proposal included as single line item entries the four DOD organizations principally involved in the Full Accounting Mission. Although JPAC's budget still flows through U.S. Pacific Command, who previously redirected some of their funding to offset warfighting priorities, the entries provide significant recognition of the importance of the overall mission; and

WHEREAS, then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates released a memo in June 2011 that threatens JPAC's ability to reach 200 identifications by 2015. Gates wrote: "I direct a reassessment of what is minimally required to fulfill the direction of Section 541 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010 (certified at 10 U.S.C. section 1509) to increase the capability and capacity of the POW/MIA accounting community"; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to fully fund the requested amounts for all organizations involved in the Full Accounting Mission, and to protect the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command budget from being redirected by U.S. Pacific Command and reduced by the Defense Department.

The intent of this resolution is:

To call upon Congress to fully fund the requested amounts for all DOD organizations involved in the Full Accounting Mission, and to protect the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command budget from being redirected by U.S. Pacific Command, and reduced by the Defense Department. (Approved as Amended)

RENEW POW/MIA DISCUSSIONS WITH NORTH KOREA

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has supported and continues to advocate for the accounting of U.S. military personnel previously listed as prisoner of war, missing in action, killed in action/body not recovered from the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, more than 60 percent of the 8,000 unaccounted-for American servicemen from war are in North Korea; and

WHEREAS, the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command conducted 33 investigative and recovery operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from 1996 through 2005, resulting in the repatriation of more than 220 sets of remains; and

WHEREAS, in May 2005 the U.S. government temporarily suspended bilateral talks with North Korean government officials, as well as POW/MIA recovery efforts due to safety concerns for JPAC investigation and recovery teams; and

WHEREAS, North Korea was removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list in 2008, but in May 2009, they conducted an underground nuclear detonation, test fired nuclear warhead-capable missiles, and stated they would no longer honor the 1953 armistice, which is a direct threat to South Korea; and

WHEREAS, the Administration and Congress must remain suspicious of the actions and motives of North Korea, yet the humanitarian aspect of the Full Account Mission could create an opportunity for bilateral talks to resume to restore JPAC search and recovery activities in North Korea; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage the renewal of bilateral talks between the U.S. government and North Korean officials for the purpose of resuming humanitarian operations to recover and account for Americans still missing from the Korean War.

The intent of this resolution is:

To encourage the U.S. government to renew bilateral talks with North Korea to resume MIA recovery operations. (Approved)

Resolution No. 424 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CALL FOR VIETNAM POW/MIA UNILATERAL ACTION

WHEREAS, diplomatic relations between the United States Government and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) were established in July 1995 following assurances from Vietnamese officials that improved bilateral relations would result in expanded cooperation to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans captured, missing or

killed during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2002, President Bush issued Presidential Determination 2002-11, stating that Vietnam's unilateral provision of POW/MIA-related documents and records should be improved, focused initially on archival data pertaining to Americans captured, missing or killed in areas of Laos and Cambodia under wartime Vietnamese control; and

WHEREAS, Presidential Determination 2002-11 also stipulated that the government of Vietnam must take unilateral actions aimed at locating and repatriating the remains of those who died while in Vietnamese control who have not yet been returned; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2008, President Bush expressed his appreciation to Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung for Vietnam's cooperation in the joint humanitarian effort to achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans who remain missing in action, and Vietnam's willingness to carry out additional measures; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to continue in this cooperative effort by authorizing officials in his government to locate and release immediately to the United States all records relating to Americans still missing from the Vietnam War; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly urge the Vietnamese government to urge its people to turn over the remains of Americans or information on American burial sites.

The intent of this resolution is:

To request Vietnam release all documents and possible remains pertaining to Americans still missing from the Vietnam War. (Approved)

Resolution No. 425 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PRESERVE INTEGRITY OF U.S.-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Defense has threatened the continued viability and existence of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, which was established in March 1992 by the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation to serve as a non-political and non-bureaucratic forum through which both nations could seek to determine the fate of missing and unaccounted-for servicemen; and

WHEREAS, a 2005 reduction in the size of the Russian government eliminated the Commission's Russian co-chairman, which ended American access to their central military archives; however, diplomatic notes passed in July 2009 between President Obama and Russian President Medvedev helped to reopen their military archives to U.S. researchers as well as increased access to potential eyewitnesses. In June 2011, less than three weeks after the VFW led seven other veterans' and POW/MIA family organizations to write the Russian president to urge his support of the Joint

Commission, he appointed a new Russian co-chairman and 31 new commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Russia is now upholding its end of the Commission; however, the U.S. Defense Department is not. Within that same timeframe—and against White House guidance—DOD has reduced Commission funding and manpower to the point of mission failure, which will severely constrain U.S. efforts to account for missing Americans from World War II forward in the former Soviet Union or former allied countries; and

WHEREAS, in an Oct. 29, 2010, letter to President Obama, and again on May 19, 2011, the VFW wrote that any U.S. consideration being given to dismantling the Commission and relegating its important work to the Defense Department would send an unmistakable signal to the American people and the Russian government that America has chosen to diminish our commitment to the Full Accounting mission; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon President Obama and his Administration to keep the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs intact in mission, personnel and funding.

The intent of this resolution is:

To call upon President Obama and his Administration to keep the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs intact in mission, personnel and funding. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 426 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

CALL FOR VIETNAM POW/MIA UNILATERAL ACTION

WHEREAS, diplomatic relations between the United States Government and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) were established in July 1995 following assurances from Vietnamese officials that improved bilateral relations would result in expanded cooperation to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans captured, missing or killed during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2002, President Bush issued Presidential Determination 2002-11, stating that Vietnam's unilateral provision of POW/MIA-related documents and records should be improved, focused initially on archival data pertaining to Americans captured, missing or killed in areas of Laos and Cambodia under wartime Vietnamese control; and

WHEREAS, Presidential Determination 2002-11 also stipulated that the government of Vietnam must take unilateral actions aimed at locating and repatriating the remains of those who died while in Vietnamese control who have not yet been returned; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2008, President Bush expressed his appreciation to Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung for Vietnam's cooperation in the joint humanitarian effort to achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans who remain missing in action, and Vietnam's willingness to

carry out additional measures; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to continue in this cooperative effort by authorizing officials in his government to locate and release immediately to the United States all records relating to Americans still missing from the Vietnam War, or those who may be still or held against their will; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly urge the Vietnamese government to urge its people to turn over the remains of Americans or information on American burial sites, and any reports of live American servicemen.

The intent of this resolution is:

To request Vietnam release all documents and possible remains pertaining to Americans still missing from the Vietnam War. (Approved)

Resolution No. 427 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

RE-DESIGNATE THE POSITION OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AS THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

WHEREAS, on November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia passed a resolution directing that two battalions of Marines be raised for the service as landing forces for the fleet, thereby establishing the Continental Marines and signifying the birth of the United States Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, Marines throughout our Nation's history have often been called upon to be the first into battle, and they have accepted this duty without hesitation and with a sense of honor and esprit de corps that is second to none; and

WHEREAS, for almost 236 years, the Navy and Marine Corps have fought side-by-side as a cohesive team against any threat that would bring harm to this Nation; and

WHEREAS, Marine Corps units constitute approximately 20 percent of America's ground maneuver battalions, 20 percent of fighter/attack squadrons, 17 percent of attack helicopters, and nearly one-third of ground combat service support to the active forces; and

WHEREAS, the Marine Corps is the only service in the Department of Defense without a specific service Secretary, as the Secretary of the Navy serves as both the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of the Marine Corps; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to re-designate the position of the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps.

The intent of this resolution is:

To change the position of the Secretary of the Navy to Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps. (Approved)

Resolution No. 428 (Submitted by the Department of Ohio)

RETAIN THE SELECTIVE SERVICE

WHEREAS, the nation is well served by keeping the Selective Service System as an inexpensive insurance policy – in a still dangerous and uncertain world – against underestimating the number of military needed to fight and win a future crisis; and

WHEREAS, the cost of keeping the Selective Service System at the ready is miniscule at \$24 million annually, when measured in the context of the overall defense budget, making it one of America's best national security bargains; and

WHEREAS, as a visible symbol of national resolve to America's potential adversaries, this small agency is the only time-proven means of mobilizing America's manpower for a significant crisis in a timely, orderly manner; and

WHEREAS, the Selective Service System and the program of draft registration for America's 18-year-old men ensure that any future draft, if needed, would be fair and equitable; and

WHEREAS, since 1980, the Nation's young men are overwhelmingly complying with the requirement to register, with 91 percent of men 18 through 25 registered; and

WHEREAS, any reductions in the size of the active and Reserve Components of the Armed Forces reinforce the need to preserve the historic link between the volunteer military and society-at-large; and

WHEREAS, the Selective Service System directly supports daily all-volunteer recruiting as a part of its draft registration program by informing America's young men that they can serve America today in the U.S Armed Forces; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Administration to continue the current registration program; to provide necessary funding for operating the Selective Service System at its current level of service; to continue its partnership with the Department of Defense; and to maintain its present reduced state of readiness as an important part of a cost-effective overall national security strategy.

The intent of this resolution is:

To retain the Selective Service System. (Approved)

Resolution No. 429 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

HOLD AND TRY TERRORISTS AT GUANTANAMO BAY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is an organization dedicated to see Americans remain safe from foreign aggression and terrorism; and

WHEREAS, we strive to keep American citizens safe to work and live in peace; and

WHEREAS, the terrorists acts by radical and/or religious extremists in recent years that have killed thousands of Americans and destroyed billions of dollars of property in the United States has awakened us to the danger of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, we have elected to imprison some of the terrorists that we have captured at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and

WHEREAS, to date, we have not brought some of these terrorists to trial for their crimes against America; and

WHEREAS, to try the terrorists in the United States would open our citizens and our cities to terror attacks by radical and/or religious extremists; and

WHEREAS, the prison at Guantanamo Bay has proven to be a safe and secure place to hold the terrorists with any protests, demonstrations or acts of terrorism; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States to continue to hold and try terrorists at Guantanamo Bay.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge the President of the United States to keep Guantanamo Bay open to hold and try captured terrorists. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 430 (Submitted by Department of Hawaii)

PROVIDE DD-214s TO RESERVE COMPONENT MEMBERS

WHEREAS, all active, Guard and Reserve veterans are eligible for VA medical care, as well as compensation and pension, if a service-connected injury occurred while on active duty; and

WHEREAS, eligibility for other VA benefits is based on presenting proof of active military service in the form of a DD Form 214. According to Title 10, U.S. Code, a member of the Guard or Reserve can only receive a DD-214 if they serve 90 days of continuous active duty, although Service Secretaries have the authority to issue the forms for shorter time periods; and

WHEREAS, the Guard and Reserve constitute one-quarter of all forces deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and it constitutes half of all Air Force air-

lift, yet similar to the active force, not every Reserve Component member has had the opportunity to deploy much less be activated for 90 consecutive days; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to delete the 90-day activation requirement in Title 10, U.S. Code, and to provide the DD Form 214 to all Reserve Component members who separate or retire under conditions other than dishonorable.

