

PROCEEDINGS
of the
111TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES

(SUMMARY OF MINUTES)

Indianapolis, Indiana
August 21-26, 2010



VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

June 9, 2011.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES,
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
May, 2011

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 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 21-26, 2010, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen 'Gunner' Kent". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

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. Hansen Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1962-1963	Byron B. Gentry* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1963-1964	Joseph J. Lombardo* Elected at Seattle, Washington.
1964-1965	John A. Jenkins* Elected at Cleveland, Ohio.
1965-1966	Andy Borg* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1966-1967	Leslie M. Fry* Elected at New York, New York.
1967-1968	Joseph A. Scerra* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1968-1969	Richard W. Homan* Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1969-1970	Raymond A. Gallagher* Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1970-1971	Herbert R. Rainwater* Elected at Miami Beach, Florida.
1971-1972	Joseph L. Vicites* Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1972-1973	Patrick E. Carr* Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1973-1974	Ray R. Soden Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1974-1975	John J. Stang Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1975-1976	Thomas C. Walker* Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1976-1977	R. D. Smith Jr. Elected at New York, New York.
1977-1978	Dr. John Wasyluk Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1978-1979	Eric Sandstrom* Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1979-1980	Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1980-1981	T. C. Selman* Elected at Chicago, Illinois.

1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock Succeeded T.C. Selman, Oct. 21, 1980.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock Elected at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1982-1983	James R. Currieo Elected at Los Angeles, California.
1983-1984	Clifford G. Olson Jr. Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1984-1985	Billy Ray Cameron Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1985-1986	John S. Staum Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1986-1987	Norman G. Staab Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1987-1988	Earl L. Stock* Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1988-1989	Larry W. Rivers Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1989-1990	Walter G. Hogan Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1990-1991	James L. Kimery* Elected at Baltimore, Maryland.
1991-1992	Robert E. Wallace Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1992-1993	John M. Carney Elected at Indianapolis, Indiana.
1993-1994	George R. Cramer Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1994-1995	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent Elected at Las Vegas, Nevada.
1995-1996	Paul A. Spera Elected at Phoenix, Arizona.
1996-1997	James E. Nier Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
1997-1998	John E. Moon Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.
1998-1999	Thomas A. Pouliot Elected at San Antonio, Texas.
1999-2000	John W. Smart Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
2000-2001	John F. Gwizdak Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
2001-2002	James N. Goldsmith* Elected at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
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, 2009-2010

Commander-in-Chief	Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Richard L. Eubank
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief	Richard L. DeNoyer
Adjutant General	Allen F. "Gunner" Kent
Quartermaster General	Lawrence M. Maher
Judge Advocate General	Vito S. DeMarco

Surgeon General.....	Dennis G. Guthrie
National Chaplain	Reverend Valentin R. Obregon
National Chief of Staff	Earl D. Banks, Jr.
Inspector General	Rick W. Barg
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 & National Legislative Service	Eric A. Hilleman
Director, Administrative Operations.....	Kevin C. Jones
Director, Communications & Public Affairs, Kansas City.....	Jerry L. Newberry
Director, Communications & Public Affairs, Washington	Joseph E. Davis
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	Daniel M. Shea
VFW Political Action Committee, Director	Salvatore J. Capirchio

Regional National Council of Administration Members, 2009-2010

District No. 1	(ME NH).....	Eugene A. Pawlik
District No. 2	(MA VT).....	John A. Martin
District No. 3	(MD NJ).....	James L. Youngblood
District No. 4	(DC DE EU)	Richard F. Kennedy
District No. 5	(IN MO).....	Paul E. Connors
District No. 6	(VA WV)	Melvin L. Reed
District No. 7	(KY TN).....	John H. Ranson
District No. 8	(AL GA)	John W. Hancock
District No. 9	(NC SC)	Roy C. Meares
District No.10	(AR OK).....	A. M. Armstrong
District No.11	(IA WI).....	Larry J. Larson
District No.12	(ND WY)	Wayne L. Paulson
District No.13	(CO KS)	Charley L. Shoemaker
District No.14	(ID MT WA).....	Raymond M. Lutz

District No.15	(AZ NM).....	Vincent B. J. Lawrence
District No.16	(AK HI LAT PAC).....	Preston (Nick) Nelson
District No.17	(NV OR UT)	Michael H. Musgrove
District No.18	(CT RI).....	Leo R. Swider
District No.19	(LA MS)	Thomas J. Kijak
District No.21	(MN NE).....	Steven P. Van Bergen
District No.23	(MI SD).....	William A. Dobbie
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District B	(IL).....	Donald R. Smithenry
District C	(NY).....	Bernard L. Thompson
District D	(OH).....	William K. Seagraves
District G	(CA).....	John P. Wolfe
District H	(TX)	A. R. (Russ) Richards
District J	(FL).....	Robert Shepherd
Past Commander-in-Chief		Glen M. Gardner, Jr.

National Honor Guard

Ronald E. Servary, Captain.....	521 MD
Alfred Nathaniel 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 15-20, 2009, Phoenix, Arizona

Convention Committee Chairman	James R. Currieo
Operations Officer.....	Raymond K. Thomas
Health Fair Chairman	Robert Rankin
Meeting Halls, Signs & Flags Co-Chairman.....	Lewie Cooper
Meeting Halls, Signs & Flags Co-Chairman.....	William Silvia
Assistant Adjutant General Administration Operations.....	John McNeill
Manager, Meetings & Events.....	Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM
Memorial Service Chairman	John Halstead
Patriotic Rally Chairman	Dennis Dole
Registration Chairman	Bertha Gripp
Transportation Chairman	Christopher Kozakiewicz
Military/Contests Chairman	Shorty Larson

National Sergeant-at-Arms

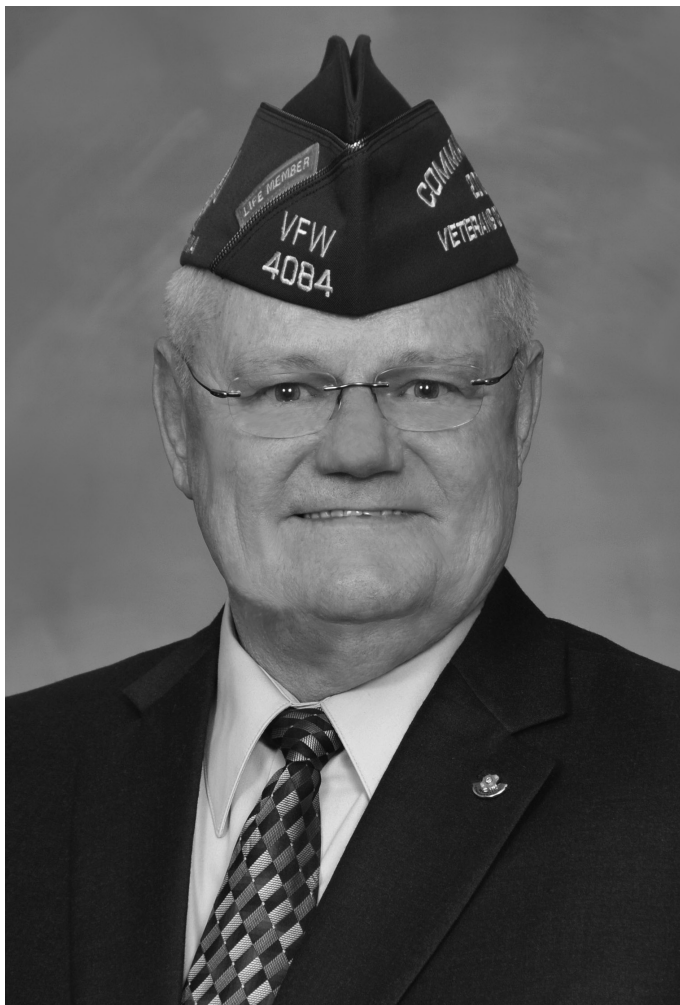
	POST
Bryan P. O'Brien.....	2394 MA

National Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms

Gary W. Barringer.....	9134 NC
Joy Ausman	10043 ID
James M. Galen	6802 MI
Keith J. MacDonald	2275 CA
Joseph P. Schirmers.....	4847 MN
L. Edward Villiaume, III.....	6827 FL
Lonnie Garza.....	7110 TX



Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr.
Commander-in-Chief
2009-2010



Richard L. Eubank
Commander-in-Chief
2010-2011

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
District No.15	(AZ NM)	Vincent B. J. Lawrence
District No.16	(AK HI LAT PAC)	George F. Barlett
District No.17	(NV OR UT)	Michael H. Musgrove
District No.18	(CT RI)	Stanley W. Borusiewicz, Jr.
District No.19	(LA MS)	Thomas J. Kijak
District No.21	(MN NE)	Steven P. Van Bergen
District No.23	(MI SD)	William A. Dobbie
District A	(PA)	Albert S. Thomas, Jr.
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 Servary, Captain	521 MD
Alfred Simmons, Adjutant Quartermaster	8509 MD
Eugene Daisey	5118 MD
Barbara Floyd	521 MD
Raymond Glock	1858 MD
Gary Lee	609 VA
Charles McConville	521 MD
Michael McGuire	8849 MD
Phillip Medlin	2678 MD
Stephen Olcott	9619 MD
Henry Servary	521 MD
Clinton Slack	475 DE
Richard Udoff	521 MD
James Youngblood	9083 MD

National Convention Committee
August 21-26, 2010, Indianapolis, Indiana

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SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 110th NATIONAL
CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN
WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, AUGUST 22-26, 2010

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE
SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 2010

(The Memorial Service of the 111th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held at the Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana, was called to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., presiding. The Gold Star Parents, Gold Star Wives and Past National Chaplains were escorted by the Sergeants-at-Arms.)

CALL TO ORDER

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

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BRYAN O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. National Sergeant of the Color Guard, advance, post and salute the flag of the United States of America.

ADVANCE OF COLORS

(Whereupon, the VFW National Honor Guard Advanced the Colors followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the National Anthem sung by Juanita Bohlman, National Soloist, Ladies Auxiliary.)

INVOCATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Please remain standing for the Invocation by Major Douglas Hedrick.

MAJOR HEDRICK: Good morning. I feel like I should be looking this way as opposed to this way. It is good to have you all here this morning. If you would, please, bow your heads with me.

Almighty Father, maker of heaven and earth, we remember today the brave men and women who have advanced the call and served this great nation in time of war.

We are grateful for the willingness to offer their very lives so that our nation might dwell in peace and safety. May the memories of what they have done always find the honor and recognition they truly deserve.

Heal those who are suffering from the wounds of war, comfort those mourning the loss of their comrades, and bring peace to those who are struggling for answers.

Your word says, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay his life down for his friends."

These patriots, our friends, we gather today to honor them for the service to this nation and pledge to continue their mission of spreading hope and freedom around the world. Amen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Commander-in-Chief, the opening ceremonies for this memorial service have been completed and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

IN MEMORIAM OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF
JAMES GOLDSMITH AND RICHARD HOMAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Two of VFW's great Commanders-in-Chief have passed away this past administrative year. James N. Goldsmith, on October 3rd, 2009, and Richard W. Homan on June 21, 2010.

The family of Chief Goldsmith is here represented by his sister, Barbara Appleby, and the family of Chief Homan is represented by his wife, Jeanne Ann Homan, his daughters, Mary Homan, Amy Homan Depoy and two granddaughters, Hannah and Evelyn.

The Garfield Park United Church of Christ Choir will sing "God of our Fathers."

(Whereupon, the Garfield Park United Church of Christ Choir then sang "God of our Fathers.")

MEMORIAL RITUAL

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

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

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

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN VALENTIN OBREGON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am at your service. I will endeavor to perform this solemn duty in the spirit of faith, hope and charity. We will now have the lighting of the POW/MIA Candle and the Armed Forces Vigil Candle by the Commander-in-Chief and the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary.

(Whereupon, the candles are lit at this time.)

Please uncover and 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 loved ones. Supply their needs and protect them from wants and deprivation. Strengthen and sustain them that they may face discouragement with courage and hardship with resolution.

Grant that they might find patience to endure and the peace and knowledge of your continuing presence.

O, God, we ask that you will strengthen and protect all of 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 and to their homeland inspire them in moments of challenge, and comfort them in tribulation and long

separations from 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 shall the true soldier look for help in the battles of life?

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

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: 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 EUBANK: "For we are strangers before Thee and sojourners as were all of our fathers; our days on earth are as shadows, and there is none abiding."

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

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RICHARD DeNOYER: I have. The Book of Life tells us that, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame and he remembereth that we are dust."

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

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LEANNE LEMLEY: 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 says, "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 have everlasting life."

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: 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 believeth when our time comes that we may depart with a good conscience in the comfort of a sincere religion, belief in God and a perfect charity for all mankind.

Let us pray. Father, God, we do thank you for this time. We thank you for the blessings of the day and for our nation. So, let us live, and, Father, when we join you you will say, "Well done, Thou good and faithful servant."

This I ask in your holy and precious name. Amen.

Helen Fross, State Soloist, Indiana Ladies Auxiliary, will now sing "Sleep Soldier Boy."

(Whereupon, Helen Fross, State Soloist of the Indiana Ladies Auxiliary, sang "Sleep Soldier Boy" at this time.)

SYMBOLIC TRIBUTE

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Comrades, in commemorating the virtues of our departed heroes who served their country in 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 GLEN GARDNER: These white flowers I place as a token of the purity of affection we have for our departed comrades.

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

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

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

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT JAN TITTLE: 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 OBREGON: Juanita Bohlman will now sing "The New 23rd."

(Whereupon, Ladies Auxiliary National Soloist Juanita Bohlman sang "The New 23rd.")

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Lieutenant Colonel Eric Ebb began his military career as a paratrooper in the 2nd Airborne Division in 1977. Following active duty, he went to Officers Candidate School and became an armor officer. He served in that capacity, rising to the rank of Major, until 1993, when he went to the seminary to become a chaplain.

In 1997, he joined the Indiana Army National Guard as a Chaplain and served in many units to include infantry, aviation and artillery. In 2004, he deployed to Bosnia as a part of the stabilization forces.

In 2005, he deployed to Afghanistan. In 2006, he returned to Afghanistan. Following his overseas deployments, Chaplain Ebb became a full-time chaplain at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center where he currently serves.

Chaplain Ebb's varied background from enlisted to officer, line officer and chaplain, give him a broad understanding of the needs of our men and women who serve in today's armed forces.

He is an ordained Lutheran minister and currently resides in Greenwood, Indiana.

Chaplain and Lieutenant Colonel Eric L. Ebb.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL EBB: And for our National Commander's benefit, I would also like to say I used to be a cheese-head. Good old Wisconsin, yes.

I have been watching it from afar, but that has nothing to do with this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen, commanders, fellow comrades, and everyone here that has an interest in the well-being of not just our men and women in uniform, but the families who also deployed with them: that is a concept we don't think of.

The families are also on the front lines. They may be back at home but they are also experiencing the pains of loss and anticipation and grief as

well.

Thirty-three years ago, in 1977, I was with my family taking my sister back to college in Kansas, and on the way back home we stopped in Kansas City and we stayed at a hotel downtown. I remember looking out the window and I saw a large group of what I figured were veterans at a convention hall across the street. I asked the hotel butler what was going on, and he said this was a World War I veterans convention.

Now, at that time I was a teenager and I thought, okay, World War I veterans. I got to thinking. I wonder how long it is going to be before there is only one left. I think that date has already passed.

The day for World War II veterans may be coming very soon, and Vietnam. This year we are recognizing the 60th anniversary of the start of hostilities in Korea. Our Korean veterans are being recognized in our veterans' magazines this year. I wonder how long it will be before there is only one of them left.

When I was 17, it didn't seem like a long time away, but here it is from hindsight. One thing has troubled me about the Korean War. It is called the "forgotten war." You have heard that. How does it make you Korean veterans feel? Are you the forgotten veterans? Is it the forgotten war?

Well, it really comes home to me when I deployed to Afghanistan in 2005. I would come home and people would say, "Hey, how was it in Iraq?" "I was in Afghanistan." "Oh, yeah, that place, too."

We called ourselves the forgotten war. We forget things in this public, and now I fear the Iraq conflict may become the forgotten war, because, finally, Afghanistan is in the news. It wasn't when I was there. When I speak at schools and church groups, which I love to do, I ask the people, here we are in Indiana, and I say, "What major international event took place in 1995?" That was 15 years ago, folks. Does anyone remember the big news in 1995?

I will give you a hint. It happened just 130 miles due east of here in a town called Dayton. Do you still remember what it was? All the media was all over it.

Have you ever heard of the Dayton Peace Accord at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base? What happened, then President Clinton brought together the heads of Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, to put an end to the worst holocaust that had happened on European soils since World War II. Have we forgotten that?

I went to Bosnia in 2004, and I loved that deployment. It is a beautiful country and beautiful people. I come home and people think Bosnia, what is that?

Folks, I fear that we as a country too quickly forget the sacrifices of our brave men and women. We don't forget those times, we don't forget those memories.

I spent two tours in Afghanistan. By the way, I just want to say from my heart I enjoyed all of my deployments and we are doing great things over there. Do you hear that in the media?

Our men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are building schools, they are building roads, they are bringing help to these people. Should we give those veterans a hand right now? (Applause)

Just once I would like to see a news report of the schools we are building and the orphanages we are helping. But, no, it is always that one bad example out there. We forget these great things we have done. Lest not

forget, what about the sailors that are on six-month flotillas; what about the air force crews that are flying missions in the skies above; marines and special ops in the Philippines, the Horn of Africa?

And guess what, we are still in the Sinai twenty years later on the multinational observer force. Let's not forget those people. They are deployed, too.

I am a Chaplain in the United States Army. We have three tenets in the chaplaincy. We are to, one, honor the dead. Two, care for the wounded. And, three, nurture the living.

Our veterans' organizations do a wonderful job of honoring the fallen as we just saw this morning at this memorial. We are working together with the Veterans Administration to care for the wounded. Yes, it is a tough job; yes, there are difficulties, but they are brave men and women caring for our veterans in these domiciliaries and hospitals across the country. We are caring for the wounded.

Now, how are we nurturing the living? I want to talk about that a minute. I am at Camp Atterbury; it is just 30 miles down the road. Most people say where is Camp Atterbury? It is kind of that little sleepy-eye base that was tucked away, but in 2003 we became on the forefront because that became a major mobilization site for guard and reserve soldiers for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Since that time we have processed over 50,000 soldiers. We are now training sailors, airmen, marines, coast guard, homeland security, and just this year we have picked up a new mission of training the civilian expeditionary workforce.

Folks, it is a busy place down there. I have a staff, and we work closely processing people. I see these soldiers on a day-to-day basis, and let me tell you some things that you probably have not heard in the media.

Right now the big buzz word is suicide and PTSD. That is all we care about. Well, I have not thought about killing myself. The majority of the soldiers that are coming back are fine. But here is a statistic I recently learned at a conference that surprised me. Do you know that over 50 percent of the suicides are from soldiers, airmen and marines that have not deployed? Do you know that the more deployments you are on, the lower that statistic goes? That surprised me. I thought it would be the other way around.

Let me tell you what the number one reason that is causing all these stressors in the soldiers' lives. It is relationships. They come home, marriages are falling apart. I have heard stories of locks being changed on the doors. Soldiers are going home expecting a welcome home and they have divorce papers waiting for them. The economy is in the tank. I tell them when they come back you may not have a job when you come back.

That is putting a great stress on our men and women as they come back. We only get them for a few days at Camp Atterbury, and we try to help them as best we can.

You know, when I do a briefing every morning for those soldiers before they go home, I tell them this: "You have the best resource, and it is in every town, in every state in this country. Do you know what that is? It is a VFW Post and American Legion Post.

"They are in every town across the country. Go there. You will get a free beer and they will tell you a story" and, by the way, I tell them you will get a free beer when they just come back, so please, folks, don't make me look

like I am lying. Find a beer for them when they come in. Please do that. Go there.

I tell them, "If you have questions about your veterans' benefits, they have a Veterans Service Officer that will help you. Go talk to them."

I am pushing the story for us. But here is where I feel that we have a disconnect and a bridge that certainly needs to be built. They are coming back by the thousands. They are going back to our communities, and many of their issues are remaining buried in their hearts. There are memories and they are not talking to anybody.

In our VFW clubs, I have sat there and listened to the members saying, "We are here. Why don't they come in and talk to us?" There is a gap.

How do we bring those men and women into the VFW clubs where they can get that help? They want to speak to people in a safe environment. You provide that. You know what they are going through. You have been there, or as we say, you have got the T-shirt. They may want to have a drink with you. You have got that.

But why are they not coming in to the clubs nowadays? That is where our challenge is before us. How are we going to further your living? Nothing will be a quick, vast answer, but I will say this: The paradigm has shifted from each war, from each generation.

The young men and women who are coming back do need you. They need us. They want the help, but their comfort zone is different from the Vietnam era, the Korean era, the World War II era. They want to come in, but they won't.

I will tell you what we should not be doing. We shouldn't sit in our clubs in our meetings wringing our hands and saying they need to come in here because, you know what, they are not coming in here. Some are, I am one. How do we get them? They need your help.

Folks, we have to find ways to think outside of the box. How are we as a club going to be relevant to these men and women? What are their needs? What are their fears, their dreams and desires? What is going to bring them in?

I am working with my club. Yes, I am going to make a plug for Greenwood, Indiana. We are thinking about creating a room that reflects what we had overseas, the MW War, the USO room, and sit around on couches watching a big TV. You have WiFi Internet, working on the computers. You have got to start thinking about what these young men and women are used to and bring them in with that.

We have got to change the way we are thinking. I am pleading with you, folks. Here are few examples of what I have seen. When the soldier comes back, I have one of the best jobs, let me say. The plane comes back to the Indianapolis airport, parks at the international site at 2:00 o'clock in the morning. I am there with a greeting crew and we walk up on to that plane when that door opens, and I am one of the first people to look into that plane. Here is what I see, soldiers' faces, they are tired, they want to get home.

Oh, the funny thing is you see them putting up their cell phones right away calling home as soon as they land. They walk out, we shake their hands. I have seen them get down on their hands and knees and kiss the tarmac.

I have got to tell you about a group of marines I watched. Maybe it is a marine thing. They had this parking area, and the grass in the median. I

watched them walk up, and this is what they did: They dove on to the grass and rolled on it. These people are happy to be home.

The next day they start the processing, and that's where we start to see the issues come up. One soldier got all the way to the end and some young girl checking his records thought there is something wrong here. He didn't have an address to go home to. He was going home to live in a car. She brought him back through. We got him some aid.

Soldiers are coming through, and what do they do when they go back home? Now, when I am speaking to churches, I always look out there and I say, "You want to help them, don't you?" They say, "Yes." What does every church, regardless of the denomination, do extremely well? Does anyone have a clue?

Ladies, what do you think every church does extremely well? Eat, potluck. You know, when they are coming back home it is in the paper. You see when your battalion from this city is coming back home from deployment. So, you know, when they are coming back, it is not a secret. Go out to the armories and reserve centers; go to the bases and say we are going to have a welcome home potluck for you. Come on out and bring your families. Do something. Don't sit and say they should come to us. You go to them. Reach out to them and welcome them back and give them a good plate of food, because they are going to want that.

I am going to close by saying this. I hope we don't forget. We cannot forget the veterans that have gone before, like the World War I vets. I am thrilled to see the Vietnam vets coming back into the fold because, you know, those people were not welcomed back 20 and 30 years ago.

They need our applause, and they need to have someone say thank you. I am glad to see this organization standing up and thanking the Vietnam veterans, 20 years too late, but they are thanking them. Thank God for what they did.

Now, we have the ones coming back now. Nurture the living, be relevant, help them out, and God bless our men and women who have paid the price to go overseas. They have written a blank check that goes all the way up to their life. They say, "Uncle Sam, you have my life." And we can help them. I will leave you with that.

Usually, I have the hardest time saying I am done, because there is so much I want to share with you. I am glad you are there. I am a proud member of the VFW and I am sharing the story with my friends and bringing them in.

I am going to leave you with this challenge, National Commander. I read the national magazine. This time next year I want to read stories in it of what creative things your Posts have done to reach out, to take the initiative to be relevant to this new generation, and bring them in. Will you do that for me? I am not hearing a thing. Will you do that for me? (Applause) Bring them in. Take care of them. God bless you and thank you. We are doing a lot of work at Camp Atterbury and we take your prayers and support. With that, I will say thank you for having me here and God bless you on the rest of your convention. (Applause)

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: The Garfield Park United Church of Christ Choir will now sing "Anthem for Our Unsung Heroes."

(Whereupon, the Garfield Park United Church of Christ Choir sang "Anthem for Our Unsung Heroes" at this time.)

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: At this time, in memory of Past

Commanders-in-Chief James N. Goldsmith and Richard W. Homan, roses will be presented to their families. Our sincere sympathy is extended to family and friends.

Please stand for the benediction by Chaplain Major Douglas W. Hedrick.

BENEDICTION

MAJOR HEDRICK: Let us pray. Lord God, we are grateful for how you have truly blessed this nation, much more than we deserve. The deeds of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, both past and present, are truly forever immortalized in our hearts.

Protect this great nation from those who seek to destroy it, and empower all of us to say no to evil and yes to truth and to justice. Help us to preserve a strong and a free nation for those who come after us.

Your word again says, "Greater love has no one more than this that he laid his life down for his friends."

For all of you here today, I pray that the Lord may bless you, the Lord may keep you. I pray that his face will shine upon you and be gracious to all of you. May the Lord turn his face towards you and grant you peace. Amen.

RETIRING OF COLORS

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

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Captain of the VFW National Honor Guard, advance and retire the flag of the United States of America.

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

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

The National Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the Gold Star Parents, Gold Star Wives, past National Chaplains and honored guests from the room.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the closing of this Memorial Service has been completed and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. This concludes our Memorial Service. Thank you for your attendance and please enjoy your convention.

(Whereupon, the Memorial Service was concluded at 9:45 o'clock a.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 2010

(The Joint Opening Session of the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 97th National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary was called to order on Monday, August 23, 2010, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., in the Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana, by Adjutant General Allen "Gunner" Kent.)

CALL TO ORDER

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Welcome to the joint opening of the 111th VFW National Convention.

During this convention, we encourage all of our Korean War vets who served in the war zone from 1950-'53 to stop by the VFW Emblem and Supply Department booth and enter their names for a chance to spend Veterans Day in the nation's capitol.

We will select four winners, one, plus their spouse or guest from each of the VFW conferences. In addition to airfare and lodging in Washington from November 10-12 on Veterans Day, the winners will be guests at ceremonies at the Arlington National Cemetery and the Korean War Veterans Memorial. They also will be treated to a dinner with the Commander-in-Chief and his wife that evening.

Winners will be announced at the business session on Wednesday morning. All of our Korean War veteran members attending the convention this year will receive special recognition, and we want to make sure all attendees know their status as Korean War veterans.

Their official name badges will include a special recognition ribbon identifying them as such. Attendees will notice signs publicizing their special ribbons, so make sure all Korean War veterans are aware of this.

Please take a moment to acknowledge their service and thank them for their contributions.

We want to extend a warm welcome to all of the service members and families who are in our audience today. We are all honored by your presence. All our military are true winners in the continuing war on terrorism. Please stand and be recognized. (Applause)

Additionally, I am extremely pleased to have the privilege of introducing some very distinguished guests here today. The VA Regional Office Director, Mike Stephens.

VAMC Director, Thomas Mattice.

Mr. Johnny Webb from JPAC and Mr. Steve Thompson from JPAC. Please acknowledge them. (Applause)

Please remember, comrades, sisters and guests that the Vice-President of the United States of America will address this convention at 11:00 o'clock today.

We want to acknowledge our generous sponsors for the 2010 VFW National Convention, as they are identified on the large screen. Special appreciation goes to our primary supporters: Budweiser and Hallmark.

And our key sponsor, Hoosier Park Racing and Casino. The Hoosier

Casino is providing \$10 worth of free gaming chips tonight for VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members. Check the flyer in your registration bag, or stop by the VFW Foundation Booth No. 618 for more information.

Please join me in giving our sponsors a great round of applause. (Applause) With us this morning are representatives from the 2009-2010 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 27 Department Commanders, 53 District Commanders, and 157 Post Commanders to be honored, and those in attendance today will be presented their awards after the Vice-President of the United States speaks this morning.

Comrades, please stand so we can properly thank you for the excellent work you so well performed this past year. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL CONVENTION CHAIRMAN ARTHUR J. FELLWOCK

Now, let me introduce this year's Convention Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Arthur Fellwock of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 1114, Department of Indiana. (Applause)

WELCOME BY NATIONAL CONVENTION CHAIRMAN FELLWOCK

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: I bring you greetings from the Hoosier State and more than six million proud Hoosiers. Welcome to our great state and to its capital city of Indianapolis.

We are extremely proud to host the 111th National Convention. We sincerely hope the time you spend with us will renew your pride in our nation, and this wonderful organization.

Our Conventions are a forum to rededicate your commitment to America's veterans and our military and bring new excitement to your work as a member of the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary.

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.

ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS

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

INVOCATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FELLWOCK: For this morning's Invocation, we have the National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Valentin R. Obregon from the wonderful state of Alabama, and 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 the posting of the Colors.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as we come together for this 111th VFW National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, we are humbled at the blessings you have given to us; our freedoms, our rights, our families, and our great nation.

We acknowledge that with these blessings comes great responsibility. Therefore, we continue to seek your wisdom, guidance and direction as we endeavor to serve our veterans, their dependents and our armed forces.

We ask special blessings for our leaders and staff who have worked diligently this past year preserving the virtues of the VFW and have risen above the challenges to reach their goals.

Over these next few days, we ask for your presence, power and protection as we participate in the activities and programs that have been meticulously planned for us throughout this convention.

Now, let the blessings flow forth and let us rejoice on this day that you have given us. We ask these things in your precious and holy name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Whereupon, National 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.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, the Opening Ceremonies of the 111th National Convention have been performed and your order has been obeyed.

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

(Whereupon, the videotape is played at this time commemorating the year of service by Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell.)

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THOMAS TRADEWELL, PRESENTATION OF OFFICIAL CONVENTION BADGE, BELL AND GAVEL

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

Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on August 20, 2009, at the VFW 110th National Convention, held in Phoenix.

VFW Commander-in-Chief Tradewell served in the U.S. Army from 1966-1968 and earned VFW eligibility while serving with B Company 26th Engineers, 198 Light Infantry Brigade, the Americal Division in South Vietnam as a demolition specialist.

His decorations include the Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Purple Heart and Good Conduct Medal.

Tommy joined the VFW in 1968 at Post 6498 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he is a Gold Legacy Life Member. He has served in elected and appointed positions at the Post, District and Department levels culminating with his election as Department Commander 1999-2000.

He served as National Inspector General in 2001-2002. He also served as the District 11 National Council Representative for members from the

Departments of Wisconsin and Iowa in 2003-2005.

National Commander-in-Chief Tradewell earned an Associate's Degree in Industrial Safety and retired from Briggs and Stratton in 1998 as a Metallurgy Laboratory Technician after 30 years of service.

He is a member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Military Order of the Cootie, the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America and Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association.

Tommy married Sharon in 1966, and they make their home in Sussex, Wisconsin.

Please welcome our Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr. (Applause)

I now present you with your convention badge, bell and the gavel.

REMARKS - COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Chief. This is an honor. Please be seated. I really didn't want to hit the vice-president's podium here with my gavel and destroy it.

I would like to say good morning. Good morning. That is better. Before I get into the heart of my remarks, I want to spend a few moments acknowledging the people who made this special day possible.

To all of my leadership team, and the rest of department and district leaders, you are my brothers in arms.

To my fellow VFW and Auxiliary members, I have reserved a special place in my heart for all of you. I have enjoyed interacting with you throughout my time as a chair officer and as National Commander. And I could never repay the debt of loyalty and support that you extended to me over the past several years.

To all my family and friends who traveled great distances to be here today, words cannot do justice to the depth of my gratitude for you making such a monumental effort just to see me convene over this 111th National Convention.

There are a few more people who I must mention by name: Past Commanders-in-Chief Wally Hogan, the late Jim Goldsmith and "Gunner" Kent. You-all have taught me more about life, leadership, and friendship than any others. Also my good friends, Past Commanders-in-Chief George Lisicki and Glen Gardner. You laid the foundation for me and any success I have had is directly attributable to you.

I am truly blessed to have all of these people as friends and I know we will continue our close relationships well beyond each other's VFW years.

And, of course, most important of all is my family: my wife, Sharon, and my sons, Tom, Jr., and Gary, daughters-in-law Chris and Gail, and my five wonderful grandchildren. (Applause)

My speech would end abruptly if I even tried to explain out what my wife and kids mean to me. In short, you are my world, so we will leave it at that for now and I will move on.

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

VFW members are doubly blessed to be well-served this year by Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent and Quartermaster General Larry Maher. We

are all indeed fortunate to have men of their character and talent also helping on a daily basis in leading the VFW into the future.

I love the VFW. From the day I was sworn in as a member at my Post in Milwaukee, Gross Yaksh Post 6498, the VFW has provided me one opportunity after another to serve my community, our fellow veterans, our magnificent service members and their families, and our nation.

I did learn there's no place quite like a VFW event. And I learned so many things during my years working on the Post and Department levels. I had a great set of teachers and it taught me that the bonds we share will never, by distance, space or time, be diminished.

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.

If there is one thing I have learned over the past year, it is that whatever new challenge, difficulty or circumstance may occur, our members always rise to the occasion with dignity, overwhelming generosity and amazing determination.

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 on behalf of our nation.

I have had the highest privilege of visiting with our troops at home and abroad and met with men and women who are absolutely magnificent and inspiring. I can tell you that in spite of all the hardships they have endured as a result of multiple deployments, their spirit and morale are truly phenomenal. They strongly believe in their mission, with the belief that it's a just and honorable one.

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 all of you 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 months, members have provided assistance to those who needed it most, and certainly those who deserved it most.

This 111th National Convention provides us the opportunity to conduct critical business and pay tribute to some great Americans. During this convention, we will make definitive plans for the future and, of course, the "passing of the colors" at the end of the week that signifies a change in leadership for this magnificent organization and the very important mission we have in helping those who deserve it most.

When you hear so much about what is wrong with our nation, all one has to do is look out on this convention floor and see a visible indication of what is "right" in America.

In just a few days, a new VFW National Commander will take the oath of office and our organization will be a part of, and witness, one of the greatest of democratic traditions of the VFW, the transition of leadership.

I have been working closely with my leadership team and our National Headquarters staff to make this transition because the stakes are clear. We face complex challenges that will not pause for a change in leadership.

This convention, by its significance, is a public demonstration of the continuity of mission and leadership for the VFW, its members and those we serve.

It allows us to pause for a brief retrospective look at this exceptional organization and its stellar accomplishments, and what opportunities and challenges still lie ahead. But even more importantly, to recognize your dedicated service to the world's finest veterans service organization.

We have put in place the tools to succeed in the long road ahead. And I hope we will preserve these tools and use them effectively to inform, educate and advocate.

The VFW 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.

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-Elect the best and every success.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity. Most of all, thank you for your friendship.

Let me finish now where I started: I love the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you and let the convention begin. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO JAN TITTLE, 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.

Jan Tittle is a Life Member of Walter C. Fulda Auxiliary No. 3433 in Ladson, South Carolina.

She has been actively involved in the organization since joining on the eligibility of her father, Arlen Owens, a World War II Purple Heart recipient.

After serving as Auxiliary and District President, in 1993-1994 she was named runner-up Department President of the Year in her membership group.

Nationally, she has served as Publicity Director, Patriotic Instructor and as Chairman for the Southern Conference on the Americanism and Hospital Programs.

She is a Life Member of the VFW National Home for Children, a Charter Member of the Dixie Dogs Pup Tent 11 of the Military Order of the Cooties Auxiliary, and a member of the Highland Park Baptist Church.

Recently retired as office manager for Kia Country of Savannah and Kia

Country of Charleston car dealerships, she hopes to return to her passion for horseback riding when she has more time.

She and her husband, Daniel, have two children and one grandchild.

I am very pleased to now present the VFW Gold Medal of Merit to my exemplary counterpart, National Auxiliary President Jan Tittle. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to Jan Tittle, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, 2009-2010.

"In esteemed recognition and sincere appreciation of her endless dedication and undying patriotism as the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. Her theme "It's Time for America's Military Heroes!," reflects her 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, as well as her remarkable leadership among and to the VFW community, 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 23rd day of August, 2010."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT, JAN TITTLE

NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT TITTLE: Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, 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, and I do 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 with our VFW counterparts. The VFW Ladies Auxiliary set very high goals this year.

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

To my Auxiliary Sisters, you make me so proud.

Comrades and Sisters, we are capable of incredible feats. Our members are some of the very most passionate people in this country. There is an undercurrent of strength and resilience that is unique to our organization. I believe with all my heart that it stems from our understanding how priceless our freedom is.

You either fought for that freedom with your own two hands, or you watched someone you loved dearly fight for it. The sacrifices that come from those are part of who we are as members of the VFW and the Ladies Auxiliary.

The things we can do as an organization, when our numbers combined in unity, are possible and are done for those in uniform.

Can you even imagine what our country would be like if this strength and resilience didn't exist?

My year as President may be nearly over, but my years as a member will continue on in service and gratitude. I don't stop giving of myself because

one goal is reached. I don't lose motivation because my theme grows destined.

Now, more than ever, I am looking to the future, the future of our organization, the future of veterans, the future of our country. We are a part of that future. Every life you touch, every child you teach, every deed you do is a part of this pulsing living thing called patriotism.

All year long I have said that it is time for America's military heroes. Sisters and Comrades, for us every minute of every day can be made into a living memorial to those who gave all, are giving now and will give tomorrow wearing the uniform of our country.

So, as I say thank you for what you have done, I now turn and look ahead that this year's circumstances be the foundation on which we build a new year. Time is short. Don't waste one minute of it. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE MITCH DANIELS, GOVERNOR OF INDIANA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We are very pleased and honored to have Governor Mitch Daniels here with us today. I would like to highlight a few things about the Governor's distinguished career in public service.

Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., was elected as the 49th Governor of the State of Indiana in 2004, in his first bid for any elected office.

Governor Daniels came from a successful career in business and government, holding numerous top management positions in both the private and public sectors. He served as Chief of Staff to Senator Richard Lugar, Senior Advisor to President Ronald Reagan and Director of the Office of Management and Budget under President George W. Bush.

The Governor's first legislative success created the Public-Private Indiana Economic Development Corporation to replace a failing state bureaucracy in the mission of attracting new jobs.

In each of its first four years of existence, the agency broke all previous records for new jobs in the state and was associated with more than \$18 billion of new investment.

In 2008, the Site Selection magazine and CNBC both named Indiana as the most improved state for business in the country, and the state is now near the top of every national ranking of business attractiveness.

In 2005, he led the state to its first balanced budget in eight years and, without a tax increase, transformed the \$600 million deficit he inherited into an annual surplus of \$370 million within a year.

In 2008, Governor Daniels was named "Public Official of the Year" by the Independent magazine governing for his achievements as Governor. He also received the Manhattan Institute's 2008 Innovator Award for his creative public policy initiatives.

Governor Daniels was re-elected in 2008 to a second and final term, receiving more votes than any candidate for any public office in the state's history.

The Governor earned a Bachelor's Degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in 1971, and his Law Degree from Georgetown University in 1979.

Governor Daniels and his wife, Cheri, have four daughters: Meagan, Melissa, Meredith and Maggie.

Allow me to present to you the Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., Governor of the Hoosier State of Indiana. (Applause)

GREETINGS – THE HONORABLE MITCHELL DANIELS

GOVERNOR DANIELS: This job brings the privilege very often of welcoming visitors to our state, and I enjoy it each time it comes along. But today is special. I hope you will come to view it as unique in your experience, too.

You have come this year to a state of patriots. I know the VFW is welcomed wherever it goes, but I promise you there is no place you will ever take this meeting that is more reverent, more appreciative, more mindful of what those who have served us so bravely in uniform mean to the rest of us. I tell you this with full confidence.

In every conflict since Indiana became a state almost 200 years ago, it has been vastly over-represented in the number of people volunteering or otherwise serving in the wars that have been visited upon our nation. There is no place in America, save only Washington, D.C., which has more monuments, more commemorative plates to honor you and people like you than Indianapolis.

Within a short block from here you can visit many, and just to single out one, we put together a decade plus ago the first monument, the memorial honoring the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. It is a place of special emotion for me, and it is just blocks from here, and I urge you to take a moment and go see it while you are with us.

Any citizen who has thought about it, certainly any student of history, needs no reminder of why you are such a special group of Americans, why any place would be so grateful to have you with them. By coincidence, I finished rereading this very morning a book "In Harm's Way" about a special moment in the life of this community about the horrific issues of the USS Indianapolis, the largest naval disaster in American history. Its survivors come here every year in their dwindling numbers to allow us to honor their very, very special sacrifice.

Here in Indiana, we need no such reminders, even though life brings them now still on occasion.

I was thinking about just less than a year ago, the Daniels family waited as millions of other families, daughter number two's fiancé completed his second foreign deployment, brought his company safely back from Baghdad, and they were married in a joyful ceremony, that we were so fortunate to be able to go through with.

Indiana lost another soldier just a few days ago, and we laid to rest Christopher Karch, Sergeant, one year beyond my youngest daughter, at the high school my daughters attended. So, tragically life reminds us all too often who you are, what this organization is, along with its sister organizations and their members, what it means for the rest of us.

But I tell you that in your long history, I know you have been embraced and welcomed in city after city, but I will tell you this:

You will always be welcomed here. There is no place in America that you can go where those who help put these events together, but just a person on the street will be more thankful, more appreciative, more ever mindful of who you are and what you mean than right here in Indiana.

It has been a couple of decades, I discovered since you were here. Don't let that go by again. In between now and the next convention when you honor us with your presence, come here in ones and twos and sub-committees, because in Indiana you will always be welcomed with open arms. We hope we will see you soon and often. Thank you so very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AMERICAN FLAG SET TO GOVERNOR MITCHELL DANIELS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Shirley Houck, the Ladies Auxiliary National Patriotic Instructor, will now present a commemorative flag set to Governor Daniels.

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR HOUCK: This flag, the symbol of the hopes of man; this cloth of dreams for freedom, justice and opportunity. Its stars are like beacons guiding us through the shoals of adversity and its red stripes like looms of struggle. The good in it cannot be had for nothing. Like any garden, it must be tended. Like any loved one, it must be held.

Hold this flag high and keep its promise right for in it lies the best hope for all of us.

I am honored to present to you this flag set on behalf of the more than 540,000 members of Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Applause)

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It is now my privilege to introduce from the Commonwealth of Independent States, the President of the War Veterans Committee, Russian Federation, Retired General Lieutenant Ruslan Aushev.

General Aushev is a combat-wounded veteran who served several tours in Afghanistan as a Commander of a Motorized Rifle Battalion, and as a Regimental Chief of Staff.

For his bravery, the General was awarded the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union.

After the war, he was elected as a people's deputy to the Soviet Parliament, and was a member of the Upper Committee Council of Military Affairs.

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

In September 2004, the General made worldwide news by successfully negotiating the safe release of 26 women and children hostages from Chechen terrorists, in the Russian town of Beslan.

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

Central to our full accounting mission is access to Russia's military archives, where U.S. researchers have been banned since October 2006. Diplomatic notes were passed last month between the United States and

the Russian Federation that we hope will revitalize a Joint Commission that was established to determine the fates of missing American personnel.

We are very grateful to the General and his fellow committee members, plus a representative from their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for joining us here today in Indianapolis. They have helped to overcome barriers to aid our full accounting mission, and for that, the VFW is eternally grateful.

Please welcome the President of the War Veterans Committee, Russian Federation, General Aushev. (Applause)

GREETINGS - GENERAL RUSLAN AUSHEV

GENERAL AUSHEV: Mr. Commander-in-Chief, convention delegates and veterans:

Thank you for your kind welcome here to the convention. I would like to note that we have in my delegation representatives of Russian veterans organizations who have come here at your invitation to help us to discuss the issues before us today. I would like for Monsieur Phillips to read a letter to the convention here from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. It is from the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Moscow, Russia, dated 20 August, 2010.

MR. PHILLIPS: "To participants in the National Conference of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it is my pleasure to greet the participants of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Conference in Indianapolis. We are pleased in the ties between the U.S. and veterans organizations are growing ever stronger and broader.

"This is now the third time that one of the largest veterans organizations in the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Committee for Warrior International Affairs under the Council of Presidents of the member nations of the CIS, led by General Ruslan Aushev is participating in your forum.

"Mutual cooperation between American and Russian veterans is taking place on a practical level. We are seeing an active exchange of experience on issues concerning socioeconomic support for veterans and their adaptation to civilian life.

"One of the priority areas for applying our efforts is the joint search for service personnel from both nations, who were taken prisoner or missing in action in World War II, war on the Korean peninsula, combat action in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, and local conflicts.

"Veterans organizations contribute a great deal to the efforts of the bilateral POW/MIA Commission. We believe that once the Russian co-chair is appointed, the Commission will renew its efforts in full measure to include conducting preliminary sessions.

"In Russia, the memory of Soviet, American and other soldiers from World War II who gave their lives for the sake of securing total victory over fascism is held dear. We greatly value the participation of the U.S. military units in the May 9th parade on Red Square in honor of the 65th anniversary of that victory.

"I wish you success in your work, and to all veterans I wish health, joy and prosperity.

"Best regards. /s/ Andre Denison, First Deputy of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation."

GENERAL AUSHEV: First of all, on behalf of our Committee, allow me to thank Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell and Executive Director

Robert Wallace for the invitation to participate in the 111th convention of your esteemed organization. This is the third time I have been given the honor of addressing your esteemed convention.

I won't hesitate to point out that this is becoming a nice little tradition which indicates an increased level of mutual understanding and cooperation. Our veterans welcome this development in our relationship. They understand it serves to strengthen the veterans movement and help resolve concrete issues.

Over the past few years, our organizations have managed to receive positive results in implementing the joint declaration on cooperation which was signed in 2007 and the ideas addressed at the U.S./Russian Conference on the role of veterans organizations in developing international cooperation.

As I noted last year, the exchange of notes determining the status of a joint U.S./Russian Commission on POWs and MIAs, which took place during President Barack Obama's visit to Moscow in July was an important event. With this, an agreement on the legal status of the Commission, which had been operating since 1992 on the basis of a verbal agreement between the presidents of our two nations was secured by law.

Now, we have made notable progress in joint efforts of the government level. Representatives of the U.S. side may get a more hands-on look at material in the Russian Ministry Defense Central Archive. We have expanded the practice of arranging for firsthand witnesses of long ago combat operations, living in Russia and various other Commonwealth of Nations, to meet with our U.S. colleagues.

An important step toward completing the Commission's work was the visit this past June of a Russian Ministry of Defense delegation. This visit was marked by helpful meetings of the Department of Defense and agreements on strengthening the status of the Commission and appointing a Chairman for the Russian side. This September we are awaiting the arrival in Moscow of a delegation from the U.S. Department of Defense led by Mr. Robert J. Newberry, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Prisoners of War Missing Personnel Affairs, as well as a delegation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, led by your new Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank and Executive Director Bob Wallace.

As indicated in the program, they will meet with veterans organizations as well as visit key government institutions. For my part, it will be my pleasure to meet with these delegations in Moscow. I am confident that these visits will allow us to increase cooperation and help us move forward in improving the accounting efforts in the search for POWs and MIAs.

In turn, we are most troubled by the period of events in Afghanistan involving a limited contention of Soviet forces. Since that time much has been done in searching for MIAs but 270 persons remain on our list and we will continue to search using any possible means.

In connection with that, I would like to emphasize the U.S. President's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mr. Richard Holbrook answered the letter we sent to him in the spring of last year promising that the U.S. would provide whatever assistance it could in obtaining information about former Soviet POWs, whether alive or dead, as well as locations of their graves on the territory of Afghanistan and neighboring states.

Here I must mention that it is specifically thanks to our friendly ties with the U.S. side that this letter reached its intended recipients so quickly and

that work on it was done. In furtherance of this issue, in May of this year, our representatives, during regular search operations in Afghanistan, met with representatives of the U.S. Emissary in Kabul and reached a mutual understanding.

Speaking of contacts with Americans, I must mention that truly enlightening work that is being done on both military and veterans issues in Moscow and other Russian cities by the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. John Beryle. With an excellent command of the Russian language and as the son of a World War II veteran who managed to see combat fighting for both U.S. and Soviet armies, Mr. Beryle is particularly perceptive of the problems faced by veterans and he is an ally for the closest possible cooperation and coordination between our nations' veterans organizations.

Having broached the subjects, I cannot pass up the opportunity to mention members of the office supporting the U.S. side of the Commission, Larry Buserlon and Henry Eastman, as well as their counterparts in Washington, D.C., Norman Cass and Sevon Censhinkle. Thanks to their professionalism and charm, our relationship is, I believe, on the rise.

My dear colleagues, last year was marked by memorable events dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the withdrawal of the limited contingent of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. Among the many questions put to me regarding this anniversary was the following:

How long will we continue to search for missing military members? At the moment, I once again recall the motto of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command with which I agree 100 percent: "Until they are all home."

For us, this is a matter of honor and of conscience, the duty of the combat brotherhood.

Speaking of the future of our continued cooperation, I want to emphasize that the basic guidelines for our joint efforts are recorded in the Declaration on Cooperation, and we intend to carry them out to the letter. We are prepared to work with our American colleagues for the sake of developing and strengthening the international veterans' movements.

Thank you for your attention. (Applause)

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: 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 last September, when he became 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 April, a visit that also included meeting Dr. Ma, the President of the Republic of China. I also want to thank him for hosting VFW Ladies Auxiliary National President Jan Tittle 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 Veterans Affairs Commission. (Applause)

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

GENERAL TSENG: Good morning. Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, National President Tittle, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my great honor to be invited to participate in your National Convention. This is my very first time to attend this convention ever since I was appointed the Minister of Veterans Affairs of my country, the Republic of China on Taiwan, last September 10th.

The association between our two organizations has been over 50 years, and especially in the past 30 years we have exchanged the top level visits. Last April, I am fortunate to host the visit of your Commander-in-Chief Tom Tradewell, when he visited Taiwan, and now I am invited again to participate in your convention here in Indianapolis.

What is more treasurable to us is that every year during your convention you pass the resolution in support of our country. We treasure this relationship and we hope that this relationship will go on and be further extended.

In Taiwan, just like in the United States of America, the people pursue a life of peace, freedom and democracy. Ever since May 20th, 2008, President Ma Ying-jeou, has put all of his efforts in developing a life of peaceful development. To achieve such kind of a peaceful development, he emphasized the improvement of relationship across the Taiwan Straits, meaning that the relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China and the relationship between Taiwan and the United States of America.

On this past June 30th, we signed the so-called Economic Agreement, the Cooperation of Agreement Measure with Mainland China in which he urged our people to wage no wars, but make friends and make money. Also, it is very important to make money.

Also, in May of this year, when he was interviewed by CNN, he advocated that we will never ask Americans to fight for us, because he meant we need to buy weapons and ask our own people to defend our own freedom and democracy.

We appreciate once again very much for the country's support that the VFW, your great organization, offered us in the past five years, and we hope that this support can continue on by urging your federal government to go by the Taiwan Relations Act and sell us the necessary weapons for us to defend Taiwan as well as the technologies, so that we can do that sufficiently. This will not only benefit Taiwan, but the security of America and East Asia as well.

We appreciate all efforts that your Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Tom Tradewell, put in the promotion of the relationship between our two countries as well as our two organizations, and President Ma Ying-jeou of my country will ask the Minister to present a Medal of Honor on his behalf.

Now, I will take the honor to read the citation. The letter is too small and I have to wear my glasses.

The certificate accompanying the award of the Order of Banner with Cravat, "Mr. Thomas Tradewell, Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, has distinguished himself by his outstanding contributions to the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of China.

"In appreciation of his meritorious assistance, Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell is presented the Medal of Order of the Banner with Cra-

vat No. 3671, by the Government of the Republic of China, in accordance with Article 11 of the Armed Forces Declaration Regulation.”

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

2010 VFW HALL OF FAME AWARD TO KENI THOMAS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It is now my honor to introduce Keni Thomas for the VFW Hall of Fame Award. Keni Thomas is a former Army Ranger, award-winning country music artist and national spokesperson for the Hero Fund.

Prior to joining the army in 1991, Keni attended the University of Florida. He served as a Ranger in the 75th Ranger Regiment, eventually attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was a member of Task Force Ranger as part of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. A main objective of the task force was to capture the elusive Somalia Warlord, Mohamed Farrah Aidid.

The most well-known of their combat missions occurred October 3, 1993, when their task force members was involved in the Battle of Mogadishu that was later immortalized in the book and movie “Black Hawk Down”, for which he was a consultant. He also served as a consultant for “We Are Soldiers.”

After Somalia, Keni went on to serve as an assistant team leader on Ranger recon teams. His military decorations and achievements include the Bronze Star for Valor and the Combat Infantryman’s Badge.

Keni was awarded Master Parachute Wings with over 400 jumps, and successfully completed the Army’s Ranger School, Belgian Commando School, the Special Forces Combat Diver’s School, the Army’s Jumpmaster Course, Pathfinder School, HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) School, Cold Weather Mountaineering School, and Medical Emergency School. Which high-intensive schools did you not go to, Keni?

Upon leaving active duty service, Thomas worked as a youth counselor. He also became a speaker, giving motivational presentations to various audiences across the United States.

Mr. Thomas soon formed the band “Cornbread” and began his career in music by performing with the band in and around Columbus, Georgia. After several album releases, they released the album “Flags of Our Fathers.”

Keni donates some of the proceeds to the Hero Fund, which directs those funds to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, an organization created to provide college scholarships and financial aid to the children of fallen special operations soldiers.

Mr. Thomas had performed the National Anthem for the New York Yankees several times, including game one of the 2009 World Series, as well as for the San Francisco Giants on Memorial Day 2010.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to thank Mr. Keni Thomas for his tremendous legacy of service to our country by presenting him the VFW 2010 Hall of Fame Award. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: “Hall of Fame Award, Gold Medal and Citation, awarded to Keni Thomas.

“In heartfelt recognition of his fervent love of country and the indomitable American spirit that he demonstrated while serving as a member of the United States Army and as a member of the Elite 75th Ranger Regiment, Mr. Keni Thomas has unfailingly expressed his devotion while dynami-

cally entertaining U.S. service members around the world and as a youth counselor and as national spokesperson for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

"His continued dedication and generous humanitarian work earns him the title of 'Patriot', and serves as inspiration to us all, thus earning him 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 23rd day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

This award also comes with a \$2,500 honorarium. (Applause)

RESPONSE – RECIPIENT KENI THOMAS

MR. THOMAS: Thank you all. Thank you so much. To tell you it is a privilege – he just took my money from me. (Laughter)

To tell you this is a privilege and an honor, it is quite an understatement. Honestly, it is bigger than that. For any of us in this room, and that is the good thing about everybody here being veterans, when you make it out of something where others did not, you are going to spend the rest of your life thanking the people who are on our left and on our right, because I know by the grace of God the only reason I am still here today is because of those men that were there when I most needed them to be there.

So, first of all, let me say thanks to the men of Task Force Ranger, because without you I wouldn't be here.

I want to thank my mom, who made the trip all the way from South Florida, and I want to thank my manager, Clara, for getting me here. If I didn't have her, I wouldn't even know what day it is. I am very, very thankful for them being here.

Now, I remember after the first battle that we had with Task Force Ranger our platoon sergeant pulled us aside and he brings everybody over, and he says, "Hey, men, I want to tell you guys this. You guys are all combat veterans." I am thinking great, I could qualify for a VA loan.

But it took me a little bit of time to realize that being a veteran, it is a lot more than just wearing a hat on your head with a lot of great pins and badges, it is a lot more than being qualified for all these programs.