The intent of this resolution is:

To urge Congress to delete the 90-day activation requirement in Title 10, U.S. Code, and to provide the DD Form 214 to all Reserve Component members who separate or retire under conditions other than dishonorable.
(Approved)

Resolution No. 431 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY LONGEVITY RETIREMENT PAY
AND DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, Congress passed legislation that allowed for the concurrent receipt of military longevity retirement and the Department of Veterans' Affairs disability compensation for injuries, and long term disabilities which were incurred on or aggravated by military duty; and

WHEREAS, the concurrent receipt applies to those veterans' who have received a disability rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rated at 50% or more,

WHEREAS, this does not provide equity to all disabled veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to requiring the concurrent receipt of military longevity pay and VA disability compensation for any veteran who is compensably rated by the VA by special award or a minimum of 10 percent to 100%.

The intent of this resolution is:

To support legislation for the full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of the rating percentage. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 432 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

TERRORISTS FOUND GUILTY IN MILITARY COURTS UNDER
MILITARY LAW SHOULD GET THE DEATH PENALTY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a veterans' organization dedicated to the proposition that the United States shall remain safe from foreign aggression, as well as terrorist's attacks; and

WHEREAS, today our government through some of its present officials seems to think that individual terrorists, and those persons who take their orders only from terrorists groups, and who are not a soldier of a recognized nation, or be under orders from a recognized nation, should be given the rights reserved for American citizens when tried for terrorist crimes against the United States; and

WHEREAS, the American people should not be expected to pay \$50,000 a year for each inmate for the rest of their lives; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that these terrorists who attack, maim and kill American servicemen, civilians and/or destroy American property, not as soldiers of another country, but solely as individual terrorists, or part of a group of terrorists, when captured, shall be held for a hearing before a military tribunal to determine if they represent a foreign country or are an individual terrorist; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the military tribunal finds that the individual captured did not try to kill, or wound American servicemen, citizens, nor destroy any American property, that he be returned to his country; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that when found guilty by a military tribunal to not be a soldier of a foreign country, or under orders of a foreign country, but to be an individual terrorist who had attempted to, or killed or wounded an American serviceman or civilian, the penalty should be death, providing that the full process of legal appeals have been exhausted.

The intent of this resolution is:

To release captured terrorists to their home countries if found not guilty of charges in a U.S. military tribunal, and to sentence terrorists who had attempted to, or killed or wounded an American serviceman or civilian to death, providing that the full process of legal appeals have been exhausted. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 433 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

REACTIVATE THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, it is the duty of every male citizen, age 18 to 25, to register for the Selective Service System; however, since 1973, the current Armed Forces of the United States has been operating strictly as a volunteer armed forces against the present day Terrorist War. This has now required our all-volunteer Armed Forces to be deployed overseas several times, causing severe undue hardships to them and their families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., that we petition Congress to reactivate the Selective Service System immediately to increase the Armed Forces of the United States. This increase should be to a point where multiple troop deployments are dramatically decreased to reduce the hardships on our service personnel and their families.

The intent of this resolution is:

To reactivate the Selective Service System. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 434 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

CEASE FOREIGN AID UNTIL HEALTH CARE ACT OF 1996 IS ENFORCED

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is an organization dedicated to the proposition that the United States remain strong militarily, financially and morally; and

WHEREAS, today, we find the United States suffering financially, as well as morally; and

WHEREAS, the United States is unable, due to its present financial position, to honor its moral position to provide funds for the original "Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996," which would allow all honorably discharged veterans to utilize Department of Veterans Affairs health care services; and

WHEREAS, we find our Nation giving billions of dollars to foreign governments in aid for whatever reasons we know not; and

WHEREAS, we find this action of giving away American treasure to foreign governments insane, and it should be stopped, so that these billions of dollars could balance our own budget, and provide funds to provide health care for the men and women who have kept America free; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the President of the United States to cease foreign aid to foreign governments until our Country funds the original "Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996" and balances our own budget.

The intent of this resolution is:

To redirect foreign aid to fund the "Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996" and balance the nation's budget. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 435 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

GRANT JCS MEMBERSHIP TO NGB CHIEF

WHEREAS, the National Guard has served and fought in every American conflict at home and abroad since its founding on Dec. 13, 1636, yet the four-star Chief of the National Guard Bureau is an advisor to—and not a member of—the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and

WHEREAS, the National Guard, under Title 32 U.S. Code, serves a dual mission to provide stateside security and humanitarian assistance at both Federal and State levels, and to project combat air and ground forces to overseas combatant commanders; and

WHEREAS, after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, almost a half-million members of the National Guard have been activated to support

National Command Authority objectives at home and abroad, to include representing a quarter of all forces deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, the National Guard is an operational force that accounts for a full third of the Army's total Brigade Combat Teams and a quarter of all Air Force aircraft. The men and women who choose to serve in the National Guard deserve leadership that has an equal voice with the other military service chiefs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to make the position of Chief of the National Guard Bureau a permanent member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The intent of this resolution is:

To support legislation to make the position of Chief of the National Guard Bureau a permanent member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (Approved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE

Resolution No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

WHEREAS, there are about 23 million living veterans; and

WHEREAS, more than 2.1 million men and women have served in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) through May 2010; and

WHEREAS, over 445,000 OEF/OIF veterans have been screened for possible mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) while 84,000 veterans have been treated by VA for the effects of TBI; and

WHEREAS, over 171,000 veterans of OIF/OEF have been treated for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, many of the over 9 million veterans over 65 years old required increased health care including long-term care; and

WHEREAS, the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs authorizing benefits for veterans, their dependents and survivors are classified into the following general categories: compensation for service-connected disabilities and death; pension for low income veterans and survivors; educational and training assistance; home loan guaranty's; service members life insurance; veterans life insurance; hospital and medical care services; nursing home and domiciliary care, including state veterans home construction funds; health manpower training; medical and prosthetic research and burial benefits; and

WHEREAS, the health care delivery facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs are aging physical plants in need of modernization through renovations and reconfiguration to meet the demands of advances in medicine and current fire, safety and privacy standards; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served in our armed forces have rendered honorable service to our great nation and are at a minimum deserving to receive timely and accurate processing of claims for veterans entitlements along with the best and most appropriate health care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which fully fund and maintain the integrity and enhancement of veteran entitlement programs and health care system. (Approved)

Resolution No. 602 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CONSIDER TREATMENT FOR A PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED CONDITION AS A CLAIM FOR VA COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, many service members have suffered from diseases that are recognized to be presumptive; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering from diseases which include many types of cancer, as well as diabetes and other chronic diseases may not be aware that they may be eligible for service connection, even if they are being treated in a VA facility; and

WHEREAS, many VA medical facilities are not currently staffed or equipped to provide appropriate counseling to veterans or their families on how to file a claim for service connected benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation requiring that treatment by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for a condition or disease recognized as presumptively service connected will be considered to be an informal claim for service connection for compensation purposes. (Approved)

Resolution No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXTENDING GULF WAR PRESUMPTIONS, REGISTRY AND HEALTH CARE TO AFGHANISTAN THEATER VETERANS

WHEREAS, many service members have served in Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, these veterans have served under circumstances similar to those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and the first Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Afghanistan was not considered part of the Southwest Asia theater of operations during Operation Desert Storm and the VA did not include Afghanistan; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the VA to include Afghanistan in the Southwest

Asia theater of operations so that appropriate benefits, including eligibility for compensation based on undiagnosed illnesses, and medical care eligibility, will be provided, retroactive to the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE VA PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENT INCREASES

WHEREAS, veterans, other than those with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, those who are receiving medications for their service-connected conditions or those whose incomes fall below the non service-connected pension threshold, must pay a co-payment for each 30-day supply of medications obtained through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, there have been repeated proposals to raise the pharmaceutical co-payment, placing an undue hardship on many veterans; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, using his statutory authority, raised the pharmaceutical co-payment from \$8 to \$9 for each 30 day supply for priority groups 7 and 8, and authority to raise it again in the future exists; and

WHEREAS, the increase in costs of the benefit would likely cause many veterans to turn away from the VA health care system and would serve to inequitably balance the federal budget through veterans programs; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceuticals are part of the VA's standard health benefits package and must be provided to all eligible veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose increases in the VA pharmaceutical co-payment. (Approved)

Resolution No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has called upon Congress to enact legislation to regulate and expand eligibility for VA health care and provide all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care services which include nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, current VA regulations extend VA eligibility for nursing home care to those veterans who are service-connected at 70 percent or above or those seeking nursing home care for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, the demand for VA nursing home care is increasing as the veteran population continues to age; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care units are VA hospital-based and provide an intensive and extensive level of nursing home care supported by the clinical specialties and other services within the host hospital; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care is considered the “safety net” for VA outpatient services such as residential care, respite care, hospital-based home care, adult day health care, homemaker/home health aid services and other extended care programs; and

WHEREAS, VA, through their own statements, recognizes the difference in eligibility for nursing home care and inpatient hospital care as inconsistent with the principles of sound medical practice, which support continuity of care for veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish a standard VA nursing home entitlement for all veterans. (Approved)

Resolution No. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

WHEREAS, almost 20 percent of combat casualties have sustained permanent brain damage due to Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) while serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and New Dawn; and

WHEREAS, veterans with blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls are at risk for TBI which often goes unrecognized; and

WHEREAS, even mildly injured TBI patients may have long-term mental and physical health consequences; and

WHEREAS, there has been universal recognition that veterans with severe TBI will need a lifetime of intensive services to care for their injuries and many VA medical facilities are not currently staffed or equipped to provide the necessary and appropriate screening, or quality health care services to veterans suffering from TBI; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that appropriate screening, diagnostic services, treatment and life-long case management services are available to every veteran suffering from TBI; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase research pertaining to, screening methods, diagnostic tools, and more effective treatments, such as hyperbaric chamber treatment, for traumatic brain injury patients to ensure that TBI veterans are receiving quality standardized treatment and rehabilitation care available. (Approved)

Resolution No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes that it is in the best interest of veterans to have a strong and viable veterans employment and training system dedicated to the interest of our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans of all eras, especially recently separated service members, are finding it difficult to obtain meaningful employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, while there are certain employment and educational programs in place for veterans there is a great need for improvement in the quality, purpose, and accountability of these programs; and

WHEREAS, veteran employment programs need to have a proactive, long-term career focus versus an immediate and often low wage, job focus; and

WHEREAS, all veteran employment programs should conduct impact studies to assess their effectiveness in attaining and maintaining meaningful long-term employment for veterans. Programs need increased accountability, oversight, and acceptable performance measures to prove the effectiveness of the programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support viable and effective veterans employment and training systems, which have necessary funding and capability to assist veterans in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment and re-employment opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that programs which are proven to be effective should have the necessary funding and personnel to fully assist veterans seeking employment and reemployment opportunities in both the public and private sectors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such programs must be held accountable for the effectiveness of the services provided and their funding should be adjusted to reflect their abilities in creating long-term meaningful employment for veterans. (Approved)

Resolution No. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HIGH QUALITY VA SERVICES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the number of women joining the armed forces of our country continues to increase every year; and

WHEREAS, women veterans comprise approximately eight percent of all users of VA health care services and women who are deployed are now playing extraordinary roles in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and are enrolling in VA at historic rates; and

WHEREAS, the number of enrolled women veterans is expected to increase by 20 percent in the next two to four years making it essential that VA is staffed and equipped to meet their specific health care needs; and

WHEREAS, many VA facilities are not currently equipped to provide gender-specific health care services to include mental health professionals trained to provide counseling and care for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, many women veterans are unaware of their eligibility as veterans and often do not utilize VA for benefits or health care services; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 111-163 addressed many of these critical issues and identified the needs of female veterans, we still await final regulations by VA for implementation of these changes; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to increase priority given to women veterans by providing adequate mental health care services to include individuals trained to provide care for Military Sexual Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge VA to ensure that it has a full-time women veterans program manager at all VA medical centers and major clinics and to ensure necessary and gender-specific health care services are available to women veterans at all VA facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to improve outreach and expand programs for women veterans to close critical gaps, allow women to choose their VA healthcare provider and offering a full-range of services designed to meet their current and future needs. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXTEND A PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION TO BLAST SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have placed tens of thousands of service members in harms way; and

WHEREAS, the nature of the conflict these men and women face is frequently guerrilla-style combat where the enemy is widely known to use improvised explosive devices, or IEDs; and

WHEREAS, much of the attention has been focused on the apparent physical wounds, there are many unseen effects of blast trauma, which could include brain injuries, long-term hearing and balance issues, chronic pain, air embolisms, and injuries mistaken for personality disorders; and

WHEREAS, some effects associated with blast injuries may not become

manifest immediately allowing the service member to return to the field, only to have their ability to fulfill their duty dramatically affected by the long-term effects of the blast; and

WHEREAS many injuries are difficult to diagnose and our men and women in uniform can suffer from these disabilities for many years after the blast; and

WHEREAS, a large number of veterans have been identified as having been evaluated or treated for a condition possibly related to a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) at a VA medical center from the start of OIF/OEF; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to approve a presumption of service connection for the conditions associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). (Approved)

Resolution No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHEREAS, several government reports indicate that nearly every federal agency is falling below their 3% contracting goal for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans and disabled veterans lack access to capital; and

WHEREAS, the tools available to veterans to fulfill their obligation and provide the federal government with the capability and capacity to fulfill 3% of all Federal contracts has continued to fail America's veterans; and

WHEREAS, other groups have comprehensive funding and small business centers across the country and more favorable options and access to capital; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration lacks the funding and staff necessary to create robust veterans programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars that Congress expand entrepreneurial education and networking for veterans via veterans small business centers funded through the Small Business Administration in order to reach all governmental agencies 3% goal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress expand veterans and disabled veterans access to capital by creating and funding a direct loan program through the Small Business Administration in order to reach all governmental agencies 3% goal. (Approved)

Resolution No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REQUIRE ATTENDANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR SEPARATING AND DEMOBILIZING SERVICEMEMBERS

WHEREAS, the goal of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is to ease the adjustment of separating service members during the difficult transition from active duty into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, medical/health services, the advising of available benefits, and other related counseling; and

WHEREAS, Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports continue to emphasize the need for all eligible service members to attend TAP prior to discharge; and

WHEREAS, TAP pre-separation counseling is not always integrated into the Military Separation process for service members and not all military bases allow nationally accredited service organizations to participate in the pre-separation or TAP briefings; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that DOD expands and standardizes their existing pre-separation counseling policies to ensure counseling services are utilized by separating servicemembers and by adding additional information on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, to include healthcare and entitlements, federal and private sector employment opportunities, G.I. Bill and vocational rehabilitation and employment programs, and to assure that individual service members will receive appropriate transitioning services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request Congress require DOL to thoroughly review the TAP program for maximum effectiveness in helping servicemembers transition, while encouraging cooperation and inclusion of nationally accredited service organizations in their programs. (Approved)

Resolution No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in Chief)

VA CLAIMS BACKLOG

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a large backlog of claims for compensation, pension, education benefits and appeals; and

WHEREAS, due to the increasing complexity of claims, the need for compliance to Court of Veterans Appeals decisions claims and the continual increase in the number of claims year to year the backlog has continued to grow; and

WHEREAS, because of substantial backlogs of claims and appeals cases, timeliness in rating cases has steadily degraded; and

WHEREAS, VBA has failed to leverage advances in information technology (IT) to create efficiencies that substantially streamline claims processing and enhance opportunities for improved quality control; and

WHEREAS, decades of staffing freezes and neglect within VA contributed to current backlogs and decreased timeliness; and

WHEREAS, Congress in recent years has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved oversight. Yet, the attrition of new hires and retirement of journeymen claims processors continues to challenge VA's ability to train and maintain a technically proficient workforce; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to continue to exercise its oversight capacity and provide the resources necessary to hire, train and sustain a workforce sufficient to overcome the backlog and provide quality and timely service to those claiming benefits or appealing decisions from VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress continue its oversight of VA IT initiatives to ensure that they are constructive, relevant and effective in streamlining claims processing and improving quality of entitlement decisions. (Approved)

Resolution No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCREASE THE BENEFIT LEVEL FOR THE SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DEA)

WHEREAS, the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (DEA) provides educational support to eligible dependents (spouse or children) of a service member who died on active duty or a veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, while DEA benefits have not increased significantly since 2000, public 4-year college tuition has increased well over 100 percent; and

WHEREAS, the average cost of tuition, fees, room and board, and books at a 4-year college was \$20,154 for the school year 2010-11 while the DEA benefit for the same period is \$8,424; and

WHEREAS, while nothing can repay the enormity of the loss and sacrifice of military survivors, providing a quality educational benefit will provide them the opportunity to build a meaningful and productive future for themselves and their children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to increase DEA benefits to reflect the rising cost of education, and that the benefit should be indexed to reflect the level of tuition as reported by the Department of Education. (Approved)

Resolution No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS WITH
POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated that treating PTSD among returning war veterans is one of its highest priorities, and the VA operates a nationwide network of more than 190 specialized PTSD outpatient treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, the early and accurate screening, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders, yields optimal patient outcomes, and statistics have shown that these conditions, left untreated or poorly treated, can lead to increases in suicide attempts or suicides; and

WHEREAS, the total number of veterans compensated for PTSD through 2010 is 386,000, with almost a third of them (138,000) being current war veterans. VA and Defense Department studies verify that combat exposure in Afghanistan and Iraq increases a veteran's risk of being diagnosed with PTSD; and

WHEREAS, available research has significant gaps in the evaluation of treatment programs for veterans diagnosed with and/or suffering from the effects of traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, and the brain's response to internal and external influences that could result in mental depression, such as substance abuse, gender or racial abuse, and the effect of aging and loneliness; and

WHEREAS, VA has struggled to provide female veterans the same type of care and services that their male counterparts receive for TBI and PTSD; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine highlights prolonged exposure therapy, an intensive specialized counseling treatment as being one of the few treatment programs that have been proven effective by evidence based research studies; and

WHEREAS, the VA currently does not have the capacity to deliver intensive exposure therapy programs at every medical center to veterans with PTSD who need it; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to adequately staff VA mental health treatment and research programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that VA take the lead on improving women's health research, training and women's health certifications, and institute comprehensive programs for the treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) among women veterans. (Approved)

Resolution No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION FOR TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat or in a position (e.g. member of a gun crew on board Navy ships) or certain occupational specialties have a high incidence rate of hearing loss or tinnitus as a direct result of acoustic trauma; and

WHEREAS, many pre-service and discharge examinations, particularly for World War II and Korean Conflict veterans, were usually accomplished with the highly inaccurate whispered-voice test; and

WHEREAS, veterans, in those cases, were not afforded a comprehensive audio logical examination upon entrance and discharge from the military services; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the second leading disability granted service connection by VA was for hearing loss or tinnitus.

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) released a study that showed that nearly all service members are exposed to acoustic trauma at some point during their military service and that many experience hearing loss and/or tinnitus as a result, often years after service. However, "after the fact, hearing loss or tinnitus incurred as a result of military service cannot be distinguished with certainty from subsequent noise-induced hearing loss..." Given these findings, reasonable doubt must be resolved in favor of veterans who suffered acoustic trauma in service.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran diagnosed after discharge with hearing loss or tinnitus when the evidence shows that the veteran participated in combat or worked in a position or occupational specialty likely to cause acoustic trauma. (Approved)

Resolution No. 616 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ENFORCEMENT OF VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, Congress enacted laws to help veterans find suitable employment; and

WHEREAS, federal contractors receive monies from the federal government, and in many cases, make a substantial profit in the process; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor has failed to provide any oversight to ensure that federal contractors are abiding by the laws required of them in regards to veterans, particularly Title 38 USC 4212; and

WHEREAS, many governmental departments have done a poor job in hiring veterans, particularly disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not know how to appeal employment decisions when they believe their eligibility for preference was not properly considered; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to hold the Department of Labor and federal contractors responsible for abiding by the law, particularly Title 38 USC 4212; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to modify Title 38 USC 4212 to stipulate penalties for all federal contractors that are found to be in non-compliance of such section; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to modify Title 38 USC 4212 to require that any information collected through the VETS-100—a required annual filing for federal contractors receiving over \$100,000 that lists the number of veterans they employ—be made available to the public and in a user friendly format for both veterans and those who assist veterans in locating employment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to hold regular hearings with governmental departments that have a poor record in hiring veterans, particularly disabled veterans, to highlight the issue and take necessary actions to discontinue such actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; that all governmental agencies clearly supply information to veterans, at the time of their application for employment, which clearly identifies the proper procedure for filing complaints should any veteran believe his or her rights have been violated under any law or regulation related to veterans' preference. (Approved)

Resolution No. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

BURIAL PLOT ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pays certain burial benefits at the death of a veteran who dies from a service connected disability. VA pays a different burial benefit and plot allowance on behalf of a wartime veteran who dies from a non-service connected condition; and

WHEREAS, the cost of funeral expenses in the private sector have increased nearly seven times over since 2001 and the current VA benefit is \$2,000 for a service connected death, and \$700 burial and \$700 plot allowance for a qualifying non-service connected death; well below the cost in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, Congress should provide the resources to meet the changing needs of burial benefits and bring burial allowances and plot allowances to the same proportionate level they were when the benefits were joined in 1973; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress increase all burial benefits to what the Independent Budget recommends: the service connected burial benefit, non-service connected burial benefit and the plot allowance should be \$6,160, \$1,918, and \$1,150 respectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress should index these benefits to inflation so that the families of veterans should never again experience financial hardship in order to bury those who served in defense of America. (Approved)
Resolution No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MINIMUM COMPENSATION FOR HEARING LOSS