Being a veteran, it carries with it a badge of honor, and there are big words we use called character and respect and noble professions. That is something that we have to continue to carry on on a day-to-day basis as veterans.

People look at us, they look at you with respect, and they look at you to set an example for others to follow. The first day that I walked into the Ranger Regiment, there was a sergeant major, his name was Leon Guero. He scared me. He was a scary man. He talked like a little Samurai warrior. He had us all lined up. He said, "Men, I want to congratulate you-all for choosing something that is an honorable and noble profession." I was a punk kid out of school and I had no idea what honorable and noble meant. But I do now.

What he said to us stuck with me for the rest of my life. He said, "Men, many of you are going to go on to long distinguished careers in the mili-

tary." He said, "Some of you are going to do your time and you are going to get out." He said, "Remember this: wherever you go, the world needs Ranger doctors and Ranger lawyers and Ranger teachers."

What he meant was the world needs leaders; the world needs people to set examples for others to follow.

The Ranger's motto is, "Rangers lead the way." As veterans, people look at us to lead the way. They look at us to set an example for others to follow. We don't get to carry the M-16 and M-4s, we don't get to fly planes anymore, but we can still go out there and lead the way.

There is a plaque that is on the wall of the Ranger Regiment, and it is on the walls of every single Special Operations Unit out there. It is from the Bible, the book of Isaiah, Chapter 6, Verse 8, and it reads, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, who will go for us? Whom shall we send?"

"And I said, 'Here I am, Lord. Send me!'"

Yes, that is who you are. Thank you for doing something that was honorable and noble, and you went and put on the uniform and you were sent. But nowadays, what do we do? What can we do? We don't get to carry the weapons anymore, but you can still go out there and make a difference. You can still be sent on a day-to-day basis setting an example for us to follow and make a difference. That comes with the title of being a veteran.

Man, I could stand up here all day and talk to you guys. This is pretty fun. I am going to sing a song instead, because what I could spend all day talking about I could sum it up in three and a half minutes in one song.

Now, when you play in the Grand Ole Opry, for a country singer, that is a pretty big moment. They give you two songs. You get to play your song that is your big hit, and then you play one other song. For you guys, you know what a record is. You see there is this thing called a record that they had in the old days, and you would flip it over, and there would be a song on the other side. That was called the "B" side. Well, this will be my "B" side.

When we go over on these USO tours and go we out to these far-off tiny little places in the mountains of Afghanistan, we can't bring the cheerleaders, we can't bring the comedians. All I can bring is this guitar, and the song that I play for them is the same song that I will choose wherever I go to make sure people hear this one, because there is a lesson I learned when I had the privilege of wearing a uniform.

This is what it is about. Everybody here wants to make a difference. Everyone wants to do something that matters. That is why you put on that uniform in the first place, and why those folks fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan and all around the world for us, they don't have to worry about making a difference. That is why they are doing it.

How do we do it now? We don't get to wear the uniform. How do we make a difference? I tell people it is an easy thing to do. All you have got to do is lead. It doesn't mean being in charge, it means setting an example for others to follow, and most of the time when you are asked to do something it is going to be difficult and it is going to be hard, and you don't want that responsibility, but you have got to step up and do the right thing even when you would rather not. That is what this song is about. It is about three people that stood up and did the right thing and set an example for others to follow.

(Whereupon, Mr. Thomas sang "Flag of Our Fathers.")

Thank you so much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF MR. JAN SCRUGGS, EDUCATION CENTER AT THE WALL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Reach out, Keni. (Applause)

Our next guest is well-known to most of us. Jan Scruggs is the Founder and President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. He conceived the idea of building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the most visited monument in Washington, D.C., receiving around three million visitors each year.

Serving as President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., the non-profit organization responsible for building and maintaining the memorial, Jan spearheaded the fund-raising efforts that achieved \$8.4 million for the memorial.

Today, it seems that most of our citizens believe that Vietnam veterans are worthy of every praise, monument and memorial that could be offered. And all of that is appreciated.

But we all understand that the best way to honor the Vietnam veteran is to help us honor the vow we all made to ensure that every new generation of veteran is appreciated and receives the dignity and respect and entitlements they have earned and deserve. And that is why the VFW became the first veterans' organization to pledge financial support to the Education Center at the Wall.

This is in keeping with our long history of supporting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and was, in fact, the first major veterans' organization to contribute to building the wall itself.

VFW contributed \$250,000 to build the wall back in 1982, making it one of the largest contributors to the project. Additionally, the VFW gave \$50,000 to the Memorial Fund to create and distribute a curriculum guide, "Echoes from the Wall," to 25,000 public and private high schools in 1999.

The Education Center at the Wall is now one way of preserving the legacy of those who gave so much of themselves and to maintain a link to their honorable service and sacrifice for future generations to come.

That is why the VFW and its members from around the world are committed to establishing the Education Center. Before the fund-raising effort began, and when the center was still but a dream, approval to add the center to the National Mall had to win congressional approval.

The VFW members made thousands of phone calls and sent letters and e-mails to their elected officials, and otherwise helped lobby Congress to gain approval for the project. So, we are thrilled for a vision that is about to become a reality.

It will be a vital part of to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and an invaluable addition to one of our nation's most treasured icons.

Not only will the center complement America's memorial to our Vietnam War comrades, it also will provide an educational experience to those who visit the wall annually and will provide fitting testimony and tribute to all who served during Vietnam.

Jan's ongoing efforts are a great reflection of his love for his country and for all of those who served in Vietnam.

Today, as a result of your generosity, we are happy to present a check in the sum of \$58,538.43 to Mr. Scruggs, which brings the total donation from the VFW to \$645,103.61 for the Education Center.

Please join me in welcoming Jan Scruggs. (Applause)

REMARKS – MR. JAN SCRUGGS

MR. SCRUGGS: I have got a few words to say. I really want to thank the Commander and everybody here for their hospitality of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as well. It is worth remembering the great help and welcome we have all had from Governor Mitch Daniels, these great people here who always welcome us to the great state of Indiana.

Well, I want to talk to you about the Education Center at the Wall, but before I do that, what I would like to do is to show you a little video that will tell you a little bit more about this Education Center to be placed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

(Whereupon, the video is shown at this time.)

That is a nice video to give you a sense of the Education Center. I have been traveling around the country and people really do understand the need for the Center, the need for something to bring the country together, to teach about the importance of service.

First and foremost, we certainly need to remember people who gave everything to their country, and we are all very fortunate, those of us here, because we came home; more than 58,000 of our friends in the Vietnam War did not come home. Other wars as well, not everyone returns.

But the country called them to duty and they answered the call. They gave everything, so it is not too much to ask that we remember them.

The Education Center will take the black granite wall of names that is visited by more than four million people each year to create the very profound educational experience. You know, nearly half of the people who visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial today were not alive during the Vietnam War, but they are even younger than the Memorial itself.

The Memorial is now 25 years old. So, the young people are coming to see it, and that is good. But they have no connection to the wall. So, the Education Center will give them that connection. It will help them to see those who once served as young people as they are serving today, people with friends and family, hopes and dreams, and their lives ahead of them.

The centerpiece of the Education Center will be a wall of faces showing the photographs of the men and women whose names are engraved upon the wall. They will be shown on their birthdays, and so the visitors will see their faces and will learn about these individuals through another exhibit, which will showcase some of the more than 100,000 items that have been left at the memorial.

We actually have now more than twice as many items left at the memorial as there are names on the memorial. These items say a lot about the people who are being honored and those leaving the tributes. They include photos, letters, dog tags, patches, all sorts of items filled with personal meanings for those who left them.

By seeing these items, we get a glimpse into what was important to those who gave their lives many years ago. The Education Center reminds us of the long tradition of service we have in this country. An exhibit at the end will show pictures of people who served in the America's wars from the Revolutionary War, which began at Lexington and Concord in 1775, all the way to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

So, this Visitors Center goes beyond an expansion of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This is all about service and honor to those who serve in our armed forces, and a very, very small percentage of people in America ever

have to even go in the military. It is a smaller percentage now than ever before, because we have a volunteer military instead of a big draft like we used to during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and even the Cold War. So, it is vital that young people learn about their heroes and that the men and women who serve today share these common values that make them special, and these values that have been shown since the Revolutionary War.

Throughout the generations, our service members have embodied the values that set the American armed forces apart: loyalty, duty, respect, honor, integrity, courage. These values will be celebrated as they should be celebrated in Washington, D.C., in the Education Center near the White House, near the State Department, near the Congress of the United States.

This will be a unique learning facility. It will be a lasting tribute to all who have served and sacrificed, and existence will be in no small part due to the friendship and the generosity of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the first organization that gave to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and it was back in 1979 when we first began the project.

The VFW was the first on board. They have always been an enthusiastic partner. When I told everyone about the plans for this, everyone vowed to help. The VFW members around the country, they told me they would be willing and eager to help raise the money, and they pledged to raise a million dollars. We are definitely going to get there. The VFW has been a great partner for us with the Education Center, just as you were back in 1982.

All of us are very grateful for your help. Actually, fairly soon we are going to have something really special for your Posts who donate. You will get an actual piece of granite from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982 that will be in a nice case. So, it will be something really to be proud of.

Last fall, we launched a call for photos to gather the pictures of more than 58,000 who are on the Memorial and to raise awareness for the project.

The next phase of the campaign is to reach into the communities to spread the word, gather photos, raise funds. We launched the grassroots campaign in Texas in April, and just last month San Antonio's Spurs' owner, Peter Holt, pledged to match up to \$1 million in gifts from the people of Texas. And the Governor of Texas, Rick Perry, along with his former Chief of Staff, Jay Kimbrough, have put together a network of veterans in Texas. And you know how the people are in Texas, they have got to do it right and they have got to do it bigger than anybody else. But at this particular time they are really doing it first.

We are here to let you know that even if you are not from Texas, this is the time to start organizing a state-by-state basis and a county-by-county basis. We greatly appreciate it. Go to the Web site, and we have a staff in Washington that will help you get a handle on how to get started in your state and to get the photographs, which is a great project. We have a lot of work ahead of us and much has been accomplished already.

I want to thank you for your continued friendship and support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your help. It was so inspiring today listening to Keni Thomas. It was just a magnificent song, and really I am looking forward to and greatly honored to have Vice-President Biden here today. We just thank so much everybody for attending, especially the leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for putting this conference on. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF FRED C. HALL OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE
PROJECT AWARD TO VFW POST NO. 9854, VINTON, LOUISIANA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The VFW has a rich tradition associated with community service, working closely with the March of Dimes, and other national organizations 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 many other civic organizations to improve America's communities.

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 unique and outstanding community service projects that are over and above what is expected of VFW units.

Receiving this year's recognition is Harrington-Lebouef Post 9854, of Vinton, Louisiana, for their World War II Veterans Ceremony Project.

In spite of the damage wrought to their community by Hurricane Ike, Post 9854 was determined to honor veterans of World War II. Their plan-of-action was multi-faceted; members initially held a ceremony at their Post in Vinton and awarded commemorative pins to local World War II veterans, some of whom were Post members.

Secondly, they held a morning ceremony at the Veterans' War Home in Jennings, Louisiana, with Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the State of Louisiana, Lane Carson, as keynote speaker.

They then continued with an afternoon ceremony hosting Governor Bobby Jindal as their special guest. Before the events were concluded more than 100 World War II veterans had received memorial pins.

The ceremonies were covered by two local television stations, three newspapers and some radio stations. A special luncheon was held for the families of the veterans, dignitaries, staff and guests. State VFW Commander Carroll Knott, and VFW Auxiliary President Evelyn Nash also attended.

During the events, each World War II veteran received a pin, a handshake, a salute, an individual photo and a DVD for their family. What a superlative honoring of our greatest generation, whose legacy we must do everything to keep.

Please join me in presenting to VFW District Commander and proud member of Post 9854, Donna Peterson, the Fred C. Hall Outstanding Community Service Project Award.

RESPONSE – MS. DONNA PETERSON

MS. DONNA PETERSON: Thank you, Commander, so much, and thank you to the National Committee for selecting our Post for this amazing award. I also want to thank the Department of Louisiana VFW, the great state of Louisiana, and our Governor and our Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and all of the service organizations that participated that day: Disabled Veterans, the Military of the Purple Heart, American Legion, the Patriot Riders,

all of whom participated and made this an amazing day.

I want to say a special thank you to our Post Auxiliary President, Mary Ann Malone, who is here today, who chronicled that day, put it in a book and submitted it to National for consideration for this award. We could not have done this without her.

We were inspired to do this project when members of our Post, who are World War II veterans, participated in the Louisiana Honor Flight, which is a project where they fly the World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., to look at the World War II Memorial in Washington. When they returned home, we knew we had to do something amazing for our greatest generation while we still had them.

So, we presented over 100 medals to male and female World War II veterans at the Veterans War Home in Jennings, Louisiana, on that amazing day.

I want to encourage all of you to try to participate in this award project. Our Post at the time of this project had 94 comrade members and 50 Auxiliary members from a small town on the border of Texas and Louisiana, right on the Gulf Coast, with 3,500 population, and the average age of our veterans was 60 years of age. If we can do it, you can do it.

We look forward to competition next year. Thank you so very much. God bless you for all you do. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION TO BURGER KING

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The Veterans of Foreign Wars, through corporate sponsorships and generous donations from many of your Departments, has been able to provide emergency financial support to our military families through the Unmet Needs Program.

In further support of this critical program, we are now honoring one of our premier corporations. 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 fund-raising program for the VFW Foundation.

During its first year of existence, the "Buy A Burger; Donate A Buck" initiative 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, our next guest was successful in his efforts to bolster the initiative by encouraging other Burger King restaurants to likewise join in and lend a hand this past November to the tune of an astounding 800 restaurants in 21 states.

Because of this tireless dedication by Mike and the hundreds of respective managers and enthusiastic employees, for the third consecutive year, Burger King patrons once again stepped forward to honor America's men and women in uniform, raising over \$500,000 for the Unmet Needs Program.

In the brief time span since the "Buy A Burger; Donate A Buck" campaign was launched, more than \$860,000 has been raised for the program, significantly helping countless military families.

This is a remarkable expression of gratitude to all the brave young men and women of our armed forces for their sacrifice and dedication.

Our thanks goes out to everyone who has played a part in this wonderful and magnanimous endeavor, and we are especially grateful to the two restaurant managers who endeavored to raise the most money for the program this year. Today, we are graced by their presence here with Mike. Let us now please recognize their magnificent generosity and thank them today.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Certificate of Appreciation presented to Greg Selting, EAU-D, Inc.

"In deepest appreciation and grateful recognition for unselfish service and in recognition of magnanimous support of the VFW's Unmet Needs Program. Greg Selting's demonstrated gratitude to the men and women and to the families of the United States Armed Forces, as established by his extraordinary acts of compassion and concern is truly outstanding and a particularly noteworthy example for all who seek to honor America's service members.

"Mr. Selting's indomitable spirit, determination, energy, and obvious love of country are in the finest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of August, 2010."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

"Certificate of Appreciation presented to Luis de le Barrera, Quality Dining.

"In deepest appreciation and grateful recognition for unselfish service and in recognition of magnanimous support of the VFW's Unmet Needs Program, Luis de le Barrera's demonstrated gratitude to the men and women and to the families of the United States Armed Forces, as established by his extraordinary acts of compassion and concern is truly outstanding and a particularly noteworthy example for all who seek to honor America's service members. Mr. de la Barrera's indomitable spirit, determination, energy, and obvious love of country are in the finest traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"In Witness Whereof, I hereunto set my hand and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of August, 2010."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief. (Applause)

And now please graciously welcome Mike DeRosa, who will speak on behalf of our award recipients.

RESPONSE – MR. MIKE DeROSA

MR. DeROSA: Thank you. Last year you were nice enough to honor us on the stage in Phoenix for our work with Unmet Needs. We were able to give a check for \$250,000 last year, and this year \$500,000. (Applause)

I have been asked how could you double it in one year? We got the usual fabulous assistance from your VFW Foundation Executive Director Dan Shea and his assistant, Jamie Moore. But what was the secret? I am going to tell you, and a lot of you will understand it when I do explain it.

Last year, my wife, Sherry, retired from her job as Dean of Business Education at the local technical college, and she looked at me and she said,

“Only \$250,000? I am going to double it.” And she did. So, Sherry, thank you. (Applause)

I am a little afraid of what she is going to tell me we are going to raise this year. But I will tell you we are going to raise more. I am not going to give you the exact number, but we are going to raise more because of gentlemen like Greg and Luis that you just honored here. Thank you for doing that.

In all honesty, those of us who planned these things, while we get so many of the honors, you know as well as I, it is the execution of the plan that makes it work. The two gentlemen that you honored here, and I hope on behalf of another 831 Burger King restaurant managers throughout the country, they are the people that executed this.

You are the people that helped because I can’t tell you how many calls I got from Burger King franchisees and they said, “DeRosa, what is this Unmet Needs Program that these VFW people keep talking to me about? How do I get involved?” Well, you are our PR corps. Thank you and keep at it, because Burger King is going to keep at it, too. I promise you that Burger King will keep raising money until all needs are met. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Mike, you had expressed an interest and a love for the Blue Angels, and because the VFW has a good relationship and sponsored them in Kansas City, we would like to present you with this. (Whereupon Commander-in-Chief Tradewell presented a named, signed picture of the Blue Angels).

MR. DeROSA: Thank you. (Applause)

HOWARD E. VANDER CLUTE MEMORIAL RIDE – CHECK PRESENTATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Since its inception eleven years ago, the annual Howard Vander Clute Memorial Motorcycle Ride has served to honor the memory of Past Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant General Howard E. Vander Clute, Jr.

The Charity Motorcycle Ride is also a fund-raiser for the VFW Foundation, and each year enthusiastic and stalwart participants often ride hundreds, if not thousands, of miles, braving the elements to help raise funds for important VFW programs.

Donations raised from this year’s charity ride have been earmarked for the VFW Foundation’s “Salute to Military Families Program” and will assist in honoring, celebrating and supporting active duty and retired military and their families. Today, I am proud to recognize Ron Martin, this year’s ride captain, as well as Ladies Auxiliary member Jeri Sherwood, and VFW member Roy Sherwood, both from the Department of Missouri, for their very generous \$5,000 donation to the Salute to Military Families Program. (Applause)

Thank you all for your always generous support of this worthy program, one that’s very unique to the VFW. There are millions of service members and veterans around the world that will always remember VFW’s support, especially when it is most needed. Thank you again. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE 2010 VFW EISENHOWER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD TO GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, the VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower Award was first presented in 1970, and over the last four decades, one award criteria held true: unless it was being presented posthumously, you had to be present to accept it.

We made an exception for this year's recipient, Army General David H. Petraeus.

As the Commander of the 101st Airborne Division, General Petraeus' steadfast determination and leadership enabled his sector of Mosul to be the first in Iraq to rebound politically and economically after the 2003 invasion.

He would use those same traits in 2004 as the First Commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq, and again in 2007, when President Bush tapped him to implement the "Surge Strategy" as the Commanding General of all U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq.

In October 2008, General Petraeus became Commander of the U.S. Central Command with overall responsibility for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other threats to peace and U.S. national interests within its 20-country area of responsibility, to including the pirating off the Somali Coast.

In June 2010, President Obama asked the General to return to war as the on-the-ground commander of all coalition forces in Afghanistan, a far more challenging mission given that he has less troops in a country far larger than Iraq, equally dangerous, and far less developed. The General accepted, and that is why he is not here today to accept this award.

The Eisenhower Award has been presented annually since 1970 to one individual for his or her contributions to American security, unity and world peace. It recognizes extraordinary contributions and achievements to secure the nation from foreign threats, to advance the interests of the nation abroad, and to inspire the American public to support these efforts as we journey towards the goal of world peace.

The Eisenhower Award is named after our 34th President, who along with seven other U.S. Presidents, proudly called themselves members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

And, indeed, General Petraeus would be extremely proud to know that one of his foremost mentors as a young captain, General John R. Galvin, likewise received the Eisenhower Award in 1992.

General Petraeus is a 1974 graduate of West Point who went on to earn two advanced degrees from Princeton University, to include a Doctorate in International Relations. He has commanded troops at every level, and was once described by former Joint Chiefs Chairman Hugh Shelton as a "highly-energetic individual who likes to lead from the front, in any field he is going into."

The General is also fearless. A little known story is he married Holly Knowlton two months after graduating from West Point. She was the daughter of Army General William Knowlton who just happened to be the superintendent of West Point when newly-commissioned Lieutenant Petraeus was a cadet.

We are grateful that technology has allowed the General to deliver a personal message of acceptance via video. Comrades and Sisters, may I

present to you the recipient of the 2010 VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower award to General David Petraeus. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Dwight D. Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army Commander, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan Commander, International Security Assistance Force.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation for answering our nation's call to service by commanding American and Allied Forces in two different theaters of war. By taking the fight directly to an enemy whose sole objective is to destroy America, he serves our nation as few others have. General Petraeus continues to play a crucial national security role in the effort to succeed in Afghanistan, and in the broader effort to disrupt, dismantle and defeat terrorism.

"His unrivaled experience, dedication to mission accomplishment, and to those who carry out his orders, is true to the ideals, traditions and values of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – GENERAL DAVID PETRAEUS

GENERAL PETRAEUS: Well, good morning to all of you there in America's heartland, and greetings from Afghanistan.

Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, it is great to see you again, even if from a distance, so soon after we met at that wonderful tribute to Korean War veterans in Missouri a couple of months ago.

Thanks for that generous introduction. More importantly, thanks for all that you continue to do at the helm of the VFW. Because of your leadership, the VFW continues to be, as it has been for more than 110 years, the standard bearing organization of veterans helping other veterans and serving local communities.

As all the veterans in the audience today can affirm, nothing means more to those who serve in harm's way than knowing that their sacrifices are appreciated by those back at home. The VFW pursues a host of important endeavors that serve as tangible expressions of appreciation for those who have answered the call to duty for providing camaraderie at thousands of VFW Posts across our nation, and advocating for veterans' rights and the new G.I. Bill, to placing volunteers in all of our VA Hospitals.

Your work makes a tremendous difference in the lives of countless serving troopers and former troopers, and all of us in uniform are enormously grateful to you for that. That is why I consider it a tremendous honor to receive the Eisenhower Award from the VFW today.

Indeed, I wish I could have been there in person to thank you for this honor, and I look forward to attending the future convention to do so once I am back from Afghanistan.

Whether from a distance or in person, though, I must say that this is an award I can accept only by recalling something, then General Eisenhower, said upon returning from Europe, that he was just the symbol of the heroic men, you people, and all of the United States have sent to war.

So, I accept this humbling tribute on behalf of the nearly 135,000 U.S. and coalition troopers who are currently serving here in Afghanistan.

Day-after-day, they endure long separations from their loved ones, operating in cultures vastly different than their own, persevere through tough physical conditions, and confront ruthless and adaptive enemies. They are the true heroes, and again I accept this award on their behalf.

In fact, I thought that I might use my time today to update you on the critical mission these heroes are undertaking here in Afghanistan. After all, the last 18 months here has seen a number of important changes designed to set the conditions for progress, most significant of which has been the effort by all involved to get the inputs right, to ensure that we have the right organizations, the people, guiding concepts and resources to enable execution of a comprehensive, civil military counterinsurgency campaign.

I will start off this morning by highlighting those changes, and then I will talk through how as a result of them we are starting to see progress; slow and uneven to be sure, but progress, nonetheless, on the security, economic and governance fronts in Afghanistan. And I will try to do all that in less than 20 minutes.

Indeed, I have reviewed your agenda for the morning, and I am well aware that I am right in the thick of an impressively long line of speakers. In fact, as I was looking over the program earlier and thinking of my remarks, and I was reminded of the young school boy's report on Julius Caesar. "Julius Caesar was borned a long time ago," the little boy explained. "He was a great general. He won some important battles. He made a long speech. They killed him." I will try to do my best to avoid Caesar's fate today.

In any case, I suppose it is time to move on to more serious matters. First, as I said, I would like to talk a bit about our efforts over the last 18 months to set the conditions for progress in Afghanistan by getting the inputs right. I should note up front that the leadership, vision, energy and expertise provided by my predecessor, General Stan McChrystal, during his time as the International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF Commander were critical to these efforts. Getting the inputs right began with building the right organizations and structures needed to carry out a comprehensive civil military counterinsurgency campaign.

The ISAF Commander presents instances now of dual hats, both as NATO Commander and Commander of USA Forces thus allowing greater unity of effort.

The Three Star headquarters, the ISAF Joint Command is now responsible for the near term planning and conduct of our operational campaign, which allows my Four Star ISAF headquarters to focus more on the strategic level.

We also now have a Joint Task Force to help develop Afghan rules, law and corrections capacity, several inner-agency fusion cells, and the Information Operations Task Force, an ISAF element that helps the Afghanistan government with reconciliation and re-integration efforts.

Finally, another new organization, the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan now heads the effort to develop Afghan security forces. Ensuring the right people are in charge of these organizations has been just as important.

Indeed, all of the nations involved in Afghanistan have sent their most talented leaders, from the United Nations, Stepan Demura and NATO's

Ambassador, Mark Sidwell, and the United States Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, and the ISAF Re-Integration Cells Chief, UK Major General Phil Jones, among many others.

These and a number of other senior leaders have brought to Afghanistan important experience from having served here before, or having held key positions in Iraq. As a result, the decisions now being made in Afghanistan are informed by a deep appreciation of counterinsurgency principles, a growing granular understanding of the situation on the ground, and increasingly strong relationships with Afghan leaders at all levels, from local tribal and religious leaders to those of the highest levels of the Afghan government.

Adjustments to the inputs in Afghanistan also included developing the appropriate guiding concepts for a comprehensive civil military counterinsurgency campaign, from pushing to achieve greater civil military unity of effort and aggressively pursuing the mission of partnering with Afghan security forces, to issuing appropriate tactical guidance designed to reduce the loss of innocent civilian life while still ensuring protection for our troops.

General McChrystal implemented several important changes as the ISAF Commander. We continue those initiatives, refining some to be sure, as we also work to adjust our guiding concepts, particularly with regard to ensuring the tactical guidance is implemented in ways that provides our troops all the support they need when they are in a tough situation, while continuing our efforts to reduce to an absolute minimum the loss of innocent civilian life in the course of our operations.

We also continue to ensure that all involved are focused on the Afghan people. After all, the human terrain is a decisive terrain in an endeavor such as this one. Thus, in addition to our numerous kinetic operations, we also pursue with our Afghan partners a variety of non-kinetic tasks to support those partners as they strive to improve governance, expand basic services and foster economic growth.

Finally, getting the inputs right also required deploying the necessary resources. As a result of various national decisions, substantial additional resources of all types have flowed into Afghanistan over the last 18 months. Most obvious of these is the increase in U.S. and coalition forces. We have, for example, tripled the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan since early 2009, with nearly all of the final 30,000 additional U.S. Forces committed by the President in December now on the ground.

Significantly, our NATO allies have committed well over 13,000 additional troops to the effort, since last year as well. Complementing the force build-up has been an increase in civilian personnel, too, with an ongoing civilian surge of nearly 1,000 additional civilian officials. Of enormous importance, as well, has been the authorization of further growth and professionalization of the Afghan national army and police, which are in the midst of increasing by some 100,000 members by the fall of 2011.

While having set the conditions for progress over the last 18 months with the proper organizations, people, concepts and resources, we are now working to capitalize on those changes. Indeed, despite enumerable remaining challenges on the security governance and economic fronts, we have seen some important gains, albeit slow and uneven in each of these areas.

In the coming months, we will work closely with our Afghan partners to

forge further progress on each front even as we support the development of continued Afghan capacity growth in each area as well.

In terms of security, the changes of the last 18 months have enabled new operations in a number of key areas of Afghanistan. To be sure as we and our Afghan partners have fought to take back insurgent sanctuaries in the Central Helmand River Valley, and elsewhere in the traditional insurgent heartland of Southern Afghanistan, the enemy has fought back. Indeed, the tough fighting and elevated levels of violence will likely continue for some time as our troopers and their Afghan partners clear more insurgent strongholds, support establishment of legitimate governance structures, and implement development projections. However, we have begun to see some encouraging progress amidst the tough fighting.

Since the beginning of April alone, for example, more than 375 middle and upper-level Taliban and other extremist leaders have been killed or captured, and some 1,500 of their rank and file have been taken off the battlefield. At the same time, adherence to ISAF's tactical guidance has helped reduce civilian casualties in the course of our operations despite the substantial increasing in our numbers and in our offensive operations.

The joint campaign in Central Helmand Province has wrestled several strongholds from Taliban control, including Nad Ali and Marja, the latter of which was previously a critical sanctioned warrior for the Taliban and the home to IED factories, insurgent headquarters, and medical facilities and the illegal narcotics industry.

As holding and building operations gradually expand in Central Helmand, our troopers and their Afghan partners have increasingly begun to focus their efforts on Kandahar City, where they are working to provide the Afghan people with the rising tide of security which will expand over time and serve as the foundation for governmental and economic progress.

Despite these encouraging developments, significant security challenges remain, and helping our Afghan partners overcome those challenges will require continued progress on several fronts, including development of Afghan security forces, re-integration of reconcilable insurgents in Afghan society, involvement of local citizens and security efforts, and the elimination of sanctuaries in Pakistan.

In the interest of time, I will briefly expand on just the first two of those. First, a critical aspect of improving security is increasing the size and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces, or ANSF. In the past 18 months, we have seen significant progress in this regard. During that time, the ANSF has added nearly 90,000 soldiers and police to their ranks. In fact, by the end of this year, they will have equaled in 18 months the growth of the previous seven years.

As importantly, ISAF has implemented several changes to better develop ANSF quality and capacity in partnership with our counterparts in the Afghan security forces. Training capacity has grown significantly with the arrival of more trainers, and partnership efforts have been dramatically expanded, too, with embedded U.S. and the coalition forces now partnering with the ANSF at all levels to provide mentorship and support. As a result of these efforts, we are beginning to see improvements in ANSF capability, with Afghan forces now in the lead, for example, in all but one district of Kabul, and in a number of other areas as well.

However, Afghan forces are still challenged by a host of issues, including insufficient retention in some units and inexperienced leaders.

The coming year will see continued efforts to help our Afghan partners in uniform work toward taking increasing responsibility for security in their country.

A second important factor in reducing violence in Afghanistan will be continued efforts to reintegrate reconcilable insurgents back into Afghan society. The past year has seen gathering momentum on this front, with Afghan and coalition leaders recognizing that we cannot kill or capture our way out of the insurgency that Afghanistan faces.

After convening an important National Consultative, Peace Jirga this May, President Karzai approved the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Program in June. This program provides a vehicle through which Taliban fighters who renounced violence and accept the Afghan Constitution can return to Afghan society as fully enfranchised citizens.

Relying heavily on the Afghan tradition of conflict resolution to ensure adequate reintegration, the program will also provide important job training to help insurgents return to productive lives. We will work closely to support our Afghan partners in the coming months to help them ensure that this program is implemented equitably as provinces and districts throughout Afghanistan begin informing their Peace and Reconciliation committees.

Progress in all of these efforts will be essential to forging greater security in the coming months as we approach July 2011, the date to begin the conditions based process of transitioning tasks to Afghan forces and officials, and to begin the gradual and also conditions-based withdrawal of U.S. Surge forces.

Even as we work with our Afghan partners to develop plans for that transition process, we are working to ensure that security gains are accompanied by gains in the governance, economic development and anti-corruption lines of operation.

Indeed, security gains in Afghanistan will only be sustainable if the Afghan government can provide effective governance and deliver essential services to its people, and President Karzai has made this very clear in comments during the recent Kabul Conference. Recognizing this reality, Afghan officials have taken important steps to expand governance capacity from creating a strategy to increased inter-ministerial coordination in key districts, to training thousands of government employees. Many of their initiatives have focused on the important issue of building human capital and connecting the national government in Kabul to provincial and district governance.

Meanwhile, ISAF leaders at every level actively mentor, advise and support Afghan leaders as they pursue these and other capacity-building endeavors.

We have also worked to better incorporate governance capacity building as part of the operational planning we conduct with our Afghan partners. In preparation for operations in Kandahar, for example, President Karzai and his ministers held shuras and fostered other political initiatives focused on increasing the sense of inclusivity and transparency in the province. These efforts, as well as ISAF's work to assist Afghan leaders in developing greater rule of law and criminal justice capacity, will be critical to expanding governance capacity in Afghanistan as we move forward.

Though slow and uneven, economic and social development in Afghanistan continues as well. For example, nearly seven million Afghan children

are now in school, a seven-fold increase from Taliban days. Immunization rates are up substantially as well, now in the 70 to 90-percent range nationwide.

Cell phones are ubiquitous in a country that had virtually none during the Taliban days, although the Taliban does force the shut down of some towers at night.

Kabul is a bustling, busy city as are Herat, as Mazar-e Sharif and Jalalabad. Roads and bridges and other infrastructure have been built. Commerce is returning to those parts of Helmand Province where ISAF and Afghan forces are present. Even in places where governance remains challenged, innovative efforts like the Afghan government's National Solidarity Program have helped enable local Shura councils to choose their own development priorities and receive modest cash grants to pursue them.

Despite progress on the economic front, significant further growth is needed. To this end, U.S. and international civilians and troopers are working hard to support development of Afghanistan's agricultural sector from implementing voucher programs for high-value crops and supplies, to advising university and government officials in developing agri-businesses, to refurbishing canal and irrigation systems as well.

We are also supporting Afghanistan's efforts to expand basic services and build the infrastructure that is so vital to linking agriculture and mining areas to domestic and international markets. Even as we assist our Afghan partners with security governance and economic initiatives, we are also focused on helping them reduce corruption. Indeed, as President Karzai has forthrightly recognized, corruption in Afghanistan is a cross-cutting issue that undermines progress in all other areas by draining vast amount of revenue from the Afghan economy, undermining the rule of law and delegitimizing the Afghan government.

We continue to work with our Afghan partners to help them turn President Karzai's stated commitment to combat corruption into reality. This will be an increase in the area of focus in the coming year, at his request.

Though some limited progress in the anti-corruption efforts has been achieved in the last 18 months, reducing corruption will depend on Afghan political will and significant encouragement and support from the international community. Thus, even as we support Afghan development of programs and initiatives to reduce corruption, leaders and troopers throughout ISAF's ranks are working to bring networks of maligned actors to the attention of our trusted Afghan partners in their chains of command. Our leaders are charged with supporting their partners and confronting, isolating, pressuring and defunding maligned actors, and where appropriate referring them to trusted partners for prosecution.

Afghanistan has a long history of representative self-governance, and we continue to work with its leaders and people to revive those traditions and reduce governmental abuses. As the various issues confronting Afghanistan make clear, the overall situation remains exceedingly complex and very difficult. While we now have the right inputs in place and we are seeing incremental progress in all our lines of operation, we know that much work remains ahead. Indeed, success will take continued commitment, perseverance and sacrifice, and it will not be achieved quickly. Thus, everyone in ISAF continues to press forward resolutely and with determination, continuing the difficult work of helping our Afghan partners forge greater security and a more hopeful future for their country.

In all of this, it goes without saying that the performance of our troopers has been nothing short of extraordinary. They have demonstrated themselves to be true Pentalic warriors, as the depth that is facilitating meetings between rival tribal leaders and helping spur local economies as conducting patrols, and undertaking so-called kinetic operations. And their relentless commitment to continue serving despite the repeated deployments and other sacrifices that service entails is truly inspiring.

It is because of their hard work, exceptional skill and indomitable will, and soldiering together with our Afghan partners that we have achieved progress in our hugely-important and hugely-difficult mission. It is those qualities in our troopers and in our Afghan counterparts that will enable progress in the months ahead.

I would like to conclude this morning with one final thought for all the former Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen in the room. As our men and women in uniform press on in their tremendously difficult work here in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and elsewhere throughout the world, you should know that they draw enormous pride, inspiration and courage from you and your fellow veterans. Indeed, today's troopers are proud inheritors of the traditions of service, sacrifice and commitment that each of you carried forward and then passed on to those who followed you.

We occasionally observe that today's troopers stand on the shoulders of those who came before them. I believe that is the case. You should know that because of the character of your service, those who serve our nation today stand very tall indeed.

So, to each of you there this morning who raised your hand and said "send me when our nation called," thank you. Thank you for your service to our nation and for the example you set while in uniform. Thank you for choosing to serve your fellow veterans and today's troopers through your efforts with the VFW.

It has been the greatest of privileges to have served with heroes like you for the last 36 years, and it has been a great privilege to join you today to accept this award on behalf of the heroes in uniform currently serving in Afghanistan and to update you on their important work here.

May God bless each and every one of them and may God bless each and every one of you. Thank you very much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

THE ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, Thomas Tradewell, and the Vice-President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Be seated. It is now my great honor to introduce a very special guest who will be speaking before our VFW National Convention for the first time. He served our nation honorably as a United States Senator from the first State of Delaware from 1973 to 2009, where he would eventually chair the Senate Judiciary Committee, and then the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

He was also well-known to be tough on crime, and even tougher on domestic violence. He considers the Violence Against Women Act as the most significant piece of legislation that he crafted in his 36 years in office.

Today, his position enables him and his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, to tour the

country and abroad, to shake the hands of, and just be with, our magnificent military and their families. And as our guest has so well stated, they do it just to say thank you, and as proud Blue Star parents of an Iraqi War veteran themselves, their handshakes and their hugs truly come from the heart.

Comrades, ladies and gentlemen, the 47th Vice-President of the United States, Joe Biden.

REMARKS BY VICE-PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

VICE-PRESIDENT BIDEN: Thank you-all very, very much. I apologize for my back to you-all. "Honor the dead by helping the living." That is not only your motto, but that is what you are all about. That is what my guys and women from Delaware have been about from the time I was introduced to them in the middle of another war, Vietnam.

Like you, like them, I know that our nation has but one truly sacred obligation. We have many obligations in the nation, but only one truly sacred obligation, and that is to prepare and equip those whom we send into harm's way and to care for them and their families when they come home. (Applause)

Tommy, Commander, you not only know that, you have lived that. You served bravely in Vietnam and then came back to keep right on fighting to make sure your comrades got everything that they deserved.

I want to personally thank you, and on behalf of the President thank you for the service not only over there but here. And to Jan Tittle, every man out here knows and every woman in the VFW knows that they would not function very well were it not for the Ladies Auxiliary. That is not hyperbole, that's a fact. (Applause)

Richard Eubank, who has a magnificent family, by the way – I just got to meet them all – who served at the height of the Vietnam War, I want to wish you the best of luck as you take the helm of this great organization, and what I would argue would be one of the most critical points in its history.

To Bob Wallace, thanks for having me, and thanks for all you do on behalf of the VFW every single day in Washington, and thank you particularly for your continued work on the POW/MIA issues. (Applause)

And to my home state, Commander Bob Wilkinson, and to the Ladies Auxiliary, Roberta Walker, the President, I want to thank you for all that you have done for the State of Delaware and all you have done for the veterans of Delaware over your careers. I particularly want to acknowledge those veterans of the Korean War who this summer are marking the 60th anniversary of the start of that conflict.

Over 111 years from San Juan Hill to the Argonne Forest, from Midway to Inchon, from Sunni City to Kuwait City, from the Corregidor Valley to the sunny Triangle, VFW members have fought for our country on both the front lines and the home front. You and your predecessors helped establish the Department of Veterans Affairs and build a National Cemetery System.

You worked to secure a better future for service members and their families by helping pass two G.I. Bills. You have spoken out time and again on behalf of the 2.2 million member ranks that continue to swell, and for all those, for all those who have fought in America's wars.

This work, your work, and this is not hyperbole, this work and your

work has never been more important than this very day.

Over the past decade, our military embarked on a longer period of sustained combat than any time in all of American history. More than two million service members have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, more than half of whom have now returned to civilian life with the honored title of "veteran." Of those men and women, the very best of this nation, almost 40,000 have been wounded and over 5,640, and it is important to get the exact number, for as I speak God only knows what has happened today.

Over 5,641 have made the ultimate sacrifice for their beloved country. Today, in this month, as you heard a little bit from my friend General Petraeus, and as you heard from the President, we are taking a major step toward concluding one of those wars, just as pledged before he took office.

One month after his inauguration, at Camp Lejeune, President Obama laid out our plan for ending the war in Iraq responsibly, and we followed that plan very closely, because of the significant help and leadership of our military. As a result, one week from tomorrow, U.S. combat forces will phase out their combat mission as we begin to bring the combat phase of this war to a close.

More than 140,000 troops were in Iraq on inauguration day. By the end of August, 50,000 will remain. Our last remaining – applaud them. They deserve it. (Applause)

Our last remaining combat unit, one that I know personally well from visiting them in Fort Lewis, to be there as they mourned their dead, to be with them in their vehicles in Iraq, the 4th Stryker Brigade of the Army's Second Infantry Division. That last unit crossed the border out of Iraq.

I am proud to say that as of September 1st the mission of the United States Forces in Iraq will move from combat to advise, assist, train and equip the Iraqi Military Forces, to conduct partnered counterterrorist operations and to provide security for our military and civilian personnel, and the infrastructure in Iraq.

I recently had the great honor of doing what Jill and I have been doing since I became Vice President, and quite frankly, before, of visiting Army Posts and all military posts all across the nation and around the world. Just last month, I headed up to Watertown, New York, to Fort Drum. (Applause) Go ahead. They deserve it.

I met with the Army's proud 10th Mountain Division, whose motto is, "Climb to Glory." God, have they climbed to glory into some of the most godforsaken parts of the world.

They have done it in a way that is not only exemplary, but would make you so proud. I was there to welcome home nearly 3,000 of them back from Iraq three months earlier than they were going to come back, because they accomplished all their goals ahead of time. These homecomings are something I have long looked forward to, as I know many of you have.

We have an outfit in Delaware called "Boots on the Ground." It was started by a group of women in Delaware who said, like my wife said, they were not going to be part of anything like happened in their generation where veterans came home and backs were turned and people actually spat upon them, but to make sure that every single solitary veteran coming home to Delaware, every military personnel coming back from service was greeted with some fanfare and appreciation.

Folks, only one percent of the nation is fighting these wars, but as my wife says on every television program she goes on, "A hundred percent of

the nation owes them a thank you. A hundred percent of the nation can do something to acknowledge what they do.” (Applause)

I must tell you, my guys from Delaware know this, it surprised me. The day my son, Captain Beau Biben returned home from a year-long tour in Iraq, I watched him embrace his wife and his children, and it surprised me how emotional it was. It was one of the proudest and happiest moments of my entire life. That’s the case for every Blue Star mother and father, husband and wife.

By the end of next year, 2011, our remaining troops in Iraq will have come home to their families and to a grateful nation. This is only possible because of the extraordinary progress of our military.

I might say, and I hope no one is offended, ladies and gentlemen, this is the finest, most fierce group of warriors this nation has ever created in our entire history. (Applause) Their success is not an accident, their success is because of a man you just saw on your screen, and a courageous Four Star General in Iraq named Ray Odierno.

Ladies and gentlemen, three things they have accomplished so far, and they are worth singling out.

First, violence in Iraq has decreased to such a small amount. That good-looking young man that looks like he is in the kind of good shape that I thought I was when I was his age, but never was, who served in Iraq in ‘04-‘05, you would not recognize the country today, thankfully.

The country then was being torn apart by sectarian conflict. You could hardly recognize the place. Al-Qaida in Iraq and the Shiite extremists remain dangerous, and their attacks still claim innocent lives. But they have utterly failed to achieve their objective, which was to enflame an additional round of sectarian conflict and undermine the election that just took place, and stop the formation of a new government. They have failed.

Secondly, Iraq security forces, now 650,000 strong, and of my thirteen trips to Iraq five were with General Petraeus who was then in charge of that process, which was halting and difficult and painful. But today they are 650,000 strong and already leading the way to defend and protect their country.

We have transferred control over hundreds of bases and many thousands of square miles of territory. Some said that our draw-down would bring about more violence. Well, they were wrong. The Iraqis are ready to take charge and in recent months, operations they have led, based on intelligence they have garnered, killed two key Iraqi leaders, the top two, and purged more than 30 other Al-Qaida top terrorists from its ranks.

Thirdly, no less important is the fact that the Iraqi leaders who once settled disputes through violence, at this very moment as I speak, because I have recently spoken to every one of them individually, are sitting down in the tortuous process of ironing out their differences in face-to-face negotiations.

The Iraqis recently held a second election, and I know I am often quoted for saying in establishing a democracy the most important election is not the first election, it is the second election. That is an election made possible by the sacrifices of American men and women, an election that the entire world agreed was legitimate. And although it has taken a long time to form a government, I facetiously point out to my friends that it took the Dutch Parliament five months to form their government. I am absolutely convinced that they are on the way to doing that.

Another way of putting this is that politics and not war has broken out in Iraq. Now, I certainly don't need to tell you that politics is not always pretty, even our own. But the hard work of forming a new government is well-underway, and I personally, at the President's request and General Odierno's request, I personally made it clear to leading politicians that it is time for them to match the courage of their citizens by completing this process.

Ever since the President asked me last year to oversee Iraq policy, I have been actively engaged on a daily basis. I have visited the country four times since then and thirteen times in all. I have come to know the players of all the leading coalitions, and I speak regularly to each of them. And I understand their intricate politics.

We have a first-rate Embassy team in place led by Ambassador Jim Jeffrey that is interacting on a daily basis, actually not mincing words with them as they work through the process of the government formation. Many people point, as I watched on television Sunday, and talk about an Iranian influence. Let me tell you something, Iranian influence in Iraq is minimal. It has been greatly exaggerated. The Iranian government spent over \$100 million trying to affect the outcome of this last election, to sway the Iraqi people, and they utterly failed. It is because politics and nationalism has broken out in Iraq. The Iraqi people voted for their desired candidate, none of whom, and I emphasize this, none of whom were wanted by Iran.

Maliki is persona non grata in Iran. Allawi is persona non grata in Iran. Barzani, none of their candidates succeeded, and now those who won, none having won an overwhelming majority. Remember, this is a parliamentary system, 320 members of their corps, they call it, going to three fifty something, and no one party got more than 91 votes.

Now, they are working to form a government and every day urging them and we are urging them to do so in a way that reflects the outcome of the election, which means that Maliki's party called State of Law, and Allawi's Party al-Iraqiya are going to have to be the nucleus of any new government. But it is difficult. They have never had a government like this before.

A very important step in the process is not talked about much, is taking place as I speak and has been for the last three weeks. That is a formal written agreement on power sharing, the limits, the power of the Prime Minister, the power of their presidency; the power of their National Security Council. That is the first step in making sure that whatever the government leaders are who occupy those seats will be able to have a workable functioning government, that will not lend itself to the ability to be hijacked. This process can sometimes be frustrating and there will be ups and downs. But I am here to tell you that I am absolutely confident that Iraq will form a national unity government that will be able to sustain that country.

One more thing: Drawing down our troops in Iraq does not mean we are disengaging from Iraq. In fact, quite the opposite is true. We are in the process of following President Bush's proposal for a long-term relationship, a security, long-term security and economic agreement with the Iraqis.

While our warriors that remain there, 50,000, are as capable as any armed services in the world, they know how to fight if they have to, their mission has changed. They are now there to help Iraqis help themselves. In the meanwhile, we are ratcheting up our civilian-led effort to ensure Iraq remains stable, sovereign and self-reliant. We are opening up consulates

in Bosra and up in Erbil, which will be heavily populated. We are going to continue to help strengthen their economic and political institutions and foster new ties of trade and commerce, and support Iraq's return to its rightful place in the region and the broader community of nations.

While the Iraq War winds down, our troops continue to take the fight to our enemies in Afghanistan. That's where Al-Qaida plotted and trained to launch the devastating attacks on 9-11. Our forces there are now in the able hands of one of the finest generals, David Petraeus, a great warrior, a strategist and a friend, who you are honoring this week with the Eisenhower Award.

Afghanistan poses different and unique problems and daunting challenges, including the local population, scarred by more than three decades of war, plagued by illiteracy, crushing poverty and rampant corruption. The country's harsh terrain, is one of the least hospitable in all of the world, as other countries overseas can tell you. I have seen it firsthand, including two years ago when a sudden snowstorm, when I was with General Rodriguez, forced our helicopter to land between two jagged peaks 9,000 feet above sea level on a road not much wider than the width of our rotor blades, with a descent on one side of about 1,800 feet and another 900, and the next mountain range less than a mile away. They are just jagged pieces of rock.

Naturally, the 10th Mountain Division, that is where these kids have had to climb with 60 pounds of gear or more and engage Al-Qaida. These kids are not kids, these women and men, they are fierce warriors and they are now among the most fierce terrains in all the world.

But after too many years of neglect, we finally now have clearly defined the strategies backed by the resources needed to implement it. We are making measurable progress on the overarching goal we have in Afghanistan to disrupt, to dismantle and to defeat Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Applause)

In order to do this, we must deny Al-Qaida safe haven and we must reverse the Taliban's momentum as we strengthen the capacity of Afghan security forces and the government so they can begin the long and painful process of assuming, over time, ultimate responsibility for their country's future.

We can't want peace in Afghanistan more than they want it. Nearly all the additional personnel, when we took over, there were fewer than 30,000 personnel there. This month we ramped that up to 100,000 American forces and about 10,000 new troops and trainers provided by our allies for the International Security Assistance Forces.

General Petraeus now, only now, has all the resources the strategy called for. So, all this talk about the inability to succeed is premature. Only now, this month, General Petraeus finally got what the military told the President and me that they need to succeed in that mission. General Petraeus is working tirelessly, and I might add he made a great sacrifice. All of you who are military know, going from being Central Command Commander to Operations Commander in Afghanistan was a sacrifice, in a technical way, a step down from commanding all of Central Command to focusing only on Afghanistan.

But it is the most retractable problem we face and it needed the best general we have. We now have him.

So, folks, don't buy into we have failed in Afghanistan. We now are only beginning with the right general and the right number of forces to

seek our objectives. General Petraeus is working tirelessly to strengthen the Afghan Security Force, and it is a daunting undertaking, to take the insurgents on in regions where they have run roughshod for too long. This effort is being complemented by an unprecedented surge of civilian diplomats and technical experts.

Our Ambassador, by the way, who is a former commander in Afghanistan, a Three Star General, General Karl Eikenberry, a warrior in his own right, he is working every single day pushing the Afghan government to step up its efforts to attack corruption and devise a plan for integration of the portion of the Taliban that is ready to accept the Afghan Constitution.

General Petraeus has said we will assess the progress made in December and begin the responsible conditions-based transition to Afghan security leadership on a province-by-province basis in July of 2011.

Everybody says, is that an end date? That is not. We are not leaving in 2011, we are beginning to transition. Why the date? The date is important, as important to the Iraqis, because we wanted to make clear to them they must step up. They must exercise sovereignty if they are ever going to prevail. Also, we state it as a goal that we should strive for. In the meantime, our thoughts and prayers remain with those troops still serving in harm's way and will continue to give them the resources they need to succeed.

As you know better than anyone, providing for our service members overseas is only where our responsibility begins, not where it ends. That's why our administration has embarked on one of the largest most comprehensive programs in American history to support our returning veterans, and their families long after the military service is over.

President Obama trusted another great warrior, General Eric Shinseki, some of you probably served under him, and charged him with transforming the Department of Veterans Affairs to meet the new and different needs of the 21st century.

If we could hold a second here, one of the things I want to point out, I have visited the Burn Center in Fort Bliss. We have all the wounded warriors that come over, multiple amputees to our home for Thanksgiving dinner. This is a different war, folks. They are a different set of injuries. There is a different imperative. We have to adjust to what it is so we don't make the mistakes that we have made as a nation for the past generation of our warriors.

We are providing General Shinseki with the resources for doing that, to build a 21st century response. Meanwhile freezing most discretionary spending in the budget, we have given the VA one of the biggest budget increases they have had in 30 years, as your Adjutant can tell you, \$16 billion this year. (Applause) That is for a total of over \$114 billion.

We followed that up with a request next year for another increase of another \$11 billion on top of that. We do that because the need is real. The need is apparent, and the need requires an obligation to meet it. I know I hear some voices and we will hear voices, and will continue to hear them who say in these tough economic times how can we so incredibly increase that money? Well, I say to those voices, whether or not we keep the promise to our veterans will say more about who we are as a nation than anything else we will do. (Applause)

In my view, our nation's obligation to veterans is not negotiable. It is a sacred obligation. In the meanwhile, the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill is already helping nearly 300,000 veterans, and for the first time their family mem-

bers earn a college degree. We are revitalizing the V.A. facilities in putting \$957 million more to the already admirable Veterans Health Administration and \$46 million for the V.A. cemeteries and national shrines that must be preserved and that you are responsible for occurring in the first place.

We have taken steps, helped veterans exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam and those who suffered from a range of ailments related to the services in the first Gulf War. Tommy, Richard and all those who served in Vietnam will remember how veterans of our generation had to prove the source of ailments in order to get their benefits. The burden is based on them. Well, thanks in part to the hard work of this organization that burden will no longer be placed on them. The burden is on the government to deny the benefit, not for them to prove their entitlement to benefits. (Applause)

Also thanks to your help, we will not make the same mistake we made with these younger veterans that we made in the past. For those with post traumatic stress disorder, our policy will be to trust veterans' own explanation of how they came about without requiring them to prove in detail where it occurred. The fact is it exists and we are implementing a new rating system to improve how claims from traumatic brain injury can be evaluated. We are doing these things because wounded veterans should not have to plead for the care they deserve. They should not have to do that. (Applause)

There are two landmark pieces of legislation that deserve special recognition, and not just because you were instrumental in both of their success. For the first time in American history, we secured advanced appropriations to end once and for all the nightmare of long delays in funding for veterans' medical treatment. That is because of you, and since sometimes the best care comes from a family member, I need not tell all of you that, we passed a Caregiver's and Veteran's Omnibus Health Services Act to fund and train relatives who serve as caregivers for their wounded warriors. These are incredible young women and men. Like me, many of you visit, on a regular basis, our hospitals to see our wounded warriors.

I was recently at a hospital, and the nurses were taking me around to the veterans who were severely wounded and who wanted to see me. We walked into a young officer's room, and he was there with his wife, a beautiful young woman, smart. And he was, I would say, 31, in his late twenties or early thirties. He had lost one leg almost at the hip, and the other just below the knee. His left hand was mangled. He was asleep. I said to the nurse and the doctor, "No, no, don't wake him up." They said, "He will really be offended if we don't."

So, they woke him up, and I walked in. This kid reached up in that triangle above his head and pulled himself up with his right hand, and he looked at me and said, "Sir, I apologize. It was my intention to be able to stand and salute you when you came." There was no self-pity, no "why me?" Like hundreds of these young men and women that I met with, you know, what I most often get asked when I say, can I do anything for you?, the response I get most often is, "Mr. Vice-President," and they pull me close, "Can you help me make it back to my unit? Can you help me get back to my unit?" (Applause) What a remarkable generation of warriors.

That is not what I planned on telling you, but a good friend of mine, Colin Powell called me and said, Joe, have you read the new book "War?" Read it, gentlemen and ladies. It tells a story in a way that I have seen some

of it firsthand that is beyond my ability to describe. Almost 18,000 men and women have been wounded so badly in Iraq and Afghanistan that quite frankly had they had the same wounds in Vietnam, they would have not lived. They have been unable to return to duty, these 18,140.

The good news is the medical advances and the improved technologies have allowed so many of them to survive who I said may have passed, in previous encounters. It also means that they are left with injuries that is going to require critical care for the rest of their lives, and their average life expectancy will be 35 years.

You and I know very well long after these wars are over, God willing, and the welcome home parades are finished and the memorials are built, and the streets are renamed, you and your fellow veterans organizations are still going to be so badly needed out there demanding that these wounded warriors get the care they need for decades from now. The estimated cost is for just these 18,000 will be somewhere in excess of \$7 billion over their lifetime to provide them the critical care they need.

I am here to tell you, I, for one, am counting on you. The entire generation of veterans, my son's generation, is counting on you, for you know better than any group of Americans we owe them nothing less because the warriors that we have sent to Afghanistan and Iraq have served as able as any generation of fighting men and women in our nation's history.

The sacred obligation I mentioned earlier extends also to those that share the burden of veterans' service. That is why the First Lady and my wife, Jill, have spent so much time leading an unprecedented push for our nation's support and engage our military families. My wife is so dedicated to this, and the Delawarians know this, a woman who used to get embarrassed or frightened standing up and speaking to 30 people.

Actually, when I asked her to go on *Army Wives*, she said, "Yes." I nearly died. She said, "Joe, it is one of the most popular programs, and if I can do anything to convince the American people they need the help, just do one act of kindness, one act of kindness." Cut that National Guard's mother or wife's lawn while he is deployed in Afghanistan or Iraq; say thank you. You-all are veterans. You know better than I how much it means.

Over nearly a decade, military families have endured multiple deployments unlike any time in our history, and the wrenching toll that absence takes on their children, their marriages and their mental health. It is only when our son, Beau, went to Iraq for a year that Jill and I came to understand what the poet John Milton meant when he said, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Well, multiple millions of women, men, fathers, mothers, husbands, grandparents, sons and daughters have served in these two wars. Our military families do far more than stand and wait. We owe them for their service to our country, and we must acknowledge and repay that debt.

There is no secret today, more than ever, that a small fraction of our citizens bear the lion's share of the cost our wars have imposed. Their call to duty has been answered by a new generation of heroes, every bit as honorable as those that have come before. Heroes like Lieutenant Colonel Chris Kolenda, whom I met in an FOB, Forward Operating Base, in a remote godforsaken piece of the Kunar Valley, I don't know how many thousand feet above sea level, just a few miles from the Pakistan border.

With the heart of a warrior and the precision of a cultural anthropologist, he and his soldiers talked me through a myriad of tribes and sub-tribes

that inhabited the terrain, and the near-constant enemy fire they endured at night sitting on that exposed mountaintop. Six of them sitting up there in godforsaken nowhere. Heroes like the seven servicemen last week that were awarded the Silver Star for valorous acts more awe inspiring than any Hollywood movie could conjure up.

One of them, Sergeant First Class David Nunez, was traveling through the Afghan village of Shewan on May 29, 2008, when the insurgents attacked. His body became totally engulfed in flames, he sought to save his comrades lives by ridding his damaged vehicle of ammunition and explosives, and as he tried rapidly to get to the back of the vehicle because they were trapped in, he gave his life.

These stories are chapters, and the greatest epic of our age. They will inspire future warriors surely as did those in this room who fought and bled in wars gone by.

But our enemy should take a different message from this sacrifice. They should take a message that is irrefutable proof of our resolve in the face of the new threats that we now confront.

As President Obama said, "Our spirit is strong and it cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you." (Applause)

So, on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank all of our troops and all of you here today for giving life to those words and for sacrificing so much for our country. May God bless you all and may God bless America, and may God, most of all, protect our troops. Thank you for having me.

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)
(There was an extended pause while the Vice President greeted individual members.)

INTRODUCTION OF JACK TURNER, NATIONAL RECRUITER AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: 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 has recruited a phenomenal 579 new or reinstated members. This is an outstanding accomplishment and fully deserves to be well-recognized by all of us. Incidentally, our awardee is an All American Department Commander at the same time, which in my book, is now an ultimate achievement.

From Post 1774, located in the city of LaMesa of District 1, Department of California, please welcome Jack Turner, the National Recruiter of the Year. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "National Recruiter of the Year presented to Jack E. Turner.

"In sincere appreciation and grateful recognition of your outstanding service in the VFW Membership Program.

"Your exceptional initiative and untiring effort during the 2009-2010 membership year contributed immeasurably toward the national membership goal of recruiting 125,000 new or reinstated members.

"You are commended for your professionalism, achievements and recognized for your dedication to the goals of the 'Honoring Our Military Heroes' 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 23rd day of August, 2010.”

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, Sr., and Adjutant General Kent.

RESPONSE – COMRADE JACK TURNER

COMRADE JACK TURNER (Department of California): Good afternoon, comrades. I have never passed up the chance to get on a mike, first of all. Anyway, I just want to thank the National Organization for this award. But more importantly, I want to thank my wife for her encouragement, her patience, her understanding, not only this year but in the many years. I also want to thank the comrades and sisters of the great state of California for their hard work and their commitment to achieving the goals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Now, in my many years of naval service, I learned one very important thing: You can never do it alone. You have to work together as a team. This past year I had a great team, my Senior Vice-Commander, Dennis Wells, my Junior Vice Commander, Bobby Price, the State Adjutant Quartermaster James Rowoldt, the State Ladies Auxiliary President, Sue Wells, 24 District Commanders, 94,000 comrades. They were all instrumental in me receiving this award. I will always wear it proudly on their behalf.

Now, I would be remiss if I didn't mention these three items. We talked about it all year. In order to be successful in any objective that you undertake, you must have three things: You must have commitment; you must have teamwork; and you must have communication. We had it. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF ALL AMERICAN TRIPLE CROWN AWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Jack; thank you, California.

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 race horse 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 the league in three specific statistical categories.

For batters, a player must lead the league in homeruns, runs batted in and batting average; pitchers must lead the league in wins, strike-outs, 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.

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 on 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 Texas is Dennis Barber. (Applause)

Next is Thomas Kijak from the Department of Louisiana. (Applause)
And from the Department of New Mexico, Vincent "B.J." Lawrence.
(Applause)

And another Triple Crown Winner, and welcome again, Jack Lewis from the Department of Maryland. (Applause)

Also with us is James Malott of the Pacific Areas. (Applause)

And last, but certainly as equal, Comrade Stephen Ward from the Department of Europe. (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)

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO THE 2010 ALL AMERICAN DEPARTMENT. DISTRICT AND POST COMMANDERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief will now get ready to present the awards to the All American Departments, Posts and Districts.

But, before we go into that, we do have a very, very distinguished comrade in our presence, and I would like to invite him to the stage at this time, the Medal of Honor recipient from Vietnam, Sammy Davis.

COMRADE DAVIS: Thank you for the warm reception. Of all the things that have happened today, I just spent two hours with our youth in the drill ceremonies competition. We have got good kids in this country! (Applause)
There is nothing broken in this nation that we, the people, cannot repair.
(Applause) We simply must do our job as it describes in the Constitution.

God bless America and God bless you all. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: 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 25 Department Commanders, 43 District Commanders and 89 Post Commanders who are with us today, and now Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer will present All American Commander Awards to this elite group.

Alabama

Department:

George H. Jones

District:

Max L. Hyatt, District 2

Post:

James R. Lorenzo, Post 924

William H. Stoltz, Jr., Post 2702

Robert M. Craig, Post 5180

Raymond Brandon, Jr., Post 6073

Alaska

Department:

George M. Ison

Arizona

District:

Donald R. Bush, District 7

Roger D. Gowen, District 10
Post:
Donald E. Taylor, Post 3632
Lindsey C. Botkin, Post 10342

Arkansas

Post:
Ashley A. Little, Post 4548
James W. Dahlem, Post 8532

California

Department:

Jack E. Turner

District:

Lawrence T. Brown, District 1
Howard L. Hagen, District 4
Michael Stadnick, Jr., District 8
Walter S. Pynn, District 23

Post:

Martin J. Chacon, Post 2967
Dale Smith, Post 3783
Bennie London, Jr., Post 5394
Ronald W. Harshman, Post 5689
Alonzo R. Rivera, Jr., Post 7420
Leigh A. Williams, Post 9454

Colorado

Post:

Joe L. Gallegos, Post 5061

Delaware

Department:

Samuel T. Adkins

District of Columbia

Department:

Jay F. Cabacar

Europe

Post:

Stephen A. Ward, Post 9534
James L. Holliman, Post 10692

Florida

District:

Julius C. Sallette, District 15

Post:

Mark A. Alvarez, Post 3308

Georgia

Department:

David G. Pipes

District:

Charles B. Brown, District 1
Al J. Lipphardt, District 3
Wayne A. Hagan, District 6
Michael J. O'Steen, District 7

Post:

William C. Sandberg, Post 3679
John A. Veverka, Post 5255

Grover K. Nessmith, Post 5978

Hawaii

Department:

George F. Barlett

Post:

Joseph F. Bragg, Post 2875

Idaho

Department:

Robert L. Jones

Post:

Denny Croner, Post 2738

Illinois

Department:

Jules D. Spindler

District:

Donovan Smith, Jr., District 15

John J. Burke, District 18

Post:

Harry L. Kortkamp, Post 1308

James W. Sheible, Post 2649

Henry M. Kowalski, Jr., Post 2791

Indiana

Post:

John K. Ayers, Post 1152

Richard W. Shirley, Post 1563

Kansas

Post:

Lynn W. Rolf, III, Post 56

Latin America/Caribbean

Department:

Jose Claudio

District:

Antonio Maldonado, District 2

Post:

Arthur J. Litesse, Post 3835

Catalino Medina-Vazquez, Post 12057

Louisiana

Department:

Federico M. Arends

District:

Thomas J. Kijak, District 12

Louvie J. Duhon, District 5

Post:

Kenneth P. Koval, Post 5951

Donna Peterson, Post 9854

Maryland

Department:

Jack P. Lewis

District & Post Commander:

R. Brian Sturgis, District 4, Post 7460

District:

John L. Adams, Jr., District 14

District & Post Commander:

Thomas L. Rippon, District 16, Post 8276

Post:

Raymond W. Weiss, Post 5246

Henry C. Schmincke, III, Post 6506

Massachusetts

District:

Anthony Manfredi, Jr., District 17

Michigan

Post:

George M. Wygant, Post 7309

Minnesota

District:

Francis S. Sutherland, District 7

Post:

Robert O. Hystad, Post 3915

Missouri

Department:

David J. Morgan

Post:

Brad Denny, Post 2593

Thomas W. Mundell, Post 3944

Lester D. Hinton, Post 4205

Paul D. Frampton, Post 7356

James A. Grytdahl, Post 10906

Montana

Post:

Jack Hawley, Post 1087

Nebraska

Post:

Ronald Packard, Post 10648

Nevada

Department:

Herman C. Hagen, Jr.

District:

Leslie M. Fiester, District 6

Post:

Greg M. Bashaw, Post 3848

Kenneth G. Hesketh, Post 10054

New Hampshire

District & Post Commander:

James J. Golden, District 3, Post 1772

New Jersey

District:

Manuel Almeida, District 6

New Mexico

Department:

Raul V. Sanchez

District:

Vincent B.J. Lawrence, District 3

Post:

Kathie D. Schiebel, Post 401

Charles J. Carr, Post 7686

New York

Post:

John F. Haviland, Post 1019

Arnold T. Anderson, Post 7955

North Carolina

Department:

William V. Sloan

District & Post Commander:

Euell H. Griggs, District 10, Post 2972

Post:

Jack M. Campbell, Post 2423

Allen Alger, Post 6060

Jessie L. Bellflowers, Post 10630

North Dakota

Department:

Edward Bennett

Ohio

Department:

Leon Johnson

District:

Henry O. Wetzel, District 1

David F. Mahlie, District 2

Robert W. Critell, District 3

Linus L. Kilchenman, District 6

George H. Dennison, District 7

James D. Dill, District 8

Post:

Gene O'Quinn, Post 1079

Dennis M. Pilny, Post 3345

Charles E. Adkins, Jr., Post 4931

John Neal, Post 7570

Oregon

Department:

Gary D. Pitman

District:

Michael Countryman, District 15

Post:

Ronald W. Jagodnik, Post 3973

Bert W. Key, Post 4273

Pacific Areas

Department:

James D. Malott

Pennsylvania

District:

Randy W. Gray, District 28

Post:

Robert R. Finch, Post 15

Cecil K. Dennis, Post 5958

John Tomasovitch, Jr., Post 7251

Eugene L. Myers, Post 8951

Glen J. Hoffer, Post 9639

South Carolina

District:

William W. Trask, District 5

Post:

John L. Hill, Post 6732

Tennessee

Post:

William G. Crawford, Post 2120

Randall E. Durham, Post 7175

Gary C. Laymance, Post 12051

Texas

Department:

Dennis M. Barber

District:

Orville J. Hayes, District 1

Eddie R. Maycen, District 5

Linnie D. McCall, District 14

Tashawnya McCullough, District 20

Post:

Angel Vasquez, Jr., Post 76

David L. Adams, Post 3413

Michael W. Tingley, Post 8577

Richard J. Riel, Post 12058

Utah

Department:

Brent W. Neilsen

District & Post Commander:

Elmer Inman, District 1, Post 3586

Charles M. Edwards, District 4, Post 4918

Post:

Douglas R. Larson, Post 1481

Charles Gram, Post 4519

William D. Brook, Post 12061

Vermont

Department:

Stephen A. Leach

Virginia

Post:

James M. Lowe, Post 1503

William J. Shepherd, Post 3219

Boyd C. Burnett, Post 9808

Washington

Post:

Frederick A. Green, Post 239

West Virginia

Department:

Terry Z. Scarbro

District & Post Commander:

Elmer R. Hibbs, District 12, Post 4326

Post:

William E. Sanford, Post 4484

Wyoming

Department:

Larry D. Orr

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, Sisters and Guests, that concludes the All American program. We will now recess and we will reconvene exactly at 1:45 for this afternoon's business session on the dot.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:45 o'clock p.m., to reconvene at 1:45 o'clock p.m.)

AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 2010

(The First Business Session of the 111th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars United States, was called to order at 1:45 o'clock p.m., with Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell presiding.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We will now call to order our Afternoon Business Session.

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

For 43 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 much 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, 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: "Certificate of Commendation awarded to Department of Arizona.

"In recognition of the remarkable achievement of forty-three consecutive years of continuous membership sustenance 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 23rd day of August, 2010."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION
TO THE 110TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It is now my distinct pleasure to present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 110th National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's very successful National Convention in Phoenix, under the always able leadership of Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Currie, who could not be with us this year.

Here to accept the award on behalf of the Committee is Ray Thomas, the Convention Committee Operations Officer for the 110th National Convention.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Certificate of Appreciation presented to the 110th National Convention Committee.

"In extraordinary appreciation and eminent recognition of their outstanding dedication and persistent drive to ensure the success of the 110th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in Phoenix, Arizona, August 15-20, 2009.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official

seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of August, 2010.”

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell and Adjutant General Allen “Gunner” Kent. (Applause)

REPORT OF CONVENTION CREDENTIALS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: I will now request that Betty Gripp give us the initial Credentials Report.

SISTER BETTY GRIPP (Department of Arizona): I am Betty Gripp, a delegate from Post 10008, Tucson, Arizona. I will be reporting to you at the beginning of each business session the delegate strength.

Total delegates, 8,350; total Department Commanders, 46; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 22; total National Officers, 36.

That is for a grand total of 8,454. Delegates registering their credentials by 4:00 p.m. today will be added to tomorrow’s totals up to the maximum authorized Posts. Any National Council member or current Department Commander who has not picked their packets up, please do so at your earliest convenience. We are located in the registration area, the third booth from the end on the left. Thank you. That is my report, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Comrade Gripp.

We will now have the report of the Convention Rules Committee by Chairman John S. Staum.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STAUM: Good afternoon, comrades. Your Committee on Convention Rules has met and agreed upon the following recommendations, which are respectfully submitted for your consideration. There are 19 rules that I have to read.

1. That, in accordance with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure, and with the exceptions noted below, Demeter’s Manual shall be recognized as parliamentary authority for this Convention.

2. That when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or address the Convention, he shall rise, address the Chair as “Comrade Commander-in-Chief,” and after being recognized, shall state his 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 ten 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 24, 2010, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the Department Convention for consideration.

5. All resolutions offered on the floor at the Convention, or otherwise, shall be in writing, and shall automatically and without reading, be referred to the Adjutant General for assignment to the proper committee.

6. Committee Chairmen, in reporting on resolutions referred to their committee, shall first read those resolutions on which favorable action is recommended. Specific resolutions 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. This Convention will not consider any resolution calling for the expenditure or appropriation of organizational funds.

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

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

10. Unit rule of voting is not allowed.

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 each morning. The Department Commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each business session, a list of Posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates representing those Posts listed on the report will be accorded voting privileges.

12. On roll calls, the Department 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. Voting shall be by acclamation, except when a roll call be demanded by 10 registered delegates representing Posts in 10 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 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.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I make a motion that we accept the Convention Rules.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion. Do we have a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: I second the motion that we accept the rules of the convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have heard the motion and the proper second. Any discussion? Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

We will now have the report of the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual. The Chairman is Glen M. Gardner.

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

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. First, let me thank my vice-chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Larry Rivers, and I also want to thank Rob Weiss and the members of the By-Laws Study Review Committee for the hard work and dedication this year.

All the members of the Committee met for over two hours yesterday and discussed the proposed by-law changes that are proposed this year, I want to thank each and every one of them. Also, to the staff members from Kansas City that assisted us were Kevin Jones and Dave Prohaska and the others that assisted us with the process.

I will read, comrades, the By-Law and Manual of Procedure changes that have been approved and recommended for approval by the members of the National By-Laws Committee. If you wish to set any aside to be voted on separately, please do so in accordance with the rules of this Convention.

Recommended for approval are B-4, B-5, B-6, B-7, B-9, B-10, B-12, B-13, M-2, M-4, M-5, M-6 and M-10.

Commander-in-Chief, it is recommended and seconded by the Committee that these be approved.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have heard the motion the Committee has made. Any discussion? Any discussion? Seeing none, all in favor will signify by "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The following By-Law and Manual of Procedure Pro-

posals were recommended for rejection by the Committee. They are as follows: C-1, B-1, B-2, B-3, B-8, B-11, B-14, B-15, B-16, B-17, B-18, B-19, B-20, M-1, M-3, M-7, M-8, M-9, M-11, M-12, M-13, and M-14.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Is there any discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PAUL MANLEY (Post 1474 - Washington): I move for adoption of B-2.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have moved for adoption of B-2. We need a second. I need a second. With no second, it will die for the lack of a second.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LOUIS PETERSON (Post 6859 – Maine): Commander-in-Chief, I am Louis Peterson, Post 6859, Department Commander of Maine. Commander, I challenge B-4 and ask for a roll-call vote on B-4.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Was it B-4?

COMRADE LOUIS PETERSON (Post 6859 – Maine): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have to have a motion to adopt. That passed.

COMRADE LOUIS PETERSON (Post 6859 – Maine): I make a motion to challenge B-4 and call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We can't hear you. You have to talk into the microphone and talk loud. I am sorry. There is no speaker up here.

COMRADE LOUIS PETERSON (Post 6859 – Maine): I make a motion to challenge B-4 and call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It has been passed already. We moved on. There was no discussion during the acceptance, so it has been passed already. Any more discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE STEPHEN LEACH (Post 6471 – Vermont): I move that we accept M-1 and make the Post Commander responsible for membership.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Do we have a second?

SISTER CATHERINE DeMARCO (Post 7771 – Vermont): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second. It is open for debate. Any discussion?

COMRADE STEPHEN LEACH (Post 6471 – Vermont): Again, I wrote this, and the reason why I wrote it is I just got presented this hat today and part of it was 100-percent membership. I approached one of my Post Commanders, who had not brought in a single member since December and it was now May, and he told me, "I am no longer responsible for membership." According to the Manual, he is not.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Is there any further discussion?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, for the record, I would like to read the comments of the staff.

"M-1 recommended for rejection. This statement was removed at the recommendation of the National By-Laws Study Group and passed last year because it was believed it is really the responsibility of all members and officers of the Post to recruit and maintain their membership.

"However, the National By-Laws Study Group will review this section at their fall meeting to see if clarifying language is needed."

COMRADE STEPHEN LEACH (Post 6471 – Vermont): One last time. I

understand what is being said, and my only point is that if we are going to keep it out from the Post Commander, let's remove it from the District Commander and Department Commander also.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Is there any further discussion? Hearing no further discussion, we have got a motion on the floor to adopt M-1. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion is defeated.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE NORBERT ENOS (Post 2875 – Hawaii): I request that B-1 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: B-1 to be set aside. You need to make a motion to adopt it because it has already been rejected.

COMRADE NORBERT ENOS (Post 2875 – Hawaii): Commander, I stand corrected. I make a motion that we adopt B-1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Do we have a second? Do we have a second?

COMRADE KENNETH WISEMAN (Post 970 – Hawaii): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Kenneth Wiseman, Post 970, Hawaii. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second to adopt B-1. For purposes of discussion, the staff will explain their feelings and comments.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. B-1, the recommendation of the staff: "Recommend rejection.

"There is no clear definition of the word 'National'. Every person has the opportunity to apply for citizenship and our military particularly enjoys a fast-track provision for doing so as evidenced by the recent mass ceremonies in Iraq this past July 4th.

"This was presented at the 109th National Convention and was defeated after discussion on the floor on the identical problem of a proper definition."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: That is the staff's recommendation. Do we have any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KENNETH WISEMAN (Post 970 – Hawaii): First of all, the definition of a "National" is anyone who owes their primary allegiance to the United States government. Every person in this room who is an American citizen is also a United States national. Our comrades from American Samoa came home from a war and began a fight anew for their benefits as veterans, were shunned by other organizations because they are U.S. Nationals and not U.S. citizens.

They turned to each other and counted on fellow veterans in this new fight, the same way they counted on each other in the foreign fields that they faced other enemies on. This is an interesting story, and it is also the story of the veterans of the Spanish American and Philippines insurrection were denied membership in the nation's major veterans groups of the time, and this refusal to admit a new blood was the same short-sightedness that brought about the demise of every previous veterans organizations.

Our Samoa comrades, members of our own band of brothers deserve entry into our organization, and we should change our by-laws to allow them into our organization.

As I researched this injustice, I found many examples of commitment to our country by Samoa warriors, and I lost count of the number of Purple Hearts, and I stopped counting the number of Bronze Stars. These patriots served many years in uniform and examples of them giving more than 30 years is easy to find.

Campaign medals place them in every theater our troops have marched, sailed or flown into and through, and as a final demonstration of their courage 20 Samoans have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the current war on terrorism.

The U.S. Department of Defense built a Reserve Readiness Center in Samoa. It is the home to the 100th Infantry Battalion, the only combat arms unit in the Army Reserve and the only battalion size element with its own distinctive unit patch, heavily decorated for service in World War II, including 21 Medals of Honor and including our own Hawaii Senator, Dan Inouye.

The current unit is manned by residents of American Samoa and received their meritorious unit commendation for service in Iraq. The Department of Treasury minted a quarter and put the territory of American Samoa on it. Service in America's military is a Samoan tradition.

In 2005, at the height of combat operations in Iraq and at a time when army recruiting was most difficult, four of the army's top twelve recruiters came from the unit that covers Samoa. The Pacific territories including American Samoa have the highest rate of enlistment per capita in the entire nation.

The VFW is an organization where veterans stand together in support of each other, and I am ashamed to think we would continue to turn our backs on American Samoa. So, let's change our by-laws and allow the U.S. Nationals to join our ranks.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, mahalo, and I yield the floor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GUNNER KENT (Post 9972 – Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am "Gunner" Kent, a delegate from Post 9972, Sierra, Arizona. I again rise in objection to this resolution for the simple reason these fine comrades that do serve our country greatly can become instant American citizens. All they have got to do is to say they want to be an American citizen. They are granted automatically American citizenship. There is no waiting period. If they want to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, be like everybody else, be a combat veteran and a citizen of this great country.

Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE WILLIAM THOMSON (Post 6192 – New Jersey): I am Bill Thomson, VFW Post 6192 and Commander of the Department of New Jersey. "Gunner" Kent and I shared our opposition to this two years ago, and we will share our opposition to this again today. Those members that are serving in our armed forces, those men and women that are serving today, represent four-tenths of one percent of the entire population of the United States of America.

For all those people that yell yahoo, they are also sitting at home in our

states, in the other 49 states. I understand that all they need to do is to say they want to be a citizen. Those people who are engrained in the traditions of the islands that they live on have the same pride in being a National as you and I have in being a citizen. But their contribution to America and the blood they bleed on the battlefield is no less because of the fact they are not a United States citizen.

Two years ago, I stood here at this microphone and told our people from the great state of Hawaii that I supported them. I told them if they ever brought it back to the floor again I would speak on the floor again to support them. If it doesn't win today and they come back tomorrow or next year, I will come back and support them again.

I cannot think of anything more that we can do to those people who share the love of country and their patriotism and are willing to die on the battlefield than to grant them a membership in the VFW. I think that is the least that we can do, Comrade Commander.

I would ask members of this convention we vote approval of B-1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CARLOS GORDON (Post 3835 – Latin America): I stand before this body as I did two years ago to support this bill, and why I stand to support this bill. I have friends that died on the battlefield. The bullet that took him out did not say, "Oh, no, you are not a United States citizen so I am not going to shoot your butt."

My brother stood on the frog between his legs, and he was not a United States citizen. Yes, maybe today he is, disabled as he is, but when that happened he was not a United States citizen. That frog did not say you are excused because you are not a United States citizen.

We have comrades in Germany, in Korea, that if they become a U.S. citizen they lose a lot of their rights in Europe as we know. You cannot own any land if you are a U.S. citizen. However, nevertheless, he is a comrade, he is a veteran, he stood before the enemy, and we are denying them that right. We are denying that right to those that went on, that are in glory somewhere in the big house up in the sky waiting for us to show up. They are still not U.S. citizens.

But that, nevertheless, does not take anything away from them, that they are combat veterans.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE FRANK LAMSON (Post 970 – Hawaii): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I stand to support this, support this wonderful little thing that we have been neglecting to do. Our citizens and our fellow people down there in Samoa, they are citizens down there, that is true, and that is why there is a VFW Post 3391 down there.

But in our military, if you are not a part of our country, not a U.S. National, not a U.S. citizen, you cannot re-enlist. If you are from Haiti or from Canada, and you want to re-enlist, you must in every sense of the word become a U.S. citizen. The Samoans do not have to do that because they are U.S. Nationalists. Our government and our military believe they are equal to us. We should also believe they are equal to us.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any fur-

ther discussion? Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CLIFF ROBERTS (Post 1875 – Hawaii): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, it is really something else that we have recruiting stations throughout the United States recruiting for the United States Nationals, and they are asking them to come in with us and fight for the same freedom for all of us. But yet we cannot allow them to join our ranks? Something is wrong with that picture.

The United States of America is recruiting them, asking them to join all services, and we have active recruiting stations there in Samoa, American Samoa. We are recruiting them and asking them to join our ranks, but we are not allowing them to join the VFW? Something is wrong with that picture.

Commander, I recommend approval.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DOUG DOWNLEY (Post 5951 – Louisiana): I rise in opposition to this. What is the big deal about becoming a citizen? This is the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. This is also for all veterans, I agree, but what is the big deal with becoming a citizen? I don't understand that. That is all I have to say, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion? Any further discussion? Hearing none, we will go for the vote. You have spoken twice, right?

COMRADE KENNETH WISEMAN (Post 970 – Hawaii): This is my second time, sir. When they join the military, my generation, that newest generation, one of the three focus groups that we are going out to recruit this year, they say, "What is the future of the VFW?" I am the Commander of my Post. I am the youngest Post Commander in Hawaii. I am a Gold Legacy Life Member and I was a sentry recruiter last year and I am a Post Commander this year.

Turning your backs on American Samoa and defeating this is turning your back on my generation. As our generation grows older and the VFW grows older, and we have to look for new membership. They already have one Post in Samoa that is proudly part of the Department of Hawaii, and I do believe if American Samoa, as U.S. Nationals can join our organization, we will draw even more by Posts and by numbers. Thank you, comrade.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion? Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE ALLEN JONES (Post 21 – Pennsylvania): Commander-in-Chief, I am Allen Jones, Past Department Commander of Pennsylvania. I am a World War II veteran. I am somewhat appalled when we want to separate citizenship from service. Those that served for my government that weren't citizens served because they felt it was right and they had an opportunity to defend what we defended for in all wars in conflict, democracy, and a safe world that we live in. I hope that each one of you considers citizenship means something to all of us.

Let them become citizens. They didn't say that they were serving in the armed forces of the United States to become citizens. They said that they were serving because it was the right thing to do, to protect their nation

and other nations in time of wars and conflicts.

Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Is there any further discussion?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DENNIS HOWLAND (Post 1481 – Utah): I would like to call for the question, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a call for the question. Is there anyone else? Seeing no one, we will go into the vote.

COMRADE VINCENT SCIROCCO (Post 11519 – Rhode Island): May I make a quick comment? My comment is I don't think that they should have to be forced to make a decision between their loyalty to their national country that they live in now and the VFW. I think that is wrong that we are putting the Samoans in that position. I support that they should be allowed to be in the VFW. Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: This is a by-law change and it requires a two-thirds vote. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. We will ask for a standing vote. All in favor, please stand. That is delegates only in favor of the motion.

This is B-1 to allow citizens and Nationals to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. It takes a two-thirds vote of the delegates. Be seated. Those opposed. The chair says two-thirds has it. The motion passed.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE Agresti (Post 3150 – Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Agresti, Post 3150, Arlington, Virginia. I move that the body adopt M-9.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: M-9, you move for adoption?

COMRADE AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Do we have a second on the motion to adopt M-9?

COMRADE MIKE WHITE (Post 3559 – Florida): I will second the motion for discussion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: M-9 and B-11 are together, so you would have to move for both of them, B-11 and M-9.

COMRADE AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): I will amend my motion to adopt B-11 and M-9.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: And the seconder?

COMRADE MIKE WHITE (Post 3559 – Florida): I will second that, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Okay. For clarity, we would like the comments of the panel.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you, Commander. The staff's comments are as follows: "For B-11 and M-9, recommend rejection. This section applies to Districts and Departments that have a relief fund, whereas, Section 219 is specific to Posts. So, therefore, a change would not apply to the Districts and the Departments."

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

COMRADE AGRESTI (Post 3150 – Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, recognizing the comments of the deliberating body, there is nothing in this Manual of Procedure section or By-Law section that specifically addresses it to Departments or Districts. Therefore, it has always been used

to apply to Posts.

Now, last year we passed 219 as a relief fund to apply to Posts. Now, this year we wisely adopted M-2, which added the word "only", so that the language of the two passages, 219 and 704, would be identical. Again, the word is "identical." There is nothing in 704 that addresses Districts or Departments.

If that is the deliberating body's intent that that should be that, then they should have made a recommendation for that. But right now the reason we have proposed this in the Department of Virginia was to clean up the Manual of Procedure and the by-laws because we had two articles saying the exact same thing. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Is there any further discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAVID PROHASKA (Post 4434 – Department of Michigan): Article VII in our by-laws clearly states "Miscellaneous Provisions." Therefore, it is more like our definition section, which would cover all subordinate units outside of the Posts, because the Post is taken care of in the 200 series. Elimination of this allows Districts that currently have a relief fund or a Department that clearly has a relief fund to use it any way they want without any restrictions. So, we want to reject this amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion? Any further discussion? Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The "nays" have it. It is so ordered. Thank you, comrades.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KELLY GODDARD (Post 4484 – West Virginia): I make a motion that we adopt B-14 and M-11.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: B-14 and M-11?

COMRADE KELLY GODDARD (Post 4484 – West Virginia): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: There is a motion to adopt B-14 and M-11. Is there a second?

COMRADE DONALD YOUNG (Post 3466 – West Virginia): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have heard the motion and the second. We will have a clarification.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief. The staff's comments on B-14, "Recommend rejection. There are tremendous financial issues that have been addressed, changing all collateral materials, hats, et cetera, making it initially impossible to implement.

"Further, this provides no benefit to the Departments or the National Organization. Lastly, by passing this amendment, the Departments will lose complete control of these units."

Comrades, the essence of this by-law would be to eliminate the word "Ladies" out of the Auxiliary and make it instead of the Ladies Auxiliary and the Men's Auxiliary, we would have one Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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

COMRADE DONALD YOUNG (Post 3466 – West Virginia): Commander-in-Chief, this organization does not divide itself along the lines of race, religion or gender. We are one family here in the VFW and our

Auxiliary should also be one family. I have a District 9 Commander back home, a lady named Mary Byrd. Mary got up at our State Convention and spoke very eloquently and stated that when she served in the Air Force her husband couldn't shop in the commissary because she was a girl. Now, here she is 30-some years later and her husband wants to participate and be a part of the Auxiliary but he can't because she is a girl. This is wrong, it needs to be changed.

The Ladies Auxiliary can't even begin to address this issue until we amend Article 11. So, I would respectfully ask my fellow comrades to approve this amendment. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion? Any further discussion? Any further discussion? This is a change in the by-laws. We need two-thirds to ratify it. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed. The motion is defeated.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 4633 – Maine): I step forward to go ahead and reconsider B-4. The reason why I am saying this is the chair has not given the Commander of my Department a chance to go ahead and get up here to set it aside. You have no mike on that aisle and it is a long way to this mike. By the time he got here, the motion had already been carried to disapprove. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Do we have a second?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Which by-law do you want to reconsider?

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 4663 – Maine): To reconsider B-4.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: There has been a motion and a second to reconsider B-4.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrade, did you vote "yes" to reject this motion to begin with?

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Comrade, our Department did not – our Department Commander was en route and was not recognized by the chair. It was inadequate time for our Department Commander to ask for this to be set aside. I think the chair should recognize the fact that we do not have a microphone close to our station.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The person who originally made that motion, where is that person?

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 4663 – Maine): I am way over here.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Microphone No. 1. Did you vote on this issue?

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 4663 – Maine): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Did you vote for it?

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 4663 – Maine): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You voted for it?

COMRADE RAY LUPO (Post 4663 – Maine): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Then the motion is in order. It has been moved and seconded.

I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DON SMITH (Post 9669 – Colorado): I spoke on this issue last year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: This is not the issue we are vot-

ing on. We are voting on whether or not to reconsider.

COMRADE DON SMITH (Post 9669 – Colorado): Then I second the motion that we reconsider B-4, bring it to the floor.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Okay. We will go for the vote. There is no discussion. The issue is “yes” or “no”. We need a two-thirds vote to reconsider. All in favor of reconsidering say “aye”; all those opposed. The “nays” have it. Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would like to ask for a roll-call vote on that last motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The chair is not in doubt.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): I would like to ask for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Do you have ten states that will ask for a roll-call vote? We need ten states.

COMRADE DON SMITH (Post 9669 – Colorado): I support this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The State Commander must come forward from ten states. We have one minute to get to the microphone, one minute for ten states to get to the microphone.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN CAULEY (Department of South Dakota): I am John Cauley, State Commander of South Dakota. I would like consideration of this vote.

COMRADE LOUIS PETERSON (Department of Maine): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Department of Maine asks for an affirmative vote on that.

COMRADE DONALD ALBERTS (Department of Colorado): I support this reconsideration.

COMRADE JAMES RICHISON (Department of West Virginia): The Department of West Virginia votes “no”.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We don’t need a “no”, we only need ten Commanders that want to reconsider.

COMRADE JAMES RICHISON (Department of West Virginia): Okay. I will reconsider.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Do you want to reconsider, what Department?

COMRADE JAMES RICHISON (Department of West Virginia): West Virginia.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have got to talk into the mike.

COMRADE EDWARD LaVALLEE (Department of Arkansas): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, as the Department Commander of Arkansas, I want to vote for reconsideration.

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

COMRADE VINCENT SCIROCCO (Department of Rhode Island): I would like to say I believe he has a right to have his point heard. I also have difficulty coming all the way from the back to get to the mike, and we need to allow a little time so that we can get to the microphones, please.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Are you voting to reconsider?

COMRADE VINCENT SCIROCCO (Department of Rhode Island): Yes. I am the State Commander from Rhode Island.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Any others? Any

others?

COMRADE EARL GAUTER (Post 3820 – New Jersey): I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: There is no roll call. We need ten Commanders to request, ten Department Commanders. We have six at this time. We have more than two minutes that we have given everybody to get to the microphone. There are still only six. So, the motion dies. The motion to reconsider is over.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 – Florida): I move for adoption of B-15.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion for adoption of B-15. Do we have a second?

COMRADE MIKE WHITE (Post 3559 – Florida): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have heard the motion and the second. We will have the comments by the chair.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: These are the comments from the staff.

“Recommend rejection. This purports to allow for Districts in geographical boundaries for the Men’s Auxiliary that could be inconsistent with those already established for VFW Districts in the Ladies Auxiliary. There is nothing mentioned as to the requirement or Departments to allow for the existence of Men’s Auxiliary Districts in their Department By-Laws, and it mandates how these Men’s Auxiliary District Officers would be governed. This amendment does not cover all the necessary financial and resource requirements to allow for that level within the organization.”

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you for the recommendation.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 – Florida): First of all, this is a Department of Florida resolution, and I am here to state the case for the Department of Florida. When the formation of the Men’s Auxiliary was formed, we passed a by-law that says a Post, if the by-laws of the Department having jurisdiction so provide, may form an association separately constituted as a subordinate unit. The Department in which the Post is located shall charter such unit and such association shall be subject to the rules established by the respective Department Convention, Department Commander and Post.

All this by-law does is allow for those Departments that have Men’s Auxiliaries. There are roughly 28 Departments that have them. Others have chosen not to have them. But the ones who do have them, then all Florida is asking is the authority to establish Districts within our boundaries by our rules if the Department Convention or our Department so chooses. They may not choose.

All we are asking is the delegates here, who were so gracious in saying that the people in American Samoa should have the opportunity to become members, all we are saying here is that the Men’s Auxiliaries within the Departments that have authorized it should create Districts. That is all we are asking. If you don’t want a District in your Department don’t have it. Don’t pass it at your State Convention. That is all it is about. It is the right to choose.

If a Department chooses to have Districts, so be it. I know that the Ad-

jutant General is going to come down and talk about the expansion of the Men's Auxiliary, and that is another issue that we can talk about at another day. But the reality of it that is we have established Men's Auxiliaries in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and by virtue of a Department voting board, and I don't see any reason why the Departments, if they so choose, should not be able to create Districts. It is not about money, it is not about a financial burden, it is a financial burden to the Departments and not a financial burden to the National Organization.

So, I would urge the delegates to really consider giving Departments that want Districts the opportunity to have Districts.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ALLEN "GUNNER" KENT (Post 9972 – Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am "Gunner" Kent, a delegate from Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

My only question to my esteemed colleague from Florida, Mr. Benny Bachand, is exactly what does the Men's Districts provide to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States? When these Men's Auxiliaries were first formed on this floor, they said they were formed so they could help the Posts generate money, do programs, work at the Posts, help the old World War II, Korean and us old Vietnam veterans to sell buddy poppies, and all this other stuff they were going to do.

Now, we are going to create them at a District level. What is their purpose at the District level? I don't see where there is any purpose, because the Districts don't need help there. They don't sell buddy poppies, they don't have District meetings where they need help. They have Auxiliaries to cook the food. What do they need the Men's Auxiliary for?

I understand what my esteemed colleague is going to say: "Well, Florida wants to have them, so Florida should be allowed to have them." Well, we can't have 54 Departments making 54 different decisions on what they want to have and not have. Everybody knows I don't have any use for the Men's Auxiliary. I can live with them at the Post level, but let's don't expand them further. It is just a monetary mess.

It is going to be a command and control mess, and the organization does not need it.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 659 – Maine): With all due respect to our previous speaker, the District level of the Men's Auxiliary would have an effect such as what our District level at the Ladies Auxiliary and the veterans' organization itself would have. The Post Men's Auxiliaries could get together at District meetings, talk about what is working for them, what is not working, and share information and knowledge about what is helping to help the veterans.

I think that this is not a discussion about whether we should have a Men's Auxiliary or not, this is about getting the Men's Auxiliary more organized, more effective, so the Men's Auxiliary can help support our veterans.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BENNY BACHAND (Post 4287 – Florida): Thank you. I

think the gentleman there is exactly right. This discussion is not about the virtue of the Men's Auxiliary. We have already had that debate eight years ago when we decided we were going to allow the Departments to have Men's Auxiliaries.

All this is about is the jurisdiction of those Men's Auxiliaries, and if we can work them within our Department and make them a better organization to do the things that the Adjutant says, to assist the Posts and to make us a better organization, that is all this Department is asking and other Departments. By virtue of this being passed, we would have that opportunity.

Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KENNETH WISEMAN (Post 970 – Hawaii): I stand in support of my comrades on the other side. In Hawaii, we don't have Districts for the VFW. That is just not how we are organized. We don't have Districts, and now not everybody has to have Districts.

To the Adjutant General, the men who would join these organizations, including my father who is an army veteran but didn't serve overseas, would join and serve proudly. We should support them in this organization. And we don't sell buddy poppies, we give them out.

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

COMRADE MIKE WHITE (Post 3559 – Florida): "Gunner", with all due respect to the chief, we all cook the food and we all do the dishes, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a great organization that was founded on the triad of many other organizations. I wasn't here when the Ladies Auxiliary was formed, but I can imagine the spirited debate that that was, and now we are talking not of creating the Men's Auxiliary, because it is there, we have given the Posts the power and the authority to either have or not have within the Department.

We are now presenting an amendment to allow those Departments that do have it, that do want to expand the Men's Auxiliary to allow them to worry about the jurisdictional, the financial costs and everything else.

Commander-in-Chief, I rise to support this. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DAVID PROHASKA (Post 4434 – Michigan): I admire Benny for what he has done here in the Department of Florida trying to establish a District, somewhat. However, it lacks a lot of things. If they are going to have any kind of structure as a District, I am assuming they are going to have a District President, a District Senior Vice-President, a Treasurer. I am assuming those things.

But the problem is the way our by-laws are written, these are a subordinate unit of the Post. What is going to happen when the Post Commander mandates something from his Men's Auxiliary and the Men's Auxiliary District President says, "No, you are not going to do that", or other such things such as fund-raising and all that, competing with the Post to which it is subordinate to? I think this is a bad by-law amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Is there any further discussion? Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. You needed two-thirds to win, and there is no doubt it was not two-thirds. The motion is defeated. Thank you.

Any other discussion? Any other discussion on the National By-Laws or

Manual of Procedure?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I want to thank all of you comrades that openly and honestly debated these issues. I think that is what makes this a great organization that we all belong to, and if we continue to do that we will continue to grow and be a great organization.

Commander-in-Chief, thank you for the appointment, and I would ask that the By-Law Committee be "relieved".

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Chairman Glen Gardner, you are hereby discharged.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We will call for the report of the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization. The chairman is George Lisicki.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LISICKI: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades: Our Committee met yesterday afternoon on Finance and Internal Organization. We had one Resolution, No. 201, "Death With Dignity."

After a short discussion and after Quartermaster General Larry Maher talked about the cost of this Resolution to our organization, which could be as high as \$383 million the first 12 months, running this program would break the organization. After the discussion, it was voted on and rejected by the Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The Committee's recommendation is to allow the Resolution to die. Anyone standing in favor?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LISICKI: Commander-in-Chief, I would just like to thank my vice-chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Norman Staab, Quartermaster General Larry Maher, the Assistant Quartermaster General Bob Greene, Staff assistants Matt Claussen and Pat Botbyl for their assistance, and I ask that we be discharged from this Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Past Commander-in-Chief Lisicki, you are hereby discharged. Thank you for your hard work.

In case you are wondering, the Parliamentarian behind me is "Fritz" Mihelcic, and that is why he is standing here. I am keeping him busy.

Next, we will have the report of the Committee on General Resolutions. The chairman is Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Tom. To all the delegates, I hope you are having a great 111th National Convention. I am the chairman of the General Resolutions Committee. We have eight Resolutions to deal with.

I will, first of all, deal with those that have been accepted, and then I will follow with those that have been amended. Then I will follow with those that have been rejected. I would ask that if anybody wants any of these set aside to please approach the microphone and let your wishes be known. Are we ready to go?

First of all, for those adopted, we have R-304, which deals with "Sup-

port a Bond, Stamp and Coin Program to Benefit American Warriors and Their Families.” That one is for adoption.

Then we also have R-307, “Support Cold War Service Medal Legislation.” The Committee recommends adoption.

And R-308, “VFW Motorcycle Rider Group.” The Committee recommends adoption.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Okay. You have heard the motion for adoption. Do we have a second?

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Is there any discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVEN RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, first of all, I want to thank you for your support giving recognition to the motorcycle organizations. There is another resolution, Resolution 303, on motorcycle organizations. I believe it better fits the needs of the Departments than 308 does.

You have a motion for 308, and I am trying to discuss 308 by explaining that I believe 303 better fits the needs. If you pass 308, does that mean we can't pass 303?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: So, you want to set aside 308?

COMRADE STEVEN RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): Yes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: No. 308 is set aside. Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE RICK TANNER (Post 3787 – California): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I don't have a 308 listed in any of my books. I don't know if anybody else does. Was that one that was sent to the Committee and should have been read?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The Committee members all had it. We should read it.

COMRADE MATT CLAUSSEN: This is Resolution 308, VFW Motorcycle Group. This was agreed to as a preface by a meeting of the motorcycle riders on Saturday evening. I will read the entire Resolution.

“WHEREAS, numerous Departments have requested authorization for the formation of VFW Motorcycle Riders Groups; and

“WHEREAS, these Departments have stipulated a primary consideration to maintain integrity to the VFW and its image as core factors to the Riders Groups; and

“WHEREAS, an Ad Hoc Committee was established by the Adjutant General in October 2009 to provide suggested guidelines concerning the formation and existence of VFW Motorcycle Riders Groups; and

“WHEREAS, proposed guidelines were accordingly developed by the Ad Hoc Committee and sent on January 2010 to all Departments for further suggestions and comments; and

“WHEREAS, the Commander-in-Chief directed a meeting be conducted at the National Convention to further discuss this issue and coordinate the guidelines; and

“WHEREAS, the consensual final recommendation of the Convention Committee is to allow the formation of the VFW Riders Groups, provided there is no affiliation with the Confederation of Clubs, COC, and that each Department titles their riders' organization as a Riders Group or Riders As-

sociation and not as a club.

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the national guidelines will be established that, one, standardizes the title of the formed groups; two, that protects the trademark of the Cross of Malta; three, mandates the use of the one-piece patch; four, mandates each member of the Riders Group must wear the appropriate logo, i.e., the VFW Cross of Malta, and Ladies Auxiliary members wear their logo, et cetera."

"Five, all groups must adhere to Posts, Departments and National By-Laws as applicable, especially as it pertains to the handling of funds as directed by Section 709 of the National By-Laws; and six, the groups not be allowed to elect officers, but be formed as a Committee or unit of the Posts, similar to the Post Honor Guards."

This has been submitted by the Commander-in-Chief to the Committee on General Resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Is there any further discussion? What we are going to do is we are going to vote on No. 304 and 307. Those are two that were recommended for adoption.

Those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: With your permission, Microphone No. 1, what we would like to do is to set 308 aside, and when we come to the rejections, of which 303 is a part of, bring that up at that time. Is that agreeable with you, sir?

COMRADE STEVEN RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): I believe so. What needs to happen next is I will move for adoption of 303 and we will discuss the two of them?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: That is correct. We will move on to those Resolutions that we approved as amended, and that is only one, R-302. The deletion is to eliminate the final "Be It Resolved" clause. On Resolution 302, the recommendation is to delete the final "Be It Resolved" clause. I move for its adoption, as amended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We don't need a second.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Commander-in-Chief, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We got it anyway. We are voting for, as amended, No. 302, Resolution 302. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Okay. Now we have those that were rejected by the Committee. First of all, we have R-301, "Patriotic March National Convention." We recommend rejection.

R-303, "VFW Motorcycle Program." The Committee recommends rejection.

R-305, "National Flag to Honor and Remember Those Who Died While Serving in America's Military." The Committee recommends rejection.

R-306, "Recognize as Eligible Members of the VFW with the Cold War Medal." The Committee recommends rejection. That's it.

Just for clarification, Resolution 303 was rejected in favor of 308 by the Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Does anybody want to adopt 301, 303, 305, 306?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVEN RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): I move for adoption

of Resolution 303.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Now, you will need a second.
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JOHN HOLLAND (Post 1 – Colorado): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second to adopt R-303.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I would just like to read on Resolution 303 the comments from the Committee. The Committee has recommended rejection in favor of Resolution 308 as this was approved by all the riders at their meeting on August 21, 2010.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): Commander-in-Chief, you said it was approved by all the riders at the meeting. I was at the meeting and did not approve it. So, that is not correct. I believe what it says is “consensus”, not 100 percent. May I continue a little bit, or do I need to step back?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We are going to talk about them one at a time. That will be 303.

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): May I speak?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: If 303 is approved, 308 cannot be approved. We will do 303 first.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BILL REGAN (Post 7452): I am Bill Regan, Post 7452, delegate to this convention. I stand opposed to 303. Resolution 308 definitely sets out the guidelines for this. This is a new organization and we need guidelines for marching orders.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ALLEN KENT (Post 9972 – Arizona): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am “Gunner” Kent, a delegate from Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona. When this 303 was brought up at the meeting we had with the motorcycle group directed by the Commander-in-Chief, Resolution 308 was also brought up, and after much, much discussion, I will say with a great group of riders, I don’t know anything about motorcycles, but we discussed all the pros and cons of both of these, and the comrade from Colorado is correct. It was not unanimous to go with 308 against 303.

However, the majority of the riders there believed what the Commander-in-Chief proposed in his Resolution, which is No. 308, was the betterment for the Riders Group Association at this time. The reason for it is 303 gives no guidelines in it. Basically, what 303 says is that there will be 54 Departments that can form 54 riders groups. They can do whatever they want and whenever they want and however they want, and nobody is in charge.

To me, that is total chaos, and chaos is not good any time. The Commander-in-Chief’s Resolution 308 specifically gives different steps they must start with, and as the comrade to my right stated, there needs to be some kind of guidelines to begin this group, and then we can progress. With that, I stand in opposition to No. 303.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JAMES HESSELGRAVE (Post 5578 – Minnesota): I also stand in opposition to No. 303. We have fought long and hard, probably the

better part of ten years, to bring a little bit of national recognition to this and to help the Vander Clute Ride. I agree with the Adjutant General. We worked hard on this. I recommend that we reject this Resolution and go with 308.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any other discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JIM HOLMES (Post 5717 – Missouri): I stand in front of you to recommend rejection of 303. It shows no direction. No. 308, in my estimation, is the way to go.

I have been involved with the VFW motorcycle riders now for close to ten years, along with Jim Hesselgrave, and I think it is the best thing for us.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEVEN RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): Some of the problems I have with No. 308 is it says to standardize the title to form groups, and it infers —

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We are only talking about 303 right now. We are only talking about 303. Do you have any discussion on 303?

COMRADE STEVEN RYLANT (Post 41 – Colorado): All right. Resolution 303 establishes a recognition of the motorcycle organizations from the various Departments as a program. It does give us the recognition that we have been asking for. The reason that we asked that it be organized by Departments, because we already have 26 different Departments, I believe, that have motorcycle organizations. They have different names.

The Department of Colorado is the VFW Warriors. We have heard the name “warrior” many times today, as wounded warriors, et cetera.

Young veterans in Colorado, Fort Carson, is the one that started our VFW organization and they are proud to be called “Warriors” and they don’t want to be called VFW Riders like American Legion Riders, and they are concerned they are going to lose the ability to be called VFW Warriors if this Resolution is not approved.

I am in agreement that we need to have something, and if the consensus or the vote says we go with 308, Colorado will live with that. I believe that No. 303 is better for our Departments than 308. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE PETE NICHOLSEN (Post 10097 – Florida): We do not support 303. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, comrade. Any further discussion? Any further discussion? Seeing no further discussion, all in favor will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed. The “nays” have it.

Now, Resolution 308 is on the floor. Any discussion for No. 308? Any discussion for No. 308? We have someone running down the aisle.

COMRADE BARB LONCAR (Post 6954 – Pennsylvania): I don’t actually have the written verbiage in front of me because it wasn’t in my booklet. But I didn’t hear mention of the Men’s Auxiliary, he said Ladies Auxiliary when he read it, and I thought he was reading it verbatim. So, I just wanted to clarify it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: I am sorry. It was inferred with

the “et cetera”, when it did say VFW members wear the VFW logo, the Ladies Auxiliary wears the Ladies Auxiliary logo, et cetera. That referred to the Men’s Auxiliary.

COMRADE BARB LONCAR (Post 6954 – Pennsylvania): Thank you. I just wanted to clarify that, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: And the Cooties, that was mentioned at the meeting, the Cooties. Any further discussion? All in favor of adoption of R-308, signify by saying “aye”; all those opposed. The “ayes” have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, Commander. That concludes the report of our Committee. I would like at this time — if I can find my notes — I would like to introduce the Vice-Chairmen of my Committee, the Past Commander-in-Chief James Nier from Texas, Past Commander-in-Chief Jack Carney from Florida, Past Commander-in-Chief John Moon from Ohio and Inspector General Rick Barg from South Dakota.

I would like to thank the Vice-Chairmen and I would like to thank all the Committee members for their input at our lengthy meeting yesterday.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, unfortunately, you can’t discharge me because I have got to stay on duty. But thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It is a good thing you are staying on duty, Past Commander-in-Chief Hogan.

Now, we will have the report of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs. The chairman is John Furgess.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. It is my pleasure to report that the Convention Committee on Security and Foreign Affairs convened in the Indiana Convention Center yesterday at 2:00 p.m. Your instructions were read, the roll call was conducted, and action was taken on the Resolutions referred to this Committee.

A portion of the Committee members were designated to participate on the POW/MIA Subcommittee. I also would like to congratulate the following Departments who studied National Security Resolutions in their Department Conventions and made their way to this great National Convention.

Those Departments that submitted National Security Resolutions, in addition to the National Staff and the Commander-in-Chief, were Montana, California, Louisiana, Europe, New Jersey and Washington.

For their support and guidance, I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Smart of New Hampshire, the Chairman of the POW/MIA Subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Gwizdak of Georgia, and the Vice-Chairmen of the POW/MIA Subcommittee, Past Commander Ed Banas of Connecticut.

Also, I want to extend the Committee’s gratitude and my personal appreciation to our Committee advisors, Joe Davis from the VFW Washington Office, and Troy Danderson from the National Headquarters, as well as to all the members of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee

who are assembled here this afternoon, and the POW/MIA Subcommittee for their thoughtful deliberation and active participation in the Committee meeting.

At the main Committee meeting, we were very fortunate to hear from Minister Tseng Jing-ling, from the Veterans Affairs Commission of the Republic of China on Taiwan, who was attending his first VFW Convention, as well as Retired General Ruslan Aushev, President, War Veterans Committee Russian Federation, and retired Colonel Shorokhov, Vice-President of Russia's VFW equivalent, Combat Brotherhood.

Commander-in-Chief, the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee carefully deliberated each and every Resolution. I will now move forward with the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee recommendations. If any of the delegates to this Convention would like a Resolution set aside, please so indicate after I have read the completed approval segment of the report and approved for adoption.

I will now read the Resolution numbers of the Committee's recommendations for approval as submitted:

Resolution 401, recommend approval.
Resolution 402, recommend approval.
Resolution 404, recommend approval.
Resolution 405, recommend approval.
Resolution 406, recommend approval.
Resolution 407, recommend approval.
Resolution 408, recommend approval.
Resolution 409, recommend approval.
Resolution 410, recommend approval.
Resolution 411, recommend approval.
Resolution 412, recommend approval.
Resolution 413, recommend approval.
Resolution 414, recommend approval.
Resolution 415, recommend approval.
Resolution 416, recommend approval.
Resolution 417, recommend approval.
Resolution 418, recommend approval.
Resolution 419, recommend approval.
Resolution 420, recommend approval.
Resolution 421, recommend approval.
Resolution 423, recommend approval.
Resolution 424, recommend approval.
Resolution 426, recommend approval.
Resolution 427, recommend approval.
Resolution 432, recommend approval.
Resolution 433, recommend approval.
Resolution 434, recommend approval.
Resolution 435, recommend approval.
Resolution 437, recommend approval.
Resolution 438, recommend approval.