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat have a high incident rate of hearing loss usually associated with acoustical trauma; and

WHEREAS, it is the general principle of disability compensation that ratings not be offset by the function artificially restored by prosthesis; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs has the authority to grant service connection for disabilities associated with combat-related diseases or injuries even if medically undocumented at the time of service; and

WHEREAS, many veterans have incurred extreme hardships through undocumented acoustical trauma related to combat service or occupational duty; and

WHEREAS, hearing aids are considered a prosthetic device necessary for good quality of life; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum compensable evaluation for any service connected hearing loss for which a hearing aid is medically indicated. (Approved)

Resolution No. 619 (Submitted by the Commander-in-Chief)

REPEAL THE SURVIVOR'S BENEFIT PLAN AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION OFFSET

WHEREAS, under current law, the surviving spouse of a retired service-member whose death is related to a military service connected condition is entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, if the military retiree was also enrolled in the Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP), the surviving spouse's SBP benefit would be offset by the amount of DIC benefits provided by VA; and

WHEREAS, the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included a provision that provided a \$50 per month increase with a \$10 increase every year after for survivors of members entitled to retired pay whose SBP is reduced by VA and the 2009 NDAA extended this payment to survivors of active duty deaths, neither benefit equals the amount being offset by DIC; and

WHEREAS, SBP and DIC payments are paid to beneficiaries for different reasons: SBP is purchased by the retiree like life insurance and is intended to provide a portion of the veteran's retired pay to the surviving spouse after the veteran's death, and DIC is a special indemnity compensation benefit paid to the surviving spouse when the veteran's service connected condition caused the premature demise of the retiree; and

WHEREAS, a surviving spouse of a federal civilian retiree who is a disabled veteran and dies from military service connected causes can receive DIC benefits without losing any of their SBP benefits due to an offset; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal the Survivor's Benefit Plan and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset. (Approved)

Resolution No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

INCIDENT REPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HEALTH CARE FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

WHEREAS, allegations of sexual assault in the military have climbed steadily over the past 10 years and this escalation is due to weak prevention efforts, inadequate field reporting, and poor managerial oversight; and

WHEREAS, Department of Defense (DOD) incident numbers indicate that there were 3,230 allegations of sexual assault reported in 2009, however, an estimated 80 percent of sexual assaults go unreported each year, and approximately 8 percent of those cases reported were prosecuted; and

WHEREAS, a civilian panel that advises top Pentagon officials on matters related to women in the armed forces found that sexual assault victims fear embarrassment, lack of action by authorities, retaliation and career penalties as a result of reporting incidents, and many refuse to answer screening questions if it means their record will reflect that they were assaulted or raped; and

WHEREAS, survivors of sexual assault often cite anonymity concerns and the absence of an independent authority that does not include commanding officers with direct authority over the survivor as reasons for their decision not to report an assault; and,

WHEREAS, many survivors of sexual assault experience Military Sexual Trauma (MST) which often leads to the development or worsening of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and current treatment strategies are often

inadequate because they are generally tailored to the treatment of combat-induced PTSD and thus fail to provide the appropriate treatment environment survivors require; and

WHEREAS, evidence suggests that gender-specific inpatient and outpatient care facilities, including gender-specific housing, established for the treatment of veterans suffering from MST and PTSD resulting from MST lead to higher rates of recovery as compared to co-ed treatment centers targeted at combat-induced trauma; and

WHEREAS, TRICARE will only pay for sexual assault forensic evidence kits (i.e., "rape kits") if the survivor seeks care in the military healthcare system, however, in many cases survivors choose to go off-base for post-sexual assault care to protect their anonymity and/or careers and evidence collected during these examinations is crucial to a successful prosecution of an offender; and

WHEREAS, survivors who choose not to report or who face obstacles in reporting instances of sexual assault often develop PTSD and other mental health issues at higher

rates which may, at a later date, necessitate the use of more intensive health care services over extended periods of time, putting added burdens on VA; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA and DOD to ensure that necessary and appropriate health care services are available to all veterans who experience sexual assault and/or suffer from MST, to include access to rape kits, confidential counseling and other treatment options, and additional gender-specific facilities for the treatment of MST and PTSD resulting from MST amongst the veteran population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DOD should establish an independent authority with oversight capacity, outside the chain of command, to be the primary respondent and advocate for those reporting a sexual assault, better ensuring confidentiality and the protection of the rights of victims; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the current assessment and treatment process for sexual trauma be conducted in a way that will convince members of the armed forces and veterans that the process protects the confidentiality of survivors and assures that appropriate investigations and disciplinary actions will be taken against the perpetrator; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DOD must aggressively support a zero-tolerance policy for sexual assault; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that servicemembers be provided educational programs aimed at the prevention of, response to, and the reducing of stigmas associated with sexual assault during initial training and pre-deployment. (Approved)

Resolution No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HOMELESS VETERANS PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, the crisis of homelessness in America has intensified due to a poor economy, which has increased the number of veterans considered at risk for homelessness because of: surging home foreclosures, a growing unemployment rate, and a nationwide shortage of affordable, low-income housing; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is supportive of President Obama's commitment to end homelessness within five years; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates, at least 131,000 veterans experience homelessness on any given night while more than twice this number of veterans encounter homelessness at some point throughout the course of a year; and

WHEREAS, the number of female service members has increased within the military, correlating with the growing number of female veterans experiencing homelessness, as well as homeless veterans with dependents; and

WHEREAS, programs operating on the federal level seek to assist local and state homeless veteran agencies and programs, partially using funds granted by the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Grant and Per Diem program and the Department of Labor (DOL) Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) acknowledges its obligation to maintain comprehensive assistance to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to the best of its capabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and Congress to continue addressing homeless veterans as a priority by increasing the availability of affordable housing, ensuring the opportunity to earn an adequate income through increased educational and employment opportunities and training, and by expanding access to health-care services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress should fully-fund all veteran homeless programs, to include the VA's Grant and Per Diem program, and DOL's Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA should periodically review the economy so as to take into account instances of inflation to adequately adjust Grant and Per Diem program rates as necessary for sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA programs extended to homeless veterans be equipped with the staffing and resources necessary to respond to the growing needs of a diverse veterans population, including women, dependents, the elderly, and disabled; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that preemptive measures to address homelessness are developed and utilized to prevent and minimize the risk

of possible homelessness that current service members and veterans face.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Department of Veterans Affairs service connected compensation and non-service connected pension not be considered as countable income by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. (Approved)

Resolution No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the period of eligibility for VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits is 12 years from the date of separation from the military or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not understand their eligibility to VR&E services and the benefits of the program until later in life when they become so disabled that their disabilities create an employment barrier; and

WHEREAS, VR&E lacks quality performance measures that measure rehabilitation based on the long-term effects of disability and the likelihood that a disability may require further rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, VR&E programs offer no services to the families and children of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VR&E can take more than 90 days from enrollment to the start of services; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to change the eligibility delimiting date for VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program by eliminating the 12-year-delimiting date for eligibility to Chapter 31 benefits and allow all veterans with employment impediments or problems with independent living to qualify for VR&E services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA must restructure performance measures to emphasize long-term rehabilitation versus the current short-term indicators of success. Furthermore, VR&E should continually follow up with veterans considered to be rehabilitated to ensure that the rehabilitation and employment placement plans have been successful; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VR&E ought to be expanded to include services for spouses and children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA streamlines eligibility and entitlement to VR&E programs to provide more timely intervention and assistance to all disabled veterans. (Approved)

Resolution No. 623 (Submitted by the Department of Nebraska)

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION PENSION MANAGEMENT CENTER,
ST. PAUL, MN

WHEREAS, the St. Paul Pension Management Center was established in 2001; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Management Center's mission statement states in part "*ST. PAUL IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TIMELY, ACCURATE CLAIMS PROCESSING*"; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Management Center has had ten years to establish the means to provide such services; and

WHEREAS, in reality these goals have not been accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the veterans and dependents who depend on the benefits being overseen by the Pension Management Center are those individuals most in need; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we contact Secretary Shinseki and our representative in Washington, DC, to express our concerns about the services being delivered by the Pension Management Center; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commander-in-Chief request an immediate inspection of the operations and performance of the pension center; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commander-in-Chief urge Secretary Shinseki to return control of all pension claims to the regional office that is "home of record". (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 624 (Submitted by the Department of Maine)

ABOLISH 38 C.F.R. 20.1403(d)(1)(2) [CUE CLAIMS]

WHEREAS, Freedom isn't free. Disabled Combat Veterans know that better than anyone. Now, freedom has been stripped from Disabled Veterans by the VA and Congress by this regulation... New Diagnosis and Failure to Assist (38 C.F.R. 20.1403 (D) (1)(2)) listed as not being a Clear and Unmistakable Error (CUE) is erroneous, arbitrary, capricious and not in accordance with the law, denying Disabled Veterans their Constitutional Right guaranteed in the 5th and 14th Amendments to Constitution of Equal Protection Under the Law, and a Fair and Impartial Due Process. (see... 38 U.S.C. 7111 & 38 U.S.C. 7261); and

WHEREAS, Equal Protection Under the Law guarantees that all citizens have the right to have evidence favorable to their case considered, whether in District, Circuit, or Federal Courts, or the United States Court of Veterans Appeals. The same applies to the VA, whether at the Regional Office (RO), or Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). This Regulation (38 C.F.R. 20.1403 (D)(1)(2) takes that basic Constitutional right to have evidence considered

that is favorable to Disabled Veterans' claims from them.....This regulation is designed to circumvent the law set forth in (38 U.S.C.7111). It doesn't say anywhere in 38 U.S.C. 7111 that failure to provide a complete exam is not an error (CUE); and

WHEREAS, VA has the Duty to Assist our Disabled Veterans. That includes providing a complete examination to determine the extent of their disability, and provide expert medical opinion as to whether the disability is service connected, and to have the entire medical history available for the examining physician, and the RO.....This regulation says that if the VA fails to provide a complete exam, or have the medical history available, that, that does not constitute Clear and Unmistakable Error, and, that a new diagnosis replacing a diagnosis from an incomplete exam is not CUE; "If the initial exam was incomplete", then the new diagnosis reflects an error (CUE) from the incomplete exam... We submit to you, that this regulation strips Disabled Veterans of the freedom they sacrificed so much for ... The freedom to have that evidence favorable to their claims considered, if the VA fails to provide them with a complete examination; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation which would abolish 38 C.F.R. 20.1403(D)(1)(2), and restore Disabled Veterans freedom to them, to have evidence considered that is favorable to their CUE claims. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 625 (Submitted by the Department of Minnesota)

VETERANS PREFERENCE – JOB TRAINING

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Veterans Employment and Training Service Centers meet mandated compliance standards for Veterans Preference; and