Commander-in-Chief, I move these Resolutions be approved.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. You have heard the motion and the second. Any discussion? Any discussion? Any discussion? Seeing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The

“ayes” have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. I move forward with the Committee’s recommendations for rejection and the reason. After this list is read, you will have the 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 by any comrade in regards to a specific Resolution, the Resolution will be under our convention rules automatically rejected.

We recommend Resolution 425 be approved as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, for the purpose of information we may want to read the amended portion of Resolution 425 “Oppose Repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’.” What we added to the first Resolved, “The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States oppose all efforts to repeal Public Law 103-160, Section 654 of the U.S. Code, Title 10, and the defense policy ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’, which has proven to be an effective compromise.” I second the motion to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: There has been a motion and a second to adopt the amendment to Resolution 425. Any discussion? Any discussion? All in favor will signify by saying “aye”; those opposed. The “ayes” have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: Finally, comrades, these Resolutions the Committee recommends for rejection and the reason. After this list is read, you will again have the same opportunity.

Resolution 403, recommend rejection in favor of 438.

Resolution 422, recommend rejection in favor of Resolution 307.

Resolution 436, recommend rejection.

Resolution 439, recommend rejection.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Since there is no motion to adopt, they are rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: Commander-in-Chief, this concludes the Committee report and I appreciate it very much and thank you for the appointment. I will ask to be dismissed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Past Commander-in-Chief Furgess, you and your Committee are dismissed with our thanks.

We will now have the report of the Subcommittee on POW/MIA. The Chairman is John W. Gwizdak.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE MARTIN SPANI (Post 1040 – Washington): I move that we set aside Resolution 439.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: That was rejected. You missed your chance to make a motion to accept. We asked three times.

COMRADE MARTIN SPANI (Post 1040 – Washington): I was on my way to the mike.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We had them listed for five minutes.

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW-MIA

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, the POW-MIA Subcommittee of the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee convened at the Indiana Convention Center on Sunday, August 22, 2010. Your instructions were followed by all members.

All members were present or accounted for, and action was taken on the Resolutions assigned to this Committee.

I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman of the POW/MIA Subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas from Connecticut for his extensive knowledge on this issue. We also extend the Committee's gratitude and personal appreciation to our advisor, Joe Davis, from the Washington Office and Troy Danderson from the National Headquarters.

Our guest speaker was Mr. Johnie Webb, the Deputy to the Commander of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command in Hawaii, who provided an updated briefing on JPAC's activities and future operations.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Committee carefully reviewed and deliberated each Resolution. I will now read the Resolution numbers that the Committee recommends for approval as submitted. If any delegate would like a Resolution set aside for discussion, please so indicate after I have completed the report and move for adoption.

Resolution 428, "POW/MIA Full Accounting Commitment and Agency Funding."

Resolution No. 429, "Renew POW/MIA Discussions with North Korea."

Resolution 430, "Call for Vietnam POW/MIA Unilateral Action."

Resolution 431, "U.S. – Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs."

All these Resolutions were unanimously approved by the Committee and we recommend to the body they adopt them at this time.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ED BANAS: I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have heard the motion and the second. Any further discussion? Any further discussion? Is anyone walking toward the microphones? We can't see. It sounds funny, but it is pretty difficult with the lights up here. All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Commander-in-Chief, we didn't have any other resolutions to consider, and this concludes the POW/MIA Subcommittee report, and our thanks to everybody that participated on the subcommittee, they did a great job.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You are dismissed, and thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: May I request to approach the podium?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Yes.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: Commander, I request permission to note as a final order of business of our Committee yesterday, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that a Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs be hired once funding becomes available. Those funds are not available now. Once funds become available, we feel like national security is one of the VFW's more primary objectives with our involvement around the world on POW/MIA with the Department of Defense, Homeland Security, Department of State. We believe that the position is too important to relegate as an additional duty. Once funding becomes available, we should do that.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. I believe that is it. We cannot vote to extend the funds. That motion would be out of order.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: The Judge Advocate General assures me the motion is not authority to spend, so I will accept that what

I said was out of order. We will keep that in mind for future action. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: That is a good idea. Next, we will have the report of the Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions. The chairman is Gary Kurpius.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Thank you, Commander. Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, I report that your Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions convened at 2:00 o'clock p.m. on August 22, 2010, and the following matters were discussed:

The Committee was divided into three Subcommittees to carefully deliberate each of the 61 Resolutions that were assigned.

The Subcommittees established were as follows. The Subcommittee on Health, chaired by Dale Ronning and Vice Chairman Barry Walter. They had staff advisors Shane Barker and Michael O'Rourke.

Subcommittee 2 was Employment by Chairman Jimmy Lee Wallace, and Vice-Chairman Court Fraley. The advisors were Larry Berman and Eric Hilleman.

Subcommittee 3 was Veterans Benefits and Entitlements, and chaired by Daniel Crocker. The Vice Chairman was Comrade Kenneth Thie. The staff advisors were Jim Wear and Teresa Morris.

Before proceeding to the report, I wish to express appreciation to Eric Hilleman, the National Legislative Service Director assisting, and Larry Berman from National Veterans Service. I also want to thank Past Commander-in-Chief John Wasylik from Ohio for serving as the Vice Chairman for this very important Convention Committee. Also, Dawn Jirak from the VFW staff, who served as Secretary and coordinated the results of our deliberations.

Commander, with your permission, I will give the Committee report by presenting those Resolutions that the Committee recommended to be approved as written. I will proceed with the Resolution number that the Committee recommends for approval as written. Bear with me, comrades, because this is a rather lengthy list.

Nos. 601, 602, 603, 605, 606, 607, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 615, 616, 617, 618, 621, 625, 630, 631, 632, 633, 635, 637, 638, 640, 642, 643, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 657.

I move to accept the Committee's recommendation to approve these Resolutions.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have heard the motion that has been made and duly seconded. Any discussion? Any discussion? Any discussion? All in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: I will now present the Resolution numbers that the Committee recommends approved, as amended. These were basically just "ands" and "ifs" or other clarifications in there.

The Resolutions are Nos. 604, 608, 614, 619, 620, 623, 626, 628, 629, 634, 639, 644, 655, 660.

I move again we accept the Committee's recommendation.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have heard the motion and the second. Any discussion? Any discussion? Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor will signify by saying "aye"; those opposed. The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: Comrades, I will read the Resolution numbers and the Committee's recommendations about why they were rejected.

No. 622, this was a Resolution that was accomplished as part of Public Law 113, Section 511.

Resolution No. 624 was rejected because that was already accomplished. This Resolution was accomplished as part of the same law, Section 101.

Resolution 627 was rejected, and I will give you the title of that, "Keep VA Services for Veterans and Their Families." It says the VA does not have the infrastructure to do this. It is not their mission to take care of dependents.

Resolution 636 was rejected in favor of Resolution 640, which was more concise.

Resolution 641, "VA Pension Look-Back", the Resolution is not beneficial to veterans and increase claims processing times.

Resolution 645 is rejected in favor of Resolution 649.

Resolution 651 was rejected as the intent was unclear.

Resolution 652 was rejected as being unfair to other veterans in the claims process and not on appeal. That was the interest on claims.

Resolution 653, "Eliminate the Delimiting Date for Eligibility Spouses and Surviving Spouse for Benefits Provided under Chapter 35, Title 38, United States Code." That was unfair to veterans and disabled veterans under other educational programs.

Resolution 654 was rejected in favor of Resolution 647.

Resolution 656 was "Support D.V.O.P.S./L.V.E.R. Grants Being Returned to Staffing Grants." It was rejected and should be tied to the performance and not just staffing to promote accountability.

Resolution 658, "Veterans Preference in Federal Employment" was rejected. They already have a General Resolution that covered federal employment.

Resolution 659, "Enforcement of Veterans Affirmative Action Programs in the Federal Government" was rejected. The Resolution was not clear in its intent.

Resolution 661, "Children Day Care Centers" has been accomplished. That was again under Public Law 101-63, Section 205.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Is there a motion to adopt any of those rejected? Is there a motion to adopt any of those rejected? If not, they die.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KURPIUS: That concludes the Committee's report. I want to thank all the members that served on the Committee. It was a rather large Committee this year, and they did an outstanding job. I would request an honorable discharge as we are dismissed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It will be honorable. Thank you for your service. We appreciate it.

COMRADE RON KAHN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, a procedural question before we close. For many years I have been coming to this National Convention. It has always been ten delegates from ten different states

that call for a roll-call vote. The way I understood it today, it was called for ten State Commanders that could call a roll-call vote. I might have missed it in the explanation of the Convention Rules. If I did, I apologize. But I would appreciate it if you could clear that up.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: On No. 12, it says, "On roll calls, the Department Commander of each delegation shall poll his delegation's registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of his delegation."

COMRADE RON KAHN: To call for a roll-call vote, the delegates that come to vote, not ten State Commanders in all the years past. I don't remember that being changed, Commander-in-Chief. Maybe I am wrong.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have not changed. I know two of the people that came up were not Department Commanders.

COMRADE ROB WEISS: As a delegate, we didn't know we could come up because it was announced as a State Commander.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: What was stated, Ron, at the beginning the Department Commanders, and then the Commander-in-Chief said no, that is wrong, anybody from the Department can make it. A couple of states were not —

COMRADE ROB WEISS: We all missed that, Commander-in-Chief. "Gunner", we are not trying to argue, but in all fairness to Ray Lupo and his group who tried to call for a significant roll-call vote, had they said delegates, anybody that is a delegate in this room could have come to the microphone, not just State Commanders, as I understood to be stated. I think many others in this convention thought that also.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: That was my mistake. You are right.

COMRADE ROB WEISS: Maybe in all fairness, we have an opportunity to try that again, to try and have a roll-call vote that would be fair to them. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RON GASCON (Department of Vermont): Commander-in-Chief, I am Ron Gascon, Past State Commander from Vermont. I just want to bring up a little picky thing. In our by-laws it says that for Continental United States, and all the states that we are State Commanders. I notice that the All Americans this year, it is All American Department Commanders on their hats.

I wonder how far the Department by-laws went back. I am a State Commander, I am an All American State Commander and have not been an All American Department Commander according to our by-laws. Thank you, sir.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, since there was confusion on the roll-call vote on B-4, now this was a reconsideration of the motion, which is the roll-call vote, the Parliamentarian and Commander-in-Chief have stated that tomorrow at the afternoon business session, if the delegates come to the mikes, ten delegates from ten different Departments and ask for reconsideration of B-4, we will have a roll-call vote on the reconsideration of B-4.

Please remember it takes a two-thirds vote to make this happen. If it is reconsidered, then it will come on the floor for a vote. That also will take a two-thirds vote. Is that satisfactory to the delegates at this convention? This will happen tomorrow afternoon at tomorrow's business session.

Also it was a slip of the tongue, as the Commander from Hawaii said we do not sell buddy poppies.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Sergeant-at-Arms, we will have the Closing Ceremonies.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Commander-in-Chief, National Sergeants-at-Arms, comrades, please rise for the closing of the session.

Comrade National Chaplain.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Heavenly Father, the activities of this day have flown by quickly. Grant us nourishment and rest as we recess until our next gathering.

Now, dismiss us with your love, blessings and mercy. Until we meet again, keep us safe and let us live in spirit of true comradeship and peace. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Please face the flag and join me in the Salute to the Colors.

(Whereupon, the assembly gave the Salute to the Colors.)

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the closing of this business session has been completed and your orders have been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: This session is closed.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 3:50 o'clock p.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION
TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2010

(The Second Business Session of the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., by Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: I will now reconvene the 111th VFW National Convention.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please conduct the opening ceremonies.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, please rise.

Comrade National Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Let us pray. Gracious Father, thank you for another day of life, service and blessings. Let the activities of this day recognize the contributions of those who have given so much. We thank you for their dedication to serve others.

Let us be mindful that all good and perfect things come from above, so we ask for your blessings upon all we say and do.

Continue Thy protection on our borders and those serving in harm's way. Be with their loved ones who anxiously await for their safe and speedy return. Give them the confidence that you are the creator and sustainer of life.

Now, let us praise you, from whom all blessings flow. We ask all this, from the one who is called the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS OBRIEN: Comrades, facing the Flag of our country, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

(Whereupon, the assembly recited the Pledge of Allegiance.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the opening part of this business session has been completed and your order has been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. I would like to call on Betty Gripp for the Report on Credentials.

REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

COMRADE BETTY GRIPP (Department of Arizona): Good morning, delegates. As of the close of business yesterday, August 23rd, 2010, at 4:00 p.m., we have total delegates of 9,057. Total Department Commanders, 49. Total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 23. Total National Officers, 36. That is for a grand total of 9,165. That is my report, Commander.

INTRODUCTION OF MOC SUPREME COMMANDER
MAURICE THERIAC

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Betty. A good job. 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 90th Supreme Scratch in Phoenix in August 2009.

Please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States of America, Maurice Theriac, from the State of Illinois.

REMARKS – MOC SUPREME COMMANDER THERIAC

We support, to the best of our ability, our VFW National Home for Children. Each year many Grand Pup Tents hold special events for the children and their families at our VFW National Home.

For example, Florida has Cooking in Stoves; Ohio has the Easter Treat. Missouri and Wisconsin have the Halloween Treat.

This last December we enjoyed a great time during our VFW National Home Christmas Party, which was held on campus. Our Supreme Commander’s special project this year is to purchase a small efficient compact automobile to be used at the VFW National Home. And we have done that.

Working with our VFW Booster Program, we remain the strong part of the VFW Post Recruiting Team. We have recruited as many VFW members as possible throughout the year. This year we recruited over 2,900 members for the VFW.

Our motto is “keep ‘em smiling in beds of white.” We continuously help hospitalized veterans everywhere by “keeping ‘em smiling in beds of white.”

Our Cooties and Ladies travel many miles working many hours providing the best entertainment possible by dressing up as Cooties and clowns to make this a special happy day for all of our hospitalized veterans, whether in VA Hospitals, nursing homes, et cetera, because I care, you care, we all care.

We do this all in the name of our Veterans of Foreign Wars. We are one, we are a team, a VFW worker with the degree of honor. We pledge to give you our full support as we take care of our veterans around the USA and the world.

Membership is vital to all organizations, and we as Cooties this year wound up at 99 percent. So, we had a great year in membership. We could use your help by joining this fun, great organization.

Commander Tommy, we thank you for the invitation. We thank you for the wonderful hospitality and we thank you for allowing us to be here, because I care, you care, we all care.

I did try to keep John Smart and Wally Hogan out of trouble in some of my travels, because I ran into them several times. But it is kind of impossible sometimes.

God bless the USA, God bless our service personnel, and God bless the VFW and the Military Order of the Cootie. I thank you very much for your attention. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
AND CITATION
TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GLEN GARDNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Maurice, and thank you, Cooties, for all you do in our hospitals. Keep up the good work.

During his 40-plus year association with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Past Commander-in-Chief Glen Gardner amassed a distinguished record of service to our nation, community and to our organization.

As VFW Commander-in-Chief, Glen 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, Glen proved to be an aggressive spokesman for all those we serve.

For that, and as his many years of dedicated service, we owe a everlasting debt of gratitude to him.

Please join me in honoring Past Commander-in-Chief Glen Gardner with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Distinguished Service Medal and Citation awarded to Glen M. Gardner, Jr.

"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, and for his many accomplishments as an exceedingly active member including successful duties as Post Quartermaster, All American District Commander and an extraordinary long and successful tenure as Adjutant/Quartermaster for the Department of Texas, ultimately reaching the apex of VFW achievement as Commander-in-Chief.

"Through his outstanding endeavors, he earned positions on several National Committees, including the National By-Laws and as Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. His laudable commitment to the VFW, along with the 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 24th day of August, 2010."

This has been signed by Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell, and Adjutant General Allen "Gunner" Kent. (Applause)

RESPONSE – PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Chief, the thing fell off. That is the way life is in the big city sometimes.

Let me just briefly say, I want to first thank my wife, Jeanne, and my family for all their support, because without them I could have never become the Commander-in-Chief of this great organization and worked for this organization.

Jeanne is not able to be with us this morning. We have a six-month-old great-granddaughter and Jeanne thinks if she gets more than five miles away from her there will be an emergency and she will not be there to take care of her.

I also want to thank all the members of the great Department of Texas, Post 3359, and District No. 3 for their help and their support over the

years.

To the members of our National staff, to Diane, Mary Ann and Betty, and those hard-working employees every day that don't get all the credit they deserve, who always made our job easier as chair officers, I want to thank them. Tommy and Richard, and their great leadership and the great things they have done for the organization.

Most of all, comrades, I want to thank each and every one of you and all the other members of this great organization. But because without the work that you do and the other members of our organization do on a daily basis, I would have never had the opportunity to be the Commander-in-Chief of the greatest veterans organization in the world, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you very much. (Applause)

VIDEO GREETINGS FROM GOVERNOR JAMES DOYLE, WISCONSIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: And now we will have a special video greeting from the Governor of the great state of Wisconsin, Governor Jim Doyle.

GOVERNOR DOYLE: "Hello, I am Wisconsin's Governor, Jim Doyle. I am pleased to be part of your welcome to the 111th VFW National Convention.

"We owe our nation's veterans a debt of gratitude that cannot be repaid, but what we can do is always honor their service and sacrifice. Our veterans deserve our respect, admiration and the best services and benefits that our nation and state can offer.

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliaries has a long and proud history of supporting and serving all of our states and nation's veterans. With 2.2 million dedicated members, your commitment and service to veterans and the community has left a positive mark on our state and nation.

"On behalf of all the citizens of Wisconsin, thank you for your service to our communities and for your service to our country.

"Today, I especially want to recognize Tommy Tradewell of Sussex, Wisconsin, as he finishes his service as the Commander-in-Chief of the VFW. The people of our state are grateful for his leadership and the many sacrifices he has made to serve our country.

"His actions have helped secure the blessings of liberty for many generations to come, and his heroic contributions to freedom have touched the hearts and lives of every American.

"On behalf of the people of Wisconsin, thank you all for your continued leadership, sacrifice, duty and commitment. Best wishes for a successful convention."

REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Again, I talked about it in my introductory speech, but I would like again to thank every Department, every State that welcomed me and took me on a tour. I really enjoyed all of the visits to the military bases around the world. I can remember going to Korea and going to the DMZ and seeing the first female guard on the DMZ, and knowing the week before I went in the newspaper they were talking about the 50,000 North Koreans that were gathering, and it looked like they could come towards the border.

As I think of that, and we sit here in our subtle freedom, I think of the tensions that those young soldiers faced as they faced North Korea and knew that if anything happened it was up to them to protect our part of the world from the North Koreans. They were up to the task.

The thing that amazed me the most was their ability to use the technology, and actually their enthusiasm to use the technology that they had.

After we visited the DMZ, we went down to the Air Force Base and there were the U-2's. The U-2 planes are very sophisticated. As a matter of fact, at 70,000 feet they can tell you what your license number is. So, if you are speeding near there, I think they could catch you.

With digital enhanced photography, they cannot only tell you what your license plate is, they can tell you the kind of engines of the vehicles. The U-2s that fly along the border don't go over the border of the DMZ. They can reach 17 miles into North Korea and with the heat-sensing radar that they have, they can tell how many trucks were started and if they are heading toward the DMZ. So, they use that technology and they actually program the U-2s to do that job.

After I came back from Korea, I went to Dover Air Force Base, and in Dover Air Force Base I am aboard a C-5H, the latest model of the big transport airplane.

As I am standing in the cargo bay, the young Cargo Master Sergeant comes up to me and says, "Do you realize that this cargo bay on this airplane is longer than the Wright's first flight?" So, that is the kind of technology and moving forward that we have seen not only in the Air Force but every single branch of the service.

I was in Alaska and we went to the medical training for our new young troops. This wasn't for paramedics, this was for the average troop. In a room that was actually a site of battle, they had troops in there and they were actually mannequins. These mannequins can breathe, they have a pulse, their eyes flicker, and many of them have lost an arm or lost a leg, and the troops have to come in, evaluate out of four people that have been wounded, which one is the most important to take care of, how to take care of them, and get each thing going to make sure that they have the right procedure.

Now, if they apply a tourniquet and the tourniquet is not applied properly, that mannequin does not stop bleeding. So, they have to do it properly. They have to start an I.V., and then they have to transport that wounded mannequin. They have to show how they are going to transport them to the helicopter or whatever Medevac that they have.

So, their training, their dedication, their motivation is fantastic each place I went. I went to New Mexico and in New Mexico we actually saw the training for the Drones. Each one of the Drones that they had there has a \$1.3 million camera on it.

Now, before the troops went into Fallujah they had these Drones flying around for just about a month and nobody in Fallujah knew that they were flying there, but they were taking pictures every day, every couple of hours. They had pictures of every person who had brought weapons into a building, everywhere they had stored ammo, everywhere they had planted booby traps, mines or IEDs.

They had all this information and all the branches of service worked together to get the information to the troops that were going into Fallujah. It was interesting to me after they went in there and knew everything they

knew and took care to protect every soldier that went in there with the information that they had learned.

After they went in there, some people said that it was a rout. Well, it wasn't a rout, it was using your information to the best of your ability. About a week later NATO said that it was an unfair advantage.

So, thank God, our troops have an unfair advantage. It is called intelligence and it is called using technology wisely.

So, I was really impressed with those troops and the cameras that they have, the planes that they have. One interesting thing that we saw in New Mexico at Holloman Air Force Base, they have what they called the Final Phantoms. Most of you know what the Phantoms were back in Vietnam, the F-4s. They use them now and actually wire them to be flown by remote control. When they fly them by remote control, they actually use them as targets to develop their new missiles to see how accurate they can fire those missiles. Now, when it is first hooked up to make sure that everything is right, they actually have a pilot in a remote-control plane.

Now, can you picture yourself being a pilot, having almost no control of the plane, and you have to sit there and going about 800 miles per hour, if the person down there on the ground happens to make a mistake and you have to take over? They have to be some pretty courageous pilots there.

We got to know the pilot and he is quite an ace. So, we found that technology again is fantastic. Like I say, everywhere that I have gone we have seen examples of technology, training and motivation that our troops have that make them second to no one.

I know if I was to go back in the military, I certainly wouldn't want to be on the other side of these young troops with the knowledge and the intensity that they train in.

When I was in California, we also got to go aboard the Nimitz, thanks to Captain Jack, who took us on a tour of the Nimitz, a ship with four acres on the open sea. The technology again that they have on that ship, and their dedication of 5,000 troops on that ship, all the planes, all the munitions, it is just fantastic to see.

The other thing we saw a few weeks ago in Kuwait, 123 degrees, and we are out there, it is pretty warm at 123 degrees. They have the black flag up, which means troops do not have to exercise. After they are there a while, at 123 degrees you still see some of these troopers exercising. Again, it is a commendation to their courage and their strength that they have, and their dedication. So, I was impressed with that.

While we were in Kuwait, we weren't able to go to Afghanistan or Iraq. Afghanistan was seriously building up the troops and Iraq was seriously drawing down the troops. We did get to meet a number of the convoys as they came from Iraq and brought the vehicles back that they didn't use anymore.

Some of those vehicles were at a big facility that actually rebuilds all the MRAPs, and they rebuild about eight of them a day. When you talk about technology, it is very interesting. There again, they have MRAPs that are used by the Seals and the Special Forces that the plant manager cannot go inside of because of the communication devices and the high-tech top-secret equipment that they use.

So, again, it is a tribute to their technology and how they use it. So, I would say the military is, as the guests have been saying, the best in the world, the best trained in the world, the best motivated, and they are doing

the job. They are getting the job done for us.

So, I would like to salute our troops for everything that they do. We are waiting for Congressman Andre Carson, and while we are waiting I think our Senior Vice has an address he would like to give. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Good morning, comrades. For those that didn't know, myself and Past Commander-in-Chief Allen "Gunner" Kent went to Vietnam in April. Part of that mission was to go to JPAC in Hawaii, and from there we went to Bangkok, talked to the representatives there at JPAC. From there "Gunner" and I went into Hanoi. While we were in Hanoi, we were briefed on some of the procedures that they are trying to get accomplished, and a couple of things that we were having a difficult time with, of course, is they were asking to continue use of their helicopters manufactured by another country.

Our difficulty was the safety and the maintenance of these aircraft. So, after we left Hanoi, we went down to Saigon or Ho Chi Minh City.

"Gunner" and I were able to go out to two sites, excavation sites. Now, comrades, let me tell you about some professional folks that make up our military. One of the sites was led by a young captain. Her name was Tracy Gilmore. She was very knowledgeable of the things that take place in an excavation site.

They took us to a pit where they had recovered munitions not only from the American battle site but munitions that were used by the NVA and the Viet Cong. They had a big pit there and part of that was all of this unexploded ordinance that was put into this ditch to be destroyed later, and the recovery of remains at the two sites.

We hopefully feel comfortable enough that in the near future, not too far from now, we will have a positive identification on some of the remains that were brought to that site. The expertise, the demolition folks, the engineers, the doctors, the people that clear this area for excavation, we have got to be deeply proud because they are made up of all branches of the service coming together as one for resolution into bringing back somebody home so we can have closure for the families.

Those are most of the things we work for, that we try to accomplish every day.

Last night we had dinner, a very good dinner with the Russian representatives, the general and the colonel, and part of their mission is to hopefully open the doors to maybe have us as Veterans of Foreign Wars ask our country to assist in trying to get remains for the Russians that are still missing in Afghanistan.

It is a two-way door, comrades. They are also helping us trying to find remains from World War II that they may have knowledge of what the Germans had killed, buried, and that the Russians had knowledge of facts after the war where these people's remains might be placed. So, we have a possibility of recovery.

So, we are going to continue to pursue that. It is very important not only to our veterans, but veterans being veterans. We have to realize their emotions as well, what it means to bring some type of closure to the families.

So, here in the near future we hope to continue doing that. We have the right people in Afghanistan right now that can ask the villagers and the mayors and all the folks that actually live in the country that might have knowledge. So, we are going to try to pursue that.

I don't think we ever toasted so many times in our life. It seems like ev-

ery ten minutes we were doing some type of toast or a salute or something. It was to the brotherhood of all combat veterans. That is where our link is with not only the Russian veterans, but anybody who has served their country and anybody who has ever went to battle, and you come back home, and some of us didn't get to come back either physically or mentally the way we had left.

So, those are the things we will continue to direct our forces in making sure that we accomplish our mission. We have those things that will be affecting not only our generation from World War II to Korea, to Vietnam to Desert Storm, Panama and Grenada, but the things that are affecting the course of Desert Storm, Iraqi and Afghan veterans, but all over the world we are just one step away from having to go to some other country.

Our country is prepared to do that. But we have got to make sure that our people that we are sending over there have the knowledge that when they come back they are going to be taken care of, and our organization, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, ensures that each and every one of us fight for those things.

With that, comrades, I know we are going to work hard for the emotions that we are going to be fighting, for the veterans coming back, either physically or mentally. That is going to be our responsibility.

So, I just wanted to share that with you, the Vietnam effort. I know "Gunner" will be the first one to tell you that it was hot. It was hot over there, dirty and dusty, and you continue to be amazed at the resilience of the folks that are out there fighting for our missing in action. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you.

Next, we would like to have our Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief from the great state of Massachusetts, Richard DeNoyer, to say a few words.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DeNOYER: Good morning, comrades. After being elected and installed this past August in Phoenix last year, I had the privilege of immediately the following month of September of making a trip with Bob Wallace out of our Washington office to Europe. Immediately upon landing in Europe, we went to the hotel, changed into suits. We had been traveling all night, so we were pretty tired. But we went to NATO and we had a briefing at NATO both with the Secretary of State side, the State Department side and the military side.

From there we went to Ramstein, which is where the troops go down range from and also come back from, and also many of the wounded are brought in for medical care to either be shipped back to the states or to be shipped next door to Landstuhl if they need immediate medical care.

We toured the base of Ramstein. They showed us the triage unit where the wounded are brought off of the planes, brought in for immediate care. We visited – the Air Force refers to it as the dormitory, we in the Marine Corps still call it the barracks. Things do change in the military. We visited base housing. They certainly live a lot better than when I was in the military. The accommodations have improved quite a bit.

From there, we traveled across Germany, stopping at Stuttgart and having lunch with the troops, dinner with some of the Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force. We ended up at the U.S. Army Command Europe.

Bob Wallace and I walked into the Chief of Staff's office, who was a Major General, and the Washington office sends your bio ahead of you so he had read that. He said, "Well, you were a Marine." I said, "Yes."

Immediately he jumped up, went back to his desk, picked up a picture,

brought it over, and it was the General in the Army, his Army dress blues, and his son, a Corporal in the Marine Corps in his dress blues. He was very proud of his son. He mentioned that his son has served in Iraq, and one of his very close friends had been killed, and he was having a little hard time adjusting and dealing with that. I assured him that the VFW was very proud of his son, and we thanked his son for his service.

In December, I went to the Philippines, and immediately upon getting there the Department of the Pacific mentioned to me the Philippines were having a ceremony in Olongapo commemorating the relinquishing of the City of Olongapo from United States back to the Philippines. They said, "Would you mind being a guest speaker?" They were looking for a guest speaker.

I said I would be honored to do that. We will need to do a little research, because I don't know too much about Olongapo, and I don't know too much about the relinquishing of that city back. We did our homework and put a speech together. It was quite an event.

We went downtown to the city, we were in a park in the city. They had children's choirs and they had students there. There were a couple of thousand people. I didn't count them, but it was very impressive. I enjoyed it very, very much. Some of you may have seen it in one of the issues of our VFW magazine.

While there up on the stage, I noticed a Philippino scout. I would say he probably was approaching 90 years of age. He was all decked out in his uniform with his medals on his chest and sitting in a wheelchair. His eyes kind of gazed on mine and mine on his. So, I went down and I saluted him and I shook his hand. I kind of think I made his day. He is a very proud gentleman, very proud to have served with the Americans during World War II.

I assure you that my impression of all of this is that the VFW is alive and well. We are respected worldwide and we are an organization that we can be very, very proud of. I thank you, comrades, and I appreciate having a chance to speak to you this morning. Thank you very much. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, the Congressman is still a little bit out. So, what we are going to do is go forward in the presentation this morning, and we are going to have the award to Judge Russell. Then we will get back to the Congressman when he decides to show up. I am sure you are tired of us tap dancing up here.

PRESENTATION OF 2010 VFW CITIZENSHIP AWARD TO JUDGE ROBERT T. RUSSELL, JR.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It is now my distinct honor to introduce and recognize the recipient of this year's VFW Citizenship Award, Judge Robert T. Russell, Jr., from the City Court of Buffalo, New York, for creating a Special Treatment Court for Veterans who commit non-violent offenses.

Judge Russell is not soft on crime, but he does believe that military service can have a unique and profound impact on the behavior of some veterans, who more often than not simply need direction and a helping hand instead of incarceration.

He requires all offenders to successfully complete rehabilitation programs as required. If they fail, they go to jail. His rules are that simple.

The judge also took away the “no one understands me” excuse some veterans used in the past. When Judge Russell convenes his Veterans’ Court, everyone in the room is a veteran so he brings peer pressure into play for people who want to succeed.

Your Honor, the VFW Citizenship Award has been presented annually since 1953 to recognize those individuals in the public and private sector who helped us become better citizens.

You make a difference in your community by changing one life at a time, and the Veterans’ Treatment Court you started in January 2008 has now blossomed into dozens of other courts around the country, and been recognized by Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

We are extremely proud of you, your staff, and everyone in Buffalo who have supported this wonderful initiative from day one.

Comrades, I present to you the recipient of the 2010 VFW Citizenship Award, the Honorable Judge Robert T. Russell, Jr. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: “VFW Citizenship Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Judge Robert T. Russell, Jr.

“In special recognition and sincere appreciation for creating the nation’s first Veterans’ Treatment Court in Buffalo, New York. The program acknowledges that military service can have a profound impact on the behavior of some veterans who commit nonviolent offenses.

“First created in January, 2008, the Veterans’ Treatment Court has become so successful in helping to positively impact veterans’ lives that it has since been emulated in dozens of other courts around the country, and has been recognized by the United States Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs of the United States.

“Your dedication to helping veterans to become better citizens is true to the ideals, traditions and values of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

“In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 24th day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration.”

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Jr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. “Gunner” Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – JUDGE ROBERT T. RUSSELL, JR.

JUDGE RUSSELL: To the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., the National Officers, and to the membership, I graciously thank you for the VFW Citizenship Award. The VFW Citizenship Award is uniquely special to me because it is from the VFW, the premier national organization of men and women who served in our military, who have given of themselves and made the sacrifices for the freedom that I and my family enjoy. And I thank you.

I am not a veteran, but my son, my dad, my uncles, my cousins have all served, and you do not have to be a veteran to love a veteran. I humbly realize that as I accept this award that my journey in the creation of a Veterans’ Treatment Court involves the culmination of work from many people who bought into a vision that we, the court, cannot only provide a service that is consistent with the traditional work of a court, but that we can also venture into new areas that can provide relief, hope and restorations to our warriors and veterans that are of service within the court system.

The Veterans’ Treatment Court can often be referred to as a problem-

solving court designed to address veteran's underlying issues, whether it is substance abuse, mental-health disease, or from the invisible wounds of war that contributed to a veteran's arrest.

It is believed that we can reduce crime and improve on public safety if our warriors and veterans are treated for their diseases, are clean and sober, on the proper mental-health medication, in stable housing and school, and are employed and caring for their families. Personal pride and hope is typically renewed for that person and that person once again becomes a stable member in our community.

It is further believed that we, as a community, will thus benefit by this habilitation process. One of my most rewarding experience as a judge was in the collaborative creation of a Veterans' Treatment Court, the first of its kind in the country. Since we began the court, over 40 other courts have begun throughout the United States and many others are in the planning stages. The court was created with the support of our community, health-care providers, and in addition to our United States Veterans Affairs office under the leadership of General Shinseki, and a volunteer base of approximately 40 volunteer mentors.

A prompt role in the creation of the court was the collaborative input by the VFW and its members. Today, many of the volunteers in Buffalo Veterans' Treatment Court and others include active members of the VFW. I am grateful that in the Buffalo Veterans' Treatment Court program that amongst its volunteer members, it also includes active members of our state VFW organization, such as our State Surgeon, William "Doc" Schmitz, Chief of Staff Marlene Roll, Tom Todaro, and I am also grateful for the support of our New York State Commander-in-Chief, Jack Veazy, and the state delegation.

This court has evolved into a breakthrough relationship whereby a federal agency, the VA, under the leadership of General Shinseki has assigned federal employees to work in the state court system.

Now, on every Tuesday afternoon during Veterans' Treatment Court, there are at least three federal employees employed by the VA working with the veterans in a state criminal court, providing linkages for treatment, awarding benefits that have been earned, and assisting with housing.

I respectfully accept this award realizing that I figuratively do not stand here alone, but that many people, agencies and volunteers, and particularly the VFW stands with me. It is a tribute to the nation and to the community in which we live that we can do innovative programming to assist our warriors and veterans.

To my wife, Bonnie, who is with me today, and my family, I am grateful for their support and harmony they bring into my life.

To the VFW, I once again say thank you, God bless you and God bless America. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE ANDRE CARSON, CONGRESSMAN FROM INDIANA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It is now my privilege to introduce Congressman Andre Carson.

First elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in early 2008 as part of a special election, Representative Carson was voted into his first full term in Congress last November.

Congressman Carson is focused on improving the quality of life for

hardworking families and individuals. His accomplishments include passing legislation to grow the local economy and create thousands of new jobs for Hoosiers; co-authoring a bill to protect homeowners by cracking down on abusive lending practices; and extending quality, affordable health insurance to an estimated 11 million needy children. To aid Indianapolis neighborhoods in their battle against a growing number of crime-ridden, abandoned houses, Congressman Carson successfully secured \$29 million in federal funding to revitalize troubled properties into affordable housing opportunities.

Funding supported by Congressman Carson enabled schools to rehire nearly all of their laid-off teachers, helping to keep class-sizes low and improving the learning environment for young people.

Congressman Carson serves on the prestigious Financial Services Committee and previously served in law enforcement as an investigative officer for the Indiana State Excise Police before being detailed to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Intelligence Fusion Center, where he worked in an anti-terrorism unit.

Congressman Carson is a graduate of Arsenal Technical High School. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice Management from Concordia University-Wisconsin, and a Master's in Business Management from Indiana Wesleyan University.

Comrades and sisters, please welcome, from the Hoosier State, the Honorable Andre Carson. (Applause)

RESPONSE – CONGRESSMAN ANDRE CARSON

CONGRESSMAN CARSON: Thank you and welcome to the great Hoosier State. Thank you so much for having me here today and for making the trip to Indianapolis. I am so pleased to welcome you to our great city. You have all served and sacrificed for our great country and we have been privileged to have you in Indiana.

I want to say a special word of thanks to our veterans from Indiana who are in attendance this morning. My grandfather is a proud Hoosier vet and he remains a constant source of pride and inspiration to me and others in our family.

I also would like to acknowledge Commander-in-Chief Thomas Tradewell, and all the VFW leadership for organizing such a fantastic convention in our great city. I know that Vice-President Biden was here yesterday, and he is a tough act to follow, but I am very glad that you got to hear about some of the critical work the Obama Administration is doing to improve the VA and better serve our veterans.

In a few minutes, you will be hearing from Secretary Shinseki. The success we have seen over the last few years has been the result of a team effort. Together, President Obama, Secretary Shinseki and Congress have realized that too often in the past our veterans were treated like second-class citizens. Your service to our country was met with inadequate services and insufficient attention by Washington.

Since 2006, Congress has been able to pass increases in the VA budget each and every year, including a record increase of nearly 12 percent just last year. And this year for the very first time, the VA is operating with advanced appropriations. (Applause)

Now, ensuring this funding up front has been a top priority for the VFW

for many years. That means that you won't see your health services cut when the VA comes to end its fiscal year next month. But we have only been working to ensure that you receive the health care that you deserve.

Because of the 21st Century G.I. Bill, returning veterans have new opportunities to pursue higher education, leading to higher pay and more stable jobs. Just a few months ago I had an opportunity to introduce the Military Families Preparedness Act. This will ensure that separating service members receive the financial training that they need to make positive decisions thus avoiding debt and ensuring that their families remain on solid footing.

I recently made a trip just a week and a half ago to Afghanistan and saw firsthand the harsh conditions and treacherous terrain our troops are facing each and every day. These men and women are doing a phenomenal job. They are sacrificing, each and every day, to protect us here in the United States.

Because of this hard-working sacrifice, I am more convinced than ever, our men over there will crush Al-Qaida, the Taliban, and the hold that the extremists have on that region. (Applause) What this means is that we need to be ready not only to welcome them when they return home, but to honor them by ensuring that they have the services that they need.

Too many of you experienced the joys of returning home only to face ostracism and challenges re-integrating back into your communities when you came back to America, only to be denied the services you were promised and the respect that you deserved.

This past treatment of our veterans is nothing short of disgraceful and it cannot continue. The treatment of our military heroes is a direct reflection of our nation's values, and it is another area that separates America from the rest of the world. That's why we, the VFW, Congress and the President are working to ensure that our veterans come home to the services that they need and get beyond the bureaucratic red tape.

Each of you deserves a country that recognizes and respects the sacrifices that you have made. I believe that the steps taken by Congress and great leaders like Secretary Shinseki are about building a better nation for all. I know our work is far from over, but together we will keep pushing to serve our veterans and better represent the ideals they fought for and continue to fight for around the world.

Thank you all for coming out. God bless you and God bless America. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Immediately following this session, we will take up B-4. There are now four microphones on the floor, so there should be no problem in getting to a microphone. We will do it immediately after this session.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Is Pat O'Neill in the audience from South Dakota? I would just like to say Pat O'Neill was the 1954-55 Department Commander of South Dakota. Yes, he is 90 years old and he still holds a Department Chairmanship. Pat, thank you for being here and thank you for working for the VFW for the last 60 years. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE ERIC SHINSEKI, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: It is now my honor to introduce

the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, General Eric Shinseki.

The General is a 1965 West Point graduate who served two tours in Vietnam with the 25th Infantry Division from 1965 to 1966, and then the 5th Cavalry Regiment from 1969 to 1970.

Twice he was wounded, to include losing part of a foot to a landmine, but instead of going home, he soldiered on to rise in rank and responsibility to command a squadron, a brigade, the 1st Cavalry Division, the 7th Army, and then in 1999 as the 34th Chief of Staff of the United States Army.

After 38 years in uniform, he retired in June 2003 after successfully leading the Army during the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mr. Secretary, you led the most powerful army on earth and now lead the one federal agency that is solely tasked to honor a nation's promise to her veterans. You did not inherit an organization without problems or challenges, but know that the VFW will always be your strongest advocate and partner on Capitol Hill, in the White House, and in all 1,400 communities where there is a VA facility.

We fully recognize and greatly appreciate what you have accomplished in just 19 months as Secretary, from adding new Agent Orange presumptions and easing the PTSD claims process, to greatly increasing programs in our nation's focus on taking care of women veterans, rural veterans, and those who are homeless.

Comrades, I present to you a fellow combat veteran, the recipient of two Purple Hearts and three Bronze Stars for Valor, the former Chief of Staff of the United States Army and now Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Eric Shinseki. (Applause)

REMARKS – THE HONORABLE ERIC SHINSEKI

SECRETARY SHINSEKI: Thank you all very much. It is very generous of you with that warm welcome. Good morning, comrades.

Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell, thank you for that very generous introduction and for inviting me to join you here in Indianapolis. Thank you also for your own leadership in Vietnam and your service and leadership here of this great VFW organization.

Let me also acknowledge some of your national leaders here on the stage. I won't name them all, but let me acknowledge Richard R. Eubank, a fellow Vietnam veteran. Congratulations as well to you as you prepare to lead this great organization in the coming months.

Your National Adjutant, "Gunner" Kent, and your outstanding Executive Director, Bob Wallace, it is great to see both of you again.

I know that Billy Bradshaw, your superb National Veterans Service Director, wanted to be here for this gathering and could not be. Let me add my best wishes to him for a full and speedy recovery as he recuperates.

To Jan Tittle, also unable to attend, many thanks to her and the ladies of the VFW's National Auxiliary for all the work they do on behalf of all veterans.

Congressman Andre Carson from Indiana, thank you for your support, Congressman, for veterans' initiatives that we all work on in Washington.

Judge Robert T. Russell, I was able from the back room to observe the presentation, your recognition of Judge Russell for what he does in the Veterans' Treatment Court in Buffalo, New York.

I had the privilege when I heard about his work to ask to be allowed to sit in his courtroom as he adjudicated Veterans' Court. I must tell you that it was a moving experience watching the care, the compassion, but also the discipline that he is administering on behalf of veterans to make sure they get back on track with their lives and, in fact, are on the road to recovery.

Judge Russell, your pioneering work and what you do advocating for veterans is much appreciated by all of us.

Fellow VFW veterans, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am honored to be here in Indianapolis with an organization that since 1899 has been a powerful voice for veterans rights in the halls of Congress and the Oval Office, and all across this country wherever and whenever veterans needed your help.

Over the years the VA and the VFW have collaborated to serve veterans. It takes the concerted effort. These things don't just happen because there is good chemistry. It takes concerted effort, hard work on the part of your leadership, your Executive Director, and on our part as well at the VA, especially during this extended period of economic difficulty.

There will always be unfinished work. That is the nature of the mission. There will always be unfinished work, but what is important for both of us, we establish clear priorities, put our energies together and go get the resources that will address those priorities. That's the nature of the mission. We have established those priorities, we have earned increased funding provided by President Obama and the Congress, and are addressing those concerns.

Let me provide some specifics about where we have come from in the last 19 months and where we think we are headed in the next 24. I am going to go through a list that has a lot of dollar figures associated with it and percentages. I am going to run through that and I will ask you to listen.

In this business, this mission, money, resources, people are fire power. If we want to get the mission done we are talking about, these are important measurements of progress. In 2009, a congressionally-enhanced budget of \$99.8 billion, congressionally-enhanced budget, allowed the VA to begin addressing a range of issues that had accumulated over time. Thanks to the Congress we were able to establish a framework, a foundation for much-needed change that would continue and follow; change that will enhance veterans' access to VA benefits and services, improve the quality and safety of our health-care programs, and then equally importantly re-engineer our business processes to provide accountability, assuring the best returns on investments and seeing where that money goes and knowing that it is being put to good work on behalf of veterans. That was 2009. This year's budget, 2010, \$114 billion is a \$14.2 billion 16-percent increase to that 2009 budget.

Provided by President Obama, it is the largest single-year increase in over 30 years for the VA. The President has enabled us to put in place programs and procedures that will serve veterans well into the next two decades. This is why when we have that kind of resources, the collaboration, the partnership that I started talking about between the VFW and the VA through your national leadership, and especially through Bob Wallace, day-to-day it becomes important that we have the priorities right.

Next year, the 2011 budget request, \$125 billion, an \$11 billion, 10-percent increase, over this large increase of 2010, that will give us much needed firepower to increase veterans' access, access to our ben-

efits and health-care services, and disability claims backlog, and eliminate homelessness by the year 2015.

Now, to deliver all of this, the VA must be without hesitation, an advocate for veterans, not lip service, but advocate for veterans. That takes a culture change which is underway. We need to make permanent the gains of the past 19 months.

Given, the economic challenges facing the government and the nation, the \$25 million increase in VA's budget over these two years, 2010 and 2011, underscores the President's commitment that he made to this organization, he made to the rest of us, to transform VA and to fix the persistent problems that have plagued the Department for decades. We need inside the VA a sense of urgency that matches the President's commitment, and that is what we are building today.

These fixes require setting clear priorities, challenging the VA workforce to get more and better results out of the funding we have been provided, and generating new business processes to track the money and ensure that it produces the greatest gains for veterans.

Last year we implemented the new Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, the largest student aid package of its kind since the original G.I. Bill of 1944. To date we have over 328,000 veterans and family members enrolled in college working towards their degrees. That is 328,000.

Now, when you add to that students who are going to school under the Montgomery G. I. Bill and Chapter 30 and Chapter 35 education programs, that number goes up to nearly 600,000 veterans and family members in classrooms preparing for the next phases of their lives. We need their ingenuity. We need their leadership, their operational experience, their toughness, their discipline and their dreams. We need it in American business and we need it in American government today just like we needed yours.

Now, we have worked two issues that have been a bit on the back burner for decades, one for 40 years, Agent Orange, and the other for 20 years, Gulf War illness.

Last October, I accepted the Institute of Medicine's (IOM's) 2008 Agent Orange Update, and based on the requirements of the law and IOM findings, the Institute of Medicine findings, I decided the evidence was sufficient to award presumptions of service connection to three new diseases, Parkinson's, Hairy Cell and other types of chronic, b-cell leukemia, that is the second category, and the third is Ischemic Heart Disease bringing the total number of Agent Orange presumptions to 15. The President fully supported these presumptions, and the Congress has appropriated \$13.4 billion to begin making payments to the 250,000 or so veterans who are expected to submit Agent Orange claims over the next 12 to 18 months.

I have been invited to testify before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on the 23rd of September to explain these decisions. I am happy to do that. It was a right decision. The President and I are proud to finally provide this group of veterans, Vietnam veterans and others who have been exposed to toxic effects of Agent Orange, to finally provide this group the care and benefits they have long deserved. (Applause)

Now, in the same vein, in March of this year, we provided presumption of service connection for nine new diseases associated with service in the Gulf during Operation Desert Storm. While we must continue to research what might have caused these illnesses, that cannot be our only focus. Our primary mission here is to address the veterans' suffering by diagnosing and

treating the symptoms of these ailments. For that reason, we have found presumption of service connection for these nine new diseases.

Likewise, in July, we simplified the claims processing for veterans suffering from PTSD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This decision ends decades of focusing on documenting the stressor event, which nobody could do very well. Everyone was challenged to do that, to get the details, the location, time, and so forth.

It ends decades of focusing on documenting that stressor event and streamlines the delivery of medical care and benefits to veterans suffering from verifiable PTSD that results from combat. This is a generational issue, not just Iraq and Afghanistan. This goes all the way back to the first operational campaigns we sent young Americans on. This affects every generation, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and forward.

We provided \$4.5 billion for mental health programs and hired another 1,000 mental health professionals in 2009 alone. This year we are spending an additional \$379 million on mental health, and our mental health staff now totals over 20,000.

Our priority here is to diagnose, treat and cure, and if cure is not possible, then diagnose, treat and care must become the standard. We are not going to allow our veterans who have carried the responsibilities of our national security squarely on their shoulders to languish for the rest of their lives without hope.

We are going to work on this. Traumatic Brain Injury, TBI, we've fielded a new disability rating system that greatly improves how claims are evaluated, and we have made enormous advances in treating those veterans with the most serious head injuries.

Those who arrive at our Polytrauma Centers comatose, with injuries that, only a few years ago were thought to be irreversible. The USA Today recently reported, and some of you might have seen that, recently reported on just some of our successes, chronologically listing the breakthroughs and VA's four emerging consciousness programs that are located in Tampa, Minneapolis, Richmond and Palo Alto.

Through innovative care, a tripling of their professional staffs over the past six years from resourcing and engaging families as co-providers in treating their loved ones. The VA facilities, these four facilities, have brought nearly 70 percent of these comatose patients back to consciousness. This is a rate that far exceeds the national norm according to highly-respected Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in New Jersey.

This is your VA, this is where your money is going to work, and we are leading the way in this once-thought hopeless arena in which people gave up hope.

There is much more to be done in 2011. We are going to focus on three critical additional areas of concern, of significant importance to veterans, at least as they talk to me as I travel: increasing access to benefits and services now eliminating the disability claims backlog and ending veterans' homelessness.

Let me touch on each of these key priorities and show how they are impacted by the President's budget.

Access: First, VA must do a better job at reaching out to all veterans to ensure they understand and are knowledgeable of our programs and their entitlements based on service-connection and needs.

Now, access runs a range of activities that include building new hospi-

tals, building more community-based outpatient clinics, veterans' centers, mobile vans. But it also includes supplying telehealth and telemedicine technology to extend the VA's reach into the nation's rural areas where life-monitoring, even into veterans' homes, where life-saving monitoring is ongoing today for roughly 40,000 chronically-ill veterans who cannot leave their homes.

In 2010, we have increased \$121 million in telehealth technologies. In 2011, those investments will grow to \$163 million. Now, the reason we are investing in telehealth is because all of us have this understanding that this is likely to be the next major breakthrough in delivery of health care.

Veterans health care: In 2011, the VA is projected to treat 6.1 million patients, equivalent to the populations of Los Angeles and Chicago combined.

Those 6.1 million veterans including 439,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. Those 6.1 million veterans will make 83 million outpatient visits to our facilities. We will be treating as inpatients something on the order of a million times, about 937,000 times.

To address large numbers like this, the VA has programmed the following resources to take care of these needs. \$6.8 billion for long-term care, an increase of 14 percent over 2010. Also, \$2.6 billion for care of veterans in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is a 30-percent increase.

\$5.2 billion for mental health care, up \$410 million over 2010, enabling us to expand inpatient/outpatient mental health care services even as we see evidence of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury and veterans' suicides increasing.

\$590 million for medical and prosthetic research. \$250 million to improve health-care access for the more than three million veterans who are enrolled and live in our rural and most highly-rural areas of our country.

\$217.6 million to meet the growing needs of women veterans, an increase of more than \$18 million over the 2010 budget.

Finally, funding for continued development of the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record, something that will begin to create the seamless transition as the uniforms come off and youngsters transition from DoD over to the VA.

In terms of benefits, in 2009 we received, for the first time ever, over one million new claims. That is not likely to stop.

Disability claims have increased 75 percent between 2000 and the year 2009. As a result, we now average over 97,000 new claims, disability claims, each month. We have launched an aggressive campaign to attack the backlog on multiple fronts and we have set some ambitious claim objectives; no claim over 125 days in processing. That is not an average of 125 days; no claim over 125 days. And a 98-percent accuracy rate. Not just faster, but also better and more accurate decisions in a timely manner.

When we get to 125 days, there is nothing magical about 125 days. We will look for another target. In the last 18 months, VBA expanded its workforce by over 3,500 people, began accepting online applications for initial disability benefits, initiated an innovation competition to get the best ideas out of our own workforce. Launched over 30 pilot programs and initiatives to identify the best practices, and invested over \$138 million in a paperless veterans' benefits management system that will be deployed in fiscal year 2012. Now, 2012 is October 2011. We are a little over a year away from this.

Additionally, VBA awarded a \$9 million contract, to fast track Agent Or-

ange claims associated with that presumption decision made last October. So, we are not taking 250,000 new claims for Agent Orange and plunking them down on what is already a large inventory. We are going to fast track that separately and keep those two moving in parallel. VBA's budget enables VBA to meet aggressive targets that we have given them. The President's 2011 budget request provides \$2.1 billion in discretionary funding, an increase of \$460 million, or a 27-percent increase over the 2010 level of funding. For VBA, this was unprecedented. It has never received this kind of funding attention in the past.

The budget also includes \$145 million in information technology funds to support the ongoing development of a smart, paperless claims processing system. We do intend to break the back of the backlog this year.

Homelessness: In this rich and powerful nation, roughly 463,000 Americans remain homeless on any given night. We accept that our veterans, who come from every town and village in this great land, are a vital part of the national landscape. We say that in honoring their service, we keep faith with Abraham Lincoln's promise to care for those who borne the battle and for their families, yet nearly one in six of America's homeless is a veteran. There are 107,000 of them.

This cannot define your VA, this cannot define our nation! So, if you wonder what this Secretary will be working on for the next several years, this is it. Over the past six years, we have reduced veterans' homelessness significantly. We intend to end veterans' homelessness in the next five years.

When I say "access", access also includes the National Cemetery Administration. Last year NCA performed over 106,000 interments of veterans and eligible family members, and we provided over 352,000 headstones and markers worldwide. This June we began offering bronze medallions signifying a veteran's status, bronze medallions that can be attached to privately purchased headstones and markers to designate that the interred is, in fact, a veteran. The VA expanded the NCA burial policy, resulting in a plan to develop new state and national cemeteries.

Ten grants, totaling \$40 million, were awarded to states to award five new state veterans cemeteries, and the VA opened five new national cemeteries for a total construction cost of over \$89 million. The President's proposed 2011 budget request includes \$251 million for cemetery maintenance and operations to support an estimated 114,000 interments next year, a 3.8-percent increase over 2010.

We are providing final resting places for the heroes of the nation, and we want those cemeteries to represent the national shrines those heroes deserve. So, what is the point of my relaying to you this extended list of projects, finances and people? It is sort of outlining our successes, the progress that we have made and sort of where we are headed. This is so you will have an understanding what the priorities are, what your leadership and what the VA has put our heads together on. I am sharing this with you because every dollar in additional resources, every step forward towards improving care, increasing access, eliminating the backlog, ending homelessness has a profound impact on veterans and, therefore, all of us.

On 1 October 2009, if we want a VA that is capable and ready to handle the unforeseen, on 1 October 2009, less than a year ago, a roadside bomb on the outskirts of Kandahar, Afghanistan, targeted a patrol of nine Army Rangers out of the 1st Battalion. Ranger Cory Remsburg was blown

in to a nearby canal; other members of his patrol were killed or severely injured. Ranger Cory Remsburg had the right side of his head shattered and caved in.

Following Medevac and six surgeries at military hospitals in Afghanistan, Germany and Bethesda, Ranger Remsburg was sent to our Tampa VA Medical Center last November in hopes that we could do some work with him. He was fully comatose, in a state doctors described as vegetative, the odds for recovery, any recovery at all, was very slim. But Cory, his family, VA therapists, doctors and nurses never gave up. They rallied to his side working on his limbs, massaging his body, keeping his muscles limber, using a wide variety of stimulants, everything from medications to aromas, to even television programs; anything that might simulate his senses, everything they could think of to bring him back to consciousness.