WHEREAS, the Job Service Centers for each State and Territory receive funding under the Wagner – Peyser Act of 1933; and, are eligible for special grants to provide services to veterans; and

WHEREAS, in January 2009, veterans job training preference law was changed, stating: "any Department of Labor workforce development, job training, or placement programs must provide priority to veterans" and that this mandate is not being met at all One-Stop locations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to ensure that all agencies that are provided funds from the U.S. Department of Labor, or that receive funding under the Wagner – Peyser Act or Workforce Investment Act meet the same compliance standards as the State Workforce agencies relative to Veterans Preference, as mandated by current law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that these same agencies be required to provide compliance reports to the office of the Assistant Secretary of Veterans Employment and training or their designee to ensure this mandate is

carried out. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 626 (Submitted by the Department of West Virginia)

ADDING COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME (CRPS) TO THE VETERANS AFFAIRS SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, due to the advances in medical care, more service members are surviving devastating injuries than previously; and

WHEREAS, one of these devastating disabilities is Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), The Mayo Clinic describes CRPS as: “an uncommon form of chronic pain that usually affects an arm or leg. Complex regional pain syndrome typically develops after an injury, surgery, stroke or heart attack, but the pain is out of proportion to the severity of the initial injury, if any.”; and

WHEREAS, CRPS, is a complication in an estimated 5 percent of nerve injuries with more than 50,000 new cases each year; and

WHEREAS, the John Hopkins School of Medicine determined from 888 CRPS respondents that 47 percent of people with CRPS reported having thoughts of ending their lives and 15 percent acted on the impulse twice on average, with the rate of suicidal ideation in CRPS is roughly two-and-a-half times that of any other chronic pain disorder; and

WHEREAS, CRPS is a painful nervous system disorder recognized by the Social Security Administration as a disabling condition; and recognized in the International Classification of Diseases in its 9th Edition, the ICD-9; and

WHEREAS, Complications from CRPS such as pulmonary embolisms can result in death; and

WHEREASE, CPRS is not included in the Veterans Affairs Schedule for Rating Disabilities; and

WHEREAS, active duty and veterans diagnosed with this disability are not being provided disability ratings or are given arbitrary analogous ratings not commensurate with this disability; and

WHEREAS, these erroneous ratings result in an insufficient level of disability benefits and compensation to active duty and disabled veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports changes in the Veterans Affairs Schedule for Rating Disabilities which would provide that an active duty member or veteran who is diagnosed with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) is appropriately rated under a distinct central nervous system disorder diagnostic code that more accurately reflects the unique characteristics of this disabling conditions.
(Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 627 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

EXTEND THE CURRENT DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR COMPENSATION
OF CHRONIC DISABILITY

WHEREAS, many Persian Gulf Veterans of the Gulf War still suffer from Chronic Disability due to various illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses; and

WHEREAS, medical research is still ongoing today and has not as yet identified causes of these various illness and medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illnesses nor when or how the illnesses will onset/ become manifest to a compensable degree in accordance with the VA rating table; and

WHEREAS, American Service Members are still serving today in The Southwest Asia Theater of Operations as defined in 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), § 3.317 (e) (2); now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to extend the current deadline to apply for compensation of Chronic Disability due to various illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses beyond the current cutoff date of December 31, 2011 as currently stated in 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), § 3.317 (a) (1) (ii). (Approved)

Resolution No. 628 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

RECOUPMENT ON HOME LOAN GUARANTY ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the economic and housing climate over the last 15 years has been turbulent; and

WHEREAS, it has been documented at every level that entities shamefully took advantage of loopholes within the law, which allowed them to profit off the misery of Americans losing their homes; and

WHEREAS, our elected officials have already seen fit to provide forgiveness and relief to Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and other lenders ; and

WHEREAS, the veterans of our Nation have done far more to protect and provide for the American dream. They should be given no less than the same consideration, now; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to amend Title 38 CFR part 36, so that veterans who lost eligibility for Home Loan Guaranty through the Department of Veterans Affairs between 2000-2015 by way of foreclosure, have their eligibility restored. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 629 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

AGENT ORANGE EQUITY ACT

WHEREAS, Agent Orange, which is known as a highly toxic cocktail of herbicide agents, that was widely sprayed for defoliation and crop destruction purposes all over the Vietnam War Battlefield, as well as on borders and other areas of neighboring nations; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs requires Vietnam veterans to prove a "boots on the ground" occurrence in order to qualify for the presumptions of service connection for herbicide-exposure related illnesses afforded under current law, now; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support amending the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to add for purposes of the presumption of service connection for diseases associated with exposure, by veterans to certain herbicide agents while in Vietnam, such as Republic's inland waterways, ports, and harbors, waters offshore and airspace above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this amendment includes as veterans eligible for such presumption those who: (1) served on Johnston Island during the period beginning on April 1, 1972, and ending on September 30, 1977; or (2) received the Vietnam Service Medal or the Vietnam Campaign Medal. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 630 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

MARKER MEDALLION

WHEREAS, Public Law 110-157, signed into law on December 26, 2007 gives the VA authority to "furnish, upon request", a medallion or other device of a design determined by the Secretary, to signify the deceased's status as a veteran, to be attached to a headstone or marker that was furnished at the private expenses; and

WHEREAS, veterans who dies prior to November 1, 1990 are not eligible to have this medallion or other device provided; and

WHEREAS, family headstones or monuments often do not necessarily commemorate the veteran's military service; and

WHEREAS, many of our honored deceased veterans now lie in their final resting place without lasting testimony by our government of their service to our country; and

WHEREAS, we believe this injustice to our Nation's veterans must be corrected, now; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support amending Public Law 110-157 to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish a medallion or other device notwithstanding the fact that they died prior to November 1, 1990. (Approved)

ENFORCE THE ORIGINAL "HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY ACT OF 1996"

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has always believed in the principle, and fought for the proposition, that a veteran earned his/her right to veterans' benefits from their honorable service to his/her Country; and

WHEREAS, Congress, in 1996, passed the "Health Care Eligibility Act" whereby for the first time all veterans with honorable service to his/her Country, regardless of wartime injury, wealth, or income, would qualify for health care with the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, thousands upon thousands of veterans across this country applied for this special veterans benefit, and due to the failure of the Department of Veterans Affairs to anticipate this huge influx of veterans seeking medical help from the VA; and/or Congress refusing to fund this new army of veterans seeking care at the VA facilities around the country, we found by the year 2002, as many as 300,000 veterans awaiting care at VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, the then Secretary of Veterans Affairs in the year 2003, rather than to demand sufficient funds from Congress to meet this need of hundreds of thousands of veterans, chose to stop "Group 8" veterans from receiving VA health care, and capped enrollment. So again VA health care would be denied to veterans due to income and wealth regardless of the honorable service these veterans had given their Country. We now have a very undemocratic situation in the Department of Veterans Affairs. We have hundreds of thousands of veterans receiving VA health care who would not be eligible for VA health care by present standards, with hundreds of thousands of veterans with the same qualifications denied access to VA care; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the "Health Care Eligibility Act" brought into the VA health services hundreds of thousands of men and women from all walks of life. The addition of these people has made the VA health services today the world's best. Doctors want to serve; staffs are proud. Now the VA is on a mission. However, the present system where some veterans are treated, and hundreds of thousands with the same qualifications are denied access, is wrong and must change; and

WHEREAS, President Obama, while still a U.S. Senator, declared before a hearing of the Senate Veterans Committee, which was attended by the VFW, that he favored giving all honorably discharged veterans access to VA hospital services; and

WHEREAS, all the men and women who gave this Country their service must have equal access to receive VA medical care with their comrades, and not be forced to purchase health insurance under the new Health Act; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reverse the 2003 Order of Secretary Principi, and allow all "Group 8" veterans access to care in VA facilities; and open registration to all eligible veterans to VA health care, if they so choose to join; that if the Secretary refuses said request the Commander-in-Chief shall make the same request of the President of the United States. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 632 (Submitted by Department of Idaho)

BURIAL OF UNCLAIMED VETERANS CREMAINS

WHEREAS, The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a Federally Recognized Chartered Veterans Service Organization for the purpose of service to the community, State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Veterans who served our country, are entitled to proper Military burial honors; and

WHEREAS, Veterans have been interred with honors in National Cemeteries since 1862; and

WHEREAS, A large number of deceased Veterans are in storage at Funeral Homes, Coroners Offices, and other locations across our nation; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of a program known as the "Missing in America Project" is designed to locate, verify, secure and inter with proper honors, these deceased cremated veterans; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the proper burial of all veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we recognize the importance of the "Missing in America Project" for proper burial of our nation's veterans and we endorse, and support locating our deceased comrades so that they receive a proper burial in National or State Veterans Cemeteries. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 633 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

ENFORCEMENT OF VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS, the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) (section 4214 of Title 38, United States Code) was enacted as part of the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974; and

WHEREAS, this act placed into law the provisions of the Veterans Readjustment Appointment Authority (VRA) that had authorized that the appointment of certain Vietnam-era veterans under executive order; and

WHEREAS, the law also required a separate affirmative action program

for disabled veterans as part of the agencies' efforts to hire, place, and advance the handicapped under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791 (b)); and

WHEREAS, section 4214 was aimed at putting disabled veterans on an equal footing with handicap individuals under the Rehabilitation Act as a nondiscrimination provision, and provides no new preference in employment to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Congress did not establish any appeal rights for disabled veterans nor establish any mechanism for review or investigation of non-selection complaints from individual veterans based on alleged failure to implement an agency's DVAAP in the veteran's personal case; and

WHEREAS, it is the same for implementing regulations, thus there is no process defined in law or regulation to review or investigate non-selection complaints within the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the law requiring affirmative action plans for disabled veterans does not make special mention of 30% disabled veterans nor does it establish any special employment programs for such veterans; and

WHEREAS, though section 4214 is codified in Title 38, U.S.C. it means nothing for veterans seeking redress as an affirmative action program; and

WHEREAS, as the law requiring affirmative action plans for disabled veterans did not establish any new preference or appeal rights for disabled veterans nor did it establish any special hiring programs for 30%+ disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, non-selection based on an agency's failure to implement a DVAAP in the applicant's personal case is not appealable under the current law or regulation; and

WHEREAS, violations of veterans' preference are handled under the administrative redress process, with the Department of Labor; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we make it a legislative priority to require Congress to require enforcement of Title 38 § 4214; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that to be in line with enforcement of veterans preference that the enforcement of section 4214 be provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Services as this agency currently enforces Chapter 41 and 43 of Title 38, U.S.C. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 634 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, the federal government has an obligation to give priority

and preference in hiring to those who have served in the military; and

WHEREAS, all federal agencies should be the ideal leaders that complies with this requirement; and

WHEREAS, Title 5 of the United States Code has established a number of ways to employ staff without having to provide veterans' preference or veterans' preference points; and

WHEREAS, there is not a requirement to provide veterans with preference in advancement opportunities beyond initial employment; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, make it a legislative priority to require Congress amend Title 5 United States Code to require preference be provided to all honorably discharged veterans of the United States military, in employment, training, and promotion in all hiring authorities. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 635 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROVIDES A PROPER EFFECTIVE DATE
FOR VETERANS PREVIOUSLY DENIED SERVICE CONNECTION
OF PERSIAN GULF SYNDROME

WHEREAS, regulations were enacted for the implementation of presumptive illnesses and diseases collectively known as "Persian Gulf Syndrome"; and

WHEREAS, the regulations proposed did not establish that veterans' who had previously been denied service connection for conditions now presumed to be service connected would have an effective date of disability that reflected the original date of application for disability; and

WHEREAS, the principles for a correct effective date is established in the Nehmer decision; but, the Nehmer decision is only applicable on claims related to exposure to Herbicide and cannot be applied to the Persian Gulf Syndrome; and

WHEREAS, it is highly probable that the effective date issue for Persian Gulf Syndrome will be taken to the Court of Appeals Veterans' Claims (CAVC); and

WHEREAS, Current regulations and statute show that the original regulations in 1994 did not comply with the intent of Congress where the VA development of regulations limited the service connection to three diseases that were meant only to be examples, now; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation that would require the effective date for any Persian Gulf Syndrome to be the date of original filing for service connection of a disease/illness which is later found to be presumptive; and

BE IT FURHTER RESOLVED, that we support legislation that establishes the Nehmer principles as a guiding principle for any future finding of illnesses and diseases that become presumptive. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 636 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

SUPPORT DVOPS/LVER GRANTS BEING RETURNED TO
STAFFING GRANTS

WHEREAS, Veterans Preference and Priority of Service for veterans have been earned by the sacrifices of men and women who have served in the military and protected our inalienable rights and nation; and

WHEREAS, Title 38 U.S. Code changed the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) Grants from staffing grants to performance grants; and

WHEREAS, many States have decreased the actual staff to provide services to veterans and provide veterans' preference by 50% or more; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service Grants supporting DVOPS and LVERS be returned to a staffing grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support action that would require the Congress through the Secretary of Labor ensure that adequate funding be provided to support adequate DVOPS/LVER(s) staff within States to provide services to all veterans' requiring employment and training assistance residing within the State. (Amended as Approved)

Resolution No. 637 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

PROVIDE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS OF
SERVICE CONNECTED VETERANS RATED AT A STATIC
80 PERCENT OR MORE DISABLED

WHEREAS, chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, extends educational assistance to the dependent s of service-connected veterans who are evaluated as permanently and totally disabled; and

WHEREAS, there are many service-connected veterans rated 80 percent and 90 percent disabled, whose dependents cannot afford to attend an institution of higher learning or pursue a vocational endeavor because of the reduced earning ability of such veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, seek the enactment of legislation which would extend educational assistance under chapter 35 of title 38, United States Code, to the dependents of veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of a static 80 percent or more. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 638 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

INCREASE THE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR FEE BASIS CARE AND
FULLY COVER THE COST OF TREATMENT THROUGH FEE BASIS

WHEREAS, when Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities are unable to provide specific treatment or cannot provide treatment economically due to geographic inaccessibility, certain veteran patients may be authorized to receive treatment from non-VA health care providers at VA expense; and

WHEREAS, the program of providing such treatment is commonly referred to as the fee basis program; and

WHEREAS, the amount payable by VA has not kept pace with medical inflation; and

WHEREAS, some service-connected veterans, in some cases, must then cover part of the cost of their care for a service-connected condition because of the limited rates of reimbursement through the fee basis program; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Administration to establish new mechanisms to ensure VA reimbursement rates for fee basis care are adequate and indexed to the appropriate annual health care consumer inflation rate recognized by the Federal government; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the VA to promote incentives among private health care practitioners and medical facilities to accept fee basic reimbursements as payment in full for the cost of treatments provided through the fee basis program for service-connected disabled veterans. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 639 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

ELIMINATE THE ENDING DATE FOR ELIGIBLE SPOUSES AND
SURVIVING SPOUSE FOR BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER CHAPTER 35,
TITLE 38 USC.

WHEREAS, dependents and survivors eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits under Chapter 35, title 38, United States Code, have ten years in which to apply for and complete a program of education; and

WHEREAS, this ten-year period begins either from the date a veteran is evaluated by the VA as permanently and totally disabled from service-connected disabilities or ten years from the date of such veteran's death due to service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, in many instances, because of family obligations or the need to provide care to the veteran, spouse or surviving spouses may not

have had an opportunity to apply for these benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek the enactment of legislation which would eliminate the ending date for spouses and surviving spouses for purposes of benefits provided under Chapter 35, title 38, United States Code. (Approved)

Resolution No. 640 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO
PAY INTEREST TO THE CLAIMS THAT ARE APPEALED

WHEREAS, our nation established veterans' programs to repay or reward veterans for their extraordinary service and sacrifices on behalf of their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, many veterans' are denied service connection for disability and are required to appeal those claims and are eventually granted service connections; and

WHEREAS, no disabled veteran should have to wait years for payment of a disability that was caused by service to this country and not have the benefit of the money over the years; and

WHEREAS, though finally paid in full in today's dollars do not represent the actual the lost of those funds over the years and is not a benefit to the veteran; and

WHEREAS, the loss of use of those funds was caused by VA error and there is no incentive for the VA to make the correct decision on the first adjudication; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that to ensure that the veteran receives all of the funds to which the veteran is entitled the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, seeks legislation requiring that the Department of Veterans' Affairs pay equitable interest that would have accrued from the effective date of claim. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 641 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

OPPOSE REDUCTION OF THE APPEAL PERIOD FOR DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS DECISIONS

WHEREAS, Congress has created a benevolent system for the administration of veteran's benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, under this benevolent system, veterans currently have one year to initiate appeal of adverse decisions; and

WHEREAS, unlike with other legal processes where fairness to opposing parties, practical considerations, and matters of administrative and judicial convenience justify shorter appeal periods, no such reasons exist within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) system where service to veterans is

paramount; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the VA claims processing system, has recommended a reduction of the appeal period from one year to 60 days; and

WHEREAS, the length of the current appeal period is not responsible in any way for the claims backlog and related problems the Commission was created to study, the real cause being the ratio of workload to production capacity; and

WHEREAS, a reduction of the appeal period will therefore not increase VA's efficiency nor reduce the claims backlog; and

WHEREAS, a reduction in the appeal period would be an unnecessary reduction of veterans' rights under the pretense of improving the VA claims appeal processes; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any change in law to reduce the period for appealing VA claims decisions. (Approved)

Resolution No. 642 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

SERVICE CONNECTION FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

WHEREAS, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) has become commonplace among OIF/OEF veterans due to the preponderance of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) on the battlefield, remarkable advances in military medicine, and greater awareness of the condition; and

WHEREAS, there is a higher rate of concussions due to IEDs; in-coming mortars, etc.; and

WHEREAS, thousands of veterans' of World War II, Korea, Viet Nam and numerous other conflicts suffered concussions, head wounds, and other trauma to the head and lived for years or decades without proper treatment; and

WHEREAS, many TBI events that are directly attributable to military service occur in training incidents and in other predicaments off the battlefield; and

WHEREAS, a great number of veterans have filed claims for conditions that are now associated with TBI and were denied service connection; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation and regulations requiring the Department of Veteran Affairs perform outreach to those veterans of other eras with verifiable head injuries and trauma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we request legislation to require that those veterans who have previously been denied and reopen claims for service connection for head injury residuals be granted service connection with an effective date of the original claim. (Approved as Amended)

Resolutions No. 643 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

VIETNAM VETERANS' EQUITY ACT

WHEREAS, Congress had developed H.R. 812 which is still in committee and which is opposed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs; and

WHEREAS, over the decade from 1961 to 1972, our military forces sprayed approximately 21 million gallons of herbicide agents in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, these herbicide agents, the most common of which was designated "Agent Orange," contained the contaminant dioxin, one of the most toxic substances known to humankind; and

WHEREAS, the dispersion and deposition of, and human exposure to, dioxins were not limited to areas directly sprayed, inasmuch as it is acknowledged that the chemical was carried away from the areas of application by canals, rivers, and streams, and that airborne particulates were carried by wind drift; and

WHEREAS, Congress has therefore provided that, for purposes of establishing or presuming service connection for disability or death as related to herbicide exposure, a veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, "served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to [a] herbicide agent . . . unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent" during that service; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has arbitrarily interpreted "served in the Republic of Vietnam" to mean only service on land areas of Vietnam and not waters offshore within its national boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the exclusion of territorial seas or waters from the term "Republic of Vietnam" is contrary to the plain and unqualified language of the law and illogical insofar as its premise is that herbicides could be carried away from the area of application across any expanse of land but not equal or lesser expanses of water; and

WHEREAS, various illnesses have been linked to and are presumed due to exposure to these herbicide agents; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served on ships no more distant from the spraying of these herbicides than many who served on land are arbitrarily and unjustly denied benefits of the presumption of exposure and thereby

the presumption of service connection for their herbicide-related disabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the legislation know as the Viet Nam Veterans' Equity Act which will expressly provide that "served in the Republic of Vietnam" includes service in the waters offshore. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 644 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

REDUCE THE TEN YEAR RULE FOR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, section 1318 (b) (1) provides Dependent & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits for survivors of certain veterans noted totally disabled for ten or some years; and

WHEREAS, the financial status of the surviving spouse is compromised due to the care required by the totally disabled veteran and provided by the surviving spouse; and

WHEREAS, the surviving spouse, acting as care-giver for the veteran, most in many case limit or give up her career, or put his or her career on hold; and

WHEREAS, it is inherently unfair that the surviving spouse should have this additional burden placed on him or her for 10 years or more before he or she can qualify for DIC when this veterans passes; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to reduce this ten-year rule for DIC qualification to a more reasonable period of time. (Approved)

Resolution No. 645 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERANS AFFAIRS PENSION MANAGEMENT CENTERS

WHEREAS, the Pension Management Centers were established in 2001; and

WHEREAS, the Pension Management Centers are tasked with the processing responsibilities for live and death pension applications and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation; and

WHEREAS, this tasking is not being accomplished in a timely, accurate manner; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General Office of Audits and Evaluations conducted a review of the Pension Management Centers dated March 30, 2011 which revealed untimely processing of original death pension claims and Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration Income Verification Matches; and

WHEREAS, the veterans and dependents who depend on the benefits being overseen by the Pension Management Center are those individuals most in need; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we express our concerns about the services being delivered by the Pension Management Center and urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to return control of all pension claims to the original VA regional office of jurisdiction. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 646 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MAKE VA FEE BASIS PAYMENTS AND CHAMPVA PAYMENTS FAIR TO PROVIDERS

WHEREAS, the fees paid under the VA Fee Basis and CHAMPVA medical insurance to providers of medical services is not equal to the fees paid by private insurance and are targeted under legislation that was passed in 2009 for a 21% reduction as is TriCare; and