Long days, weeks and month, no signs. But finally three months after his injury, doctors recognized that Cory Remsburg had awakened. He had regained consciousness through sheer determination on his part, mirrored by the unwavering efforts of those who loved and cared for him, his progress has been agonizingly slow, but let me also report steady.

He communicated first on a computer keyboard. He has now slowly regained his ability to speak. He is one of VA's seventy-percenters, one of those who was comatose with severe traumatic brain injury who everyone had decided there was little hope. VA doctors, therapists, along with the love of his family and Cory's own fighting spirit brought him back from the darkness.

In June, he returned for a visit to his old unit. He went back to Hunter Army Air Field in Savannah, Georgia, the home of the 1st Ranger Battalion, to shake hands with his Ranger buddies.

As President Obama recounted in a recent speech, Cory is just what we would expect of a Ranger Staff Sergeant. When someone at the VA Hospital told him, "Cory, one day you are going to walk out of here." Cory's response was, "No, I am going to run out of here."

Staff Sergeant Remsburg embodies the great fighting spirit that made our country great, fighting spirit that you have firsthand knowledge about.

"Rangers Lead the Way" is the slogan of the Ranger regiment. Whatever service you come from, I think all veterans can relate to the importance of the words from one service's creed and much repeated and often heard is recognizable four lines: "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade."

Staff Sergeant Remsburg's life from, his ten deployments since 9-11 to his rescue by other Rangers, his fight for life, epitomizes that creed. He will not give up, period, and VA will not give up, either.

I will place the mission first, never accept defeat, never quit, never leave a fallen comrade, that could as well be the VA's creed. We will not give up on Cory Remsburg or any other veteran who needs the care and benefits that were promised by Abraham Lincoln in 1865. That promise defines my mission, is why I came back, and is what we work on.

It is the purpose of the funding update I just gave you to show you how we generate fire power and where it is going. It is also the mission of VA's 300,000 employees. We will always look to the VFW for your partnership, your assistance, your advice and advocacy for veterans to help us fulfill that mission.

Thank you for having me here again today. It is great to see all of you.

May God bless our veterans, may God bless our men and women who continue to serve the cause of peace in uniform. May God continue to bless this great country of ours. Thank you very much. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE 2010 VFW AMERICANISM AWARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The VFW Americanism Award is presented annually to individuals for their outstanding contributions to the American principles of patriotism, commitment to service, and love of country.

Since 1959, it has been presented to military personnel as well as to members of Congress, actors, entertainers, a billionaire, the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs, and a Vice-President of the United States.

Emblematic of all our magnificent troops and their families are the non-commissioned officers who provide mentorship, inspiration and intrepid leadership to the enlisted ranks and committed counsel to the officer ranks of our military services.

The membership of the VFW is deeply appreciative for the sacrifice and courageous service of all our enlisted personnel, and the ultimate way to honor them by us is to present the Americanism Award to the senior enlisted advisors of the five military services.

They stand as a bright and shining example of selfless dedication and support of more than 1.4 million active duty Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen.

Due to a cancellation of a flight, the army enlisted Sergeant Major Kenneth O. Preston cannot be with us today.

Representing the U.S. Army enlisted service members and the Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston is Command Sergeant Major Michael W. Williams of the U.S. Army Military District of Washington and Joint Forces Headquarters for the National Capital Region.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: I will read the citation. As we all know, when the flights get cancelled today, you don't get a back-up. We will have the Sergeant Major come to the Washington Conference and we will make the appropriate presentation to the U.S. Army at the Washington Conference.

"Americanism Distinguished Service Award Gold Medal and Citation presented to Kenneth O. Preston, Sergeant Major of the Army, on behalf of the enlisted men and women of the U.S. Army.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation to the enlisted men and women of the United States Army who carry out its national defense missions in theaters of operation ranging from Iraq and Afghanistan to the Korean Peninsula, the Balkans and elsewhere around the globe.

"The dedication of Sergeant Major Preston as the longest-serving Sergeant Major of the Army, and that of 550,000 active-duty soldiers serving today is true to the ideals, traditions and values 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 24th day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, the "Americanism

Distinguished Service Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Carlton W. Kent, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on behalf of the men and women of the U.S. Marine Corps.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation to the enlisted men and women of the U.S. Marine Corps who carry out its national defense missions afloat and ashore in theaters of operation ranging from Iraq and Afghanistan to elsewhere around the globe.

"The dedication of Sergeant Major Kent and that of more than 200,000 active-duty Marines serving today is true to the ideals, traditions and values 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 24th day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by me, Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – SERGEANT MAJOR GREG GRIZZLE

SERGEANT MAJOR GRIZZLE: My name is Sergeant Major Greg Grizzle with the United States Marine Corps Forces Command. I am proud to accept this award on behalf of the 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sergeant Major Carlton Kent, who could not be here today because he is visiting our marines in Afghanistan. So, for him and all of the Marine Corps, thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Representing the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Rick D. West, is Command Master Chief Chris Adams of Navy Region Midwest in Great Lakes, Illinois.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Americanism Distinguished Service Award, Gold Medal and Citation presented to Rick D. West, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy on behalf of the enlisted men and women of the U.S. Navy.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation to the enlisted men and women of the United States Navy who carry out its national defense missions afloat and ashore in theaters of operation ranging from Iraq and Afghanistan to elsewhere around the globe.

"The dedication of Master Chief West and that of more than 330,000 active duty sailors serving today is true to the ideals, traditions and values 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 24th day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – COMMAND MASTER CHIEF CHRIS ADAMS

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF ADAMS: I had a script I was going to follow, but I am not going to do that, because as I look at you, I want to be you, because this card right here, it is not metal like some of you older folks, but I do have it. It is a Life Membership. I am very proud of all of you. You probably don't hear that very often, but I am very proud of you for what you have done because I know I wouldn't be standing here today if it

wasn't for all of you. So, thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Representing the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, James A. Roy, is Command Chief Master Sergeant Christopher Muncy of the Air National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Americanism Distinguished Service Award Gold Medal and Citation presented to James A. Roy, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force on behalf of the enlisted men and women of the United States Air Force.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation to the enlisted men and women of the United States Air Force who carry out its national defense missions in theaters of operation ranging from Iraq and Afghanistan to elsewhere around the globe.

"The dedication of Chief Master Sergeant Roy and that of the 330,000 active duty airmen serving today is true to the ideals, traditions and values 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 24th day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE- CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER MUNCY

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT MUNCY: I can't let the Command Master Chief top me, so there is my Life Membership card, too. I am making sure that is up there, too.

On behalf of my wingman, Chief Sergeant of the Air Force James Roy sends his apologies for not being here. He is out taking care of our airmen around the globe. I know he would want to tell you thanks to the VFW for always fighting for Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and their families.

First and foremost, we must remember those families that were there for you when you were gone and they are there for our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen now.

On behalf of the Blue Suit business and on behalf of the 330,000 airmen in the Air Force, the 108,000 airmen of the Air National Guard and 70,000 airmen of the U.S. Air Force Reserves, we just want to say thanks. Thanks for remembering us when 99.2 percent of the American public has no clue about what it is to serve. We thank organizations like the VFW that take up that streamer, take up that guidon and fight for us. Thanks for being there for us and for taking care of this great nation. God bless. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: And for our very proud and vocal minority here in this audience, we are certainly honored to have with us Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Charles W. "Skip" Bowen, who just recently retired after 32 years of service to our nation.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Americanism Distinguished Service Award Gold Medal and Citation presented to Charles W. Bowen, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Retired, on behalf of the enlisted men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard.

"In special recognition and sincere appreciation to the enlisted men and women of the United States Coast Guard, who carry out its critical missions of national defense, maritime safety, security and mobility, and the protection of natural resources.

"The dedication to duty demonstrated by Master Chief Bowen and that of the enlisted men and women serving in today's active duty and reserve components of the U.S. Coast Guard is true to the ideals, traditions and values 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 24th day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General.

RESPONSE – MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER CHARLES BOWEN

MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER BOWEN: Go VFW! I am a proud member of the Gunnery Sergeant Elia P. Fontecchio Memorial Post in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

But I will say on behalf of the 50,000 active duty and reserve enlisted men and women of the Coast Guard that are stationed worldwide, including the Northern Arabian Gulf, it is a great honor to receive this from the VFW. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, let's render another rousing round of applause for our nation's senior enlisted leaders, and to all the wonderful active duty enlisted and their families that they so well represent. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, remember, as soon as this business session is over we will immediately go into the discussion on M-4, so please remain in the hall. We will go into discussion immediately on B-4.

Also, after that is over I need to see the chairmen of the four conferences, the chairmen or vice-chairmen, whoever is here, of the four conferences. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: I see Frank Brown is here from Wisconsin, 94 years old. Frank, it is good to have you here. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE 2010 ARMED FORCES AWARD TO GENERAL ANN DUNWOODY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The VFW Armed Forces Award has been presented annually since 1964 to military members and organizations to recognize extraordinary achievement to the armed forces of the United States, the nation and to our national security. In keeping with these extraordinary achievements, I take great pleasure in introducing our next guest.

General Ann E. Dunwoody is a fourth-generation U.S. Army soldier who has served our nation as a logistician for 35 years.

She is currently the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Material Command, one of the largest commands in the Army, with more than 67,000 soldiers and civilians operating in 49 states and 127 countries.

Since her first assignment in 1976 as a Platoon Leader at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, General Dunwoody has commanded at every level and held a variety of worldwide assignments. She was the first woman to command a battalion in the 82nd Airborne Division and the first woman in the U.S. military to achieve the rank of Four-Star General.

During Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, she deployed with the 82nd Airborne as the Division Parachute Officer. Later in her career, as Commander of the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, she guided one of the largest deployments and re-deployments of U.S. Forces since World War II, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

She is a graduate of the State University of New York at Cortland and later went on to receive Master's Degrees in Logistics Management and National Resource Strategy. She has been the recipient of a number of prestigious military and civilian awards, and received an Honorary Doctorate of Human Letters from SUNY-Cortland in 2009, and an Honorary Doctorate of Military Science from Norwich University in 2010.

Comrades and sisters, today we honor someone who fulfills the honorable tradition of extraordinary achievement represented by this award. Please welcome the recipient of the 2010 VFW Armed Forces Award, General Ann Dunwoody. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: "Armed Forces Award Gold Medal and Citation awarded to General Ann E. Dunwoody.

"In special recognition and appreciation of her exemplary military career spanning more than three decades, beginning with her army commission in 1975.

"General Dunwoody has embodied all that is in a brilliant military leader, admirably serving her nation in many challenging assignments and dedicating her career to enhancing the performance and welfare of United States service members. Always upholding the core values of the United States military, General Dunwoody has earned the greatest admiration and respect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 24th day of August, 2010. Approved by the National Council of Administration."

This has been signed by Thomas J. Tradewell, Commander-in-Chief, and Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Adjutant General. (Applause)

RESPONSE – GENERAL ANN DUNWOODY

GENERAL DUNWOODY: Well, good morning. I can't begin to tell you how honored I am to be here and how humble I am to be the recipient of this award. But more importantly, I am just delighted to be with this incredible group of men and women, the VFW team. It is such an impressive audience of veterans and patriots.

I think there are more folks here than in my hometown in Randolph, New York. Now, it is a real small town, a population of about 1,200. But I have to tell you, even though it is a really small hometown, it has a first-class VFW. Most of you wouldn't be surprised if I told you that its parking lot is the only one in town that is always full. Of course, half of them are snowmobiles. (Laughter)

Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, thank you so much for this honor and thank you for your lifetime of service to the VFW and to our nation. I also want to thank you for that very kind introduction. My mother would have believed every word of it, my brothers and sisters would have wondered who the heck you were talking about. (Laughter)

I am also honored to have shared the stage with the best of the best non-commissioned officers from each one of the services. I want to person-

ally congratulate each one of them and thank them for who they represent. Let's give them another round of applause. (Applause)

I know you have heard from the Honorable Secretary Shinseki this morning. We are so blessed to have such a passionate and caring leader leading our Veterans Affairs. General Shinseki has been and continues to be one of my coaches and mentors.

I remember several years ago when he was our Chief of Staff of the Army, he used to quote another great American, General Creighton Abrams, who once said, "What this country needs it cannot buy. It needs men and women who see service to their nation as an affair of the heart."

No organization represents that ideal more the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause) To those of you who are here and the 1.5 million folks you represent, I would tell you the average citizen probably does not know that for 111 years the VFW has been standing shoulder-to-shoulder with all of our veterans, that you have volunteered millions of hours to make sure that thousands of our veterans get the benefits they have earned, and that you have raised millions in scholarships to enhance education for our youth.

Because of you, too, service to our veterans really is an affair of the heart. A simple thank you will never be enough, because we all know that the men and women of the VFW are national treasures.

Please know that you continue to be an inspiration to me and to the men and women in uniform, past and present.

During these challenging and demanding times, I don't have to tell you that we will need you and we will need your help now more than ever. As you know, a new generation of veterans who borne the nation's burden for the last nine years must be cared for. Young vets, distinguished vets, vets with unique challenges and needs, and we can never forget what they have sacrificed for our country. Just like you, when they were needed, they were there. Just like you, they have given so much and asked for so little.

So, as you complete your important work this week, please, as you reflect back on the past and think about the future, every now and then I would ask you to look at the time. It is about 10:15 here in Indianapolis. It is 6:15 p.m. in Iraq. It is 7:45 p.m. in Afghanistan where men and women continue to risk their lives to provide hope in countries where there has been none, provide opportunities to those who have had none, and when they return home I know the VFW will be there to honor our nation's sacred commitment to our veterans.

So, I would like to accept this tremendous award on behalf of all of our great Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen. Thank you again for this incredible honor.

God bless you, God bless our veterans and God bless our country. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF CATHERINE CLEGG – GENERAL MOTORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: A great number of current and retired General Motors' employees have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

General Motors has a long history of supporting the military. During World War II, Detroit, home to General Motors, 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.

Catherine L. Clegg, General Motors' Vice-President of Labor Relations, is here with us today to provide some insight as to GM's rich history of support for veterans.

Catherine recently assumed her current position on July 1, 2010, and reports to our good friend Diana Tremblay, GM Vice President of Manufacturing and Labor Relations. Previously, she was a manufacturing manager for General Motors' North American Region.

Ms. Clegg joined GM in 1983 as a manufacturing engineer. She has held a number of manufacturing assignments that increased in responsibility for stamping and assembly plants, and was appointed a plant manager in 2001.

In 2007, Ms. Clegg was named a manufacturing manager, responsible for all North American stamping and die operations. Last year, she became a manufacturing manager for several assembling, stamping and powertrain operations. She oversaw an organization of 14,000 UAW-CAW represented and 1,700 salary employees in North America.

In 1982, she received Bachelors of Science Degree in Manufacturing Technology from Eastern Michigan University. Ms. Clegg earned her Master's of Business Administration Degree in 1987 from the University of Virginia.

And in relation to all of this, I would like to add, Cathy, that our late Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith would be very proud of your illustrious GM career.

Comrades, please give a warm welcome to Cathy Clegg. (Applause)

REMARKS – CATHERINE CLEGG, GENERAL MOTORS

MS. CATHERINE CLEGG: Thank you very much for that very nice introduction. It is really a pleasure to be here today with the VFW. The VFW does so much to assist Americans who have worn the uniforms of our armed services.

I know each one of you is proud as well you should be. You served our nation and now you serve others who are doing the same.

Within the last two months, I have seen some changes in my own professional life, a new job at GM as VP of Labor Relations and a new role as executive champion of General Motors' Veterans Affinity Group.

For those of you not familiar with the concept of the Affinity Groups at General Motors, we encourage people of similar interests or an affinity to get together both formally and informally, to network as well to help us improve the business with their ideas regarding their specific group.

We have ten groups at GM ranging from the Veterans Group to the Chinese Affinity Group. These networks make suggestions on what GM should do to reach out to target groups in terms of support, recruiting, marketing and so on.

The Affinity Groups bring a lot of great ideas and energy to our business, and we are very proud of their accomplishments. This week we are proud to have three of our Executive Board members of our Veterans Affinity Group here with you at the conference. They have manned the display, and perhaps you have met some of them. I just wanted to recognize them:

Doug Wait, who serves in the Navy, Elliott Benson, who served in the Army, and Keith Mattress, who has served in the Air Force. Thanks, guys.

Although I am new in my role as the champion of the Affinity Group for the Veterans, I am certainly not new to my support of veterans. I am proud to say that we have veterans in my family. I am proud to have a great-uncle that lays at rest at Arlington National Cemetery, having served in World War II. My brother-in-law served in Vietnam two tours of duty with the Marines, and most recently my young nephew, who served with the Marines in Iraq.

When I was plant manager at Fort Wayne Assembly, which is just north of here, as you know, we had a full wall entrance to our plant, probably a 40-foot long wall where we recognized every one of our employees and team members who served in our armed forces with a plaque that had their branch of service and name to honor them. Pictures and small biographies helped to remind all of us about those that sacrificed for our freedom and service to our country.

As a manufacturing manager with responsibility provided to a dozen plants, I was proud to see all of the plants have some form of tribute to our veterans and our military personnel. In partnership with the UAW, most of our plant locations have active veterans committees that do everything from organizing events in support of veterans to sending care packages to team members who are deployed, and to offering support to families who have relatives serving overseas.

Now, in this new role, I am learning that GM support of veterans extends far beyond the activities between the UAW and General Motors in our plants. From fund-raising efforts to finance programs that support veterans, to ensuring that GM goes beyond the legal requirements for supporting those that get deployed, we hope that GM's efforts convey how grateful we are to the men and women in uniform.

I would like to spend a few minutes talking about some of these efforts, because many of you or your friends and family members might benefit from our efforts. I know that all of you have served, have done so with pride and accepted the sacrifice that comes with military service. That sacrifice really comes to light when you visit a veterans' hospital. I think that is why the Liberty Project is so meaningful to us at General Motors. It combines something we know a lot about, designing and building cars and trucks, with something that we hardly imagine; injuries from a military duty that impact a person's ability to drive.

In partnership with the Army, we have placed two driving simulators that can help soldiers understand what can be done to help address mobility issues. To date we have placed one in the Walter Reed Army Hospital and the other in the Intrepid Center in San Antonio. We are working on one for Tampa. These simulators are equipped with hand controls and other mobility equipment that can assist drivers.

We all know that driving provides a sense of independence and freedom, so helping our injured soldiers maintain that ability is very important to us.

GM also has been an active supporter of the Road to Recovery Conference Job Fair, from on-site representatives to financial contributions to the conference. GM recognizes people with military backgrounds make terrific employees. Currently, we have 3,900 veterans that work at General Motors and, in fact, our recently-named CEO, Dan Akerson, graduated from the

U.S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering, and served on Navy destroyers before starting his post-military career.

When it comes to balancing military duties and work responsibility, we try to make it easy on our employees. To say thanks to them, we go well beyond what are considered legal commitments to seniority and to wage protection.

Employees on active duty related to Homeland Security, we continue their current earnings and we protect their benefits. For employees in the Reserve and Guard, we continue benefits and we pay the difference between what they make in the service and what they would have made on the job. In short, it is our way of being with them when they put on that uniform and then when they return to civilian life.

Finally, we also offer vehicle discounts to military personnel, eligible members of the military, which include active duty members and the Reserves for the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, National Guard and Coast Guard are qualified to receive preferred pricing on eligible GM vehicles through the GM military discount program. This is a great value and it is available exclusively from General Motors and gives you a special discounted price below the MSRP. You can visit gmmilitarydiscount.com to learn more about the program as well as you can stop by the booth we have in the Exhibit Hall and learn more, as well as some of the other efforts underway at General Motors. For example, the Cell Phone for Soldiers Program.

As I mentioned, hopefully you had a chance to stop by our display at the conference. There is a Military Tribute Camaro, perhaps you have seen it. If you haven't, I would suggest you make it a point to get by and take a look at it. It is really a very wonderful piece of work, and one of my favorites.

In closing, it has really been an honor to speak to you today. GM may be a global company, but our roots started right here in America. During the '40s, every one of our factories were converted to support the military effort and the men, and at the time a few women, that were proud to support our country. Today, the support of our armed forces continues and the men and women at GM salute every one of you for your commitment to our country.

God bless you all. Thank you very much. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BRIAN ALEXANDER, PRESIDENT, WORLD WAR I MUSEUM

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Brian Alexander is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National World War I Museum at the Liberty Memorial, America's only museum dedicated to the great war. Located in our home city of Kansas City, the National World War I Museum mission is to inspire thoughtful dialogue and learning to make the experiences of the World War I era meaningful and relevant for present and future generations.

Originally known as the Liberty Memorial, the structure was completed in 1926. For decades, the museum welcomed veterans and visitors from around the world.

In 2004, the site was officially designated as the National World War I Museum by the 108th Congress. The new state-of-the-art museum, located

below the original Liberty Memorial, opened to national acclaim in 2006.

Brian began his tenure at the National World War I Memorial in November 2007. Since his arrival, he has led an effort to transform the organization from one with mainly local focus to one with international scope of activities.

In less than three years many milestones have been achieved, including the development of the organization's first strategic plan, the creation of joint ventures with important partner institutions, the expansion and development of the Board of Trustees and professional staff; the initiation of several national legislative efforts, strategic fund-raisers for major gifts to support the ongoing operations and endowments; and the launch of a \$62 million campaign known as the World War I Centennial Campaign Fund.

Brian has more than 30 years of experience in museum management, including serving as President and CEO of the historic Annapolis Foundation in Maryland. He was Executive Vice-President and Director of the Shelburne Museum in Vermont, and the Director of the State Museum in North Dakota.

He earned his B.A. in American History and an M.A. in History Museum Studies from the University of Illinois, and attended the Museum Management Program at the University of Colorado.

Brian has been a consultant to the American Association of Museums, served as a faculty member at the Seminar for Historical Administration at Colonial Williamsburg, and has been a speaker at numerous professional museum conferences. He served as a Trustee in the American Association for State and Local History, and has published numerous catalogues and articles on a variety of museum topics.

I am most proud to add that we in the VFW are simply the best of friends with Brian and all of his museum excellent staff. Please join me in welcoming Brian Alexander. (Applause)

REMARKS – BRIAN ALEXANDER, PRESIDENT, WORLD WAR I MUSEUM

MR. ALEXANDER: Thank you, and good morning everyone. Today I would like to talk about the history and exciting future of the National World War I Museum. As Tom said, it is in Kansas City, Missouri. Following World War I, Kansas City citizens raised \$2.5 million, which was an enormous amount of money in the 1920s, to build a memorial to honor those who served. This is a photo of the site dedication in 1921.

At the dedication, the five allied generals met together for the very first time. The memorial was completed in 1926, and was dedicated by President Calvin Coolidge.

For the next 80 years, this is how visitors experienced the Liberty Memorial. At the base of the tower there is an inscription that reads, "In honor of those who served in the World War in defense of liberty in our country." This is unique, because it is the only major memorial in the country that is dedicated to all those who served in World War I.

There are four guardian spirits which adorn the top of the tower, representing courage, honor, patriotism and sacrifice. Also, there are two halls which flank the tower. These were original exhibition galleries.

The tower itself is 217 feet high, and an elevator takes visitors to the observation deck. Once at the top of the observation deck one can see a

sweeping view of the Kansas City area.

Here is a view, a nighttime view of Kansas City, overlooking the skyline.

In 2006, the museum underwent a dramatic transformation. We opened a new world-class museum built beneath the original tower. The new museum is a state-of-the-art facility and is considered to be one of the best of its kind in the world.

One's experience begins by crossing a field of 9,000 poppies, each one representing 1,000 combatant deaths.

The museum offers a wide range of interactive technology which helps our 21st audience better understand the war. Visitors see both the weapons of war as well as personal items, and the collections represent all countries who participated in the great war.

Our library and our archival holdings are considered to be among the best in the world, and these include thousands of posters, manuscripts, books and other historical materials.

The museum has a long-standing relationship with the VFW. In 1931, the VFW used Liberty Memorial as a focal point for its annual encampment. Then in 1961, the VFW was an important part of the re-dedication of the Liberty Memorial with both Presidents Eisenhower and Truman in attendance.

Forty-one years later, in 2002, the VFW was active in the memorial's re-dedication following a major restoration. During the fund-raising drive to build a new museum, the VFW generously supported the project.

The VFW and the museum also partnered to bring special guests to the museum, including Vice-President Dick Cheney, Senator John McCain, and the last surviving Doughboy of World War I, 109 years old, Frank Buckles of West Virginia.

Since opening in 2006, we are very proud of our accomplishments. More than one million people have visited the museum, including over 70,000 school children who came on field trips. Visitors come from throughout the world, and we have made a significant impact on the Kansas City economy.

Our guests tell us that the museum has been extraordinarily meaningful to them and comments such as these are typical.

We have also received much international media attention since opening in 2006. You may have even seen the museum highlighted on Turner Classic Movies.

Since 2006, we have acquired thousands of new collection items. One of the most significant acquisitions was a tank that saw action on the Western Front. Another acquisition last year was a 1,700-piece collection donated by Wanda Halbert of Naples, Florida.

Since opening, we have developed numerous special exhibitions highlighting our collections and those from other organizations. Among them, American Women Rebuilding France, World War I in Color, and on a lighter note, Snoopy, the World War I Flying Ace.

One unique exhibition was the Academy Award won by Gary Cooper for his portrayal of Sergeant York. Both Sergeant York's sons and Gary Cooper's daughter met for the first time at the museum.

In addition to exhibits, we have a wide range of programs throughout the year, including Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Also, we have a very close relationship with the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, which has brought thousands of officers from around

the world to the museum. Also, we host numerous musical and theatrical events, lectures on a wide range of topics.

The museum is also featured in various popular and scholarly publications. Many special guests have visited the museum, including former Secretary of State General Colin Powell, former Senator Bob Dole, European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet, Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, actor Kevin Costner, General David Petraeus, former Secretary of Defense William Cohen, current Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, and President Barack Obama.

There are numerous ways to get involved with the museum. You can support our active fund-raising programs necessary to sustain ongoing operations. You can participate in Advisory committees and in our 100-member Presidents Council, or volunteer in many areas throughout the museum.

Last year over 20,000 hours of service were contributed to the museum. You can also become a donor of historical objects. We are still actively involved in acquiring new objects and we are happy to discuss potential acquisitions from interested parties. Also, one can rent the museum for special functions, which is an important part of our revenue stream.

You can also become a member and enjoy many benefits, such as free admission, newsletter, invitational events and more. You can participate in the Walk of Honor program, which includes over 7,000 inscribed bricks which can be purchased by the public and honors those who served in World War I and other conflicts.

In 2014, the world will begin its 100th Anniversary Commemoration of World War I, which will further enhance focus on the museum. In preparation, we have a couple of pieces of legislation pending. The first would be to establish a national commission to oversee the centennial, which would be located at the museum in Kansas City, and receive designation as a National Memorial for World War I. Both initiatives have been supported by the VFW.

We recently launched a campaign to raise \$62.7 million over the next eight years, which will help fund both our centennial projects and will also help to create an endowment to help sustain our ongoing operations.

Lastly, I hope you all make a trip to visit the museum, the nation's only National Museum dedicated to World War I. I thank you for the opportunity to share the story of the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Someone had a birthday on August 4th. They were 220 years old. Who was it? The United States Coast Guard. Happy birthday, United States Coast Guard. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF MR. KELLY SHACKELFORD, LIBERTY LEGAL INSTITUTE

The fight for the Mojave Desert Memorial is one that we as an organization will fight until the end.

In 1934, the VFW erected a small wooden cross and plaque in what is now the Mojave National Preserve to honor the American "dead of all wars."

In 2001, the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU, representing Frank Buono, filed suit in federal court arguing that the memorial violates the

Constitution because of its religious symbolism.

Congress has since designated the memorial as a National Memorial and ordered the Secretary of the Interior to convey the memorial and the acre of land directly under it to the VFW, the original donors of the memorial, in exchange for five acres of land within the preserve.

After months of deliberation, the United States Supreme Court reversed a lower court ruling to tear down the cross. But the ruling still doesn't allow the congressional-approved land transfer to occur just yet. The high court chose instead to remand the case back to the district court.

Meanwhile in May, after the Supreme Court's pointed reversal of the liberal Ninth Circuit Court, some disenchanted cowards tore down and stole the memorial.

A reward is now being offered through our very good companion, the Liberty Legal Institute, and hopefully the perpetrators of this shameful act will be apprehended and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The Liberty Legal Institute was founded by Mr. Kelly Shackelford in 1997 as an organization that fights for religious liberties and protects First Amendment rights in the courts nationwide. As an expert in constitutional law, Mr. Shackelford has argued before the U.S. Supreme Court and Texas Supreme Court, in addition to serving as co-counsel and numerous other U.S. Supreme Court cases, and is now fighting for us on the Mojave Desert Cross that so proudly honors our fallen comrades.

As was explained last year in Phoenix by our guest, this is just one example of the continual misguided hostility toward veterans' memorials. Saving the Mojave Desert Cross will likewise save many other memorials across this great land, and continue the wonderful heritage our citizens have always extended, from Revolutionary times to the present, of honoring our heroes that have so gallantly protected our ideals and principles.

Comrades and Sisters, please welcome back a man who is so valiantly and boldly fighting for our veterans and for the VFW in that quest, Mr. Kelly Shackelford.

REMARKS – KELLY SHACKELFORD, LIBERTY LEGAL INSTITUTE

MR. SHACKELFORD: About a year ago, I came to you and told you that we were going to the Supreme Court, that there was a major case, that the VFW was actually the leading veterans service organization in this case, to defend this memorial.

Well, today, I am back to update you. But I want to make sure that everyone is reminded what this case is about. So, while some of you have seen this and some of you have not, I want to show the video about the case and then I will bring you up to date on where we are. If you could start the video, please.

(Whereupon, the video is shown at this time.)

Four months ago, I was sitting in the front row of the United States Supreme Court when they issued their opinion reversing the courts below to tear down this memorial which was a great day for all veterans' memorials. But I have to give you the rest of the news, it was a very important victory or that veterans' memorial would have been torn down by the government and not allowed back, and the VFW would not be allowed to even have their land and the memorial that was put up by VFW members in 1934 who had come back from World War I.

It was a great victory, but it is not over. The Supreme Court said we are reversing the courts below, their rationale is wrong and, therefore, we are sending it back down and asking the lower court judge to give it another try, to issue another opinion. So, while I think their message is very clear they don't want this torn down, we are not sure yet whether that judge will get that message, because that judge is going to have another shot.

So, we have to go back down to the district court with the same court judge and the Court of Appeals that thought originally they should tear down the veterans' memorial. The ACLU is demanding and making it very clear that their position is not changing, that despite the Supreme Court's opinion they are still advocating for this memorial to be torn down. So, we have got a fight on our hands. But that is okay. We plan to win.

I just want you to understand as this is happening, which I think is a disgrace, who is the one that is stepping up and leading to make sure this doesn't happen? It is the VFW. It is the VFW who is standing up and saying we are not going to stand by while you tear down a veterans' memorial that has been up for 76 years, that was actually put up by the hands of VFW members who were trying to simply recognize and respect those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

But I have even got more news, some of which you heard about a little earlier. You may have seen some of this on the news. Unfortunately, vandals came in the middle of the night, obviously they didn't like the Supreme Court opinion, and they tore down this memorial which had been up 76 years, carried it off, and we think they probably destroyed it.

Well, as you saw in the film, Henry Sandoz has been caring for this. He made a promise to the last living World War I veteran who put that up that he would watch over it. For 26 years, he has been faithful to that promise.

He knows the dimensions. When people have vandalized it before, he has put it back up and he has put it back up in its current shape. Well, he has an exact replica to go back up on a moment's notice.

I can't tell you how many veterans, and even people who are not veterans across the country, who have offered helicopters, construction equipment, anything necessary to do that immediately. The only reason that hasn't been done is unbelievably at this point the government is refusing to allow the memorial to be put back up. The National Park Service and the Administration are refusing at this point to allow the memorial to go up. We think that is unacceptable. Any veterans' memorial that is vandalized should be corrected and put back up immediately. That is the least we can do to respect and honor those who have paid the price for our country.

So, what happened is again the VFW stepped forward, along with the American Legion, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and constructed a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, to the President, asking that the President overrule this decision, allow that veterans' memorial to go up immediately. We have sent that to the President. We have not gotten a response yet, but I want to encourage you with something.

We have this letter online. We want people to go online and sign on to the letter. We think if we can get enough people flooding this that eventually the administration will realize that this is something that the American people do not accept and that the memorial needs to go back up immediately.

If you have a pen or anything, write it down. It is very simple. The Web site is just called putthecrossback.com. There is a letter that you can see

that again was constructed by the major VSOs and that is going to the President. But we need every American to sign on to that.

Now, I want to show you visually, just so you can see, and these are at the Web site that you can look at and show your friends, or anyone else, family; but I want to show you slides on the progression of what has happened.

This is the original memorial that was put up. This was all the way back to 1934. The next slide is the court-ordered “bag” covering it after the lawsuit was filed by the ACLU, and they got the original decision to tear it down.

When the bag was cut off, this is what the court did to make sure it was covered and couldn’t be cut off.

Now, go to the next slide. This is what it looks like now. It has completely been ripped out of the rock, carried away, and we don’t know where. We think probably destroyed. But we are ready again to put it back up immediately.

We will go to the last slide here. This is the Web site that I mentioned to you where it is a way you can get the information and share it easily with others. I would encourage you to do so.

Recently, I saw something in a newspaper that really caught my attention. It was simply a picture. It was two soldiers, both of whom had been injured, who were in a helicopter being evacuated. You could see the tubes from the machines going in them, and you could see the grimace on their faces in order to lift their fist and touch one another’s fists.

As tears welled up in my eyes, I thought this is what our country is all about. Then I thought how dare these people go after a veterans’ memorial that has been up for 76 years. But here is the good news to this story. The VFW is not sitting on the sidelines twiddling their thumbs, hoping that something is doing about this. The VFW has gotten involved.

We have already been to the U.S. Supreme Court. We are back in the lower court below. We are doing everything we can publicly to get the public to come and insist that this memorial be put back up. We are simply taking every action imaginable.

I have got to tell you, it is a great honor that Liberty Institute gets to represent the VFW, and I have got to tell you this is from my very heart. As far as I am concerned, this battle is not over until we win. (Applause)

We will exhaust every resource we have, do everything in our power to make sure that happens, because as was mentioned a few minutes ago in my introduction, this is not even just about this memorial.

If one seven-foot cross in the middle of the desert, has to be torn down, what do you do with a 24-foot cross in the Arlington Memorial Cemetery, the Cross of Sacrifice? What do you do with the Argonne Cross that is surrounded by majestic pikes? What do you do with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier that says, “Known But to God”? What do you do with literally every veterans’ memorial and cemetery in every community and every state of this country that has religious symbols, whether it is the Star of David or a cross? The kind of sandblasting and bulldozing that we would see I think would be something that would turn the stomach of every American. So, this is a fight we have to continue. We plan to win.

I just want to thank you for your leadership. Thank you, God bless you, God bless our troops, and God bless the United States of America.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, we have one more event before we go into the discussion on B-4. Please remember after it is over, I need to see the four chairmen or vice-chairmen, one from each conference, up here at the podium. As soon as the next speaker is done, which is the National Home, we will then go into consideration of B-4.

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: One of the standout icons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary is the VFW's National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The National Home is a profound example of veterans helping veterans

Even more so, in my opinion, the Home is the ultimate example of implementing God's good protection and care on the most innocent of our society through his benevolent servants.

This morning, we have with us the Home's wonderful leaders, Board President Raymond Warren, Executive Director Patrice Greene, along with our 2010 Buddy Poppy Child, Taylor Peek, who resides in the Arizona House on campus.

REMARKS BY BOARD PRESIDENT RAYMOND WARREN

COMRADE WARREN: Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and the children and families of the National Home, thank you for inviting us to visit your delegation today. It is truly an honor to serve as Board President for the National Home.

There are 12 elected Trustees and five ex-officio Trustees who serve and represent the VFW on the Board of Trustees.

On the Board of Trustees is Adjutant General "Gunner" Kent and the Quartermaster General Larry Maher. And, of course, the Commander-in-Chief, Tommy Tradewell. He provides a great service as a trustee of our home, and I thank you all for your commitment.

Commander-in-Chief, thanks to you also for the support of our special flag project this year. So far, we have 38 State flags with more to come, and they will proudly be displayed in the community center gymnasium at the National Home.

We thank all of you and again to all members of the VFW all around the country. As a trustee, I get to see for myself firsthand all the children, families that you are helping, and I can tell you as a VFW member that we can be very proud of what we do at the National Home.

Now, I would like to introduce our National Home Executive Director Patrice Greene.

REMARKS – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PATRICE GREENE

MS. GREENE: Thank you, Ray. Commander-in-Chief Tradewell, we congratulate you and thank you for your service and your leadership in the VFW, and your caring concern for the families and children at the National Home.

This year the VFW National Home for Children celebrated its 85 years of providing help, hope and honor, and that is truly a reason to celebrate and to be proud of all you have achieved.

In January, Commander-in-Chief Tradewell and National President Jan Tittle traveled all the way to the National Home and helped us celebrate. We want to thank both of them for making the National Home a priority. Many of you have visited the Home and have seen firsthand the beautifully cared-for grounds and buildings, and the growth and improvements that have taken place over the last couple of years, including two new duplexes that help us care for more families and children.

Today I am proud to announce this spring we are going to be groundbreaking for another new duplex at the National Home, because we are growing and we are needed. There will be more information coming up about that in the next couple of months.

But we do hope that anyone who can come and share in that special event will make that trip. Everyone who visits the National Home comes away in awe of all you have done for the children and the families.

As of tomorrow night, there will be a whole bunch more people in awe, because tomorrow morning at 7:00 o'clock there will be six buses full of VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members who are going to be leaving this Convention Center traveling all the way to the National Home to visit. So, that is a wonderful, wonderful thing.

We thank all of you for your loyalty, for your hard work, for commitment. Over the years there have been so many grateful families whose lives you have changed because of what you are able to do at your National Home. Today we have kind of a surprise. We have with us a special gentleman, who currently lives in Florida, but way back in 1943 came to live at the National Home all the way from Alaska. I happen to know that was before Alaska was ever a state.

So, please welcome this morning for just a couple of short remarks, National Home alumni George Craft. (Applause)

MR. GEORGE CRAFT: There is no telling exactly what could have happened to me when my father died. I was brought to the National Home for Children where they took care of me for eight years. I graduated from high school and went directly into the air force. I served for eight years, but I never got overseas so I could never belong to the VFW. But I still have an obligation as far as I am concerned that I can never repay for what I have been rewarded with.

I am a happy man, I have raised a family, I am retired, and now I am living the American dream just because the VFW took care of me. (Applause)

I would like to say that I went to the National Home with two brothers and a sister, and there is only two of us left, but I am the only one that seems to be following a happy trail keeping up with the VFW, because I think it is a responsibility that now I am able to do it where I wasn't able before.

I want to say that I am thankful to all the people in the VFW for what I have been rewarded with. The people before you have done a great job. I go back to the National Home when I can. I think it is improving all the time.

For all those people that don't go there, they are missing something. They should go there. Any time you get close to it, you should drop over and visit it, because there is so much to see that wasn't there before. Like I say, every time I go back things are changing, just like everything else, and it a better place for any kids that come in there. That is about the best I can do to tell you people how much I appreciate it. Thank you, and God bless

the National Home and God bless the VFW. (Applause)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREENE: Now, I would like to introduce to all of you some of the new kids on the block at the National Home, the National Chorus, and their leaders, Misty Botje, and Brian Lorente. The children will introduce themselves.

MR. BRIAN LORENTE: My name is Brian Lorente. I am the Life School Coordinator at the National Home. I have been a staff member for nearly 11 years. It is a pleasure to be back here at the convention. We hope you guys enjoy the show tonight.

MS. MISTY BOTJE: My name is Misty Botje. I am a house parent with my husband in the New York II House, and starting this August my husband and I are starting 20 years there. And I would like to bring up our choir to introduce themselves.

(Whereupon, the National Home Choir introduced themselves at this time.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREENE: The chorus will be singing tonight at the Patriotic Rally. We encourage you to come and see them sing and cheer them on.

Now, it is my honor to present the 2010-2011 Buddy Poppy Child, Taylor Peek.

REMARKS BY 2010 BUDDY POPPY CHILD

BUDDY POPPY CHILD PEEK: Hi. My name is Taylor Peek, and I am nine years old. I am living at the Arizona House. I live with my dad and my younger brother and my older sister. Our house is nice and living there has helped my family so much. There is a computer lab and a community center where I get help with my homework.

I am working on getting a higher reading level and a higher math level in school.

I hope I get a 4-H rabbit, or even a pig some day, too. I like the playground because it is a safe place to play, and I really love going on the swimming trips. Then when I got out this summer, I went on the Cedar Point trip. We also went to VFW Camp Trotter. That was a lot of fun.

I am in Junior Girls and we get help with the Ladies Auxiliary, and the best part about being in Junior Girls is we get to do a lot of neat stuff like make cards, posters, T-shirts for veterans, and it is a lot of fun being in Junior Girls.

Living at the National Home is amazing. I am glad to be the Buddy Poppy Child, so I can visit all the veterans and do lots of interesting things. Maybe I can meet the VFW Commander and get to shake his hand.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Those are all very special events that we attended, Ladies Auxiliary President Jan Tittle and I. We attended those special events at the National Home. Thank you very much for the gift.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREENE: We have one last thing that maybe you can't see from there, but maybe if he holds it up you can. Just a short time ago we introduced a tribute walk brick walkway program at the National Home, and we have nearly 1,000 bricks, because it is such a popular tribute in the walkway already. Today we are presenting Tommy a brick in the walkway at the National Home in honor of his year of service.

Tommy, we hope that holds a special place in your heart. (Applause)
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Again, if you have not been to the National Home, you are missing out on a very big treat. Every visit there shows you the VFW is the one caretaker for our veterans and their families. So, thank you for being here. We appreciate it, and God bless the National Home.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL (Cont'd.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, we will take up the question of reconsideration of the By-Law Amendment for Proposed By-Law B-4 and the Manual of Procedure M-4. Our Parliamentarian will explain the procedures and exactly how this will be done.

PARLIAMENTARIAN "FRITZ" MIHELICIC: Thank you, sir. I am Fritz Mihelcic, the National Parliamentarian. During the Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual report yesterday, 23 August 2010, the Committee recommended for adoption B-4 and M-4. These are titled Article II, Posts, Section 222, Delegates, County Council, District, Department and National Convention. These are concerning the increase in the convention fee.

A vote was taken and it was passed by two-thirds majority of this convention. A motion for reconsideration was made by a comrade who said he voted in the affirmative. It was duly seconded. A voice vote followed and the chair ruled that the motion for reconsideration failed.

A motion for a roll-call vote was made and seconded. Pursuant to Convention Rule No. 16, adopted at the beginning of this convention, the Commander-in-Chief ordered that the roll-call demand be stated at the microphone by Department Commanders only.

During the ensuing discussions between the chair and the delegates who were on the floor attempting to vote for the roll-call motion, it appeared that the roll-call demand did not meet the required ten registered delegates from Posts of ten separate Departments as voted by the Department Commanders. Therefore, the motion for a roll-call vote was denied.

In the interest of fair play and to ensure that all delegates are properly heard on matters that come before this convention, the Commander-in-Chief has determined that today, 24 August 2010, the motion for a roll-call vote for the reconsideration of the passage of B-4 and M-4 shall be allowed. If the roll-call request is valid, there will be a roll-call vote to determine if there is a majority to reconsider the main motion. If "yes", B-4 and M-4 will be back for discussion. If "no", B-4 and M-4 will be considered adopted by this convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: At this time if there are ten registered delegates representing Posts in ten separate Departments, please line up at the microphones. If there are ten delegates from ten separate Departments, ten Departments.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DON SMITH (Post 9669 – Colorado): Commander-in-Chief, my name is Don Smith, Post 9669, Department of Colorado. I would like to bring this item to the floor again.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Colorado, thank you.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE STEPHEN LEACH (Post 6471 – Vermont): Commander-in-Chief, Steve Leach, Post 6471, State of Vermont. I move that we allow this to be brought back for discussion.

PARLIAMENTARIAN MIHELIC: We are looking for ten delegates from ten separate states who are asking for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Okay. Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE KELLY GODDARD (Post 4484 – West Virginia): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Kelly Goddard, West Virginia, Post 4484. I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE GREG LYNCH (Post 1088 – New Hampshire): Commander-in-Chief, I am Greg Lynch, a delegate from New Hampshire, Post 1088. I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE SCOTT BRAMLETT (Post 2259 – Arkansas): Commander-in-Chief, I am Scott Bramlett, Post 2259, Arkansas. I request a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DENNIS HOWLAND (Post 1481 – Utah): I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you.

Microphone No. 4.

COMRADE VINCENT SCIROCCO (Post 11519 – Rhode Island): I request a roll-call vote.

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

COMRADE RODNEY FUNK (Post 2689 – Indiana): We call for a roll-call vote.

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

COMRADE RICH DIFEDERICO (Post 7330 – Connecticut): I call for a roll-call vote.

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

COMRADE MARK REILLY (Post 6859 – Maine): I call for a roll-call vote.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: That is ten. We don't need any more. Thank you. The roll-call vote requirement has been met. The motion for reconsideration will now go to a roll-call vote. A majority is required for the motion to reconsider to pass.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Could I have the Credentials Chairman to come forward, please. Could I have the Departments line up in alphabetical order at Microphone 3 so we have no confusion on this vote. Microphone 3 is right in the middle.

COMRADE BETTY GRIPP (Department of Arizona): We have at this time a grand total of 9,165. For the majority, it is 4,583.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, please remember it takes a majority to bring it back to the floor, and the majority will be 4,583 delegates.

I will start with the Departments. If you are not the Department Commander, Senior or Junior, you do not get the plus one. The Department Commander will tell us who you are and then I will give you the number. I will give you the number and you tell me how you vote, and then I will

repeat the number back so do not leave the microphone until I repeat the number back to you so there is no confusion.

Could I, please, have quiet in the hall? This is an important vote for all these comrades. We don't need a lot of discussion.

(As Adjutant General Kent called the roll, the following votes were cast.)

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Alabama		127
Alaska		98
Arizona		185
Arkansas	152	
California	7.5	464.5
Colorado	124	
Connecticut	138	

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The Parliamentarian told us we cannot split a vote, California. You have a whole vote on the "yes" or on the "no" side. No fractions are allowed. I will continue to call the roll and I will call California back after the roll-call is finished and then you can give me the way you want that fraction going.

Does everybody understand that California gave me a fractional vote and by the Convention Rules a fractional vote will not be cast. They will caucus their Department and then they will come forward with another vote on that half vote.

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Delaware		91
District of Columbia	17	8
Europe		125
Florida		433
Georgia		151
Hawaii		73
Idaho		71
Illinois		505
Indiana	532	
Iowa	40	
Kansas	148	
Kentucky		144
Latin America/Caribbean		21
Louisiana		65
Maine	55	
Maryland	7	220
Massachusetts		187
Michigan		338
Minnesota	3	258
Mississippi		88
Missouri		281
Montana		56
Nebraska		130
Nevada	30	49
New Hampshire		66
New Jersey	60	128
New Mexico		108
New York	11	182
North Carolina		114

North Dakota	91
Ohio	472
Oklahoma	124
Oregon	101
Pacific Areas	78
Pennsylvania	475
Rhode Island	49
South Carolina	135
South Dakota	135
Tennessee	135

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, the Credentials Committee has now said that the “nays” have the majority. It is impossible for the “yes” to prevail, so the motion is defeated.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you for your participation. A majority has not been reached. The motion for reconsideration is defeated. B-4 and M-4 stand as approved. That’s it. Thank you.

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Thank you very much. Comrades, please remember I would like to see the four Chairmen or vice-chairmen, one from each conference. Also remember the Patriotic Rally this evening. We have a very good rally for you. So, please, make sure you come over. You know the time for the line-up. Everybody is welcome to march. There are good seats there.

All the concession stands will be open, so there will be plenty of food to eat there if you want to get something. The parade will step off shortly at 1830. That is 6:30 in the evening for you guys in the Air Force. 1830 for you Marines. I have to get my licks in when I can anymore. I thank you for your indulgence. Have a great day.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, “Gunner” for your indulgence.

Sergeant-at-Arms, we will have the closing ceremonies.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O’BRIEN: National Chaplain.

BENEDICTION

CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Heavenly Father, the time has come when we must part. We thank you for giving us this precious time together and pray that each moment was used wisely.

Continue to keep our great nation strong and free and watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom.

Now dismiss us with your love, blessing and mercy. Until we meet again, keep us safe and let us live in spirit of true comradeship and peace. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O’BRIEN: Comrades, please join me in the Salute to the Colors. Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the closing of this session has been taken care of and your order has been obeyed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you. We are in recess until 8:00 o’clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:35 o’clock p.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2010

(The Third Business Session of the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was called to order in the Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana, at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: I will now reconvene the 111th VFW National Convention.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please conduct the Opening Ceremonies? (Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms O'Brien led the assembly in the Salute to Colors.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Please rise. Comrade National Chaplain.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Let us bow our heads. Gracious Father, continue Thy blessings upon us and strengthen us with wisdom and knowledge as we strive to do Thy will. Let us always seek Thy favor and enable us to move forward in protecting our veterans, dependents and our military.

Continue to oversee and protect our troops, especially those who are in harm's way; fighting to preserve freedom and rights for us and others. Bring them home speedily and victoriously.

Watch over us during the activities of this day and let all that we say and do, honor our country, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and glorify Thy great and holy name.

Let us have a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades, those missing in action, and those held as prisoners of war. Grant us Thy peace. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, face the flag of our country and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms O'Brien led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the opening for this session has been completed and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Everyone please be seated.

I would now like to call on Betty Gripp for the report of the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

SISTER BETTY GRIPP (Department of New Mexico): Thank you, Commander. Good morning. At the close of business yesterday, at 4:00 p.m., August 24th, 2010, total delegates 9,269.

Department Commanders 50; Past Commanders-in-Chief 23; National Officers 36. That is for a grand total of 9,378. That is my report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Betty, for a job well done.

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 VFW and continue to do.

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 Sergeant-at-Arms for ten years. He is a Past All State Post Commander, Past District Commander and Past County Council Commander.

In 1982, Bryan was named 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 26 years as a senior controller in Boston. (Applause)

Gary Barringer has been a Sergeant for 15 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 VVA.

He retired from the North Carolina National Guard after 34 years of service and is also retired from 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 the VAV's 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 Sergeant-at-Arms for 14 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 has been a Sergeant for 48 years – that's right, 48 years – and that deserves a separate applause. (Applause)

Joe is a Life Member of Post 4847 in Saint Cloud, Minnesota. His volunteer work spans decades: Minnesota State Surgeon 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 eight years and is a Life Member of Post 6802, Richmond, Michigan. He is a Past All-State Post Commander and Past All-State Quartermaster. He served as a Quartermaster for 18 years.

Currently, Jim is serving as Michigan District 5 Commander. He retired after 30 years service from General Motors.

Lonnie Garza has been a Sergeant for four years and is a Life Member of Post 7110, New Braunfels, Texas. He earned All American Post Commander honors four times and the National Recruiter Century Award 13 times.

Lonnie retired from the Army in 1987 with 22 years of service. He presently works for the National Guard's 4th Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery Regiment in San Antonio.

Unfortunately, Keith McDonald, who has been a Sergeant for 16 years, is unable to attend the convention this year. We look forward to seeing him in San Antonio next year.

Ed Villiaume resigned this past spring after serving eight years as an Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms. We already miss him and hope that he will still visit us in the future. He was a great, loyal, dedicated Sergeant. He had to resign because of health issues.

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 great 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 all the entire organization, thank you for your service.

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

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

Now it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce the comrades who have given most all of their adult lifehood to this great organization, the Past Commanders-in-Chief in attendance at the 111th National Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana.

1974-1975, John J. Stang, Kansas.
1977-1978, Dr. John Wasylik, Ohio.
1980-1982, Arthur Fellwock, Indiana.
1983-1984, Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Massachusetts.
1985-1986, John S. Staum, Minnesota.
1986-1987, Norman G. Staab, Kansas.
1988-1989, Larry W. Rivers, Louisiana.
1989-1990, Walter G. Hogan, Wisconsin.
1991-1992, Robert E. Wallace, New Jersey.
1992-1993, John M. Carney, Florida.
1994-1995, Allen F. "Gunner" Kent, Arizona.
1995-1996, Paul A. Spera, Massachusetts.
1996-1997, James E. Nier, Texas.
1997-1998, John E. Moon, Ohio.
1998-1999, Thomas A. Pouliot, Montana.
1999-2000, John W. Smart, New Hampshire.
2000-2001, John F. Gwizdak, Georgia.

2003-2004, Edward S. Banas, Sr., Connecticut.

2004-2005, John Furgess, Tennessee.

2006-2007, Gary L. Kurpius, Alaska.

2007-2008, George J. Lisicki, New Jersey.

2008-2009, Glen M. Gardner, Jr., Texas.

Comrades, will you give a round of applause for the Past Commanders-in-Chief? (Applause)

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL HOME TRUSTEES

I will now read the nominations for the National Home Trustees:

District Six for 2010-2016, and representing Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee, Past Commander-in-Chief James R. Mueller, O'Fallon, Missouri. Jim has been a VFW National Home Life Member since April 19, 1996. He is endorsed by the VFW Department of Missouri.

There are two nominations for District Seven for 2010-2012, and representing Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. Due to the passing of District Seven Trustee and Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Goldsmith of Michigan, the elected Trustee will complete the remaining two years of the term.

The first nominee is Larry Larson of Marshalltown, Iowa. Larry is a VFW National Home Life Member since March 23, 2006, and is endorsed by the VFW Department of Iowa.

Also nominated for District Seven is Cindy Peto, from Perry, Michigan. Cindy has been a VFW National Home Life Member since April 19, 1990, and is endorsed by the Ladies Auxiliary and VFW Department of Michigan. She is currently serving as the Board appointed interim District Seven Trustee.

We also have two nominees for District Ten for 2010-2016, and representing Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The first is Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Al has been a VFW National Home Life Member since May 10, 2006, and he is endorsed by the VFW Department of Texas. Al is currently serving as the Board appointed Trustee to fill a one-year vacancy for District Ten.

And also nominated for District Ten is Karen Smorol McKeever, of Mission, Texas. Karen has been a VFW National Home Life Member since March 19, 1990. She is endorsed by the Ladies Auxiliary and the VFW Department of Arkansas.

Before we call on the Director of Programs, there seems to have been some confusion about the vote yesterday. Somebody said we counted California's vote to get over the top, to get the majority on the "no" side. Comrades, California's vote was not counted yesterday, because they had a fractional vote. So, it was not counted. Without California's vote, the vote total was 5,877 "no" votes. California was not counted.

I will now call on the Director of Programs, Steve Van Buskirk.

WINNERS OF THE NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CONTEST

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 in 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 Joseph J. Liles, Vice-Chairman Darrell Bencken, and members Wally Gansenberg, Dale Wittrock and Donald Young. 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 West Tawakoni Memorial Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 2559, West Tawakoni, Texas.

Third place is Richard A. Anderson Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 8953, Romayor, Texas.

Second Place is Fontaine Qui Bouille Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 6461, Fountain, Colorado.

First Place is Oregon Post No. 8739, Oregon, Illinois.

Category 2 is for the use of poppies in a Memorial or Inspirational Display.

Honorable Mention goes to Ladies Auxiliary to the Virgil Wilson Post No. 4961, Seaford, Delaware.

Third Place is Arnaudville Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 5153, Arnaudville, Louisiana.