WHEREAS, many private medical providers will not accept Fee Basis, CHAMPVA, and TriCare because of the inequity of payment; and

WHEREAS, the government plans are the only insurance that many 100% disabled and retired military personnel have and the proposed reductions will prevent veterans and their dependents from adequate medical treatment and care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation and regulations requiring that Fee Basis, CHAMPVA, TriCare and other plans providing medical care for retired and disabled veterans be kept competitive with private insurance providers. (Approved)

Resolution No. 647 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REDEFINE CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE ERROR

WHEREAS, final benefit decisions made by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are accepted as correct in the absence of clear and unmistakable error. When such error is found, VA will reverse or amend the prior decision and has the same effect as if the decision had been made on the date of the prior decision; and

WHEREAS, the term "clear and unmistakable error" is not defined in the law; and

WHEREAS, VA has defined clear and unmistakable error and specifically excludes from this definition the Secretary's failure to fulfill the duty to assist; and

WHEREAS, VA has a statutory duty to notify claimants of the evidence

necessary to complete their claims, and a duty to assist them in obtaining the evidence necessary to substantiate their claims; and

WHEREAS, VA routinely fails to fulfill its duty to assist. To substantiate this, in FY 2010, the Board of Veterans Appeals remanded nearly 21,000 cases, over 42 percent of its decisions that year, to the Veterans Benefits Administration to complete development as required by law; and

WHEREAS, such massive failure to fulfill the duty to assist works a hardship on claimants in that VA routinely makes decisions without all procurable evidence. Further, the magnitude of this problem is indicative of intentional misconduct, gross negligence or systemic incompetence; and

WHEREAS, claimants should not be penalized for the misconduct or negligence of the VA; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to enact legislation which would abolish 38 C.F.R. 20.1403(D)(1)(2), and define clear and unmistakable error to include the failure of the Secretary to fulfill the duty to assist. (Approved)

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

Chairman: Larry W. Rivers, Past Commander-in-Chief, Louisiana
Vice Chairman: Glen M. Gardner, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

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Alaska	Walter Watts	3629
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Arizona	Raymond Thomas	3632
Arizona	Allen Kent	9972
Arkansas	Christine Oldham	4548
California	David Norris	52
California	Mike Maynor	52
California	Gary Reason	8762
California	Ronald Bonnin	5867
Colorado	Wayne Thompson	5061
Colorado	Charles Watkins	3917
Colorado	Ronald Lattin	5061
Connecticut	Alfred Meek	2046
Delaware	Paul Phillips	2863
Dist. of Col.	William Bennett	346
Europe	Rufus Allen	10557
Florida	W. Benny Bachand	4287
Florida	Robert Young	10137
Florida	Eugene Perrino	10087
Georgia	Wayne Hagan	6605
Hawaii	Melvin Hori	10276
Hawaii	Richard Haake	3850
Idaho	Donald Riegel	889
Illinois	Jerry Foreman	1984
Illinois	Rick Frank	1461
Illinois	Robert Crider	2801
Indiana	Arthur Fellwock	1114
Indiana	Johnny Capps	6653
Iowa	Christopher Davey	9722
Kansas	Robert Greene	7397
Kansas	John Berkley	8873
Kentucky	William Garwood	1170
Kentucky	Brian Duffy	1170
Louisiana	Russell Shoemaker	3375
Maine	Thomas Lussier	6859
Maryland	Victor Fuentealba	9083
Massachusetts	Augustus Gatti	608
Massachusetts	Roland Gendron	6643
Massachusetts	Ronald Smith	8892
Massachusetts	Edward Walsh	6712
Michigan	David Prohaska	4434

Department	Name	Post No.
Michigan	Lloyd Putman	9455
Michigan	Robert Weiss	2406
Michigan	Kenneth Klee	4659
Minnesota	Alcuin Loehr	4847
Minnesota	Stephen O`Connor	4114
Missouri	Lawrence Maher	7356
Missouri	Kevin Jones	7356
Missouri	Billy Becker	4680
Montana	Larry Longfellow	1087
Nebraska	Dan Petersen	131
Nebraska	Roger Broeker	1504
Nevada	Michael Musgrove	2350
Nevada	Marvin Alig	10047
New Hampshire	Kevin McKeating	483
New Jersey	Joseph Orlando	5941
New Mexico	David Wimmer	7686
New York	Dennis Sullivan	4927
New York	William Schmitz	524
New York	Harold Burke	1895
North Carolina	Ronald Lief	7288
North Dakota	Richard Belling	7564
Ohio	Gerald Ward	5713
Ohio	James Dickens	5532
Oklahoma	Donald Fenter	5263
Oregon	Roger Ege	1909
Pacific Areas	William Wichmann	727
Pennsylvania	Albert Thomas	974
Pennsylvania	Jack Snyder	3376
Pennsylvania	Robert Eiler	8805
Pennsylvania	John Brenner	2493
Rhode Island	Michael Corriveau	5392
South Carolina	Gerald Pothier	10256
South Dakota	Todd Struwe	2118
Tennessee	Ronald Gilbert	1294
Texas	Carlos Sustaita	8787
Texas	Kenneth Burton	9182
Vermont	Michael Corrado	758
Virginia	Thomas Randall	824
Virginia	John McNeill	5412
Washington	David Guinsler	3386
West Virginia	James Richison	573
Wisconsin	Matthias Mayer	6498
Wisconsin	Michael Borg	2778
Wyoming	William Lattimer	991

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California	Paul Gonzalez	2967
California	Vernon Hollins	5394
California	George Smith	2122
Colorado	Robert Kidd	3917
Connecticut	Charles Watkins	9452
Delaware	Gary Frederick	2863
Dist. of Col.	Troy Gatling	341
Europe	Billy Barber	10436
Florida	Paul Considine	7674
Florida	Leland Fair	3270
Florida	Katrina Smailis	5968
Georgia	Richard Knight	9143
Hawaii	George Kelly	3830
Idaho	Daniel Johnson	63
Idaho	Rick Johnson	4902
Indiana	Daniel Fuller	2953
Iowa	Dennis Abel	1797
Kansas	Robert Greene	7397
Kansas	Herbert Schwartzkopf	7972
Kentucky	Paul Worthington	1168
Louisiana	Elvin Bass	3337
Maine	David Olson	6859
Maryland	D. Cunningham	8185
Massachusetts	Thomas Canada	1012
Massachusetts	Edgar Docherty	1526
Massachusetts	William Madera	1702
Massachusetts	Dana McQuaid	2017
Massachusetts	Ronald Patalano	529
Massachusetts	Paul Spera	144
Michigan	Matthew David	423
Minnesota	David Adams	1782
Minnesota	John Shalloe	8510
Missouri	Jimmy Cook	30
Missouri	Lawrence Maher	7356
Nevada	Rickie Isom	2313
New Hampshire	David Ouellette	10722
New Jersey	Patrick Botbyl	1593
New Jersey	Thomas Farrell	3020
New Jersey	Miguel Savala	1270

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New York	Bernard Thompson	1896
New York	Joel Vanik	2721
North Carolina	Kenneth Sellers	1920
North Dakota	Thomas Bernotas	4324
Ohio	Clifford Bauer	3360
Ohio	Tommie Leininger	5713
Oklahoma	Ron Gimondo	1719
Oregon	H. Merle Jackson	4108
Oregon	Kenneth McEntire	3965
Oregon	Juan Palacios	10626
Oregon	Danny Stanks	3965
Pacific Areas	Richard Keeley	9612
Pennsylvania	Dennis Bicking	6495
Pennsylvania	John Getz	3376
Pennsylvania	Allen Jones	21
Pennsylvania	Larry Wade	7377
Rhode Island	Roger Lavoie	5392
Rhode Island	Vincent Scirocco	11519
South Carolina	John Mellert	3433
South Dakota	Michael Mullen	2730
Tennessee	Edward Southern	4862
Tennessee	Terry Thomas	1289
Texas	Keith Foley	12058
Texas	Thomas Glover	2451
Texas	John Lozanski	5076
Texas	James Towers	8200
Texas	Jose Vargas	9173
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Vermont	Reginald Johnson	758
Virginia	Thomas Gimble	1503
Virginia	John McNeill	5412
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Department	Name	Post No.
Alaska	Daniel Garcia	1685
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Arizona	Gregory Kozakiewicz	9907
Arkansas	Patrick Flenniken	2881
Arkansas	Ruben Tamariz	2278
California	Joseph DeShields	9934
California	Dean Lee	8358
California	Elden Monday	85
California	Dale Smith	3783
California	Jack Turner	1512
Colorado	Donald Smith	9669
Colorado	David Stone	3917
Colorado	G. A. Wolusky	7829
Connecticut	Charles Doyle	189
Delaware	Mark Newman	3238
Dist. of Col.	Curtis Brisbon	2979
Dist. of Col.	Jay Cabacar	5471
Europe	George Gilgore	10614
Florida	Mark Alvarez	3308
Florida	Ernest Sandman	2500
Florida	Michael White	3559
Georgia	Michael O`Steen	5976
Georgia	David Pipes	658
Hawaii	Joseph Bragg	2875
Hawaii	Frank Lamson	970
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Idaho	Robert Jones	3012
Illinois	Vincent Long	1756
Illinois	Philip Maughan	3873
Illinois	William Wolff	7539
Indiana	Eric Billman	6904
Indiana	Richard Shirley	1563
Indiana	William Weberding	3183
Iowa	Darrell Blasberg	2208
Kansas	Darrell Bencken	2981
Kansas	David Cuba	6654
Kansas	Ellery Farr	1650
Kansas	Robert Greene	7397
Kansas	Stephen Van Buskirk	7397
Kentucky	Garry Smethers	1084
Louisiana	Mitchell Cota	6706
Maine	Alfred Michaud	1285
Maine	Arthur Roy	1603
Maryland	Paul Kauffman	10078
Maryland	David Oswald	9862
Massachusetts	Theodore Eaton	2104
Massachusetts	Larry Johnson	8074
Massachusetts	Robert Wessa	697
Michigan	Douglas Masseur	701