Second Place goes to Valley District Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 1589, Masontown, West Virginia.

The First Place winner is Sugarloaf Memorial Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 6368, Dupo, Illinois.

Category 3 is for the Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies:

Honorable Mention goes to Hedrick-Rhodes Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 5206, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

The Third Place winner is Baxter Springs Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 408, Baxter Springs, Kansas.

Second Place, Hugo Matejcek Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 3723, Owatonna, Minnesota.

And the First Place winner is Crawford County Post and Ladies Auxiliary No. 4549, Robinson, Illinois.

Category No. 4 is for using poppies in a Memorial or Inspirational Display by Junior Girls or Sons of the VFW Unit.

Honorable Mention goes to Junior Girls Unit Ladies Auxiliary to the Narrows Bridge Post No. 10018, Tacoma, Washington.

Third Place goes to Junior Girls Unit Ladies Auxiliary to the Fred E. Richards Post No. 3055, out of the State of Michigan.

Second Place, Junior Girls Unit Ladies Auxiliary to the Hinkel-Kleeschulte-Westhoff Post No. 5077, O'Fallon, Missouri.

The First Place winner is Junior Girls Unit Ladies Auxiliary to the Department of Michigan, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lansing, Michigan.

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 Kersten O'Day Post No. 2899, Bell-Day, Kentucky. (Applause)

SILENT AUCTION DONATION TO THE VFW NATIONAL HOME AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

This year marks the ninth consecutive silent auction we have had at Convention. This year 49 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 very proud to announce that this year's auction garnered a total of \$7,850, and I am pleased to present this check to Patrice Greene, VFW Executive Director, National Home for Children. We will present that at a later time.

This year we are celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War. Our Korean War veterans, comprising some 20 percent of VFW's total membership, are a treasured asset for our organization.

As part of this year's celebration, we have identified these honored veterans with a special recognition ribbon on their name badge. We are honoring four of our Korean War veterans and their spouses or guests with a trip to Washington, D.C., over Veterans Day this year.

The drawing for that trip has been completed and I am now going to announce our recipients. Please stand to be recognized when I call your name.

From the Department of Wisconsin, Comrade Richard L. Hoium.

From the Department of New Jersey, Comrade James W. Manning.

Our third recipient, from the Department of California, Comrade Bob Maxwell.

And finally, from the Department of South Carolina, Comrade G.T. Pothier.

Congratulations to each of you. At the conclusion of the meeting, someone from the national staff will contact you and will explain the details of your trip. (Applause)

Now, could we have all of our Korean War veterans stand to be recognized and thanked for your magnificent service during a very trying time in our history. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Comrades, at this time, a Past Commander from the Department of Florida, Jack McDermott, would like to address the convention. Jack.

COMRADE JACK McDERMOTT (Department of Florida): Good morning. My name is Jack McDermott from the great state of Florida, and I just happen to be the President of the Board of our hidden gem that Florida has and the National Organization has. It is called the Retirement Home at Fort McCoy.

This coming year we will be celebrating our 20th anniversary, and for those of you who don't know what it is, it is a retirement home for us veterans, and the Ladies Auxiliary. What we offer you is 40 acres and a room to come home to and enjoy yourself.

Several years ago we had the fortunate opportunity of hiring a new Director, and I will let him speak a little more. Our new Director, we took from the Pentagon. His name is Lieutenant Colonel Al Lugo. He took over the home in last October and is running it to this day. I would like to introduce you to Lieutenant Colonel Lugo.

COMRADE AL LUGO: Thank you, Jack.

Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Past National Commanders and Fellow Comrades: It is truly a pleasure to be here today to speak about the VFW retirement home in Ft. McCoy.

My first experience after retiring out of the military, as Jack mentioned, was the VFW, and I was not aware of all of the positive things that this organization does for veterans and soldiers. I had heard about the VFW. I kind of went through the process of retiring as a Veterans Service Officer, but I was unaware of all the things that this organization has. So, when I had the opportunity to join them, it was no-brainer to become a VFW member.

In Florida, we have a retirement home, as Jack mentioned, that is truly phenomenal. It has just been renovated these past few months. We had the honor of having breakfast with the Commander-in-Chief, and he can speak about the home. I want to let you know that the place is there for you, for all of us veterans. It is a magical place, and I truly invite you to come out there.

We will soon have 71 rooms. It is independent living. You come and go as you please. Our delegation here from the great state of Florida, our State Commanders and State Officers have some brochures and cards. I want to thank you for the opportunity to come up here, and let you know this is a place in Central Florida, close to Daytona and Ocala that you could come and live happily ever after.

I again want to thank you for giving us an opportunity to speak and let you know everything is well in Florida. I thank you for everything that you do for the VFW and all of our veterans. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MOTION TO PRESENT THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 111TH NATIONAL CONVENTION TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 111th 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 2, 1968, and entitled Title 44, United States Code, Section 1332.

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RICHARD DeNOYER: I second it.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: You have heard the motion. I will call for the vote. All those in favor will signify by saying "aye"; all those opposed "no". The "ayes" have it. It is so ordered.

. . . Convention Announcements. . .

VFW POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE PRESENTATION TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: We will now have a presentation to Commander-in-Chief Tradewell from the Chairman of the Political Action Committee, Garry J. Goff of Michigan.

COMRADE SALVATORE CAPIRCHIO: First of all, I want to thank everyone out here for the support they have given the PAC this past year. It is because of your dollars that we can support the candidates that show

advocacy for our veterans' issues. Chairman Garry Goff will now make the presentation of the eagle.

COMRADE GARRY GOFF (Department of Michigan): VFW-PAC Award, Golden Eagle Award, 2010, to Thomas Tradewell, Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. (Applause) Thank you for your support.

PRESENTATION OF LEGION OF HONOR BRONZE MEDAL
FROM CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
TRADEWELL

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: At this time, we will have a presentation by Past National Chaplain Ted Bowers to Commander-in-Chief Tradewell.

COMRADE TED BOWERS: Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates, Comrades and Sisters: I am representing the Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia.

On January 3rd, 1943, the U.S.S. Dorchester carrying troops left New York harbor bound for Greenland. Just after midnight on February 3rd, an enemy submarine fired a torpedo that struck the Dorchester, destroying the electrical supply and releasing clouds of steam and ammonia gas.

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 a storage locker and distributed jackets, and 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 prayer and a hymn. 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 very significant because of the identity of the four young men, as 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 station in life, the chapel established its 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, Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT
JAN TITTLE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have some special guests. 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.

Jan has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary for many years and has left a successful legacy for others to follow for years to come. I admire her deeply. She is a true compatriot and a tremendous leader.

Please welcome a wonderful lady from the Palmetto State of South Carolina, Jan Tittle, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary. Please rise. (Applause) Again, I would like to introduce the Ladies Auxiliary President, a lady that has worked with me and I have enjoyed this year with. As I was visiting the Ladies this morning, I mentioned to them that she definitely increased my enthusiasm and as the Ladies Auxiliary always does, working together made us a better organization.

So, without further ado, Jan Tittle, President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

RESPONSE – LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT TITTLE

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT TITTLE: Thank you, Tom. You know, I understand that right now I am supposed to say something profound, but I want you-all to understand that I am a very honest woman. Bryan, where are you, Bryan O'Brien? I need you to go find Sharon Tradewell because I walked over here, she was waiting for me somewhere and nobody put her with me, and I just realized it. Please send somebody to get Sharon and bring her in here while I am here. Thank you. Hurry.

Tom, I apologize. I was all excited. Sharon was on my stage this morning, I have talked about her. I was all excited, she is absolutely wonderful. Then I was so excited to come to see you-all, and you know how they grab you and scoot you. They grabbed me and scooted me and when I walked and stepped on stage and I thought, "Oh, Sharon." So that is the truth, and now I will talk.

I am delighted to be here. Obviously, I am excited to be here or I would have never forgotten our Commander-in-Chief's wife and my friend, Sharon, who will be here shortly, hopefully.

I just want to say briefly to you, and I have said it in a lot of Departments I have been in, so you have heard it before. But I don't think you can ever hear it too many times when somebody speaks from their heart and tells you how much you mean to them.

I joined the Ladies Auxiliary under the eligibility of my father, who was a World War II Purple Heart recipient. My daddy served in the Philippines. He died when he was 51 years old. He came home from the war wounded and weary.

When I grew up, we didn't have a lot in our household, because my daddy was able to work sometimes, not all the time. He was able to do some things that, as he got older, he was not able to do. And then, as I said, he passed away at 51.

My mother worked shift work at a plant so that we could have what we needed. Back then, the health systems at the VA and the benefits and the knowledge was not really readily available. Had we known it, I would have qualified for many things as his child, one of which is a completely-paid college education by the state that we live in. We didn't know it.

We didn't know anything about the VFW. We didn't know anything about veterans' benefits. We just didn't know.

When I grew up, I found out about the VFW, and what you do and what

you stand for. I joined your Ladies Auxiliary almost 32 years ago. Since then, I have learned more and more about what you do and what you stand for.

I am so proud to be able to be the National President of this organization for so many reasons, one of which is because my daddy would have been so proud. I thank you for everything you have done.

You know, whether it was 60 years ago or 60 days ago, you made a conscious choice when you came back from war. You put on the VFW hat and every day of your life since then you have worked, you have done whatever needed to be done. You have continued to fight for our veterans for their rights and their benefits. You have continued to do all that you had to do.

I am eternally grateful that no child today will do without because they don't know about veterans' benefits, thanks to you.

Thank you for everything you do. (Applause)

I would like to introduce my Chief of Staff Kaye Mellert from South Carolina. (Applause) Can you tell I am stalling? I keep praying that Sharon will come through the door. I know that you don't want me to stand here, so I will not stand here. When Sharon comes, she is coming in with my Chief of Staff, and my Chief of Staff is going to be with her, and will you introduce her on my behalf?

I am so tacky and I am so ashamed, I really am. But I can't make it better except by doing that. I love you and I love her, and I apologize. Thank you. (Applause)

2009-2010 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS GIFT PRESENTATION TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: The 2009-2010 State Commanders are now gathering here on the stage for something that will be good. Rex Faris, Past Virginia State Commander, is the representative of these Commanders.

Rex, I turn the microphone over to you, sir. Have a good time.

COMRADE REX FARRIS (Department of Virginia): I am going to. Thank you, "Gunner". I will wait for the Commander-in-Chief's boss to get here.

Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell, all of the Department Commanders came to an agreement that we would get you some type of gift, and the gift was decided on, and then it was my job to solicit the funds to pay for this gift. It is with great pleasure that I give you this grandfather clock, because that is all I could come up with as far as funding, but with great respect. (Laughter)

Seriously, though, Chief, you get to take that home, by the way. I don't want it back. Hopefully, if your boss coordinated everything as we have been sneaking behind your back, on Monday this will be delivered to your house. It is a grandfather clock. At the base will have a brass plaque on the very bottom that will say "Presented to Tommy J. Tradewell, Commander-in-Chief, 2009-2010, Veterans of Foreign Wars." It will have all 54 Departments with the names of the Commanders on that plaque at the bottom. So, you will never forget us.

Every time that clock chimes, you will cringe. I need Sharon down here. I have something for her. (Applause) We pulled it off, didn't we, Sharon? "He is in Russia, you can call now."

Anyway, this is what you need when they deliver it Monday.

MS. SHARON TRADEWELL: Everything is set.

COMRADE REX FARRIS (Department of Virginia): She is an organizer. Also, we understand that you just bought a new motorcycle. You probably have not dressed it all the way out as you like. We have some leftover funds, somewhere between \$800 and a thousand dollars, and as soon as I clear the account you will be receiving a check for that amount. Personally, I would forget about dressing the bike. I would give it to Sharon for all the time you have been gone.

Anyway, Chief, it has been an outstanding pleasure. I know I speak for all 54 of us when I say it has been our pleasure and our honor to serve with you in 2009-2010. It will be an experience that I know we will never forget. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: What a team. Thank you, team. Every time that clock strikes I will remember this team. In between I will be thinking of them, too, because you could have not asked for a better team to work with, and the effort, the time, the friendship that was shown in every one of my visits to each one of your Departments I will treasure forever. The clock will just be a sign of that. But the memories in my heart will be just as important. Thank you, honey. (Applause)

LADIES AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT TITTLE: Actually, I am again sorry I did what I did, but actually I am kind of glad, because how appropriate for me to be allowed to introduce Tom's wife and one of my very good friends here in front of his Department Commanders, Sharon Tradewell. Say hello. (Applause)

MS. SHARON TRADEWELL: Good morning. I am not a speaker. I leave it all to Tom.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: To all the Past State Commanders, 2009-2010, happy trails to you until we meet again. Happy trails to you. Keep smiling on until then. That's it. (Applause)

NOMINATION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The nomination of Commander-in-Chief, Richard Eubank, is being nominated by David Norris and Bob Maxwell from California.

COMRADE DAVID NORRIS (Post 52 – California): Good morning, comrades. My name is David Norris, Past National Chaplain and Past State Commander from California. It is my honor to stand before you today and place the name of a great comrade into nomination for the high office of National Commander-in-Chief. He earned his eligibility in Vietnam while serving with the 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions from December 1967 through January 1969 as a field radio operator.

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

This comrade joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1988 at Post 10165, Cameron Park, California. He is currently a Life Member of Post 4084 in Ridgecrest, California.

He has served in many elected and appointed positions at the Post, District, State and National level. He has also earned the Triple Crown for achieving All-American status as Post Commander, District Commander

and State Commander for California.

He is also a member of many other organizations, which include the Military Order of the Cootie, the American Legion, DAV, Moose, Eagles, Elks, the Vietnam Veterans of America, to name a few.

Comrades, it is my pleasure to place the name of Richard Eubank into nomination for the next National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2010-2011.

COMRADE BOB MAXWELL (Post 5689 – California): I am proud to second the nomination of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Richard Eubank for the high office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the years 2010-2011. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Any other nominations for National Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for National Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief? Nominations will be suspended until tomorrow.

NOMINATION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

The nomination for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief will be nominated by Cliff Olson, Paul Spera and Walter Gansenberg.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OLSON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Good morning, comrades. Once again, comrades, I come before you at this podium to propose the nomination of a comrade that has truly deserved the opportunity to serve the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the same manner that he has served his country and his fellow veterans for the past 50 years. He has served with dignity and honor since enlisting in the Marine Corps at the age of 17 in November 1960.

He has continued to serve through 22 years in the Corps. He gained his eligibility to the Veterans of Foreign Wars while serving in Da Nang, Vietnam, from July 1966 through July 1967. He rose through the ranks, serving as a Drill Instructor in Parris Island. He also found time to earn an Associate Degree and also a Bachelor's Degree from Bridgewater State University.

He continued through the ranks and went on to become a warrant officer, and then concluding his Marine Corps tour after obtaining the rank of First Lieutenant. After his discharge, he started on another career with the Paralyzed Veterans of America being a dedicated service officer, a duty that continued for another 20 years of aiding veterans and their dependents.

My comrades, this is truly a veterans' veteran, a man that will go well out of his way to assist the comrade. I would think that some of you comrades here today have seen and heard Richard this past year as he performed his duties as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

He has traveled far and wide from Russia, Europe and through the Far East, the Philippines, along with visiting many Departments. I would also mention that he has been married to his lovely wife, Theresa, for 44 years. They have two grown children and six grandchildren.

He has shown that he is truly capable of handling the position of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. He has shown his dedication to veterans and to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is with great pride and a distinct honor and privilege to place in nomination for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 2010-2011 a fine and dedicated comrade and friend from the Department of Massachusetts, Richard L. DeNoyer. Thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAUL SPERA: Comrade Commander-

in-Chief and Comrades, I am Paul Spera from Boston, Massachusetts, Post 144. I rise to second the nomination of Richard DeNoyer for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and I do so with pride and I do so in the name and the voice of the entire Department of Massachusetts, all of its members, its Ladies Auxiliary and all of those veterans whose lives Richard has touched through his service work, through his ability to reach out and help all of his fellow veterans and his fellow citizens.

So, with pride, with pleasure and on behalf of the State Commander and all of the Department of Massachusetts, I second the nomination of Richard DeNoyer for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMRADE WALTER GANSENBERG (Post 834 – Massachusetts): My name is Walter Gansenberg. I am from the Department of Massachusetts, and it is indeed my pleasure to second the nomination of Richard DeNoyer to the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

NOMINATION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Now, for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, we have John Hamilton to be nominated by Jack Carney and Jim Nier.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF CARNEY: I am indeed proud and pleased on behalf of the Department of Florida this morning to nominate John E. Hamilton for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 2010-2011.

John is a member of uncommon commitment, candor, courage, and certainly competence. John is an honored graduate of the Georgia Military Academy, class of 1967. He served with Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam. He was the recipient of three Purple Hearts for wounds in battle. He also was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon, the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, Cross of Gallantry, the Vietnam Civil Action Medal First Class, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, and many other decorations for his service to our country.

He was a Certified Master Water Safety Instructor Trainer who taught water survivor's skills to Marines and Sailors. Also, he taught and certified other water safety instructors. He was honored by Presidents Jimmy Carter and George Bush for his active participation in community service.

He was Florida's 1981 Young Veteran of the Year, and was twice honored as the recipient of the Legion of Honor Award of the Chapel of Four Chaplains. John's career included being a professional wrestler that spanned from 1970 to the '80s. Watch out.

He owned and operated John E. Hamilton Associates, a chemical and janitorial supply company in Jacksonville, Florida, until he retired in 2002, and is now enjoying his retirement. He has worked with and coached inner-city and at-risk students and kids for many years.

John has a distinguished record for service. John has been a member of Post 7909 in Jacksonville, Florida, and was three times its Post Commander. He was an All American District Commander, All American Department Commander, and he helped and provided guidance and assistance in the formation of the VFW Service Office in Florida.

The 2002 State Convention for the State of Florida was dedicated to him in recognition of his continuous support to the veterans of the State of

Florida, and its service office.

He was elected as a National Council member, District J, 1989-90. He was Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie in 1992.

He was the former President of the National Home Board of Trustees in 2004 and 2005. He has served as Chairman, Development Committee and a member of the Executive Finance and Facilities Committee at the Home. He served on numerous Committees for the National Organization.

John has two sons, Eric, who is a fireman, and John, Jr., who resides in California as a technician.

I am extremely proud to tell you also that his mother is alive and doing well, and she is over 90 years of age and she resides in Rockport, Massachusetts.

I am indeed proud again to tell you that we have an outstanding, dedicated candidate, comrades, for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, John E. Hamilton.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Good morning. I am Jim Nier, a delegate from Post 8919, Texas.

Comrades, I rise this morning to second the nomination of John E. Hamilton of Florida for the prestigious position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of our great National Organization. I met John about 20 years ago when I was campaigning for the office that he is now seeking. We became friends.

I have come to know him as a veterans advocate and as a comrade who has a genuine compassion for our great organization and those that we serve. It shows in everything that he does, in all of his accomplishments.

He is a proven leader, having held every position from the Pup Tent through Supreme Commander levels on the MOC, and Post Commander and Council member in the VFW, and now he is about to start his progression through the National VFW chairs.

That is an amazing feat and to the best of our knowledge it has never been done before. It speaks volumes of his fortitude and his perseverance.

You heard Past Commander-in-Chief Carney say he is a businessman. John understands that the VFW is big business. He understands budgets, he understands operations, and he understands planning. He turned around the financial situation of the VFW National Home during his tenure on the Board of Trustees and as its chairman.

John is very approachable. He finds time for everybody. He doesn't mince words. He is a no-nonsense, tell-it-like-it-is type of man. He is a man of integrity and most importantly he possesses an uncanny ability to rally those necessary to implement initiatives that will make things better for the Veterans of Foreign Wars as it evident by the implementation of the service officer program in Florida during his watch.

If you talk to him and listen to him, you will find he has a vision for our National Organization that addresses the issues and concerns of our grass root members. He exudes the enthusiasm and drive to get working on their behalf. He will be inclusive in his decision-making. He will serve with a kind, caring, compassionate competency that veterans and their families need and deserve. He will never be happy with the status quo, but instead will always be looking to the future and for better and innovative ways to accomplish our goals.

He is eminently qualified for the job. He will represent us the way we would want him to as he travels the country and around the world. He

will truly make us proud. Therefore, it is with a great deal of personal pride that I second the nomination of Comrade John E. Hamilton of Florida to be the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for 2010-2011. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Hearing none, nominations remain open until tomorrow.

Any further nominations for the Senior Vice Commander? Any further nominations for Senior Vice Commander? Any further nominations? Hearing none, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

NOMINATION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

Now, to break the chain of marines, -- I am beginning to wonder if you have to be a marine to join this elite group here. Now, we have nominations for Quartermaster General Larry Maher. At this time, nominations will be presented by Rob Weiss, Adjutant Quartermaster of the Department of Michigan, Dave Havelly from Indiana, Stan King, Quartermaster from Massachusetts, Precilla Wilkewitz, Adjutant Quartermaster, Department of Louisiana, Wayne Paulson, Adjutant, from North Dakota.

COMRADE ROB WEISS (Post 2406 – Michigan): Larry, did you ever feel like the world was a tuxedo and you were a pair of brown shoes?

Lawrence M. Maher was elected Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in March 2005. Larry's expertise in law and in finance has helped guide us through some difficult times in the past few years as we experienced changes in the laws and a downward turn in the economy.

It has been my pleasure to work with Larry for the past 12 years. He is a friend and a great veterans' advocate. Larry's eligibility in the Veterans of Foreign Wars was earned by serving in the United States Navy.

It is my honor and privilege to nominate Larry M. Maher for the position of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the administrative year 2010-2011.

SISTER PRECILLA WILKEWITZ (Post 4224 – Louisiana): Commander-in-Chief, I am Precilla Wilkewitz, a delegate from VFW Post 4224, Baker, Louisiana. I rise to second the nomination for Larry Maher for the office of Quartermaster General for 2010-2011. Joining me on the stage are the Quartermasters from the Western, the Eastern, the Big Ten and the Southern Conferences joining in this endorsement.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we endorse Larry Maher for Quartermaster General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. Any further nominations? Any other nominations for Quartermaster General? Any other nominations for Quartermaster General? Hearing none, the nominations remain open until tomorrow.

NOMINATION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

Now we will have nominations for National Chaplain, nominated by Lloyd Putnam, Commander of the Department of Michigan, and Rob Weiss, Adjutant Quartermaster for the Department of Michigan.

COMRADE BUD HUUKI (Post 6507 – Michigan): Good morning. My name is Bud Huuki, Past State Commander of the Department of Michigan and a delegate of Southfield Post 6507. It is my extreme honor to nominate this individual for the high office for National Chaplain.

Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta graduated from Hazel Park High School in 1951. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from William Tyndale College, and his Master's Degree from Eastern Michigan University. Elmer earned his Doctorate of Ministry from the Ecumenical Theological Seminary.

Reverend Liimatta was the Pastor of Apostolic Lutheran Church for 40 years in Southfield, Michigan. He was Southfield Police Chaplain for 30 years, retiring in 1995.

Reverend Liimatta has served with the United States Army in Korea from 1952 to 1954 as a Sergeant E-5. Elmer was a tank mechanic and motor sergeant.

Among his decorations, he received the Korean Service Medal with one Bronze Star, the National Defense Medal, Republic of Korea Presidential Citation, and the United States Nations Service Medal. Elmer is a Life Member of Post 6507 and is the Post, District and Department of Michigan Chaplain. He has been married to his wife, Ruth, for 55 years, and has five sons and one daughter.

It is my pleasure to nominate the Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta for the high office of National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2010-2011.

COMRADE ROBERT WEISS (Post 2406 – Michigan): I am Robert Weiss, delegate from Maple City Post 2406, Michigan. It is my pleasure to second the nomination for Elmer R. Liimatta. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Any further nominations for National Chaplain? Any further nominations for National Chaplain? Any further nominations for National Chaplain? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

For Judge Advocate General, Larry Minton will be nominated by Larry W. Rivers and Jack Carney.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much. I am honored to stand before this group of distinguished comrades this morning to nominate Larry B. Minton for the office of VFW Judge Advocate General.

Comrade Minton is a Life Member of the VFW Post 1736 in Alexandria, Louisiana. Larry earned his eligibility for the VFW as an artilleryman with the 1st Air Calvary in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969. Larry has been a Life Member of the VFW for more than 30 years.

During this more than 30 years of VFW membership and service, Larry has been an active member and has served on numerous Post, Department and National Committees. He has also served our organization in elective offices at the Post, the District and the Department level. He has served as the Tenth District Commander for Louisiana's Tenth District and VFW Post 7136 Judge Advocate for over 15 years. He has served as the Department of Louisiana's Judge Advocate for the last 12 years.

Larry is married and he and his wife, Susi, have been married for more than 40 years, and he has three children and four beautiful grandchildren.

Larry graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, Louisiana, with a Bachelor's Degree, and received his Law Degree from Loyola University of the South in New Orleans, graduating from Law School in 1990.

He has been a practicing lawyer full-time in Alexandria, Louisiana, since that time.

My comrades, on behalf of VFW Post 1736, Louisiana's Tenth District, the great Department of Louisiana VFW, and the comrades of the great VFW Southern Conference, I am honored to nominate Larry B. Minton for the office of VFW Judge Advocate General for the 2010-2011 administrative year.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: My comrades, I rise to second the nomination of Larry Minton as the next Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. In addition to serving this great organization and as a fellow veteran, Comrade Minton's commitment to his family, his community and his church epitomizes the VFW creed of service to others.

Comrade Minton and his wife, Susi, have worked with their community food bank for a number of years, the Taste A Program, a program that worked for at-risk children. Comrade Minton has also served as President of the local Rotary Club.

He and his wife are active members of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Pineville, Louisiana. My comrades, VFW tradition requires those in the ranks aspiring to national office be required to show through their prior service that they will serve us well. By his experience, both in the VFW and his personal life, Comrade Minton has trained, prepared for the national office he now seeks. His experience as District Commander, Post Judge Advocate for 15 years, Department of Louisiana Judge Advocate for the past 12 years, and as a practicing attorney make him uniquely qualified for the office of VFW Judge Advocate General.

I am indeed honored to second the nomination of my friend of more than 20 years, Larry Minton, a Life Member of Johnson Brown VFW Post 1736, Alexandria, Louisiana, as the next VFW Judge Advocate General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Do we have any other nominations for Judge Advocate General? Any other nominations? Any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

NOMINATION OF SURGEON GENERAL

Now, we have the nomination for Surgeon General, nominated by George Lisicki and John Biedrzycki for the nomination of William Schmitz.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GEORGE LISICKI: Good morning, comrades. I am proud to place the name of a caring comrade, who has used his medical experience for most of his adult life in caring for his fellow veterans. Doc Schmitz enlisted in the United States Navy in 1966. He completed Hospital Naval Corps School in Great Lakes, Illinois, in 1967. He was Senior Corpsman at Portsmouth Naval Hospital. Doc was then assigned to Camp Lejeune and worked at the Combat Engineering School as a Range Corpsman where he was awarded a Meritorious Mast, a meritorious promotion for outstanding performance in medical duties. He became the only Navy Corpsman to be awarded the Marine Corps Combat Engineering Degree.

He then went to Vietnam and was attached to the USMC Infantry and Artillery. He served by treating field casualties. Then in the 1st Medical Battalion, he ran a minor surgical clinic and manned a Medevac bunker for incoming casualties.

Doc returned to the United States in 1970 and obtained his degree in Registered Nursing, and was hired out of the graduating class to be on the faculty, the first in the history of that program. Doc worked in the Department of Corrections in the capacity of Registered Nursing and Acting Nurse Administrator, retiring after 30 years of service.

Doc has a lengthy and rich history in his service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was elected State Surgeon in 2007. He was editor of the NYS Overseas Veterans Newspaper for nine years. Doc was Commander of Special Projects Chairman for the past year and the Special Projects for the Men and Women of the PTSD Clinic at the Batavia VA. Doc's effort led to the project exceeding all prior fund-raisers for the Department in excess of \$70,000.

He was Post Commander for two years, County Commander for two years and District Five Commander. He has served on various District Councils and National Committees, including National Security.

Comrades, it is my honor and pleasure to place the name of my friend and our comrade, William "Doc" Schmitz in nomination for the high office of Surgeon General for 2010-2011.

COMRADE JOHN BIEDRZYCKI (Post 418 – Pennsylvania): Comrade Commander-in-Chief and delegates to the 111th VFW National Convention: I, John Biedrzycki, delegate of Post 418, Department of Pennsylvania, rise to second the nomination of William "Doc" Schmitz of the Department of New York for the office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

It has been said that service to others gives you the opportunity to make a contribution to the future. Service to others has been the hallmark of Doc Schmitz' life, both in his professional vocation and his personal avocation of service to veterans who need a helping hand.

Doc, as he is affectionately known, has served as VFW Department of New York Surgeon for many years. He lectures on combat PTSD to various agencies, such as the New York State Police Association, Schools of Nursing, and various other agencies.

He served on the first Veterans Court Mentoring Team in Buffalo, New York, in support of Judge Russell. He was a member of the team that converted the New York State Department of Corrections Medical Department to a universal medical coding system and a computer system.

While serving as an instructor in the School of Nursing, Doc spearheaded the use of computers as an integral part of the grading system and evaluating system. He serves on many, many veterans' administrative committees throughout the State of New York, and currently handles veterans' issues for the 29th Congressional District of New York.

His lifetime of service was outstanding in many other arenas. Doc served on the YMCA Board of Directors for youth lacrosse and basketball teams.

He is a member of the American Legion, the Marine Corps League, the Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America and Patron of the Jewish War Veterans. He is a founding father of a fraternity and a car and cycle club.

He is a 32nd Degree Mason and a Retired Masonic Shriner clown. At this time I have to tell you something of a personal note. On Doc's visit to the Department of Pennsylvania, he received one of the most unusual kinds of endorsements that any candidate can receive.

He was immediately stopped by the Pennsylvania State Police in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and awarded a fine citation for his excellent driving skills. He certainly remembers Pennsylvania.

Clearly the service that William "Doc" Schmitz has given to veterans and others demonstrate his uniqueness that make him eminently qualified to serve as Surgeon General of our organization. Quality is never an accident, it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution.

Doc typifies a life of service and dedication to the future of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I am honored to second his nomination and urge you to support William "Doc" Schmitz for the office of Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the administrative year 2010-2011. Thank you.

COMRADE HAL BURKE (Post 1895 – New York): Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, delegates to the 111th Convention. I, Harold Burke, Past State Commander of the Department of New York and a delegate from VFW Post 1895 rise to second the nomination of William "Doc" Schmitz for National Surgeon General.

Doc has been our Surgeon General at the Department of New York for the last three years and I will tell you without a doubt he is one of the most dedicated members of this organization that you will ever find. Doc has traveled thousands of miles in his tenure, visiting all the VA Hospitals, working very closely with the Batavia Hospital, the PTSD program, and he has helped many veterans throughout the State of New York with his expertise.

It is a great pleasure implied that I second the nomination of William "Doc" Schmitz on behalf of the Department of New York and all of its members for National Surgeon General for 2010-2011.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Hal. Do we have any other nominations for Surgeon General? Any other nominations for Surgeon General? Any other nominations for Surgeon General? Hearing none, nominations will remain open until tomorrow.

Do we have any announcements?

ADJUTANT GENERAL KENT: Immediately following this session, if you have your CDs from last night, please come up and the Chief will be here for one hour to sign them for you. That's it, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: CDs are still available at the entrance to the Supply Department. If anyone wants one of those CDs, again we will be happy to sign them. The money raised definitely will go to our Unmet Needs and the Military Assistance Program. So, you are definitely donating money to a good cause.

Sergeant-at-Arms, we will have the closing.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Comrades, please rise.

Comrade National Chaplain.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, the time has come when we must part. We thank you for giving us this precious time together and we pray that each moment was used wisely.

Continue to keep our great nation strong and free, and watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom.

Now dismiss us with your love, blessings and mercy. Until we meet again, keep us safe and let us live in spirit of true comradeship and peace. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, facing the flag of our country, join me in the Salute to the Colors.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the close of this session has been completed and your orders have been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. We are now in recess until 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 9:45 o'clock a.m., to reconvene on Thursday, August 26, 2010, at 8:00 o'clock a.m.)

FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION
THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2010

The Fourth Business Session of the 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in the Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana, was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please prepare the room for the Opening Ceremonies.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

Comrade Chaplain Obregon.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Thank you, Father, for all the blessings you have given during this 111th VFW National Convention. We look forward to the events of this day, and ask that you bless and anoint our newly-elected officers with wisdom, discernment and vision for the ensuing year.

Let us look forward with determination and purpose as we unite ourselves in continuing to fight for our veterans, their dependents and our armed forces.

Let us always remember to uphold the widows and children in our National Homes and enable us to meet their needs. May Thy good providence shield us from all harm and watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom.

May your presence, peace and protection be with us always. We ask all of this in your precious and holy name. Amen.

(Whereupon, National Sergeant-at-Arms O'Brien led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your order has been obeyed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: National Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you.

I will now call on Betty Gripp for the final report of the Credentials Committee.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

SISTER BETTY GRIPP (Department of Arizona): Good morning, everybody. I almost forgot that. At the close of business, at 4:00 p.m. yesterday, August 25, 2010, the total delegates registered with credentials are 9,366.

The Department Commanders, 50. Past Commanders-in-Chief, 23. Total National Officers, 18. That is for a grand total of 9,456.

Commander-in-Chief, I want to thank you for the appointment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you for a job well done. Again, thank you, Betty. It is an outstanding job and thank you so much for your service.

I will now ask all 2009-2010 Department Commanders that are in the audience to please come up on the stage.

(Whereupon, Commander-in-Chief Tradewell presented each State Commander with a pin.)

Again, I thank the Department Commanders for the 2009-2010 service, your friendship and, of course, the gift. I will appreciate it and thank you every time I hear that grandfather clock strike.

Having no further responsibility, it is now my pleasure to dismiss the Committee on General Resolutions.

My thanks to all the chairmen, vice-chairmen and to all the members of each Committee for your time and dedicated efforts.

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 to come before this convention? Any other business? Hearing none, I will call on the Adjutant General for any announcements he may have.

. . . Convention Announcements . . .

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you, "Gunner" Kent. I would just like to say and thank everyone for their participation in this convention. I would like to thank my wife and my son and daughter-in-law for being here. It is great to see them. They are definitely a part of my VFW career. I thank them for all their inspiration and for being here.

Again to all of you that work for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, thank you. Congratulations to all of the Commanders, officers last year, and it is my sincere pledge to assist Richard and all the officers this coming year so we can continue the business of the VFW, not only in the eyes of veterans but in the eyes of our military so they will join our ranks.

ELECTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Now we will proceed to the Election of Officers. I will reopen nominations for the office of Commander-in-Chief. Richard L. Eubank from the great state of California has been previously nominated.

Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DENIS WELLS (Post 8327 – California): I move that the nominations be closed and that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for Richard L. Eubank for the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2010-2011 administrative year.

COMRADE TOM LeBRON (Post 9448 – California): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Richard L. Eubank 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: Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Richard L. Eubank for Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2010-2011 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, I present to you the Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Richard L. Eubank. Congratulations, Commander Eubank. (Applause)

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT EUBANK: Comrades, I thank you with all my heart for everything you do for the veterans. I would like to personally thank my family, and I will mention them more in my speech. I want to thank not only my family but the Department of California and the Western Conference for allowing me to serve in this position. With that, thank you for everything that you do.

ELECTION OF SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, I will now open nominations for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Richard L. DeNoyer from the great state of Massachusetts has been previously nominated. Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE GEORGE MURRAY (Department of Massachusetts): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move to close the nominations and instruct the Adjutant General to cast one unanimous ballot for Richard DeNoyer as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2010-2011.

COMRADE WALTER GANSENBERG (Post 834 – Massachusetts): I second it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Richard L. DeNoyer 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: Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Richard L. DeNoyer for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the year 2010-2011 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, you have elected Richard L. DeNoyer as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Would you like to say a few words, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect?

REMARKS BY SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT DeNOYER: To the Veterans of Foreign Wars, thank you so very, very much for your faith and trust in me. To my Department of Massachusetts, I thank you for your support

and guidance. To my wife, Theresa, thank you for the love and support that you have given me.

Richard, it was wonderful to serve as the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief with you. It is indeed an honor to serve with you this coming year. God bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you very much.

ELECTION OF JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The name of John E. Hamilton from the great state of Florida 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.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am John Carney, a delegate and Past Commander-in-Chief. I move that the nominations be closed and that we cast one unanimous ballot for John E. Hamilton for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the year 2010-2011.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES NIER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Jim Nier, a delegate from Post 8990, Texas. I second the motion, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for John E. Hamilton 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 John E. Hamilton for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2010-2011 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, you have elected John E. Hamilton as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Would you like to say a few words, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-Elect Hamilton?

REMARKS BY JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT HAMILTON: Thank you very much, Chief. Good morning. Let me say how much this means to me, and it seems like it was a short time coming. I want to thank the great Southern Conference for their support, the Department of Florida, and particularly Past Commanders-in-Chief Jack Carney and Jim Nier for being there for me here today. That means a lot to me. Thank you very much. God bless you all.

ELECTION OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The name of Larry M. Maher from the great state of Missouri was placed in nomination for Quartermas-

ter General. Nominations are now again open for Quartermaster General. Are there any other nominations? Any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE ROBERT WONNELL (Department of Missouri): Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am Bob Wonnell, the Commander of the Department of Missouri. I move the nominations cease and the Adjutant General be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for Larry M. Maher for the office of Quartermaster General for the year 2010-2011.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

COMRADE JESSIE JONES (Department of Missouri): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: 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: Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Larry M. Maher for Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2010-2011 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, you have elected Larry M. Maher as Quartermaster General.

Would you like to say a few words, Quartermaster General Maher?

REMARKS BY QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT MAHER: First, I would like to say I have now two Judys in my life, one that keeps me in line at home and then one that keeps me in line at the office. This is the one from the office. My wife is back in Kansas City because she is in education.

I stood before this convention last year and I said that the VFW was in a difficult time financially, but I was confident we would get back on the right track. We made good progress this year, and I am optimistic that we are on the right track, and I promise I will do everything that I can to continue to point this organization so that it stays on that track.

I want to thank Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell for the great job he has done this year. He has had some real challenges and he has handled them very well. He provided an excellent example for all of us as he worked with many constraints of a diminished budget, but still had a great year. He has been an excellent spokesman for the organization, and an advocate for veterans.

I look forward to working with Richard Eubank and his team, Richard DeNoyer and John Hamilton and "Gunner" Kent.

We have way too many obstacles here, but somehow we will overcome them. We will keep them in line. We have a lot of marines in line for the future.

Last year, the officers and the Council had to make some very difficult decisions on so many important issues. We have not seen the last of those tough decisions, but we will continue to set the course.

Delegates, I thank you again for the opportunity to serve as Quartermaster General. I would like to thank the Department of Missouri and my Post 7356. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, complaints, 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 earn your trust. Thank you very much.

ELECTION OF NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The name of Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta from the great state of Michigan was placed in nomination for National Chaplain. Are there any other nominations for National Chaplain? Are there any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LLOYD PUTNAM (Post 9455 – Michigan): I would like to make a motion that the nominations be closed and that the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for the Reverend Elmer Liimatta as Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion. Is there a second?

COMRADE ROBERT WEISS (Post 2406 – Michigan): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta 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: Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta for National Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2010-2011 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, you have elected Reverend Elmer R. Liimatta.

Would you like to say a few words, National Chaplain Liimatta?

REMARKS BY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT LIIMATTA: As you can see, we sure shook that bridge. There was a young lad a few years ago, and one day he climbed on the edge of the bridge and as he was reaching in to get the molasses he slipped, and as he was falling the last words we heard from him were, “Lord, make me worthy of this occasion.”

Thank you for your support and prayers. We have a great year ahead of us. We have a lot of work to do. I may not be the best VFW member, or the best Lutheran, or the best Chaplain, but our previous Chaplains have pledged their support and we are going to have a great year. Working in many areas as a nation and a country, we are going to accomplish a lot. I ask your support and prayers as we do.

Too many people are looking for answers at the bottom of the pile. I am not talking about the VFW, I am talking about our communities. It is time for us to stand up against those folks that are not right. This gives the vision

of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and the dignity of life.

You never appreciate being an American until you go to a foreign country. This book offers up to us a living word, a living motto. It gave us a birth to our nation. It is a symbol of our liberty and our freedom. We can hold that word high, not just the declaration on our altar but to put it in practice.

There are so many military campaigns and ideas. My favorite right now is Canaan when he came the second time from the Promised Land. I made a trip to the Holy Land last year and there were 86 other Chaplains. They said, "So what? In four years you can run again." I am not quite there, but 15 months from now, Lord willing, I will be. Again, I thank you. I ask for your prayers and support for the coming year. Thank you.

ELECTION OF JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. The name of Larry B. Minton from the great state of Louisiana was placed in nomination for Judge Advocate General. Any other nominations for Judge Advocate General? Any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, I am Larry Rivers, a member of VFW Post 1736, Louisiana. I move the Adjutant General be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for Larry Minton for Judge Advocate General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. You have heard the motion. Is there a second?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JACK CARNEY: I am Jack Carney, a delegate and Past Commander-in-Chief. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second that nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for Larry B. Minton 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: Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Larry B. Minton for Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2010-2011 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Now, Comrades, you have elected Larry B. Minton as Judge Advocate General.

Would you like to say a few words, Judge Advocate General Minton?

REMARKS BY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT MINTON: Thank you very much, comrades, for your support. I understand I will be the Chairman of the Appeals Committee. Since I have gotten into this, our appeals seem to have increased by a large number. I assure you that I will do the very best job I can taking care of that and anything else that is assigned to me. Thank you.

ELECTION OF SURGEON GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: The name of William J. "Doc" Schmitz, Sr., from the great state of New York was placed in nomination for Surgeon General. Any other nominations for Surgeon General? Any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Hearing none, I recognize Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE HAL BURKE (Post 1895 – New York): I would like to make a motion that the nominations cease and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for William "Doc" Schmitz as National Surgeon.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

COMRADE JOHN BIEDRZYCKI (Post 418 – Pennsylvania): I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: We have a motion and a second that the nominations be closed and the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for William J. "Doc" Schmitz, Sr., 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: Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for William J. "Doc" Schmitz, Sr., for Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2010-2011 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Comrades, you have elected William J. "Doc" Schmitz, Sr., as Surgeon General.

Would you like to say a few words, Surgeon General Schmitz?

REMARKS BY SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT SCHMITZ: First of all, I want to thank the delegation for electing me to this position. I also want to thank my Department of New York and the Eastern Conference for supporting me. I look forward to serving you. I have two marines to keep me in line. Thank you very much. God bless you all.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: I will now call upon the Adjutant General to announce the newly-elected National Council of Administration members.

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:

District No. 2, Vito S. DeMarco.

District No. 4, Charlie W. Smith.

District No. 6, Harold "Hal" J. Roesch.

District No. 8, Dean E. Smith.

District No. 10, Robert A. "Robbie" Clark.

District No. 12, Gary K. Mathisen.

District No. 14, George C. "Corky" Berthiaume.

District No. 16, George F. Barlett.
District No. 18, Stanley W. Borusiewicz, Jr.
District D, Roger A. Frye.
District H, Eliseo "Al" Canto, Jr.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT TRADEWELL: Let me please call on Commander-in-Chief-Elect Richard Eubank for his announcement of appointed officers for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT EUBANK: My appointments for the term for which I was elected are:

Adjutant General, Allen F. "Gunner" Kent.
Chief of Staff, David B. Norris.
Inspector General, Darrell F. Bencken.
Sergeant-at-Arms, Bryan O'Brien.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: 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.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I have the honor to present Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief Gary Kurpius, who has been officially appointed the Installing Officer.

INSTALLING OFFICER KURPIUS: 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 TRADEWELL: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER KURPIUS: Have the books of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER KURPIUS: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: He does.

INSTALLING OFFICER KURPIUS: I would remind any officer not having proof of eligibility on file and not being installed at this time that the by-laws prescribe you must within 60 days of election or appointment submit to the Adjutant General for his file a copy of your proof of eligibility.

Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General ready to be turned over to his successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER KURPIUS: Have you the Charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: I have.

INSTALLING OFFICER KURPIUS: You will now surrender the gavel to me.

Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., 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: The following officers are to be installed:

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Richard L. DeNoyer.

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, John E. Hamilton.

Adjutant General, Allen "Gunner" Kent.

Quartermaster General, Larry M. Maher.

Chaplain Reverend, Elmer R. Liimatta.

Judge Advocate General, Larry B. Minton.

Surgeon General, William J. "Doc" Schmitz, Sr.

Chief of Staff, David B. Norris.

Inspector General, Darrell Bencken.

Sergeant-at-Arms, Bryan O'Brien.

District No. 1, Eugene A. Pawlik.

District No. 2, Vito S. DeMarco.

District No. 3, James L. Youngblood.

District No. 4, Charlie W. Smith.

District No. 5, Paul E. Connors.

District No. 6, Harold "Hal" J. Roesch.

District No. 7, John H. Ranson.

District No. 8, Dean E. Smith.

District No. 9, Roy C. Meares.

District No. 10, Robert A. "Robbie" Clark.

District No. 11, Larry J. Larson.

District No. 12, Gary K. Mathisen.

District No. 13, Charley Shoemaker.

District No. 14, George C. "Corky" Berthiaume.

District No. 15, Vincent B.J. Lawrence.

District No. 16, George F. Barlett.

District No. 17, Michael H. Musgrove.

District No. 18, Stanley W. Borusiewicz, Jr.

District No. 19, Thomas J. Kijak.

District No. 21, Steven Van Bergen.

District No. 23, William Dobbie.

District A, Albert S. Thomas.

District B, Donald R. Smithenry.

District C, Bernard Thompson.

District D, Roger A. Frye.

District G, John P. Wolfe.

District H, Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr.

District J, Richard Shepherd.

Commander-in-Chief, Richard L. Eubank.

NATIONAL 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 KURPIUS: National Officers-Elect of the Veter-

ans 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 Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

"I solemnly promise that at the close of the term to which I have been elected or appointed, or sooner if so ordered by proper authority, I will surrender immediately to only the duly authorized person or persons, all records, money, or other properties of this organization in my possession or under my control.

"All this I freely promise, upon my honor, as a loyal citizen of our great Republic. So help me God.")

As you were.

Comrade Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN OBREGON: Let us pray. 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 art ever present amongst us, grant wisdom unto them so that during 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 KURPIUS: As you were. National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations.

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 to the rostrum.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-Elect Richard L. Eubank, 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. Eubank, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn Obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT EUBANK: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER KURPIUS: 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, Commander-in-Chief-Elect Eubank received the following Obligation: "In the presence of Almighty God and the Officers and Delegates of this Order here assembled, I, Richard L. Eubank, do hereby solemnly promise that I will faithfully discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to which I have been elected, in accordance with the 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. Eubank, 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 LIFEMEMBERSHIP CARD TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THOMAS TRADEWELL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: It is with great pride, and an honor and a privilege for me to present the Past Commander-in-Chief Lapel Pin and Gold Life Membership Card to Past Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell. (Applause)

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Comrades, I am profoundly grateful to the delegates of the 111th VFW National Convention for the honor, trust and confidence you have bestowed upon me.

Since 1899, we have waged war to ensure that our nation properly

takes care of her veterans. We have won many battles, but there are more to be fought that may be even more difficult to win. It will take our best warriors to fight these battles so that our nation will properly care for her veterans, her service members and all their families.

Comrades, I have looked out over the convention floor these past few days and reflected on why we served our country in the military. I know it surely wasn't for the pay but for the love of our country.

And because in the Army you are warriors; because in the Marines we are warriors; because in the Navy you are warriors; because in the Air Force you are warriors; and because in the Coast Guard you are warriors.

Along with new Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Richard DeNoyer and new Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief John Hamilton, we stand here ready to serve.

To Past Commanders-in-chief Tommy Tradewell and Glen Gardner, thank you for allowing me to grow and be a part of your team. To all the other Past Chiefs here today, especially Past Chief Gary Kurpius for installing me, and to Allen "Gunner" Kent, my Adjutant General, thank you for your leadership, your guidance and for your mentorship.

To my Ship 4084 in Ridgecrest, California, my State of California, and the entire Western Conference, thank you for the years of support and friendship. I also want to recognize in memory Hal Jordan, Dennis Boudreaux, John Flannery and Ken Robbins, all of whom have since passed, and thank them for taking me under their wings and showing me how great this organization truly is.

To our National President Cortina Barnes and all the members of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, who I believe are our angels of warriors, thank you for doing what you do daily for the good of the entire organization. Without a doubt, all of you make all of us better.

To Walt Hamilton, Paul Chevelier, Jack Johann and Charlie Baker, all marines who I served with in the past and who are here today to help celebrate my election as Commander-in-Chief, thank you for your continued friendship.

To Andy and Hazel Anderson, you will never know how much your friendship means to me.

To my very special guests, daughters Shannon, Anna and Amy; sister Wanda; and granddaughters Hope and Loren, thank you for making this day even more special by being here. To my mother, who could not be here today, thank you for the great life you gave me as your son.

And to my wife and love of my life, Celeste, I want to publicly thank you for your patience, your understanding and for your love. Without your unconditional support, I would not be here today.

Comrades, this acceptance speech will be short, and to some of you that might be a blessing. But I want you to remember two things: the VFW needs rifles and we need bullets.

Everyone at this convention is a rifle, and so are thousands of others back in your home states and Departments, Districts and Posts. You are the leaders. You are the ones who can be truly counted upon to do whatever it takes to achieve every objective.

But every rifle needs bullets, and that's our membership. And from one grunt to the many warriors in this room, you know there can never be too many bullets. That's where our membership recruiting objectives need to focus. We need more bullets and not temporary rounds that ricochet away

at the end of a one-year membership.

Did you know that since 2007 more than 315,000 annual members did not renew their memberships? Included in that number were almost 120,000 former members younger than 39 years old. That is a shocking amount of lost ammunition, but the question we have to ask ourselves is "why?"

Are we too eager to push an inexpensive one-year membership instead of explaining the true value of a lifetime membership?

Are we so focused on recruiting the two million war veterans that we forgot the 15 million others who are also eligible from past wars and conflicts?

Do we assume everyone knows who the VFW is and what it is we do when, in fact, they don't?

Some of you know that I retired from the Marine Corps in 1987 after serving 20 years, but what you probably don't know is that I didn't join the VFW until 1988.

I was building a house in California when I stopped by a local hardware store to pick up some supplies and just happened to notice a sign advertising the formation of a new VFW Post.

One opportunity led to another, and before too long I was the Commander of VFW Post 10165 in Cameron Park, and then the District Commander, and then the Department Commander from 1999-2000. One of my proudest achievements from those days is being a Triple Crown All American Commander at all three levels.

Comrades, I was able to accomplish this by surrounding myself with other warriors who fought long and hard for veterans, and who gave me the honor of being All American.

I said that to say this: No one ever asked me to join the VFW. Let me repeat that. No one ever asked me to join. So, how many other veterans are out there who just need to be asked?

The VFW reached 100 percent of its recruiting goal for 37 consecutive years, from 1956 to 1992. But from 1993 forward, our membership has dropped from a record high of almost 2.2 million to the 1.5 million we have today. That is a lot of bullets, comrades, and the loss is mainly due to non-renewals, not to an aging veterans' population.

About 60,000 members passed away last year, but we more than made up for the loss with 111,000 new or reinstated members. The reason why we fell 19,000 short of reaching 100 percent this year was because almost 70,000 members didn't renew their memberships.

This happens every year, and the primary reasons given are people don't feel like they fit in, or they don't like the leadership. Comrades, we are not working for the Post or District, and we are not working for the State or Department Commanders, we are fighting for our warriors!

Comrades, in battle, just because you don't like your commanding officer or platoon sergeant doesn't mean you don't defend your position to protect yourself and those warriors beside you. It is the same now as then. You must stand up and fight for veterans by defending your perimeter with new membership.

You need to do whatever it takes, because we both know that every program and service we provide takes rifles to do the legwork and bullets to provide the support.

I am here to pledge my support to help you reach and exceed your

goals, even if that means going door-to-door with your Commanders and Membership Chairmen. Just let me know how I can use the influence of this position to help you at the local level.

I know for a fact that we can all learn lessons from the Department of Arizona, which just reached 100 percent for their forty-third consecutive year. A big salute to Arizona. (Applause)

I also want to applaud the 26 other States and Departments who also reached 100 percent under Tommy Tradewell's leadership. Would all those State and Department Commanders in the audience please rise and be recognized. Well done.

Rifles and bullets, that's what I want you to take back home. I also want everyone to imagine that their States and Departments, Districts and Posts are like combat units in the field with missions and objectives. Each State and Department has a perimeter to hold, and that is 100-percent membership. We are counting on you to hold the perimeter. Do not allow yourselves to be overrun.

Comrades, we will all know at the end of June 2011 who held their position and succeeded in their mission of 100 percent, and also those who took ground, 100 percent plus. Any combat unit worth its salt will take their objective and accomplish their mission. I want warriors who are willing to go into battle with me. For those who do not wish to wage war for our veterans, please stand aside and let us pass through.

This challenge is being reflected in the following poem that I took liberty to tweak for cause and effect.

"We Band of Warriors.

"Whoever does not have the stomach for this fight, let them depart. Give them money to speed their departure since we do wish to die in this person's company.

"Whoever lives past today and comes home safely will rouse themselves every year on this day, show their neighbor their scars, and tell embellished stories of all their great feats of battle.

"These stories will teach our sons and daughters, and from this day until the end of the world, we shall be remembered.

"We few, we happy few, we band of warriors, for whoever has shed their blood with me shall be my comrade.

"And those that are afraid to go to battle with us will think lesser of themselves as they hear of how we fought and died together."

Henry V, wrote William Shakespeare, only wanted warriors who wanted to be there on the field of battle with him. Similarly, I need Posts that are battle ready to step into the breach at a moment's notice like VFW Post 4534 in Rockledge, Florida, who paid for motel rooms to help homeless veterans during last winter's record cold;

Or Post 1156 in Larchmont, Massachusetts, who opened their doors as the town's only senior citizen cooling center during this summer's record heat;

Or Post 2107 in Dearborn, Michigan, who helped bury with honors 26 homeless veterans whose cremated remains went unclaimed for years;

Or Post 5689 in Burney, California, who helped to ensure the dignified return of 20-year-old Marine Corps Lance Corporal Tyler Allen Roads, who died last month in Afghanistan.

Comrades, ours is a service organization that is second to none when it comes to be there for others in need, but it takes rifles to be the leaders and

to do the grunt work, and bullets to provide the support.

We have to be there for our 2.2 million service members and all their families who continue to be fully engaged and extremely stressed in America's longest war.

We have to be there with our support of the troops programs that just in this past year sponsored:

210 homecoming or departure events for more than a quarter-million troops and their families;

Provided more than 1.1 million free telephone connections between deployed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families back home and through our Unmet Needs Program provided more than a half million dollars in grant money to help 360 military families get through emergency financial situations.

We have to be there to ensure the VA keeps its promise to care for America's veterans of yesterday, today and tomorrow, and to ensure the VA treats our women veterans with the respect and dignity they have earned and deserve as warriors.

We have to be there for them on Capitol Hill, just like in March when the VFW was the only veterans' organization to fight for all VA and DoD health-care programs in the new National Health Care Bill.

We have to be there for our young and not so young veterans who are wading through a maze of paperwork just to file a VA claim. Our VFW certified service officers helped 105,000 veterans last year receive \$1.5 billion in earned compensation or pension.

And we have to be there for the thousands of unemployed veterans, homeless veterans, and the 88,000 MIAs still missing since World War II, and all of their families.

Comrades, we are the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. We are the nation's oldest major veterans' organization, and with your help we could be unquestionably the nation's largest veterans' organization. Now, that's an objective.

It bears repeating to say every VFW member has a sacred obligation to help ensure that those who follow us into harm's way are properly welcomed home with honor and appreciation.

But to accomplish this mission, we need rifles and we need bullets. I urge those who have not renewed their membership, or those who are eligible but have not yet joined our ranks to do so today, because sometimes it's okay just to be a bullet. You can be a rifle tomorrow.

Our responsibility and mission is to ensure that all veterans, past, present and future, will have the very best equipment they need to win every war and the very best care they may need to heal again. This is how we fulfill our sacred oath to "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living."

Comrades, in closing I ask what your legacy will be? Will it be that you chose to stay in the rear with the gear and the beer and the fear, or will it be to fight and win battles for veterans?

What we do for ourselves dies with us, but what we do for our country and for fellow veterans will live forever and it will ensure that this great organization remains strong and relevant to every new generation of patriots who follows us.

It's your choice, but please know that for the next 12 months I will be looking for warriors whose battle cry will be "Let's Get Muddy and Bloody with the Chief!"

Comrades, I thank you once again for your faith and for your trust.
Semper Fi!

(Whereupon, the assembly extended a prolonged standing ovation.)
At this time we will entertain a motion to adjourn the convention.
I recognize Microphone No. 2.

MOTION TO CLOSE CONVENTION

COMRADE KEVIN JONES (Post 7356 – Missouri): 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 111th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed.

COMRADE ROBERT GREENE (Post 7397 – Kansas): I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: You have before you a motion, properly seconded, to close the 111th 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

NATIONAL 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 Honor Guard retired the Colors at this time.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade National Chaplain, the Benediction, please.

BENEDICTION

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN LIIMATTA: Heavenly Father, we come to you asking your blessing upon your servants with their new responsibilities as officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

As Solomon asked for wisdom through an understanding heart, grant unto our leaders humility and trust that they might seek your guidance and their vision may be lifted above pride and prejudice to make decisions to your glory and our great nation.

May they sense your care and protection to uphold them and their families. Set them for a blessing and by your grace continue to lead us as one nation under God. Amen.

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the Closing Ceremonies for the 111th National Convention have been completed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TRADEWELL: Thank you. The 111th National Convention is closed. We are adjourned sine die.

(Whereupon, the Convention was duly adjourned at 10:00 o'clock a.m., sine die.)

**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 21-26,
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**

C-1 (Proposed by Department of Illinois)

CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER

Sec. 230101 – Organization.

Amend Sec. 230101 – Organization. (a) Federal Charter., by inserting the words “and women”, immediately after the word “men”. (Disapproved)

B-1 (Proposed by Department of Hawaii)

ARTICLE I – MEMBERS

Sec. 101 - Eligibility.

Amend Sec. 101 - Eligibility., National By-Laws, by substituting the first sentence in the first paragraph to read the following:

“Any citizen of the United States and any United States National may be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States who is serving or has served honorably in the Armed Forces of the United States:” (Approved)

B-2 (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.” (Disapproved)

M-1 (Proposed by Department of Vermont)

ARTICLE II – POSTS

Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.

Amend Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following paragraph after (a)(1) l.:

“m. Assure that eligible veterans are encouraged to join and maintain

membership.” (Disapproved)

M-2 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE II – POSTS

Sec. 219 - Relief Fund.

Amend Section 219 – Relief Fund., Manual of Procedure, by adding the word “only” at the end of the opening sentence. (Approved)

B-3 (Proposed by Department of Florida)

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., National By-Laws, by inserting the following new paragraph after “Vacancies...” and before “Removal...” and inserting the word “Resignations” in the title of the section as follows:

“Sec. 220 – Vacancies, Resignations and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.

Resignation. Any resignation occurring in the elective offices of the Post should be filled by nominating and electing at the next stated meeting of the Post or special meeting called for such purposes as prescribed in Section 220 of the Manual of Procedure. Any elected officer who resigns their position will not be allowed to hold that same office in the same administrative year in which the officer resigned.” (Disapproved)

M-3 (Proposed by Department of Florida)

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 inserting the following new paragraph after “Vacancies...” and before “Removal...” and inserting the word “Resignations” in the title of the section as follows:

“Sec. 220 – Vacancies, Resignations and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.

Resignation. In the event of a resignation in the office of Commander or Commander-elect, the Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect shall at once, and without further formality, succeed to the title and duties of such office and the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Com-

mander-elect shall at once, and without further formality, succeed to the title and duties of the Senior Vice Commander. Likewise, in the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect, the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect shall at once, and without further formality, succeed to the title and duties of said office. If the Senior Vice Commander does not move to the position of Commander then the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect shall at once, and without further formality, succeed to the title of Commander. If neither the Senior nor Junior Vice Commander succeed as described herein then the Senior Vice Commander shall assume the duties of the Commander until the election of the new Commander.

Should the vacancy occur in the office of Post Quartermaster, the Post Commander may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster to carry out the duties incident to that office. The appointment shall in no instance exceed more than sixty (60) days and shall be null and void upon the election of a Post Quartermaster.

Any elected officer who resigns their position, will not be allowed to hold the same office, in the same administrative year in which the officer resigned." (Disapproved)

B-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE II – POSTS

Sec. 222 – Delegates, County Council, District, Department and National Conventions.

Amend Sec. 222 – Delegates, County Council, District, Department and National Conventions., National By-Laws, by substituting in its entirety the following:

"Sec. 222 – Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.

(a) Delegate strength shall be one for every thirty members or fraction thereof in good standing. Delegates and alternates shall be elected in accordance with the Manual of Procedure.

(b) Delegates elected under this section shall not be considered instructed and may exercise full authority in the duty to be performed.

(c) Each Post will pay, in accordance with its Department By-laws, a delegate registration fee for each and every delegate to which the Post shall be entitled.

(d) Each Post will pay, in advance, a national convention registration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25) which shall entitle the Post to a packet of convention information and materials and one identified registered delegate for the National Convention. Each additional delegate attending the national convention will pay a ten dollar (\$10) delegate fee." (Approved)

M-4 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE II – POSTS

Sec. 222 – Delegates, County Council, District, Department and National Conventions.

Amend Sec. 222 – Delegates, County Council, District, Department and National Conventions., Manual of Procedure, by substituting in its entirety the following:

“Sec. 222 – Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.

By the passage of a motion before balloting, candidates for delegates and alternates may be voted for on the same ballot. The member(s) receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared delegates and alternates.

(a) Post delegates and alternates to the District shall be elected at a regular meeting of the Post held not less than thirty (30) days prior to the District Convention 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. The District Quartermaster shall verify the delegate strength of each Post using the month-end membership report immediately prior to the convening of the convention, with such additions as may be necessary by new posts only. Such report shall be used to determine delegate strength for meetings during the ensuing year. Delegates and alternates of each Post shall serve as delegates throughout the year provided they remain members in good standing in the respective Post within the District.

(b) Post delegates and alternates to the Department Convention shall be elected at a regular meeting of the Post held not less than thirty (30) days prior to the Department Convention 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. The Department Quartermaster shall verify the delegate strength of each Post using the month-end membership report immediately prior to the convening of the convention or as the Department By-Laws so provide. Delegates and alternates of each Post shall be members in good standing in the respective Post within the Department.

Where the Department By-Laws so provide, a delegate registration fee shall be paid by each Post for every delegate to which each Post shall be entitled, based upon and as shown by the Department Quartermaster's records as of not less than thirty (30) days prior to the convening of the convention, with such additions as may be necessary by new posts only. The delegate registration fee shall be forwarded by every Post regardless of the number of delegates present at the annual Department Convention, and must be in the hands of the Department Quartermaster not later than fifteen (15) days before the convening of the Department Convention. Posts failing to forward the full delegate registration fee shall be considered delinquent and in arrears.

The Department Quartermaster shall set up a Department Convention fund and all Department delegate registration fees received by him shall be placed therein and used and expended only as and for expenses incurred and expenditures made in the holding of an annual Department Convention.

(c) Post delegates and alternates to the National Convention shall be

elected the last meeting night in June 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. Delegate strength of each Post shall be based upon the Quartermaster General's records as of June 30, with such additions as may be necessary by new posts only. Delegates and alternates shall be members in good standing in their respective posts. Delegates shall not be recognized at the National Convention unless they personally register their completed delegate card with the National Credentials Committee.

Posts instituted after delegate strength has been determined, but prior to convening date of the respective convention or district meeting, shall on the day of institution, elect one delegate and one alternate for each thirty names or fraction thereof according to the number of names listed on the charter application.

Delegates will be issued credentials at the conventions. Delegates and alternates to District, Department and National conventions shall be recognized only when posts have complied with the provisions of the By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual and convention rules." (Approved)

B-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS

Sec. 402 – By-Laws.

Amend Sec. 402 – By-Laws., National By-Laws, by substituting with the following:

"The District Convention may adopt or amend By-Laws governing the District as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure, provided such By-Laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-laws of the Department having jurisdiction."
(Approved)

M-5 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS

Sec. 402 – By-Laws.

Amend Sec. 402 – By-Laws., Manual of Procedure, by substituting with the following:

"Copies of By-Laws, including amendments, adopted by a District shall be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief, through channels. Such proposed By-Laws or amendments shall be submitted to the Department Commander who shall review them for compliance with the Department By-Laws and shall forward them within thirty (30) days, with a recommendation to the Commander-in-Chief, certifying that there is no conflict

in the proposed By-Laws with the Department By-Laws. No By-Laws or amendments adopted by a District shall become effective until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or his designee for compliance with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.” (Approved)

B-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 502 – By-Laws.

Amend Sec. 502 – By-Laws., National By-Laws, by substituting with the following:

“The Department Convention may adopt or amend By-Laws governing the Department as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure, provided such By-Laws do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.” (Approved)

M-6 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 502 – By-Laws.

Amend Sec. 502 – By-Laws., Manual of Procedure, by substituting with the following:

“Copies of By-Laws, including amendments, adopted by a Department shall be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief, through channels. No By-Laws or amendments adopted by a Department shall become effective until reviewed by the Commander-in-Chief or his designee for compliance with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.” (Approved)

B-7 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 503 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.

Amend Sec. 503 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees., National By-Laws, by substituting with the following:

"Each Department shall hold one Convention each year, which shall begin no earlier than ninety days prior to the convening of the National Convention and shall be concluded no less than thirty (30) days prior to the conclusion of the National Convention.

The minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a Department Convention shall be not less than one delegate each from ten Posts in the Department unless the Department By-Laws may prescribe a different number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Any member in good standing or one on official business may visit a Department Convention; however, such visitor shall have no voice in business discussions unless recognized by the Commander, and shall have no voting privileges. Those on official business shall be recognized by the Commander for the conduct of business." (Approved)

B-8 (Proposed by Department of Michigan)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 516 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

Amend Sec. 516 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National By-Laws, 516(b) by replacing "Service Officer" with "Certified Veterans Advocate". (Disapproved)

M-7 (Proposed by Department of Michigan)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 516 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.

Amend Sec. 516 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., Manual of Procedure, by replacing "Service Officer" with "Certified Veterans Advocate" in the first sentence. (Disapproved)

M-8 (Proposed by Department of Michigan)

ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS

Sec. 518-Officers: Duties and Obligations.

Amend Sec. 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, (a) Officers., (11) **Service Officer.**, by replacing the word "Service Officer" in the title with "Certified Veterans Advocate" and replacing the "The Department Service Officer" with "The Department Certified Veterans Advocate" in the first sentence. (Disapproved)

B-9 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 618 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.

Amend Sec. 618 – Officers: Duties and Obligations., National By-Laws, in item (9) under (f) Adjutant General:, by replacing “Section 608” with “Section 616” in the first sentence. (Approved)

B-10 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL

Sec. 620 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.

Amend Sec. 620 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members., National By-Laws, by substituting with the following in **Removal.:**

“Elected officers or committee members can be removed as prescribed in Section 620 of the Manual of Procedure.

The Commander-in-Chief may, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the National Council of Administration, remove any elected National officer who fails to fulfill the duties of his office as required by Section 618, provided that such officer has been given seven (7) days written notice that removal will be sought, including the reasons for removal, and the officer is provided an opportunity to be heard by the National Council at a regular meeting or special meeting called for that purpose, prior to such removal.

Any National officer removed by the Commander-in-Chief 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.” (Approved)

B-11 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 704 – Relief Fund.

Amend Sec. 704 – Relief Fund., National By-Laws, by deleting the title and text entirely. (Disapproved)

M-9 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 704 – Relief Fund.

Amend Sec. 704 – Relief Fund., National By-Laws, by deleting the title and text entirely. (Disapproved)

B-12 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 720 – Definitions.

Amend Sec. 720 – Definitions., National By-Laws, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“Unit” as used in Section 709 of these By-Laws refers to an entity or group other than the sponsoring Post, District or Department. In all other instances, the term “unit” or “subordinate unit” refers only to a duly chartered Post, District or Department and does not, under any circumstances, refer to any activity, clubroom or holding company sponsored by any Post, District or Department.

“This organization” or “National organization,” as used in these By-Laws, refers to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the body corporate created by Act of Congress, 36 U.S.C. 111 et seq.

“He, His, Him” as used in these By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual shall include both male and female persons.

“Resign, Resignation” means deliberately giving up an office or membership, e.g., quitting. Resignation from an office in this organization or any unit shall become effective immediately upon the communication to resign in writing or orally to the respective Commander, or at a regular or special meeting of the chartered unit. Any elected officer who resigns their position will not be allowed to hold that same office in the same administrative year in which the officer resigned.” (Approved)

B-13 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IX – DISCIPLINE

Amend **ARTICLE IX - DISCIPLINE**, National By-Laws, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“Sec. 901 — Discipline of Members.

Except as otherwise provided in the Congressional Charter, these By-Laws and the Manual of Procedure, no member shall be subject to the penalties prescribed in Section 907, unless such member shall have been advised in writing of the charges against him and afforded the opportunity to request that such charges be heard and determined at a Disciplinary Hearing as hereinafter provided.

No disciplinary action may be initiated with respect to conduct that has been the subject of previously initiated disciplinary action.

Sec. 902 — Offenses.

Members who have committed offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may be subject to disciplinary action and may be assessed the penalties provided in this Article. Offenses recognized

by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are:

1. Disloyalty to the United States of America.
2. Failure to fulfill the obligations taken at time of application and admission or the obligations taken upon installation of any office.
3. False representation or deliberate concealment concerning eligibility to membership, office, or acquiescing in or permitting ineligible persons to become members or officers.
4. Disobedience or disregard of the provisions of the Congressional Charter, By-Laws (at all levels), Manual of Procedure, Ritual, General Orders or any other laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or any order of the Commander-in-Chief.
5. Conviction of, or entering a guilty or no contest plea to a felony, or to a misdemeanor or ordinance violation involving moral turpitude, in any court in the United States.
6. Conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline or conduct unbecoming a member in his relations to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or other members.
7. Divulging any of the private business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with the intent or effect of embarrassing the Veterans of Foreign Wars or members thereof.
8. Preparing or signing any false record, return, regulation, order or other official document of or concerning the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, knowing it to be false, or making any other false official statement with the intent to deceive.
9. Selling or otherwise disposing of money or property without proper authority or, willfully or negligently damaging, destroying or losing any such money or property belonging to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, or any Post, County Council, District, or Department.
10. Aiding, abetting, counseling, concealing, commanding, conspiring, soliciting, procuring or causing to be done any act which, if done, would be punishable under this Article.
11. Knowingly making or causing to be made a false entry in or false alteration of a government record. Knowingly conveying or causing to be conveyed in any form false information concerning one's military record.
12. Knowingly providing false information or statements in connection with the initiation of charges against another member.

Sec. 903 - Disciplinary Actions.

Disciplinary actions shall be initiated only when there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offense has been committed by the person charged and a signed incident report or appropriate documentation is submitted by the accuser to the appropriate commander (i.e., Post, Department, Commander-in-Chief).

Prior to the initiation of disciplinary action, a Post or Department or its respective Commander or the Commander-in-Chief, shall appoint an individual or committee to investigate alleged offenses brought to its attention by a member and report on the results of such investigation.

Who May Initiate:

1. A Post may, acting by two-thirds vote at a regular or special meeting, instruct the Post Commander to initiate such action with respect to a

member of the Post.

2. A Department Commander may initiate such action with respect to any member within the Department.

3. The Department Convention or Department Council of Administration may, by two-thirds vote, instruct the Department Commander to initiate such a proceeding.

4. The Commander-in-Chief may initiate such action with respect to any member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

5. The National Convention or the National Council of Administration may, by two-thirds vote, instruct the Commander-in-Chief to institute such a proceeding. In the event the Commander-in-Chief is the accused, the National Convention or National Council of Administration shall designate a member to initiate such disciplinary action.

6. If the respective Commander fails or refuses to initiate a disciplinary action after being instructed to do so, another member may be instructed to initiate the action.

7. If the Commander is the accused, action must be initiated by higher authority.

How to Initiate: Disciplinary Actions must be initiated by the preparation and delivery of written Charges and Specifications to the accused member.

Charges and Specifications – How prepared and Delivered: Charges and Specifications must be prepared and delivered in the manner described and authorized in the Manual of Procedure.

Hearing Requested. If the accused member desires a Disciplinary Hearing (with or without mediation), such member must within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the Charges and Specifications, request a hearing. Such request shall be made in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

No Hearing Requested. In the event that the accused member does not properly request a Disciplinary Hearing within fifteen (15) days or, prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) day period, advises the Commander or the designated member initiating the action that a hearing is not desired, the Commander or the designated member initiating the charges, may take such action as is deemed appropriate including the ordering of any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these By-laws.

1. If initiated at the Post, the Commander or the designated member initiating the charges, must have concurrence by majority vote of the Post to order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these By-laws.

2. If initiated by the Department Commander, he/she may order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these By-Laws.

3. The Department Council of Administration or the Department Convention causing the Charges to be initiated shall, by majority vote, order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these By-laws.

4. If initiated by the Commander-in-Chief, he/she may order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these By-Laws.

5. The National Council of Administration or the National Convention causing the Charges to be initiated shall, by majority vote, order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these By-Laws.

Any action taken must be in writing and delivered by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested to the last known address of the accused member. Such action shall include notification of appellate rights. A

copy thereof must also be forwarded to the next higher authority.

Sec. 904 - Appeal.

Any member against whom disciplinary action is taken under this Article shall have the right to appeal such action (with the exception of cases settled through mediation). Such appeal shall be made in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure. If the member fails to properly appeal the action in the manner specified in the manual, the appeal will not be considered. With respect to appeals from the imposition of penalties where no hearing was properly requested, the member shall be entitled to appeal only the severity of the penalty and shall not be entitled to contest the commission of the offense.

Appeals to the Department Commander. Appeals from disciplinary actions initiated by a Post shall be to the Department Commander. The decision of the Department Commander shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration shall be final.

Appeals to the Commander-in-Chief. Appeals from disciplinary actions initiated by a Department Commander shall be to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration shall be final.

Appeals to the National Council of Administration. Appeals from disciplinary actions initiated by the Commander-in-Chief shall be to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration shall be final.

Except as provided in Section 905, no penalty in a disciplinary action shall be carried into effect if an appeal has been taken and such appeal has not been finally adjudicated. The penalty shall be carried into effect at such time as a decision is final and by execution of a Special Order by the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration.

Nothing herein shall be construed as preventing the Commander-in-Chief from enforcing the provisions of the Congressional Charter, these By-Laws, the Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws or usages and/or the duties of his office, regardless of any pending appeal.

Computation of Time. Whenever these By-Laws or the Manual of Procedure requires action, with respect to appeals, within a specific number of days it refers to calendar days. The time shall be calculated beginning with the day upon which the decision at the previous level was delivered to the last known address of the member.

Any required action by the member must be made in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and post-marked no later than the date due. The Commander-in-Chief may, grant an extension provided the request is received prior to the expiration of the time frame originally prescribed and that the request is for good and sufficient cause.

Sec. 905 - Suspension from Office.

At any time after charges are initiated against a member holding office, the Commander-in-Chief or Department Commander having jurisdiction, may suspend the accused member from office pending a final decision on the disciplinary action, provided that with respect to salaried officers, said suspension shall be with pay. During the suspension of a Post, County Council, District or Department Commander, the office shall be temporarily filled by the Senior Vice Commander. Suspensions affected under this section shall not be subject to appeal.

Sec. 906 – Prima Facie Case.

If the accused member has been convicted of a violation subjecting him to discipline under Section 902, certified copies of the judicial record of conviction or plea shall be conclusive evidence of a violation of said section and a Commander or Disciplinary Hearing Panel may consider the matter as if the accused was willfully absent.

Sec. 907 – Penalties.

Penalties for offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be:

1. Termination of membership.
2. Suspension from membership for a specified period of time.
3. Suspension of certain rights or privileges of membership for a specified period of time.
4. Suspension or removal from office.
5. Reprimand.
6. By other administrative action deemed appropriate.

Sec. 908 - Administrative Actions.

A member who has been suspended from any Post by sentence of disciplinary action properly carried into execution, shall be placed in Department Member-at-Large. Upon completion of the suspension of membership a transfer is permitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 107 of the national By-Laws.

In the event that a member transfers his membership and reasonable grounds exist to initiate disciplinary action, the Department Commander or the Commander-in-Chief may transfer the member back to the jurisdiction where the disciplinary action will be initiated.

Any member, or former member, sentenced will be allowed one opportunity to petition directly to the Commander-in-Chief to have his conviction pardoned or his sentence commuted provided at least five years of the pertinent sentence have been served.” (Approved)

M-10 (Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group. Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief)

ARTICLE IX – DISCIPLINE

Amend **ARTICLE IX - DISCIPLINE**, Manual of Procedure, by replacing in its entirety with the following:

“Sec. 901 - Discipline of Members.

It is the purpose of this Article to provide a procedure whereby a member may be appropriately disciplined while assuring that such member is given reasonable notice of the charges against him and afforded an opportunity to request that such charges be heard and determined at a Disciplinary Hearing. Except as otherwise specifically provided in the Congressional Charter or sections of the By-Laws and this Manual of Procedure, no member may have his membership terminated or suspended nor may any member be relieved of any office unless such discipline is imposed as provided in Article IX.

This Article does not apply to action taken by a Post, County Council, District or Department to bar or suspend members from participating in activities or use of club-rooms sponsored or conducted by such Post, County Council, District or Department; such actions are subject to separate regulation by the pertinent Post, County Council, District or Department.

The following forms, as they may be revised from time to time, will be used in conjunction with this section: Special Order Initiating Disciplinary Action (DA-1); Charges and Specifications (DA-2); Order Appointing a Disciplinary Hearing Panel and Special Order (DA-3); Findings and Sentence (DA-4); Form of Record of Disciplinary Action (DA-5); Request For Mediation/Hearing (DA-6) and, Record of Mediation (DA-7). (Template forms are in the Appendix.)

Sec. 902 - Offenses.

The recognized offenses shall be as provided in Section 902 of the By-Laws.

Sec. 903 - Procedure for Disciplinary Actions.

(a) **Who May Initiate.** (See Section 903 By-Laws.)

(b) **How To Initiate.** Charges and Specifications shall be signed by the Initiating Officer and attested to by the Adjutant and shall include a copy of the incident report.

(c) **Charges and Specifications.** Initiation of a Disciplinary Action requires delivery to each accused of written Charges and Specifications.

(d) **How To Prepare.** The Commander or the designated member initiating a disciplinary action should do so by issuing a Special Order (Form DA-1) which will have attached to it the Charges and Specifications (Form DA-2), and Request For Hearing (Form DA-6).

(e) **How To Deliver.** Charges and Specifications shall be delivered personally, or by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested to the accused member's last known address. Documentation of delivery shall be retained by the Adjutant.

(f) **How Hearings Are to Be Requested.** A request (Form DA-6) must be made in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, postmarked no later than fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the Charges and Specifications and must be addressed to the Commander initiating the action or, in the event that the charges are not initiated by the

Commander, to the person initiating the charges.

(g) **Procedure Where Mediation Requested.** Mediation does not preclude the accused's right to a hearing. If mediation is requested, the Mediation Officer is designated by the next higher authority and shall schedule a meeting date within fifteen (15) days of the request. The mediation shall include the following individuals: the Initiating Officer, the Mediation Officer, and the Accused. If an agreement is reached during mediation, the penalty imposed is binding and not subject to appeal. The result shall be recorded on Record of Mediation (Form DA-7).

If an agreement is not reached during mediation, a hearing date shall be scheduled within fifteen (15) days of said meeting.

(h) **Procedure Where No Hearing is Requested.** (See Section 903 By-Laws.)

(i) **Procedure — Disciplinary Hearing Requested.** In the event that the accused member requests a Disciplinary Hearing within fifteen (15) days and in the manner prescribed above, the following procedures apply:

1. **Appointment of Panel.** If the action is initiated at the Post level, the District Commander will select the disciplinary panel members, date, time and location by issuance of an order (Form DA-3 in the Appendix). The order shall detail at least seven (7) members to the panel.

In the event that the Department Commander initiating the disciplinary action is the accuser, the Commander-in-Chief will issue the order.

If the Commander initiating the disciplinary action or appointing the panel expects to be a witness with respect to factual matters, the Commander should request that the order appointing the panel be issued by higher authority. That request will be in writing.

Only members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in good standing may sit on a Disciplinary Hearing Panel. No blood relative of the accused or any accuser or witness for the prosecution shall be appointed to the panel.

The same panel may be appointed to hear more than one case. Related cases may be heard at the same time, provided that the Recording Officer maintains a complete and separate record for each accused.

In the event that appointees are unable to serve or the time or place of a hearing must be changed, a supplemental order may be issued.

a. President. Is the presiding officer over the panel and not subject to challenge. He shall be acquainted with the hearing procedures, maintain order and give the necessary directions for the conduct of the proceedings. The president shall rule upon all questions concerning the admissibility of evidence, the competency of witnesses, continuances, adjournments, recesses, motions, challenges and orders, the propriety of any argument or statement of counsel and on any other matter deemed appropriate for the official and efficient conduct of the hearing. The president of the panel shall take notes or cause notes to be taken that summarize the substance of the testimony of the witnesses and exhibits, the arguments of counsel, the objections and rulings on matters brought to the attention of the panel and other matters of signifi-

cance occurring in the course of the proceedings.

b. Prosecutor. Shall present the evidence supporting the Charges and Specifications. He shall not be a member of the panel. The prosecutor should not be a witness with respect to disputed factual matters. He may, however, provide evidence concerning procedural matters.

c. Defense Counsel. The accused shall select his own professional or lay counsel. The accused may employ or select a private lawyer at his own expense. Defense Counsel shall not be a member of the panel nor an accuser. Defense Counsel should not be a witness with respect to disputed factual matters. He may, however, provide evidence concerning procedural matters.

2. **Continuance.** The President may, for reasonable cause, postpone and/or reschedule the hearing. A party desiring that the President postpone or reschedule the hearing shall make such request in writing, stating the reasons for such request. All parties and panel members shall be advised in writing of the rescheduled date.

3. **Recording Officer.** The Recording Officer shall record all the proceedings and the recordings shall be retained and included as record. The recording officer should take reasonable steps to assure that all testimony is recorded and that all speakers and exhibits are adequately identified in the record. Any notes taken by the President shall be retained with the record of the proceedings. A complete record should include copies of:

a. Special Order advising of the initiation of a disciplinary action. (Form DA-1)

b. Charges and Specifications. (Form DA-2)

c. The written statement that the Charges and Specifications have been personally served or mailed to the accused in accordance with Section 903(e).

d. The request for the Mediation or Disciplinary Hearing made by the accused. (Form DA-6)

e. The order appointing the Panel. (Form DA-3)

f. The tape recording or videotape of the proceedings.

g. The President's notes of the proceedings.

h. Any exhibits admitted into evidence.

i. The record of disciplinary action. (Form DA-5)

j. The findings and sentence. (Form DA-4)

k. The result of Mediation if applicable. (Form DA-7)

The record shall be delivered to and maintained by the Adjutant.

(j) **Procedure at Hearing.** In the event that a Disciplinary Hearing is requested, the procedure for conducting such hearing shall be as follows:

1. **Selection of the Panel – Challenges.** The entire panel shall initially be seated. Each side may challenge any member or members, but those members may be removed only for good cause. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, prejudice for or against a party, financial or other interest in the outcome or inability to afford an impartial hearing. The challenging party shall state the reasons upon which that party believes good cause exists. When a member of the panel is challenged for cause, the President of the panel will decide on the question. No further panel member may be excused for cause when the effect is to reduce the number of panel members below three.

Members of the panel shall swear or affirm that they will judge the

case fairly and impartially.

2. **Plea to the Charges.** After the panel is confirmed, the Charges and Specifications shall be read to the accused by the President unless the accused advises the panel that he has read the charges and they need not be read. The accused shall be required to plead guilty or not guilty to each charge and specification separately. The plea will be recorded on the Form of Record of Disciplinary Action (DA-5).

3. **Objections.** If there have been procedural errors in initiating the disciplinary action, preparing and delivering the Charges and Specifications, appointing the panel, scheduling the time and place of the hearing or any other matter occurring prior to the hearing, Defense Counsel or the accused must make their objections known to the panel before the opening statements are given and evidence heard. Similarly, objections must be made to errors in procedure or in the admission of evidence occurring during the course of the hearing at the time of the error. Unless objections are timely made, the alleged error will not be considered in the event of an appeal.

4. **Opening Statement.** The prosecutor, followed by the Defense Counsel, shall be permitted to make opening statements which outline for the panel what each believes the issues to be and what each expects to show by the evidence to be introduced.

5. **Order of Presentation.** The prosecutor introduces his evidence first. When the prosecution rests, the defense may introduce its evidence. The prosecutor may then present evidence to rebut such evidence as may have been presented by the defense and the defense shall be given an opportunity to rebut any rebuttal evidence presented by the prosecution. Counsel for both sides shall have the opportunity to cross-examine each witness after direct testimony is given.

6. **Rules Concerning Evidence.** Evidence may be testimonial or documentary. Testimonial evidence is evidence given in the form of testimony by witnesses. All testimony shall be taken under oath or affirmation by all parties testifying.

7. **Documentary Evidence.** Includes items other than documents, and is presented in the form of exhibits which show or demonstrate factual matters. An adequate showing of authenticity (i.e., that the document is an original or a true and correct copy of the original) must be made with respect to documentary evidence. A Disciplinary Hearing Panel may base its decision on either direct or circumstantial evidence.

Direct evidence consists of testimony or documents which, if believed, would directly prove or disprove facts.

Circumstantial evidence consists of testimony or documents which, if true, would prove or disprove facts or circumstances from which, either alone or in connection with other facts, the existence or nonexistence of a fact in issue could be inferred.

Hearsay evidence consists of testimony based upon the out-of-court statements of persons or documents, i.e., what some other person told the witness or upon something seen by the witness in a document that is not presented.

The reason that hearsay testimony is given less credence is that there may be no opportunity to cross-examine the person who actually heard or saw the incident or wrote the document. While hearsay evidence can be considered by the Disciplinary Hearing Panel because of a belief

that a sufficiently trustworthy basis exists for considering the evidence, it should be considered with an appreciation that the evidence is less credible. Hearsay evidence may be fully considered without that limitation if the witness is testifying concerning something the accused has said or the evidence consists of reinforcing documents or letters prepared or signed by the accused.

Books of account or business records are generally admissible. Evidence must be relevant and material. Evidence is not relevant or material when it does not tend to prove or disprove an issue in the case or the President rules that it's not material to the issue at hand.

The panel will exclude improper evidence to which an objection is sufficiently made. It may, on its own initiative, exclude other improper evidence. Excluded evidence should not be considered by the Hearing Panel. The President should note any evidence which was offered but excluded, giving the reason therefore, and any instances where objection was made but the evidence was admitted over such objection, noting the objection.

The panel should protect every witness from insulting or improper questions, harsh or insulting treatment and unnecessary inquiries into private affairs. It should also forbid any inquiries into irrelevant matters intended to merely annoy witnesses or other pertinent parties.

8. Closing Arguments. After both sides have rested, the prosecution commences its closing arguments. The defense follows and the prosecution closes with rebuttal argument.

9. Deliberations of the Panel. The panel sits in closed session during the deliberation on the findings and sentence. This should include full and free discussion of the evidence at hand. The panel must consider each charge and specification separately and make a determination whether the accused is guilty or not guilty on each charge and specification.

In deciding the case, the sentence should be commensurate with the offense committed. In any event, each case shall be decided on its own merits and the panel shall give due regard to all of the circumstances.

a. **Reasonable doubt.** In order to convict the accused of an offense, the panel must be reasonably satisfied that the accused is guilty of the offense.

b. **Two-thirds Majority Required.** There must be a two-thirds majority vote in order to convict on any charge and specification. If, in computing the number of votes required, a fraction results, such fraction will be counted as one; thus, where five members are to vote, the requirement that two-thirds concur is not met if less than four concur. The sentence must likewise be determined by a two-thirds majority vote.

10. Findings and Sentence. (DA-4) The findings and sentence shall be announced by the President in open hearing after deliberations are complete. In the event the accused or his counsel was not present at the hearing but the accused has been found either guilty or not guilty on all of them, a copy of the Findings and Sentence (Form DA-4) shall be mailed to the last known address within seven days after the hearing.

11. Record of Hearing of Disciplinary Actions (DA-5). In addition to the notes to be maintained by the President of the panel, the president shall also prepare a Form of Record of Disciplinary Actions (Form DA-5).

Sec. 904 — Appeal.

Any member on which Disciplinary Action is taken under this Article shall have the right to appeal such action.

Failure of the member to comply with the following rules, including the requirement that each appeal at least state the facts of the case based on the evidence introduced at the hearing, the reasons why the case was erroneously decided, and the relief requested, are grounds for denying the appeal.

(a) Appeals From Post Actions. Appeals to the Department Commander shall be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of penalties by a Disciplinary Hearing Panel or, in the case when no hearing is requested, the imposition of penalties by the Initiating Officer or Post. All appeals shall be made in writing and be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Department Commander at the Department headquarters. The written appeal shall:

1. State the facts of the case based on the evidence introduced at the hearing (if a hearing has been held).
2. Make a clear and concise statement of the reason or reasons upon which the member claims the case was erroneously decided.
3. State the relief requested by the member.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Department Commander shall request that the Adjutant maintaining the Trial Record forward the same to him within fifteen (15) days. The Department Commander will also provide a copy of the written appeal to the prosecutor, who shall have fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the copy to make a written response directly to the Department Commander. The prosecutor will also mail a copy of his written response to the accused. The accused or his counsel shall then have ten (10) days from the date of such response to make a further written submission to the Department Commander. Once accomplished, the Department Commander shall decide the appeal and inform the accused and the Post Commander in writing as to his determination. The decision of the Department Commander is final unless within fifteen (15) days an appeal is made to the Commander-in-Chief. Such an appeal must be made in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at National headquarters in Kansas City. The appeal must include the three criteria listed above.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief shall request that the Department Commander forward to him the Trial Record, together with any papers submitted by the parties on appeal. The Commander-in-Chief will, within thirty (30) days, decide the matter and inform the member, the pertinent Post Commander and the Department Commander of that decision. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief is final unless an appeal is made to the National Council of Administration within fifteen (15) days of the Commander-in-Chief's decision. Such appeal shall be in writing and shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration at National headquarters in Kansas City. The appeal must include the three criteria listed above.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals shall request the Commander-in-Chief forward the Trial Record and any papers submitted by the parties on appeal. The Chairman

shall advise the member of a time and place that the matter will be considered and decided. The member shall have the right to appear, at his own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place as the matter is considered. Upon a recommendation by the Committee on Appeals, The National Council of Administration shall decide the appeal and subsequently inform all concerned of its decision in writing.

(b) Appeals From Department Commander Actions. Appeals from disciplinary actions initiated by the Department Commander shall be to the Commander-in-Chief. Such an appeal must be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of sentence by the Disciplinary Hearing Panel or, where no Disciplinary Hearing is requested, the imposition of penalty. All appeals will be made in writing and shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at National headquarters in Kansas City. The appeal must include the three criteria listed in section 904(a).

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief shall request that the Adjutant maintaining the Trial Record forward the same to him within fifteen (15) days. The Commander-in-Chief will provide a copy of the written appeal to the prosecutor, who shall have fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the copy to make a written response directly to the Commander-in-Chief. (A copy will be mailed to the accused and his counsel.) They shall have ten (10) days to submit a reply. Thereafter, the Commander-in-Chief shall decide the appeal and inform the accused and the Department Commander. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief is final unless an appeal is made to the National Council of Administration within fifteen (15) days. Such appeal shall be made in the manner specified in the foregoing subsection (a) for appeals to the National Council of Administration for cases initially appealed to the Department Commander.

(c) Appeals From Commander-in-Chief Actions. Appeals from disciplinary actions initiated by the Commander-in-Chief shall be to the National Council of Administration. Such an appeal must be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of sentence by the Disciplinary Hearing Panel or, where no hearing is requested, the imposition of sentence by the Initiating Officer. All appeals shall be in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration at National headquarters in Kansas City. The appeal must include the three criteria listed in section 904(a).

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration shall request that the Adjutant maintaining the Trial Record forward the same to the Adjutant General within fifteen (15) days. The Council will provide a copy of the written appeal to the prosecutor who may, within fifteen (15) days, submit a written response directed to the National Council of Administration. If a response is submitted, it shall be mailed to the accused and Defense Counsel, who may file a response thereto within ten (10) days.

The National Council of Administration shall advise the member of a time and place that the matter will be considered and decided. The National Council of Administration shall determine the manner in which the matter will be considered. The member shall have the right to appear, at his own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place where the matter is considered.

Upon recommendation by the Committee on Appeals, the National Council of Administration will decide the appeal and subsequently will inform the accused in writing of its decision. That decision is final.

(d) Timeliness of Appeals to the National Council of Administration:

Normally, appeals received greater than thirty (30) days before the next scheduled regular meeting will be heard at that meeting. Appeals not within this timeframe may, at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, be referred to the council for deliberation at a future scheduled meeting.

Sec. 905 - Suspension from Office.

To effect a suspension under Section 905 of the By-Laws, the Commander-in-Chief, or the Department Commander having jurisdiction, will inform the member in writing and notify the respective Post, County Council, District or Department Commander of such action.

The Commander-in-Chief or Department Commander is not required, however, to suspend the accused member in every instance. They may use their discretion in determining whether or not such suspension is necessary or appropriate.

Sec. 906 – Prima Facie Case.

The term “prima facie” is a legal term used to describe something that is legally sufficient to establish a fact or a case unless disproved. If an accused member has been convicted by a court of law of a felony, misdemeanor or even an ordinance violation, and will not be available for, a disciplinary action, the disciplinary action may still be initiated and conducted in the same manner as any other. Under this section of a Prima Facie case, it would not be necessary for the prosecutor to prove again what the civil authorities have already established in the criminal trial. To establish guilt at this disciplinary Hearing, all the prosecutor needs to do is present a certified copy of the court record of conviction. The burden then shifts to the accused or his counsel to show that the record of conviction is not a true and correct record.

Sec. 907 – Penalties.

(See Section 907 – Penalties, National By-Laws.)

Sec. 908 — Administrative Actions.

(See Section 908 – Administrative Actions, National By-Laws.)”
(Approved)

B-14 (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, 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-11 (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 percent 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 Adj-

tant 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)

B-15 (Proposed by Department of Florida)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1301 – Formation.

Amend Sec. 1301 – Formation., National By-Laws, by deleting the first sentence in the second paragraph and adding a third and fourth paragraph to read as follows:

"Departments are authorized to permit the issue of charters to Districts determined by the Department Convention assembled. The issuance of charters is not mandatory; rather, this will be decided by individual Departments. The Department Convention assembled shall determine the number of Districts and the geographical boundaries thereof, which shall be established in the Department. No District shall be established with less than three (3) Auxiliaries and seventy five members.

A Charter shall be issued by the Department Commander to such Districts as the Department Convention determines to establish. The Charter

shall be signed by the Department Commander and countersigned by the Department Adjutant.” (Disapproved)

B-16 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY
Sec. 1301 – Formation.

Amend Sec. 1301 – Formation., National By-Laws, by changing the title and replacing the section in its entirety with the following:

“Sec. 1301 - Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliaries.

The Men’s Auxiliary of 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 Men’s Auxiliary of 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 Men’s 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 Men’s Auxiliary of 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.” (Disapproved)

M-12 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries.

Amend Sec. 1301 – Organization and Disbandment of Mens Auxiliaries., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the entire section with **Sec. 1101 – Organization and Disbandment of Auxiliaries** under **ARTICLE XI – LADIES AUXILIARY**, with the exception of substituting the word “Mens” in

lieu of “Ladies” where it appears. (Disapproved)

B-17 (Proposed by Department of Indiana)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1302 – Eligibility.

Amend Sec. 1302 – Eligibility., National By-Laws, by replacing the first sentence in the first paragraph as follows:

“Membership in the Mens Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall be limited to husbands, widowers, fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons, brothers, half-brothers, stepsons (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, and stepfathers (who have performed the duties of parent).” (Disapproved)

B-18 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Sec. 1303 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business.

Amend Sec. 1303 – By-Laws, Rules of Order and Order of Business., National By-Laws, by substituting with the following:

“The Men’s Auxiliary of 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. The By-Laws adopted by any such Auxiliary shall not conflict with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or laws and usage of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the By-Laws or Rules and Regulations of the respective Department, District, County Council, or Post.” (Disapproved)

B-19 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Amend **ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY**, National By-Laws, by adding the following section:

“Sec. 1304 - Incorporation.

a) The Men’s Auxiliary of 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 Men’s 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 Men's Auxiliary of 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, providing that the respective Department and 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 any 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 Articles of Incorporation, 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 these provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the Charter." (Disapproved)

M-13 (Proposed by Department of Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Amend ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY, Manual of Procedure by adding Sec. 1304 – Incorporation. to read as Sec. 1104 – Incorporation., under ARTICLE XI – LADIES AUXILIARY, with the exception of substituting the word "Mens" in lieu of "Ladies" where it appears. (Disapproved)

B-20 (Proposed by Department of West Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Delete **ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY**, National By-Laws, in its entirety. (Disapproved)

M-14 (Proposed by Department of West Virginia)

ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY

Delete **ARTICLE XIII – MENS AUXILIARY**, Manual of Procedure, in its entirety. (Disapproved)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AT THE
111TH NATIONAL CONVENTION, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**

Resolution No. 201 (Submitted by Department of West Virginia)

DEATH WITH DIGNITY

WHEREAS, it is common knowledge that veterans of the United States military are departing this life without means or without family or both, therefore the remains are disposed of in the undignified most convenient manner; and

WHEREAS, every veteran who has served his or her country bravely and heroically during times of great national turmoil and distress has earned the right to die with dignity and be decently interred with due honor and respect; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to lay and initiate a plan to consider, explore, investigate and determine advisability of providing burial benefits to each member in good standing as a part of the annual membership dues initiative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that time is of the essence and the VFW Burial Benefits Program, when finalized and adopted by the National Convention, shall be implemented within the shortest possible time.
(Disapproved)

CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 301 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

PATRIOTIC MARCH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, to promote camaraderie and membership; and

WHEREAS, to strengthen membership through-out the country and the world; and

WHEREAS, to help promote patriotism and togetherness; and

WHEREAS, to show the host community the strength, loyalty, and the commitment of the men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and

WHEREAS, to show our pride and courage for our country; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Adjutant General and Quartermaster General develop a way to continue the pride of the patriotic march of color guards that they have shown at past National Conventions and allow all color guards present to march in the Patriotic Rally Parade. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Minnesota)

YELLOW RIBBON INITIATIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has always honored our Veterans; and

WHEREAS, many states have called upon units of their National Guard and the Military Reserve Units for deployment; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other service organizations to enlighten and assist communities in their citizen soldier sacrifices, and, show their appreciation through the Yellow Ribbon Community Designation Program; and

WHEREAS, communities need the expertise on how to honor those who serve with these designations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we accept and support the local communities on getting their yellow ribbon initiative and re-integration action plan started; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the membership should be encouraged to help implement them through Veterans programs, family outreach, and membership at the State, District and local levels in conjunction with the other veteran service organizations. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

VFW MOTORCYCLE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes that the needs of veterans of today have changed from the needs of the veterans that founded this great organization; and

WHEREAS, the sport of Motorcycle Riding has proven to be a compelling attraction to the Current Conflict Veterans, as well as the Vietnam Veterans, that are eligible to join the Veterans of Foreign Wars but may not have previously joined; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of Departments have independently formed VFW Motorcycle Organizations; and

WHEREAS, departments that have formed VFW Motorcycle Organizations have experienced a significant increase in membership as a result of their motorcycle organization's activities; and

WHEREAS, the newly formed Department VFW Motorcycle Organizations and their members have been actively supporting many of the programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars including Military Assistance Program, Operation Uplink, Unmet Needs, and the VFW National Home for Children; and

WHEREAS, the best practices and lessons learned of the various Department VFW Motorcycle Organizations have shown that each Department has unique needs that may differ from each others that require individual state By-laws or Standard Operating Procedures; and

WHEREAS, there does exist a need for a committee of representatives from the various State VFW Motorcycle Organizations to communicate and encourage cooperation in the furthering of the goals for the Veterans of Foreign Wars as they apply to the motorcycle riding members of those states; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we recognize VFW Motorcycle Organizations as a program under the direction of the National Program Director; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Program Director will establish a VFW Motorcycle Committee comprised of representatives of the various Department Motorcycle Organizations to establish lines of communication; to facilitate cooperation; to share best practices and lessons learned; and to assist Departments that do not presently have a VFW Motorcycle Organization but would like to form one; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mission Statement for the VFW Motorcycle Organizations Program will be to promote and support programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; to augment the VFW recruitment and retentions goal; to promote motorcycle safety; and to provide a social atmosphere for VFW members who share the same interests; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each Department may implement the VFW Program in their Department to meet the specific needs of their members in their Department. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 304 (Submitted by Department of North Carolina)

SUPPORT A BOND, STAMP AND COIN PROGRAM TO BENEFIT AMERICAN WARRIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

WHEREAS, the nation is blessed with men and women who voluntarily swear an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; and

WHEREAS, these men and women make great personal sacrifices in the name of our Constitution thereby ensuring the perpetuation of our individual liberties; and

WHEREAS, these same men and women voluntarily make great personal sacrifices to carry democracy and extend the freedoms we enjoy to the underprivileged of the world; and

WHEREAS, some of these men and women will incur great personal hardships and catastrophic injury in the performance of their duties; and

WHEREAS, we feel duty bound to honor, support and provide relief to these warriors and their families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, does hereby offer its total and unequivocal support of and initiative implementing a new government bond, stamp and coin program. The proceeds from which shall be used exclusively for those warriors and their families who have bore the brunt of preserving our freedoms and extending those freedoms throughout the world. (Approved)

Resolution No. 305 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

NATIONAL FLAG TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THOSE WHO DIED
WHILE SERVING IN AMERICA'S MILITARY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars honors the service and sacrifice of all military service members especially those who have lost their lives in service to the Republic; and

WHEREAS, there has never been an officially recognized symbol that serves as a daily 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, supports the House of Representatives Bill 1034 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 Department of Virginia and National VFW to adopt the flag created by the "Honor and Remember" organization to serve as a national symbol by supporting HR1034.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to adopt the flag created by the "Honor and Remember" organization to serve as a national symbol of Remembrance. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 306 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

RECOGNIZE AS ELIGIBLE MEMBERS OF THE VFW WITH
THE COLD WAR MEDAL

WHEREAS, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain members; and

WHEREAS, proposed in Congress Senate bill S.2743 and House bill HR 4051; and

WHEREAS, provides for the award of a military service medal to members of the armed forces who served honorably during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, a larger pool of eligible individuals to recruit would help; and

WHEREAS, many cold war veterans have significant military service and supporting campaign medal or campaign badge would recognize eligibility; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Commander-in-Chief appoint a committee to explore in depth, the feasibility of amending the Congressional Charter and By-Laws of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to include those worthy cold war medal warriors who proved significant support to the successful cold war effort. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 307 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

COLD WAR SERVICE MEDAL

WHEREAS, millions of unrecognized American troops served overseas around the globe in waging and winning a clear-cut victory in the Cold War (1945-1991); and

WHEREAS, the VFW was in the forefront of the worldwide struggle to defeat international communism since its inception and actively promoted anti-communism as a tenet of membership; and

WHEREAS, membership eligibility already includes service in six separate areas that were Cold War flashpoints recognized by the Army of Occupation Medal, China and offshore waters under the China Service Medal (1945-1957), as well as 17 distinct military actions (1958-1983) covered by the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, 382 Americans lost their lives in hostile incidents with Soviets and their surrogates, Chinese, North Koreans and Cuban-supported insurgents along the Iron, Bamboo and Cactus Curtains (over and above the full-fledged wars in Korea and Vietnam) and other combat endeavors as evidenced by the Cold War VFW magazine series (1996-98 and book in 2004); and

WHEREAS, uncounted numbers of the United States military enforced the containment policy in inhospitable environments ranging from the shores of Greenland, the barren Aleutian islands, North Pacific skies, depths of the Arctic Ocean, Latin American jungles to remote outposts stretching from Ethiopia to Pakistan, without official or public recognition; and

WHEREAS, an all-encompassing precedent (Public Law 104-3) as has been set with the universal opening of membership to all veterans of Korea war service regardless of direct exposure to enemy attack; and

WHEREAS, as a matter of fairness and a means of rectifying a continuing injustice to Americans who performed arduous duty during the Cold War in most cases equal to that of combat, closing this gap in Cold War recognition, is the right thing to do for our veterans; and,

WHEREAS, Congress has currently proposed legislation (S.2743 and H.R.4051) that provides for the award of a military service medal to members of the armed forces who served honorably during the Cold War and assisted in its final successful outcome; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we support the federal legislation to award a Cold War Service Medal to veterans who were involved in that historical endeavor. (Approved)

Resolution No. 308 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VFW MOTORCYCLE RIDER GROUP

WHEREAS, numerous departments have requested authorization for the formation of VFW motorcycle rider groups; and

WHEREAS, these departments have stipulated a primary consideration to maintain integrity to the VFW and its image as core factors to the rider groups; and

WHEREAS, an *ad hoc* committee was established by the Adjutant General in October 2009 to provide suggested guidelines concerning the formation and existence of VFW motorcycle riders groups.

WHEREAS, proposed guidelines were accordingly developed by the ad hoc committee and sent on January 2010 to all departments for their further suggestions and comments; and

WHEREAS, the Commander-in-Chief directed a meeting be conducted at the National Convention to further discuss this issue and coordinate the guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the consensual final recommendation at the convention meeting is to allow the formation of VFW rider groups provided that there is no affiliation with the Confederation of Clubs (CoC) and that each department titles their riders organizations as a "riders group" and not as a

“club”; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that National guidelines will be established that (1) standardizes the title of the formed groups; (2) protects the trademark of the Cross of Malta; (3) mandates the use of the one-piece patch; (4) mandates that each member of the rider groups must wear the appropriate logo (i.e., VFW wear Cross of Malta, Ladies Auxiliary members wear their logo, etc.); (5) all groups must adhere to Post, Department and National By-Laws, as applicable (especially as it pertains to the handling of funds as directed by section 709 of the National By-laws); and, (6) the groups not be allowed to elect officers but be formed as a committee or unit of the Post (similar to Post Honor Guards). (Approved)

Resolution No. 309 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CHANGE ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL AUTHORIZATION DATE

WHEREAS, President Kennedy established the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) by means of Executive Order 10977, dated December 1961, for operations conducted on or after July 1, 1958; and

WHEREAS, between the hostile activity termination of World War II on March 2, 1946, and the effective date of authorization of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal on July 1, 1958, there is no specific medal to recognize armed service personnel for expeditionary activities and deployments; and

WHEREAS, during this period, military personnel responded to various threats, contingencies and support activities around the globe, including the areas of Guam, the Philippine Islands, and the United Kingdom; and

WHEREAS, as a matter of criteria, the AFEM may be authorized for three categories of operations: U.S. military operations, U.S. military operations in direct support of the United Nations, and U.S. operations of assistance to friendly foreign nations; and

WHEREAS, many of the military operations between March 3, 1946, and July 1, 1958, meet the criteria for the award of the AFEM; and

WHEREAS, criteria is already established that the medal shall be awarded only for operations for which no other U.S. campaign medal is approved; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the President of the United States to issue an Executive Order to change the effective date to qualify for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to March 3, 1946; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review all military operations during this period and award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to participants of those operations that qualify. (Approved)

Resolution No. 310 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AMEND AWARD CRITERIA FOR
WORLD WAR II ARMY OF OCCUPATION MEDAL

WHEREAS, the Navy Occupation Service Medal was awarded to Naval personnel for service in Trieste, Italy, from May 8, 1945 to October 25, 1954; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army was part of the Trieste, Italy, occupation from May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954, but not awarded the Army of Occupation Medal; and

WHEREAS, not equally recognizing all military personnel who served as part of an occupation force, regardless of branch of service, is an inequity that needs to be rectified immediately; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Army to rectify this inequity by awarding the Army of Occupation Medal to those Soldiers who served in Trieste, Italy, from May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954. (Approved)

Resolution No. 311 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AWARD PURPLE HEART TO ELIGIBLE COLD WAR SERVICE MEMBERS

WHEREAS, not all members of the military who died or were wounded-in-action were recognized during the early period of the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, President Kennedy signed Executive Order 11016, "Authorizing Award of the Purple Heart," on April 25, 1962, for members of the military, and civilians who died or were injured without a formal declaration of war; and

WHEREAS, President Reagan signed Executive Order 12464, "Award of the Purple Heart," on February 23, 1984, for members of the military who died or were injured while serving outside the territory of the United States as part of a peacekeeping force, and as a result of an international terrorist attack; and

WHEREAS, during the period after World War II to the early 1960s, other Cold War servicemembers lost their lives or were wounded-in-action and were not recognized for their service and sacrifice; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the President to sign an Executive Order to award the Purple Heart Medal to members of the military during the period May 9, 1945, to April 25, 1962, under identical circumstances as contained in Executive Order 11016 and Executive Order 12464. (Approved)

Resolution No. 312 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXPAND VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL ELIGIBILITY DATES

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense recognized U.S. military personnel serving in the Republic of Vietnam from July 1, 1958, to July 3, 1965, by awarding eligible personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM); and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 11231 established the Vietnam Service Medal as recognition of service in the Republic of Vietnam or contiguous airspace or contiguous waters from July 3, 1965, to March 28, 1973; and

WHEREAS, service in the Republic of Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind during April 29-30, 1975, was recognized by awarding eligible personnel the AFEM; and

WHEREAS, armed forces personnel who originally received the AFEM for service in the Republic of Vietnam during the two periods—July 1, 1958-July 3, 1965, or April 29-30, 1975—are now qualified to receive the Vietnam Service Medal in lieu of the Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, after the last combat troops were withdrawn on March 29, 1973, American forces still remained within the Republic of Vietnam, in Thailand, and on ships in the Gulf of Tonkin to support South Vietnamese military operations between March 29, 1973, and April 28, 1975, yet those veterans were not recognized by a campaign or service medal; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Vietnam Service Medal to those who served in the Republic of Vietnam, in Thailand, and on ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in support of military operations between March 29, 1973, and April 28, 1975, provided the servicemember meets the eligibility criteria considered as qualifying service during July 3, 1965, through March 28, 1973. (Approved)

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 Commander-in-Chief and the U.S. armed forces and intelligence agencies in their mission to identify and destroy terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, U.S. citizens and allies continue to be targeted for international terrorism as evidenced by 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, it is imperative to the security of the American people that the U.S. stay on the offensive and take the fight to the enemy wherever they exist; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that the Administration and U.S. Congress provide the U.S. armed forces the resources necessary to succeed in battle, as well as to properly care for those who return home wounded, and their families; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that U.S. intelligence agencies also 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 U.S. Congress heed the expert counsel of field commanders regarding future troop build-ups and reductions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally support the Commander-in-Chief 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 in the 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 international terrorists, as evidenced by 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 our country illegally, as well as those who enter legally but purposely overstay their work, education or tourist visas; and

WHEREAS, homeland security threats may also originate internally 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; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security “Secure Border Initiative” will not achieve operational control of nearly 7,000 miles of northern and southern borders until 2011; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. also needs to secure more than 16,000 miles of coastline and all airports and shipping ports of entry; and

WHEREAS, the 9/11 Report Card, published in December 2005, gave failing grades to the Department of Homeland Security in a number of areas, including airport passenger arrival screening against terrorist watch lists; 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.
(Approved)

Resolution No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

HALT ROGUE NATION WMD PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the threat of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the transfer of weapons-grade material and technology remain very real dangers to the United States and its allies; and

WHEREAS, North Korea is a non-signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, has a ballistic missile development program underway, and has a long history of hostile behavior towards the United States and the Republic of Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea agreed in September 2005 to give up its nuclear program in exchange for an energy package and a U.S. pledge not to attack or invade; and

WHEREAS, in May 2009, North Korea conducted another underground nuclear detonation, test fired missiles capable of carrying a nuclear war-head, stated it would no longer honor the 1953 armistice, and threatened to attack South Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea has broken all agreements and demonstrated it cannot be trusted; and

WHEREAS, Iranian officials have confirmed that North Korea is assisting them in the development of nuclear weapons technology; and

WHEREAS, Iran is becoming a military dictatorship through the Revolutionary Guard’s rise in economic and political power, and Iranian President Ahmadinejad publically that Israel should be “Wiped off the map”; and

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 other rogue nations who support them; and

WHEREAS, despite attempts to normalize relations, the Administration and Congress must remain suspicious of the actions and motives of North Korea and Iran; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Administration to use strong economic sanctions against North Korea and Iran to halt their development and transfer of weapons of mass destruction programs. (Disapproved)

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 nine 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 morale, 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, 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, such as the Airborne Laser, 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, such as the Airborne Laser, 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 programs as a high priority national security requirement. (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 coun-

try has been admitted to NATO; and

WHEREAS, all 28 NATO member nations have military forces in Afghanistan, and 23 NATO nations are contributing to the training effort in Iraq with troops or through financial or equipment donations.