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Minnesota	Patrick Bohmer	246
Minnesota	Donald Nix	5518
Mississippi	Wayne Aldridge	10567
Mississippi	Charles Singleterry	3036
Missouri	Christopher Bell	30
Missouri	Charles Dickinson	3135
Missouri	Lawrence Maher	7356
Missouri	David Morgan	5331
Missouri	Robert Wonnell	1894
Montana	Jack Hawley	1087
Nebraska	Sammy DeJohn	8334
Nebraska	John Iossi	3704
Nevada	Stephen Gibbs	10047
Nevada	Kenneth Hesketh	2313
New Hampshire	Frederick Harvey	1772
New Jersey	Ernest Cuff	1795
New Jersey	Duane Sarmiento	5579
New Mexico	Gerald Grace	12071
New Mexico	Richard Nutt	7686
New York	Donald Mackey	5088
New York	Michael Spellman	7393
North Carolina	Michael Edwards	2417
North Dakota	Wayne Paulson	753
Ohio	Christopher Haynes	7670
Ohio	Samuel Hixson	6772
Ohio	Charles Smith	4510
Ohio	Clayton Uzell	7536
Oklahoma	Mark Richardson	4876
Oklahoma	Gordon Wheeler	9969
Oregon	Ronald Jagodnik	3973
Oregon	Bert Logan	584
Pacific Areas	William Bradford	2917
Pacific Areas	Ronald Teets	2485
Pennsylvania	Peter Hook	6393
Pennsylvania	Benjamin Mastridge	6495
Pennsylvania	Frank Mills	1754
Rhode Island	Salvatore Capirchio	2396
Rhode Island	Leo Swider	2929
South Carolina	Harry Bishop	3034
South Carolina	Lyn Dimery	10420
South Carolina	Frank Fogner	10804
South Dakota	William Barlow	3442
South Dakota	Marvin Czerwonka	1273
Tennessee	Hubert Parish	4939
Tennessee	Michael Rhew	684
Texas	Roy Grona	3377
Texas	Phyllis Metcalf	9191
Utah	Michael Baker	1481
Utah	Dennis Howland	1481
Vermont	Gary Villa	792

Department	Name	Post No.
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Virginia	Craig Dudley	4809
Virginia	John Mc Neill	5412
Virginia	Earle Weekley	8644
Washington	William Broadwater	3386
Washington	Darrell Small	7392
Washington	Richard Whipple	2886
West Virginia	Robert Caruthers	9926
Wisconsin	Gerald Parchem	987
Wisconsin	Bruce Sorensen	7534
Wisconsin	Frank Wilke	6377
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Wyoming	Earl Sellers	4343
Wyoming	Charles Sutter	4797

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California	Alexander Brown	1512
California	Lawrence Connolly	2542
California	Arthur Harris	5179
California	Larry Stroud	2266
Colorado	Warren Tellgren	9644
Connecticut	Neil Hunt	296
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Dist. of Col.	Robert Hines	341
Europe	Richard Kennedy	27
Florida	James Carlisle	10097
Florida	Allen Hall	7909

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Florida	Glen Tilley	2391
Georgia	Al Lipphardt	12002
Georgia	Dean Smith	5290
Hawaii	Joseph Davis	3391
Hawaii	Roland Lum	2875
Hawaii	Nicholas Young	1540
Idaho	Dale Smith	3646
Illinois	John Burke	5788
Illinois	George Cramer	3873
Illinois	Russell Rieke	5694
Illinois	Jules Spindler	4549
Indiana	Harley Andrews	6606
Indiana	Jerry Blake	1114
Iowa	Larry Larson	839
Kansas	Roger Cawley	112
Kentucky	Randall McComas	6423
Kentucky	John Ranson	6095
Latin Amer/Carib	Edward Olds	3835
Louisiana	Thomas Kijak	5951
Louisiana	Kenneth Koval	5951
Maine	Peter Miesburger	9389
Maryland	Thomas Williams	9862
Massachusetts	Antone Andrews	697
Massachusetts	Leo Gatti	608
Massachusetts	Alvin Smart	2547
Michigan	Larry Coleman	1888
Michigan	Ernest Meyers	2406
Minnesota	Gary Anderson	6587
Minnesota	John Staum	9625
Minnesota	Steven Van Bergen	1296
Mississippi	Samuel Ladner	4808
Missouri	Debra Anderson	7356
Missouri	Nancy Cowan	5327
Montana	Francis Croucher	6786
New Hampshire	Mark McCabe	10722
New Jersey	Albert Bucchi	3020
New Jersey	Otto Gollon	7679
New Jersey	Leonard Hennig	1429
New Jersey	Carey Pritchett	6590
New Mexico	Edwardo Rodriquez	3274
New York	Ronald Bush	6433
New York	Melvin Garrett	6396
New York	James Longendyke	1386
New York	Jack Veazy	2246
North Carolina	Stephen Amos	1134
North Carolina	Billy Cameron	5631
North Carolina	Douglas Seay	5202
North Dakota	Charles Weible	7564
Ohio	Michael Hughes	3035
Ohio	Raymond Ornelas	3538

Department	Name	Post No.
Oklahoma	Robert Clark	4876
Oregon	John Stanks	3965
Pacific Areas	Laurence Lyons	10216
Pennsylvania	John Biedrzycki	418
Pennsylvania	Dominic DeFranco	764
Pennsylvania	James Miller	12019
Rhode Island	Frank Lightowler	6342
South Dakota	Russel Dramstad	1776
Tennessee	James Inman	5266
Tennessee	Jerry McKeehan	5156
Texas	James Hoffman	8587
Texas	Thomas Howard	3359
Texas	Arthur Richards	4010
Utah	Phillip Dunne	2628
Vermont	Burton Cross	758
Virginia	Joseph Longstreet	3219
Washington	Rex Cook	969
Wisconsin	William Backes	8320
Wisconsin	Edward Stockel	6498

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Gary L. Kurpius, Past Commander-in-Chief, Alaska

Vice Chairman: James R. Mueller, Past Commander-in-Chief, Missouri

(Room 201, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center)

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Vice Chairman: Dan Crocker, Michigan

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Vice Chairman: Dennis Flynn, Missouri

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Chairman: Bill Dozier, Maryland

Vice Chairman: Lee Kichen, Florida

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Alabama	Lawrence Sepanski	4190
Alaska	Scott Griffith	9785

Department	Name	Post No.
Alaska	Joseph Simms	10252
Arizona	Vincent Reagan	1677
Arkansas	Fred Steube	9095
California	Joseph Guest	2805
California	Howard Hagen	2967
California	James Rosa	1622
California	Justin Tripp	3787
Colorado	Rebecca Forbes	41
Colorado	James Mauck	2601
Connecticut	Richard DiFederico	7330
Delaware	James Withrow	6483
Dist. of Col.	William Bradshaw	284
Dist. of Col.	Clifford Fields	2979
Europe	Lance Howard	10557
Europe	Dale Nagan	10708
Florida	William Hanson	5968
Florida	Robert Poucher	8083
Florida	Sherrill Shaw	10733
Florida	Kenneth Thie	10094
Georgia	William Sandberg	3679
Georgia	Joel Willis	5290
Hawaii	Frederic Chang	10276
Hawaii	Norbert Enos	2875
Idaho	Robert Jackson	2136
Idaho	Tom Ressler	63
Illinois	Robert Migalich	4763
Illinois	Kenneth Seay	9759
Indiana	Lawrence Blankman	717
Indiana	Richard Faulk	2839
Indiana	Beverly McLaughlin	6978
Iowa	Quinten Christensen	941
Iowa	Howard Ransford	775
Kansas	Larry Rowilson	2981
Kentucky	Alvey Gregory	3167
Kentucky	Gerald Kayrouz	1170
Louisiana	Michael Richardson	1962
Maine	Arnold Leavitt	1603
Maryland	William Dozier	9619
Maryland	Raymond Kelley	160
Maryland	Jack Lewis	194
Maryland	Mary Walters	10077
Massachusetts	Charles Brunaccini	1012
Massachusetts	Walter Gansenberg	834
Massachusetts	Donald Lafond	7239
Massachusetts	John Martin	5737
Massachusetts	Joseph Stavolta	7423
Massachusetts	James Williams	8164
Michigan	Daniel Crocker	796
Michigan	Elmer Liimatta	6507
Michigan	Leonard Milewski	1136
Michigan	Jerry Smith	7581

Department	Name	Post No.
Minnesota	Thomas Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Louie Mrozek	6316
Minnesota	James Tuorila	428
Mississippi	Raybon Windham	9122
Missouri	Terry Clay	4207
Missouri	Dennis Flynn	2866
Missouri	Thomas Mundell	3944
Montana	Robert Schweigel	6786
Nebraska	Bernard Brosnihan	10727
Nebraska	James Pierce	5547
Nevada	John Friscia	10047
Nevada	John Stroud	2313
New Hampshire	Jorg Dreusicke	10722
New Hampshire	Frank O'Neil	1772
New Jersey	Lawrence Berman	133
New Jersey	Bernard McElwee	10184
New Jersey	Daniel Viveiros	2174
New Mexico	Joe Ford	401
New Mexico	Fred Ortiz	5890
New York	Marcello Rotunda	53
New York	Thomas Todaro	53
North Carolina	Roy Meares	10400
North Carolina	Roland Rochester	6018
North Carolina	Cleophus Summers	1134
North Dakota	Steven Frojen	9049
North Dakota	Dale Ronning	7564
Ohio	Charles Adams	892
Ohio	Francis Clendenen	9473
Ohio	Ronnie Davis	5108
Ohio	Roger Taylor	2873
Ohio	John Wasyluk	2529
Oklahoma	Curtis Bohlman	1335
Oklahoma	Timothy Turman	3085
Oregon	Dennis Guthrie	4108
Oregon	Norman Henshen	7384
Oregon	James Willis	584
Oregon	Jackie Zule	5233
Pacific Areas	Patrick Higgins	10216
Pacific Areas	Robert Zaher	2485
Pennsylvania	Thomas Brown	928
Pennsylvania	John Foster	7213
Pennsylvania	Franklin Lopes	92
Pennsylvania	William Mayer	8896
Rhode Island	Armondo Azzinaro	8955
Rhode Island	Ernest Frappier	6342
Rhode Island	Ryan Gallucci	152
Rhode Island	Allen Wagonblott	5392
South Carolina	Paul Slater	10804
South Carolina	Jimmy Wallace	11079
South Dakota	William Cerny	9950
South Dakota	Donald Dahlin	2975

Department	Name	Post No.
Tennessee	William Crawford	2120
Tennessee	John Scott	4848
Tennessee	Donald Smith	2120
Texas	Sandra Covin	6008
Texas	Harry Munn	6008
Texas	Ralph Rodriguez	6873
Utah	Mark Lamb	1481
Vermont	Curtis Brown	758
Vermont	Stephen Leach	6471
Virginia	Nelson Betancourt	3150
Virginia	Gerald Manar	609
Virginia	Richard Raskin	7589
Virginia	J. Gary Wagner	3150
Washington	Court Fraley	2886
Washington	Thomas Leonard	2886
West Virginia	Clifford Gwinn	3466
West Virginia	Charles Haney	7048
Wisconsin	Earl Banks	2708
Wisconsin	David Goeldner	12100
Wisconsin	Allen Kochenderfer	10406
Wisconsin	Thomas Lemmer	6377
Wyoming	Donald Heckert	3511
Wyoming	John Lavery	11453
Wyoming	Gary Mathisen	2221

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Chairman: Bertha Gripp, Post 10008, Arizona

COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: Thomas A. Pouliot, Past Commander-in-Chief, Montana

Vice Chairman: Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

Department	Name	Post No.
Missouri	Kevin C. Jones	7356
Michigan	David E. Prohaska	4434