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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea is politically and militarily vital to the United States, and to the defense and stability of the Pacific and Asian regions; 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 the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation on December 13, 1991; and

WHEREAS, in late 1992, the North Korean nuclear issue halted progress of that agreement; and

WHEREAS, North Korea still maintains 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

WHEREAS, North Korea is developing powerful, long-range missiles that could possibly reach 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 real 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 keep a substantial military presence in South Korea, and increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern weaponry and technology to safeguard its freedom and promote security in the Pacific and Asian regions. (Approved)

Resolution No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

WHEREAS, the Republic of China (ROC) 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 (PRC) 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 the PRC 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 to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons and technology as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

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 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 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, throughout the 234-year history of the Navy and Marine Corps, they have fought side-by-side as a cohesive team against all enemies; and

WHEREAS, the Commandant of the Marine Corps became a full member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the mid-1970s, and from 2005 to 2007, a Marine served as the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and

WHEREAS, the Marine Corps is the only military service within 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 410 (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); and

WHEREAS, 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 pay gap, Congress in the Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act directed that military pay raises for FY00 through FY06 be automatically one-half percent above private-sector wage increases; and

WHEREAS, military pay raises from FY07 forward would automatically match the increase in the ECI, unless Congress authorized a further increase; and

WHEREAS, the current FY10 military pay raise of 3.4 percent is 2.4 percent behind private-sector wages, and despite the slow economy, the pay gap is sure to widen with the Administration's proposed 1.4-percent military pay raise in FY11—the lowest since 1962; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to provide a military base pay raise that will restore full comparability with private-sector wages; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a slow or no-growth economy is not valid rationale to underpay our valiant servicemen and women in uniform who have singularly borne the brunt of almost nine years of war. (Approved)

Resolution No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

LOWER THE RESERVE COMPONENT RETIREMENT PAY AGE

WHEREAS, current law stipulates that after completing 20 satisfactory years of honorable service, Reserve Component members must wait until age 60 to receive retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, when the current age requirement was established, this nation didn't utilize the Reserve Component forces the way it does now; and

WHEREAS, the posture of Reserve Component forces has changed from a strategic reserve to an operational force; and

WHEREAS, in peacetime and war, they have become a larger percentage of the total force and are essential partners in a wide range of military operations, from smaller-scale contingencies to major theaters of war; and

WHEREAS, it is well known that the active force cannot sustain the readiness posture to meet our national military strategy without the Guard and Reserve; and

WHEREAS, over the course of a military career, with months and years of mobilized service on active duty, a reserve member's ability to accrue a civilian retirement is severely impacted because they contribute less to their own 401k and IRA retirement plans; and

WHEREAS, 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 – represent one-half of America's total military might, and are an integral and vital part of today's total force; 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 retirement pay eligibility age to 55 for all Reserve Component members. (Approved)
Resolution No. 412 (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 (FY08 NDAA) includes a provision that 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 700,000 Reserve Component members have served on active duty since September 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 reserve retirement because it occurred prior to the NDAA's January 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 the Congress to retroactivity allow National Guard and Reserve members who served on active duty in support of a contingency operation since September 11, 2001, to receive the early retirement credit as outlined in the FY08 National Defense Authorization Act. (Approved)

Resolution No. 413 (Submitted by the Commander-in-Chief)

OPPOSE TRICARE FEE INCREASES

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the nation have an obligation to provide retirement benefits to military personnel who successfully accomplish a career in uniform; and

WHEREAS, DOD routinely wants to increase enrollment fees and co-payments for military retirees under age 65 who receive the health care package known as Tricare; and

WHEREAS, all military retirees earned equal health coverage by virtue of their service, and there should not be multi-tiered fee schedules for retired military beneficiaries any more than there are for different salaried employees under civilian coverage or different grades of federal employees under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP); and

WHEREAS, military health coverage is expensive, yet so is the personal investment someone makes to voluntarily commit to a full military career; and

WHEREAS, the real or perceived erosion of benefits for career-minded personnel will undermine long-term retention, readiness and leadership experience; and

WHEREAS, the Defense budget should be increased to cover this health care obligation, and the authority to impose or increase enrollment fees and co-payments should be moved from DOD to the U.S. Congress; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all Tricare fee increases and urge Congress to prevent the Department of Defense from escalating or realigning co-payments or any other fees for Tricare services and benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support legislative action to move the authority to impose or increase Tricare fees to the U.S. Congress.
(Approved)

Resolution No. 414 (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 the event of a divorce; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, the Congress adopted a law to circumvent the Supreme Court decision, the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA), 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 their former spouses regardless of fault, merit or need, and regardless of whether the former spouse remarries; and

WHEREAS, military retirees are subject to a lifetime of recall to active duty and subject to the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, and that no other retirement system includes similar provisions for division of pay, and the spouses right to receive the pay requires no code of conduct or behavior; 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 415 (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, has drafted a new interstate compact to address the educational transition issues of children of military families; and

WHEREAS, frequent relocations due to military service impact student enrollment, eligibility, placement, and graduation; and

WHEREAS, frequent moves and long deployments place a heavy burden on military families, and put military students at an educational disadvantage; and

WHEREAS, this 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; members or veterans of the uniformed services 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 compact is currently active in 27 states, who account for more than 80 percent of the total number of military children educated off base; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this 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 all state governments to expeditiously adopt the language of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a duly authenticated copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Department of Defense and Council of State Governments. (Approved)

Resolution No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION FOR DEPLOYED SINGLE PARENTS

WHEREAS, there is no legal safeguard that protects military single parents from being sued for permanent custody of their children while they deployed in support of contingency operations; and

WHEREAS, military single parents are required to have a family care plan in the event they are deployed, which delegates caregiver responsibilities for minor children; and

WHEREAS, such caregiver arrangements are not equivalent to legal custody, and some civilian courts have chosen to ignore the family care plan during child custody challenges; and

WHEREAS, a deployed servicemember cannot appear in court to defend their right to custody; and

WHEREAS, the range of state approaches to family law makes it impossible for the military to create a document that would be legally binding; 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; and

WHEREAS, due to the nature of military service, 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 courts from permanently changing child custody arrangements while a servicemember is deployed. (Approved)

Resolution No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

MILITARY ABSENTEE VOTING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has long been deeply committed to ensuring that all military personnel have the opportunity to vote in Federal elections; and

WHEREAS, a national study by The Pew Center found that military voters from 16 states and the District of Columbia are disenfranchised from exercising their right to vote due to insufficient time allotted to apply for, complete and return absentee ballots in time to be counted; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Voter Assistance Program (FVAP) needs authority to institute greater oversight and accountability measures to ensure ballot access for military overseas voters, as mandated by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; and

WHEREAS, agencies within the State and Federal governments 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 their location; and

WHEREAS, the voting process would be greatly improved for military absentee voters by expanding the use of the Federal Write-in Absentee ballot; by allowing election materials to be transmitted electronically; by requiring at least 45 days for ballots to be mailed to the voter and returned to the election office; and by eliminating requirements for military voters to have their completed ballots notarized or witnessed before mailing them to election offices; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon State and Federal government officials to implement measures to ensure military absentee voters have at minimum a 45-day window in which to request, complete and return their absentee ballots by the Federal election due date. (Approved)

Resolution No. 418 (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 (VA) disability compensation for service-connected injuries or disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the passed law phases out by 2014 the VA disability offset, 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.

WHEREAS, the passed 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 the rating percentage. (Approved)

Resolution No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

NATIONAL HONORS TO WORLD WAR I GENERATION

WHEREAS, formed in 1899, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is the nation's largest and oldest major veterans' service organization comprised solely of war veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Great War for Civilization, as it is memorialized on the reverse of the WWI Victory Medal, was the first major overseas conflict in which the United States was engaged following the establishment of the VFW; and

WHEREAS, 4,734,991 men and women served in uniform during WWI, and more than 53,000 died and 200,000 were wounded in 18 months of combat; and

WHEREAS, their heroism has endured to this day in military lexicon through such nom de guerre titles as "Devil Dog" and unit sobriquets such as "Rock of the Marne"; and

WHEREAS, WWI veterans occupied the White House and commanded our ground, naval and air forces during World War II; and

WHEREAS, the last surviving American WWI veteran is a fellow VFW member, 109-year-old Frank Buckles from Charles Town, W.Va.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that in recognition of a grateful nation's homage to the courage and sacrifice of all World War I veterans, we urge the Congress to endorse and the President to proclaim that the Flag of the United States be flown at half-staff from all public buildings, military installations and ships, from the time of notification of the passing of our last WWI veteran until he is laid to rest, or for one week, whichever is shorter. (Approved)

Resolution No. 420 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

AWARD A COLD WAR VICTORY MEDAL

WHEREAS, the Cold War, America's longest war, is the only war in modern history to not be recognized by a campaign, service or victory medal; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the United States government recognized the contributions of more than 20 million U.S. servicemembers during the Cold War with a certificate of recognition, yet no medal exists to recognize those who served in hundreds of military operations to promote world peace and stability between September 2, 1945, through December 25, 1991; and

WHEREAS, excluding the Korean and Vietnam Wars, more than 380

American servicemembers were killed—to include 120 who remain listed as missing-in-action—and 500 were wounded from Cold War operations overseas; and

WHEREAS, eligibility for a veterans' benefits, in part, requires honorable service during a time of war, which renders Cold War veterans ineligible because no Cold War medal exists; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes that Cold War veterans prevented world domination of communism and nuclear war, and that the U.S. government has not properly recognized the service of those who sacrificed so much for so long; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the creation and awarding of a Cold War Victory Medal to all eligible U.S. service personnel who served in the U.S. military during the Cold War era, from September 2, 1945, to December 25, 1991.
(Disapproved)

Resolution No. 421 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

UPHOLD PUBLIC LAW 103-160 BAN ON HOMOSEXUALS SERVING IN THE MILITARY

WHEREAS, in 1993, Congress passed Public Law 103-160 (Section 654, U.S. Code Title 10) to prohibit homosexuals from serving in the armed forces of the United States. The Defense Department, in a compromise to implementing the law, created the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which bans homosexuals from serving openly in uniform; and

WHEREAS, approximately 13,000 servicemembers have been discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" since 1993—80 percent of whom by self-admission—compared to approximately 225,000 servicemembers who separate/retire annually, or approximately 3.8 million who left service voluntarily over the same 17-year period; and

WHEREAS, every servicemember who separates voluntarily or involuntarily possesses a critical yet replaceable expertise; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is fully aware that societal norms regarding homosexuality have changed since the passage of Public Law 103-160, and that recent nationwide polls reflect public support of repeal as high as 70 percent, even though less than seven-tenths of 1 percent of the general public serves in uniform; and

WHEREAS, every American should have the opportunity to serve in uniform, but the needs of the nation and military must come before the needs of the individual; and

WHEREAS, military life is fundamentally different from civilian life in that military society is characterized by 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; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States opposes all efforts to repeal Public Law 103-160 (Section 654, U.S. Code Title 10), and the Defense Department policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," which has proven to be an effective compromise; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we support the Defense Department's one-year review, and regardless of its final recommendation, we urge the nation's lawmakers to weigh their decisions carefully by considering the overall national security impact repeal would have on unit cohesion and morale, and military retention and recruitment programs. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 422 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

TRANSFER ARMY NATIONAL CEMETERIES TO VA

WHEREAS, Arlington National Cemetery is hallowed ground to more than 330,000 veterans, servicemen and women, family members, plus U.S. presidents and others who have faithfully served our nation; and

WHEREAS, recent allegations in the news media and verified by the Army Inspector General revealed an antiquated accounting system that has so far identified 211 gravesites as being improperly marked or not marked at all, as well as managerial incompetence. As a consequence, the superintendent was stripped of all responsibilities, and his deputy was placed on administrative leave; and

WHEREAS, Arlington is one of two active national cemeteries managed by the United States Army, with the other being the Armed Forces Retirement Home in northwest Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, with a fully automated nationwide system of 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration is the recognized expert in the maintenance and operation of national cemeteries, not the United States Army; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the transfer of the national cemeteries at Arlington and Armed Forces Retirement Home-Washington from the Department of the Army to the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the transfer include all property, civilian employees, responsibility and funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that assigned military units, such as the Army's Old Guard, will remain intact in both mission and responsibility in order to render proper courtesies to those who have the honor of being interred at Arlington National Cemetery. (Approved)

Resolution No. 423 (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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 424 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING COMMITMENT AND AGENCY FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of America's missing, who number more than 78,000 from World War II, 8,000 from the Korean War, 1,700 from the Vietnam War, 120 from the Cold War, and one each from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress has a moral obligation to appropriate the funding necessary for government agencies involved in the Full Account Mission—the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) and Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), among others—to properly plan and execute programs and operations to resolve this issue and help bring closure to the families of the missing; 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, yet Congress did not provide additional funding to support the increase in mission. Budget shortfalls have already led to previous mission cancellations due to competing warfighting priorities; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Defense's call to reduce DOD operations budgets may negatively impact the Full Accounting Mission at a time when accounting efforts have been increased by Congress; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and Congress to increase the overall Full Accounting budget to an amount commensurate to achieving 200 or more identifications per year by 2015, and to make the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command budget a dedicated line item appropriation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Defense to not reduce staff, responsibilities or the operations budgets of those DOD organizations involved in the Full Accounting Mission within the United States and the countries of Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Russia and elsewhere. (Approved)

Resolution No. 425 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

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 (DPMO) and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) conducted 33 investigative and recovery operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) 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 DPRK government officials, as well as POW/MIA recovery efforts in North Korea 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, which created an opportunity for bilateral talks to resume with DPRK officials in order to restore JPAC 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 and unaccounted-for from the Korean War. (Approved)

Resolution No. 426 (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 Socialist Republic of 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 and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam conflict; 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. (Approved)

Resolution No. 427 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

U.S.-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs was established in March 1992 by the direction of the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation to serve as a forum through which both nations can seek to determine the fate of missing and unaccounted-for servicemen; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. delegation's objectives have been to determine whether American servicemen are being held against their will on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and, if so, to secure their immediate release and repatriation; to locate and return to the U.S. the remains of any deceased American servicemen interred in the former Soviet Union; and ascertain the facts regarding American servicemen who were not repatriated and whose fates remain unresolved; and

WHEREAS, the commission is organized into four working groups, each

representing a key area of investigation – World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Cold War – and meets in regular plenary sessions several times each year; and

WHEREAS, on April 30, 2005, then-Russian President Putin reduced the size of his government, a move that eliminated their Joint Commission co-chairman position, which effectively halted all progress, to include access to Russia's central military archives; and

WHEREAS, commission members include two United States Senators and two United States Representatives representing both political parties, although one House Democrat Commissioner position has been unfilled since January 2006; and

WHEREAS, diplomatic notes passed in July 2009, and the recent reopening of Russia's military archives to U.S. researchers, are signs of renewed support of the Joint Commission, although a Russian co-chairman has yet to be appointed; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Russian President Medvedev to appoint a Russian co-chairman to the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the leadership of the House of Representatives to appoint a qualified member to serve as Democrat Commissioner to the Joint Commission. (Approved)

Resolution No. 428 (Submitted by Department of California)

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, Medical of Honor recipients, certain categories of Defense Department civilians and nonappropriated-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 dis-

charged, 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 the Department of Defense to amend DOD 4515.13-R, "Air Transportation Eligibility", by adding 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents to the Space A flight eligibility list. (Approved)

Resolution No. 429 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

KEEP GUANTANAMO BAY OPEN TO IMPRISON TERRORISTS

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 groups in recent years that have killed thousands of Americans and destroyed billions of dollars of property in the United States, has awakened the United States to danger of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, we have elected to imprison the terrorists at Guantanamo Bay; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has stated that he intends to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, and to transfer the terrorists being held there to another prison in the United States; and

WHEREAS, it might become necessary to build a new prison in the United States to hold these terrorists, at a cost of 300 million dollars; 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 reverse his Order to close Guantanamo Bay, and keep it open to imprison terrorist now and into the future. (Approved)

Resolution No. 430 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

TRY TERRORISTS IN MILITARY COURTS UNDER MILITARY LAW

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 groups in recent years that have killed thousands of Americans and destroyed billions of dollars of property in the United States, has awakened the United States to danger of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, we have elected to imprison the terrorists at Guantanamo Bay; and

WHEREAS, to date we have not brought all these terrorists to trial for their crimes against Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Attorney General of the United States had decided to try these terrorists in Civil Court within the United States; and

WHEREAS, to try the terrorists within the United States would open our citizens and our cities to terror attacks by radical groups; and

WHEREAS, what these terrorists have done are acts of war against the United States, and the proper court to try them for these crimes is in a Military Court under Military Law; and

WHEREAS, the terrorists have said that they are engaged in a holy war against the United States; 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 reverse the decision of the Attorney General and try the terrorists in Military Courts under Military Law. (Approved)

Resolution No. 431 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

TRY TERRORISTS AT GUANTANAMO BAY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is an organization dedicated to see Americans remains 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 groups in recent years that have killed thousands of Americans and destroyed billions of dollars of property in the United States, has awakened the United States to danger of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, we have elected to imprison the terrorists at Guantanamo Bay; and

WHEREAS, to date we have not brought all these terrorists to trial for

their crimes against Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Attorney General of the United States has decided to try these terrorists in Civil Court within the United States; and

WHEREAS, to try the terrorists within the United States would open our citizens and our cities to terror attacks by radical groups; and

WHEREAS, the prison at Guantanamo Bay has proven to be a secure place to hold the terrorists without any 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 reverse the decision of the Attorney General to try the terrorists within the United States, and direct the trials to be held at Guantanamo Bay. (Approved)

Resolution No. 432 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

WOMEN IN SUBMARINES NOT ACCEPTABLE

WHEREAS, the U.S. Submarine service has provided this nation an arm of defense unparalleled in the history of our founding Republic; and

WHEREAS, efforts are being promoted to allow women to serve on submarines by late 2011 unless the U.S. Congress passes legislation to kill this proposal; and

WHEREAS, no evidence has been presented to date that would improve the efficiency of our submarine service; and

WHEREAS, cramped quarters could lead to fraternization or sexual harassment; and

WHEREAS, a national survey revealed a two-to-one ratio of respondents opposed to the plan; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate to bring forth the introduction of legislation to not allow this proposal to be enforced to weaken our military and additionally portray this weakness to the world. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 433 (Submitted by Department of Europe)

RESCIND STATE DEPARTMENT DECISION TO EXCLUDE MILITARY RETIREES FROM DPO MAIL SERVICE

WHEREAS, military retirees abroad are unofficial ambassadors of the United States in their countries of residence; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) has supplied APO postal services to US Embassies and Consulates for many years; and

WHEREAS, military retirees have had access to these postal services and rely on them for essential first class mail service including health and finance matters; and

WHEREAS, the Department of State has established its own DPO mail service; and

WHEREAS, the Department of State has given notice to military retirees that they will be excluded effective 31 December 2009; and

WHEREAS, this exclusion will bring great harm to military retirees, their widows and families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to rescind the order excluding military retirees from the use of DPO facilities. (Approved)

Resolution No. 434 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

HALT THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BY NORTH KOREA AND IRAN

WHEREAS, North Korea remains a highly militarized Stalinist state with a long history of hostile behavior towards the United States and the Republic of Korea; and

WHEREAS, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently threatened and taken action that unequivocally displays hostility toward the United States and its allies; and

WHEREAS, North Korea and Iran are not signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; and

WHEREAS, North Korea and Iran have a ballistic missile development program; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that North Korea has produced enough highly enriched uranium to build six to eight nuclear weapons and Iran is actively moving forward with a program to produce highly enriched uranium; and

WHEREAS, security and stability in their respective regions is threatened by the ambitions of North Korea and Iran to build nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS, Iranian officials have confirmed that North Korea is assisting Iran in the development of nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS, the greatest threat to America's security is nuclear weapons or weapons grade material falling into the hands of terrorist organizations; and

WHEREAS, North Korea and Iran have demonstrated they cannot be

trusted; and

WHEREAS, the Administration and Congress must remain suspicious of North Korea's and Iran's actions and motives; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the United States Congress and Administration to do all in its power to halt North Korea's and Iran's nuclear weapons development program and the proliferation of nuclear weapons or material to third world countries, terrorist states or organizations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support and encourage the United States Government to penalize any and all companies or corporations that trade or do business with North Korea or Iran. (Approved)

Resolution No. 435 (Submitted by Department of Washington)

REACTIVATE THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, it is the duty of every male citizen, ages 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 War on Terrorism. This now requires our all-volunteer Armed Forces to deploy overseas several times, causing severe 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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that barring any reactivation of the Selective Service System, that the Congress of the United States end all overseas combat assigned deployments and bring our troops home at the earliest opportunity. (Disapproved)

RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE

Resolution No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

WHEREAS, presently there are about 23 million living veterans of whom 40 percent are over 65 years of age and require 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 sur-

vivors; 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 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)

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 as Amended)

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 con-

tinuum 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 and Enduring Freedom; 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 for traumatic brain injury patients to ensure that TBI veterans are receiving the best 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 and served in recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq are enrolling in VA at historic rates; and

WHEREAS, the number of enrolled women veterans is expected to increase by 30 percent in the next five 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; now, therefore

WHEREAS, Public Law 111-163 addresses many of these critical issues and we thank Congress for identifying 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 by 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 Opera-

tion 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)

IMPROVE TREATMENT FOR CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISORDER

WHEREAS, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD), a disease of the lungs in which the air passages become narrow and impair breathing, is the fourth largest cause of death in the United States; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffer disproportionately from COPD as compared to their peers with a rate approximately three times higher than the civilian population and it is the fourth most common diagnosis among hospitalized veterans and first among those aged 65-74; and

WHEREAS, COPD exacts a heavy price not just on the health of the veteran, but on the health care system as it is the most expensive chronic disease among veterans, accounting for over 15 percent of VA's bed occupancy and leads to about double the average hospital stay length as veterans who are not suffering from COPD; and

WHEREAS, VA's treatment options appear to be limited, restricting vi-

able formulary options and imposing roadblocks that other federal health care systems such as Medicare or TRICARE may not impose; and

WHEREAS, VA lacks a disease management specialty clinic (which it has for certain other conditions) on COPD despite its prevalence among veterans and the large costs associated with VA's care of this condition; and

WHEREAS, without a specialty clinic, most COPD veterans that VA cares for are managed by primary care providers, who may not have the specialty knowledge to properly treat this deadly condition; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge VA to improve the health care treatment options for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder to include making necessary adjustments to the formulary to ensure that pharmaceuticals that have proven effective are easily available to veterans without hassle and that VA create specialty clinics to educate, train and recruit health care professionals to deal with this disease's harmful effects. (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, 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.

(Approved as Amended)

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, Congress has not provided an increase in burial benefits

and the plot allowance since 2001, while the cost of a funeral and burial in a private cemetery has increased nearly seven times to over \$8,550, the value of the current benefit is \$2,000 for a service connected death, and \$300 burial and \$300 plot allowance for a qualifying non-service connected death; 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 now provides a \$60 per month payment to 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 as Amended)

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 as Amended)

Resolution No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PAYMENT FOR LOSS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is charged with compensating veterans for lost earnings capacity caused by the residuals of disease or injury incurred coincident with military service; and

WHEREAS, the Institutes of Medicine (June 2007), Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (October 2007), President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors (July 2007), and Economic Systems, Inc. (in a study commissioned by the Department of Veterans Affairs, September 2008), all recommended that VA devise and incorporate additional payments for loss of quality of life caused by service connected disabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation which changes the purpose of compensation to include both loss of earnings capacity and loss of quality of life. In doing so, we urge Congress to increase compensation to adequately address the impact that service connected disabilities have on veterans' quality of life. (Approved)

Resolution No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXEMPT CATASTROPHICALLY DISABLED VETERANS FROM PAYING ANY VA CO-PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 required the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish and operate a system of annual patient enrollment and created eight Priority Groups of which Priority Groups 7 & 8 must pay co-payments for their care; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act provided authority to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the medication co-payment for each 30-day or less supply of medications and concurrently established an annual adjustable cap for calendar year 2002 and beyond; and

WHEREAS, veterans who are determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled as a result of nonservice-connected causes and whose incidental

incomes exceed the “means test” thresholds, are assigned to priority group 4 and still remain subject to co-payments for their medical care; and

WHEREAS, the requirement to pay co-payments causes a tremendous hardship on catastrophically disabled veterans and their families who need to use more health care services to a greater extent at a time when the veteran’s ability to work is severely diminished; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to exempt category 4, catastrophically disabled veterans from paying any VA co-payments. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 623 (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 as Amended)

Resolution No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDE FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT

WHEREAS, advances in battlefield medicine and protective equipment are allowing many service members to survive what would have been fatal injuries in previous generations, but often at the price of severely disabling injuries such as multiple amputations, shrapnel injuries, blindness, burns or impairment of cognitive function from blast injuries; and

WHEREAS, this population of veterans require unprecedented life-long intensive medical support and that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is appropriately allowing those who are medically stable enough to receive care in appropriate residential care settings; and

WHEREAS, to improve the quality of care provided to them, many of these service members' family members are deciding to play an active role in the delivery of care for their loved ones, often choosing as to become lifelong caregivers and personal attendants to help their loved ones deal with the dramatic loss of physical, mental and emotional capabilities; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers must not only deal with the challenges of care for a loved one, but must confront disruptions to their family life, personal professional goals, and the loss of other informal support networks as they must spend the bulk of their time and energies on their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that caregivers experience burdens that worsen their physical and psychological health and they have

higher rates of stress, anxiety and depression, which help lead to lowered life expectancies and can severely reduce the quality of life of the family member as well as the veteran to whom they are providing care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to create an effective family caregiver program that includes a training and certification program so that family caregivers are eligible to receive a family allowance for the care they are providing on behalf of VA to their loved ones; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a comprehensive caregiver program must include continuous support options for the family member including the availability of respite care, mental health counseling for the family member, as well as the availability of health care and other services to help them cope with caregiver burden thereby improving the quality of life for severely disabled veterans. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 625 (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, the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill was passed into law in the 110th Congress and is a drastically more favorable benefit; 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 VR&E's educational housing stipend needs to be increased to reflect the current state of other educational benefits; 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. 626 (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 \$19,388 for the school year 2009-10 while the DEA benefit for the same period is \$8,325; 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 as Amended)

Resolution No. 627 (Submitted by Department of Maryland)

KEEP VA SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

WHEREAS, with the recent passing of the Health Care Act of 2010 by

the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, President Obama signed into law the Health Care Act of 2010; and

WHEREAS, the number of veterans presently enrolled with the Veterans Administration for health care could be affected by this Health Care Act; and

WHEREAS, numerous other veterans are denied VA health care because they have no service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Health Care Act of 2010 allows all Americans affordable health care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to increase enrollment by including all veterans and their families whether that veteran has a service connection or not; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to expand VA health care by offering a full-range of services designed to meet current and future needs of all veterans and their families.
(Disapproved)

Resolution No. 628 (Submitted by the Department of Maine)

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE PAYMENT STRUCTURE TO STATE
VETERANS HOMES THAT ADMIT VETERANS WITH
SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes have ably served veterans and some of their immediate dependents and survivors for nearly 150 years; and

WHEREAS, there are 140 State Veterans Homes in all States and Puerto Rico providing services, including but not limited to, hospital care, skilled nursing, skilled rehabilitation, dementia and Alzheimer's care, domiciliary care, respite care and end of life care, to almost 28,500 Veterans and dependents on an ongoing basis; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, Public Law 109-461 requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to reimburse State Veterans Homes for services provided to veterans with a 70% or higher service-connected condition; and

WHEREAS, the VA did not issue related, mandatory regulations until April 29, 2009, with the 2 ½ year delay resulting insubstantial administrative complexities for State Veterans Homes seeking retroactive payment adjustments; and

WHEREAS, although the original intent of PL 109-461 was to provide a higher-per-diem rate for services rendered, the implementation of this law

has actually resulted in a new payment calculation that reimburses significantly lower amounts to many States Veterans Homes, especially in the 30 states where Medicare and/or Medicaid-certified facilities operate; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this law is threatening the continued financial viability of many State Veterans Homes; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to modify VA practices regarding State Veterans Homes to ensure equitable payment for services rendered to service-connected veterans for care beyond the scope of inpatient care. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 629 (Submitted by Department of Massachusetts)

VA FUNDING FOR BLINDED VETERAN TRAINING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has been a great advocate for those who suffer from disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VFW considers all disabilities to be treated equally under federal law; and

WHEREAS, a number of veterans develop blindness, as illustrated by the fact that the VA diagnosed over 62,000 OIF/OEF veterans as having various refractive disorders between FY 2002 and 2009; and

WHEREAS, the VA has a responsibility to care for our blinded veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA's efforts to expand services for this population are laudable, but not fully sufficient to address the needs of those returning from the two ongoing wars and veterans experiencing age-related conditions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to provide sufficient funding to hire personnel to train blinded veterans to become self-sufficient and that there be a sufficient number of trainers available at a VAMC or CBOC. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 630 (Submitted by Department of Utah)

MANDATE VETERAN AND DISABLED VETERAN STATUS BE COUNTED DURING THE CENSUS

WHEREAS, for more than 200 years men and women have served this country in the Armed Forces of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census does not ask U.S. Citizens to identify if they are military veterans or disabled as a result of military service; and

WHEREAS, veterans benefits are allocated to states based on veterans

population which is currently estimated based on sampling; and

WHEREAS, this does not accurately reflect true veterans population and as a result inaccuracies exist; and

WHEREAS, this is a disservice to the men and women who have served our country in time of peace and war; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation mandating the U.S. Census Bureau count veterans and disabled veterans in the census. (Approved)

Resolution No. 631 (Submitted by Department of Texas)

ESTABLISH A VA MEDICAL CENTER IN
THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande Valley is composed of four counties and has had a proud and distinguished history of service as members of the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, the Rio Grande Valley has several valley citizens that have been recognized for their bravery in combat and given the nation's highest award for gallantry; and

WHEREAS, many have given their lives in the service of their country and a great number were prisoners of war; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we address the inequality in the State of Texas and assure that no veteran is denied proper health care and a veterans hospital in the Rio Grande Valley be established to correct this injustice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that our elected officials recognize the concerns of our veterans to assure that proper health care is readily available to all the veterans. (Approved)

Resolution No. 632 (Submitted by Department of Montana)

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 during time of war, or national emergency; and

WHEREAS, Congress, in 1996, passed the "Health Care Eligibility Act" whereby for the first time all veterans, regardless of wartime injury, wealth, or income, would with honorable service to his/her country in time of war or national emergency, would qualify for health care with the Veterans Administration; and

WHEREAS, thousands upon thousands of veterans across this county applied for this special veterans benefit, and due to the failure of the Veteran Administration 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 veterans due to income and wealth regardless of the honorable service these veterans had given their country in time of war or national emergency. We now had a very undemocratic situation in the Veterans Administration. We had 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. These people were not injured in a war, nor down and out economically, but their addition 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 honorable discharge veterans access to VA hospital services; and

WHEREAS, all the men and women who gave this country their service in time of war and national emergency, 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)

Resolution No. 633 (Submitted by Department of New York)

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL

WHEREAS, the leasing of a portion of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Hospital, is currently under active consideration by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which could necessitate the transfer of some of its functions and services to other facilities; and

WHEREAS, should the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Hospital services be transferred, this would cause tremendous hardship and be detrimental to veterans and their families in the region; and

WHEREAS, we are presently experiencing not only an aging veterans population that will need more healthcare but also our country is engaged in two wars in which members of the armed services have sustained tens of thousands of casualties that will require an increase in healthcare access rather than a decrease that the proposal will incur; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, urges the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to retain the property comprising the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Hospital campus of the Department of Veterans Affairs Hudson Valley Healthcare System at Montrose, New York, as an element of that system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, urges the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to refrain from entering into an enhanced-use lease of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Hospital campus, unless such activities under such a lease include the provision of services for veterans, including veterans of limited financial means; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, urges the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs not to permit any enhanced-use lease to diminish any care offered at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Hospital campus of the Department of Veterans Affairs Hudson Valley Healthcare System at Montrose, New York and in fact ensure an increase in care available; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, urges the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to restore and maintain the types and levels of healthcare and support services that are reflective of their service and dedication to our nation through the facility at Franklin Delano Roosevelt Hospital campus. (Approved)

Resolution No. 634 (Submitted by Department of New York)

EXPAND TITLE 38 UNITED STATES CODE CHAPTERS 30 AND 33
MAKING G.I. BILL BENEFITS RETROACTIVE FOR VETERANS WHO
INCURRED EDUCATIONAL DEBT PRIOR TO THE BILL'S ENACTMENT

WHEREAS, Title 38, Section 3001, Chapter 30 United States Code, mandates the Secretary Department of Veterans Affairs to provide a new educational assistance program to assist in the readjustment of members of the Armed Forces to civilian life after their separation from military service; to extend the benefits of a higher education to qualifying men and women who might not otherwise be able to afford such an education; to provide

for vocational readjustment and to restore lost educational opportunities to those service men and women who served on active duty after June 30, 1985; to promote and assist the All-Volunteer Force program and the Total Force Concept of the Armed Forces by establishing a new program of educational assistance based upon service on active duty or a combination of service on active duty and in the Selected Reserve (including the National Guard) to aid in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified personnel for both the active and reserve components of the Armed Forces; give special emphasis to providing educational assistance benefits to aid in the retention of personnel in the armed Forces; and to enhance our nation's competitiveness through the development of a more highly educated and productive work force; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, Section 3201, Chapter 32, United States Code, mandates the Secretary Department of Veterans Affairs to provide educational assistance to those men and women who enter the Armed Forces after December 31, 1976, and before July 1, 1985, to assist young men and women in obtaining an education they might not otherwise be able to afford, and to promote and assist the all volunteer military program of the United States by attracting qualified men and women to serve in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, Section 3201, Chapter 32, United States Code, Title III Veterans Educational Assistance does not provide retroactive benefits for service members and veterans who incurred educational debt before Congress recognized the need to provide today's veterans with benefits commensurate with that of the WWII era; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, Section 3311, Chapter 33, United States Code, mandates the Secretary Department of Veterans Affairs to provide educational assistance for all veterans serving in the Armed Forces commencing on or after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, Section 3321, Chapter 33, United States Code, time limitation for use of and eligibility for entitlement places a fifteen (15) year expiration on this entitlement, but does not provide retroactive benefits for service members and veterans who incurred educational debt before Congress recognized the need to provide today's veterans with benefits commensurate with that of the WWII era; and

WHEREAS, failure to remedy this gap in coverage for those veterans who incurred educational debt prior to the enactment of the G.I. Bill for the 21st Century would effectively deny them the benefits being enjoyed by their comrades and continue an undue burden on these veterans and their families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the establishment of a program of retroactive loan repayment and educational assistance for members of the Armed Forces who served in the Armed Forces after September 11, 2001, to pay off all educational debts and living expenses incurred by service members and veterans in the pursuit of an education prior to the enactment of the G.I. Bill for the

Resolution No. 635 (Submitted by Department of New York)

BUILD AND FUND A FULL VA MEDICAL CENTER ON
THE ST. ALBANS VA CAMPUS

WHEREAS, Title 38, Sec 8162, United States Code, mandates the Secretary Department of Veterans Affairs may only enter into an enhanced use lease if he/she determines the following conditions exist: at least part of the use of the property under the lease will be to provide appropriate space for an activity contributing to the mission of the Department; the lease will not be inconsistent with and will not adversely affect the mission of the Department; and the lease will enhance the use of the property; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, Sec 8102, United States Code, mandates the Secretary Department of Veterans Affairs provide medical facilities for veterans entitled to hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care or medical services; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 13327 Sec. 3 (c) (i), (ii), and (iii) dated February 4, 2004 mandates that enhanced use leases be consistent with and supportive of the goals and objectives of the VA; and

WHEREAS, demolition of the existing Naval Hospital on the St. Albans VA Campus would unnecessarily expose staff, patients, and the surrounding community to asbestos creating a moral and financial obligation for the VA to remediate; and

WHEREAS, it would be more cost effective and consistent with environmental stewardship for the VA to renovate and retrofit the existing Naval Hospital which is currently underutilized as a 180 bed domiciliary to meet the current and future needs of veterans in Queens and western Nassau Counties; and

WHEREAS, veterans requesting medical services at St. Albans are systematically forced to receive care at other VA facilities outside of Queens County, thus reducing the utilization of St. Albans and skewing VA reports and analysis; and

WHEREAS, 200,000 veterans reside in Queens and western Nassau Counties who must currently travel a great distance to VA medical centers located in other counties for care and services; and

WHEREAS, we will have an increased population of so called "Baby Boomer" veterans living longer who will need extended care and the current 180 bed domiciliary at St. Albans will not be able to meet this need; and

WHEREAS, veterans who depend on St. Albans for limited outpatient and or domiciliary care who suffer life threatening illness or injuries must be transported to outside emergency medical facilities during the critical

hours of life and death; and

WHEREAS, an increased number of veterans will survive current and future campaigns with extreme physical limitations due to medical advancement. These veterans would have died in past conflicts, but in order for them to live they will require extended care and the current 180 bed domiciliary at St. Albans will not be able to meet this need; and

WHEREAS, veterans recovering from physical and psychological trauma associated with their service should have serene outdoor environments to aid in their recovery; and

WHEREAS, we will have an increased population of female veterans who need extended care; and

WHEREAS, female veterans who depend on St. Albans for limited outpatient and/or domiciliary care are effectively denied female specific care; and

WHEREAS, Queens County has experienced an increase in homeless veterans in need of comprehensive treatment and counseling services; and

WHEREAS, the VA has not demonstrated a plan to address the practice of over booking in the New York Harbor Region; and

WHEREAS, failure to provide a full service VA medical center with Emergency Room, Primary and Extended Care for female veterans, and a Domiciliary with comprehensive treatment for homeless veterans would be inconsistent with and will adversely affect the mission of the Department to care for the veterans of Queens and Nassau Counties; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we fully support the establishment of a full VA Medical Center with emergency room and supportive services; primary and extended care for female veterans; and a comprehensive treatment facility for homeless veterans be provided by retrofitting the existing facilities at St. Albans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA provide funding for the construction renovation and retrofitting of existing structures and new needs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we oppose any plans to demolish the existing Naval Hospital and surrounding structures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA provide funding for a Health Care for Homeless Services program at St. Albans to provide outreach and case management services. The outreach staff, which will include graduates of HVHCS programs, will provide counseling and linkage with VA medical and psychiatric appointment; a community residential contract program to help veterans leave the streets and prepare for treatment programs; to work closely with community agencies and service organizations such as the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, the Salvation

Army, United Veterans Beacon House, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, actively partnering with several of them in the VA Homeless Providers Grant & Per Diem Program, which will provide transitional housing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA provide funding for an expanded Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans program at St. Albans to facilitate rehabilitation services to homeless veterans in a 500 bed residential setting, with a structured 4 month program which addresses the range of conditions which both contribute to and result from homelessness: substance abuse; psychiatric instability; lack of housing; unemployment; lack of social and life management skills; and lack of community support systems; based on the veteran's needs VA provide, individual and group counseling, vocational rehabilitation and medical and psychiatric care; skills training groups to focus on anger management, relapse prevention, money management and cooking on a budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA provide funding for a Vocational Rehabilitation Therapy program at St. Albans to provide veterans the opportunity to explore their vocational skills and interest, and to develop and obtain employment and/or educational opportunities; to provide assessment, testing, counseling, planning and placement as essential parts of the comprehensive vocational treatment plan; to allow veterans to develop resumes, practice job interviewing skills, and receive placement services from a full-time onsite NYS Department of Labor representative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA provide funding for a Supportive Housing program at St. Albans to facilitate affordable transitional housing for homeless veterans discharged from HVHCS programs. (Approved)

Resolution No. 636 (Submitted by Department of South Dakota)

SUPPORT VA MEDALLION FOR ALL VETERANS INTERRED IN PRIVATE CEMETERIES

WHEREAS, the VA Secretary approved a bronze medallion design on January 13, 2010; and

WHEREAS, a VA furnished medallion is a device made of bronze that can be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker for veterans interred in a private cemetery; and

WHEREAS, its purpose is to signify the deceased's status as a veteran; and

WHEREAS, the medallion is available in three sizes, 5 inches, 3 inches, and 1-1/2 inches. Each medallion will be inscribed with the word VETERAN across the top and the Branch of Service at the bottom; and

WHEREAS, the medallion will be furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or marker for all deceased honorably discharged veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, and whose grave in a private cemetery is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker; and

WHEREAS, eligible veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the medallion, but not both; and

WHEREAS, the medallion is mailed without charge to the veteran's next of kin, or authorized representative. Appropriate affixing adhesives, hardware and instructions are included with the medallion. The Government is not responsible for costs to affix the medallion on the privately purchased headstone or marker; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to allow the medallion for ALL deceased honorably discharged Veterans of the United States of America. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 637 (Submitted by Department of South Dakota)

SUPPORT FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PAY
ITS FAIR SHARE OF COST TO PROVIDE CARE FOR VETERANS IN
STATE VETERANS HOMES

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes were founded for soldiers and sailors following the American Civil War, and have ably served veterans for nearly 150 years; and

WHEREAS, under Title 38, United States Code, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized to make aid payments to States maintaining State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, currently there are 140 State Veterans Homes as member institutions of the National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH), in all States and in Puerto Rico, on a daily basis providing hospital, skilled nursing, rehabilitation, long-term care, dementia and Alzheimer's care, domiciliary care, respite care, end of life care, and adult day health care, to 28,500 veterans and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United State Code, authorizes VA to make per diem payments to the States for Veterans residing in State Veterans Homes, and the State Veterans Home program is recognized as the lowest-cost among all nursing care alternatives used by VA; and

WHEREAS, Title 38, United States Code, authorizes VA to pay a per diem payment up to 50 percent of the national average cost of care in State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the growing long-term health care needs of older veterans, the State Veterans Home program will increasingly serve a vital purpose and will continue to provide the lowest cost alternative for veterans needing long-term care in the future; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support a VA per diem payment of not more than 50 percent of the national average cost of providing care in a State Veterans Home, as authorized by law. (Approved)

Resolution No. 638 (Submitted by the Department of North Carolina)

SUPPORT RECOGNITION OF COLLEGE CREDITS BY
PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES FOR MILITARY
EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES

WHEREAS, many public colleges and universities do not ask for, review, or assess evidences of federal military education and training courses; and

WHEREAS, many public colleges and universities do not accept equivalent college credits for nationally recognized military education and training courses; and

WHEREAS, acceptance of equivalent college credits will eliminate the necessity of veterans taking duplicative educational material, first in the military and then repeated in college; and

WHEREAS, acceptance of equivalent college credits will reduce federal government cost for education, paying first for the military schooling and then again under the G.I. Bill for similar and equivalent courses in the college; and

WHEREAS, acceptance of equivalent college credits will encourage more service members and veterans to enroll in and attain a university or college degree, as well as enhance recruiting in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, time saved by such acceptance will allow service members and veterans to spend more time with their families or at a place of employment; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that universities and colleges should ask for, review, and assess evidence of federal military schools and courses completed by military service members and veterans, and grant credits toward their intended major as set forth in the American Council on Educations' Guide to the Evaluation of Education Experiences in the Armed Forces. (Approved)

Resolution No. 639 (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, Agent Orange was also stored on U.S. vessels and used for vegetation clearing purposes around U.S. bases, landing zones and lines of communication; and

WHEREAS, the VA 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 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. 640 (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 private expense; and

WHEREAS, veterans who died 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)

Resolution No. 641 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

VA PENSION LOOK BACK

WHEREAS, Public Law 95-588 of 1978 established a Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act based on financial need; and

WHEREAS, estate planning for the elderly is being used by persons with

large estates to preserve assets for heirs while taking advantage of a VA Federally needs based program designed for the less fortunate; and

WHEREAS, The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 clearly demonstrated the intent of Congress regarding the transfer of assets and applying for Federally needs based programs under the Medicaid Program; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to petition Congress to implement a five-year look back period as it pertains to the transfer of assets when applying for VA Pension benefits. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 642 (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 who engage in dubious practices; 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 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)

Resolution No. 643 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

OPPOSE SECRETARY SHINSEKI'S PROPOSED LEGISLATION OF MAY 28, 2010

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans' Affairs was established to administer benefits earned by veterans for their service to the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the process was established to be non-adversarial; and

WHEREAS, the process has evolved into a legalistic fight where veterans are routinely denied benefits on the first application necessitating appeals and representation by veteran service organizations or by attorney's and other persons licensed by the Office of General Counsel to represent

veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans' do not file a Notice of Disagreement when first denied the benefits and many years later meet an administrative wall that requires help by others; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Shinseki sent a letter and proposed legislation to the Speaker of the House on May 28, 2010 that would hinder veterans from being represented by the person of their choice or by an attorney if they so desired; and

WHEREAS, the major theme throughout the Secretary's proposed legislation is not the improvement of quality of providing benefits to veterans, rather its emphasis is on time, limiting the amount of time that substantive appeals and Notices of Disagreement could be filed; and

WHEREAS, although there are many things in the proposed legislation the overall effect on veterans would be to deny them the same rights that are being provided to criminals; illegal combatants; and other that are not citizens of this country; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans' of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose the enactment of any National or State Legislation that denies veterans the ability to have the same rights of appeal that all people in the United States (legal and illegal) enjoy in the obtaining of their benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we oppose Secretary Shinseki's proposed legislation that was transmitted on May 28, 2010. (Approved)

Resolution No. 644 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROVIDES A PROPER EFFECTIVE DATE
FOR VETERANS PREVIOUSLY DENIED SERVICE CONNECTION OF
GULF WAR ILLNESS

WHEREAS, regulations were proposed on April 18, 2010 for the implementation of presumptive illnesses and diseases collectively known as "Gulf War Illness"; and

WHEREAS, there were only two comments submitted on the proposed regulations referred to as RIN 2900-AN24-Presumptions of Service Connection for Persian Gulf Service; 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 known as the Nehmer decision; but, that decision only affects claims that are related to exposure to Agent Orange and will not be applied to the Gulf War Illness;

and

WHEREAS, Secretary Shinseki sent a letter and proposed legislation to the Speaker of the House on May 28, 2010 that would hinder veterans from being represented by the person of their choice or by an attorney if they so desired; and

WHEREAS, it is highly probable that the effective date will be taken to the Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (CAVC) and because the regulations and statute show that the original regulations in 1994 did not comply with the intent of Congress (as outlined in VA Training Letter 10-01) 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 Gulf War Illness to be the date of original filing for service connection of a disease/illness which is later found to be presumptive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support legislation that establishes this as a guiding principle for any future finding of illnesses and diseases that become presumptive. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 645 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

VIETNAM VETERANS' EQUITY ACT

WHEREAS, Congress has developed H.R.2254 and SB 1319 which are 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, 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 a disability or death related to herbicide exposures, 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 Veterans 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 the 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 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 known 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. 646 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

SERVICE CONNECTION FOR TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES FOR NON OIF/OEF VETERANS

WHEREAS, Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) have become more prevalent in the OIF/OEF veterans due to the preponderance of usage of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and the high survivability rate; and

WHEREAS, there is a higher rate of concussions due to the transportation equipment; IEDs; in-coming mortars, etc.; and

WHEREAS, thousands of veterans’ of World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, Grenada, Panama, Bosnia/Herzegovina, and other conflicts suffered concussions, head wounds, and other trauma to the head and survived; and

WHEREAS, these veterans’ filed for many of the symptoms that are now associated with TBI and have been denied service connection for those conditions; 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 Veterans Affairs perform outreach to those veterans of other eras with verifiable head injuries and trauma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, 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)

Resolution No. 647 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

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. 648 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

OPPOSE THE IMPOSITION OF TIME LIMITS FOR
FILING COMPENSATIONS CLAIMS

WHEREAS, veterans suffer lifelong impairments from disabilities incurred in connection with military service; and

WHEREAS, compensation is a benefit available to service-connected veterans at any time they choose to claim it; and

WHEREAS, veterans who, for whatever reason, do not initially desire to claim and receive compensation should not forfeit the right to claim and receive it at some later time; and

WHEREAS, no reason other than defeating delayed claims exists for imposition of a statute of limitations on compensation claims; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims processing system, suggested a time limit for filing compensation claims as a way to reduce VA's workload; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims. (Approved)

Resolution No. 649 (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 veterans' benefits and service; and

WHEREAS, under this benevolent system, veterans currently have one year to initiate appeals 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 and 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. 650 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

OPPOSE REGIONAL DISPERSION OF THE
BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

WHEREAS, veterans and other claimants for veterans' benefits may appeal erroneous decisions of the various and geographically dispersed benefits offices and medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, inaccuracy and lack of uniformity are pervasive among the claims decisions of the many VA field offices; and

WHEREAS, one board, the Board of Veterans' Appeals situated adjacent to VA's central office and policymaking center in Washington, D.C., hears

all appeals; and

WHEREAS, appellants, Board members, and taxpayers derive numerous benefits from an appellate board housed in one centralized location, some of the more obvious of which are:

- Availability of the collective expertise of the entire board
- Professional interaction and association among Board members and staff
- Shared and uniform training
- Common and shared goals and responsibilities
- Economies of scale from pooled resources and the most efficient workload distribution, with the flexibility and capacity to readjust the workload as necessary between members and support staff
- A positive environment and employee incentives for developing creative solutions and innovations to meet and overcome the challenges inherent in a system of mass adjudication of claims
- More efficient and effective centralized case management and storage
- More effective centralized board administration and hands-on employee oversight; and

WHEREAS, Congress created the Board of Veterans' Appeals after repeated failed experiments with various configurations of regional appellate panels that were plagued by persistent inefficiencies and problems and were proven impractical and poorly suited to properly dispose of veterans' appeals; and

WHEREAS, indications are that consideration is being given within certain quarters of VA to dismember the board and scatter its decision makers among the VA field offices or among various regions of the Nation; and

WHEREAS, such regional reorganization of the Board would be extremely unwise, wholly unwarranted, and not in the best interests of veterans or taxpayers; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we categorically oppose any decentralization of the Board of Veterans' Appeals. (Approved)

Resolution No. 651 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PAY FEES OF ATTORNEYS, AGENTS,
AND CLAIMS REPRESENTATIVES

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, in the spirit in which special benefits are provided to especially deserving beneficiaries, our citizens intended these benefits to

be dispensed through an open, helpful, and informal system in which the government is duty bound to receive every claimant as entitled and provide every reasonable assistance in developing and shepherding the claim through the entire administrative process while affording consideration of all legal avenues toward granting every benefit that can be supported in law; and

WHEREAS, the programs are also designed in a manner that ensures veterans and their families will receive the full measure of aid from disability compensation and other monetary payments without taxation and with protections that ensure they are not; and

WHEREAS, Congress has set the rates of these modest benefits to be minimally adequate for their intended purpose, such as assisting disabled veterans and their families in purchasing the necessities of life or obtaining services necessary to ameliorate the effects of disability, and the amounts provided do not contemplate or allow for any reduction or diminishment in buying power such as will occur when a portion is diverted to attorneys; and

WHEREAS, acquiescence in any general situation in which obtaining veterans' benefits required hiring an attorney and surrendering portion of disability compensation or other benefits obtained to the attorney fundamentally contradicts and undermines the spirit of the benefit programs created solely to aid and meet the special needs of disabled veterans and their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, it is inappropriate for Congress to disavow the government's obligation to ensure veterans receive the benefits due them by passing them off to the legal profession where their plight might well depend on or be determined by their potential for producing attorney fees; and

WHEREAS, adding to the administrative processes all the ancillary burdens involved in fee agreements, withholding, and disbursements will greatly aggravate the existing overburdening of the system and require the diversion of scarce resources away from activities where they are more urgently needed and could yield more meaningful returns; and

WHEREAS, no disabled veteran should have to pay attorney fees to obtain the benefits that a grateful nation provides and the veteran is rightfully due; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek legislation requiring that the Department of Veterans' Affairs pay the fees that would have accrued under current regulations and that these fees will meet the current requirements of the EAJA. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 652 (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 benefits 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, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we seek legislation requiring that the Department of Veterans Affairs pay equitable interest that would have accrued from the effective date of claim. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 653 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

ELIMINATE THE DELIMITING 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, spouses 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 legislation which would eliminate the delimiting date for

spouses and surviving spouses for purposes of benefits provided under Chapter 35, Title 38, United States Code. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 654 (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 expenses; 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 IF FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge VA to promote incentives among private health care practitioners and medical facilities to accept fee basis reimbursements as payment in full for the cost of treatments provided through the fee basis program for service-connected disabled veterans. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 655 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

PROVIDE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS OF
SERVICE CONNECTED VETERANS RATED AT
60 PERCENT OR MORE DISABLED

WHEREAS, Chapter 35 of Title 38, United States Code, extends educational assistance to the dependents of service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, there are many service-connected veterans rated 60 percent and more 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, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States,

that we 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 60 percent or more. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 656 (Submitted by Department of Ohio)

SUPPORT DVOPS/LVER GRANTS BEING RETURNED TO
STAFFING GRANTS

WHEREAS, Veterans Preference and Priority of Service for veterans has been afforded to veterans since the days of our colonies to present day, and have been earned by the sacrifices of men and women who have served in the military service 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 by the U.S Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service Grants supporting DVOPS and LVERS be returned to a staffing grant Veterans priority of service be expanded to include any agency or organization, state or federal, that received federal funding for employment and training, i.e., directly or through federal grants through the states (including the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we request 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 that State. (Disapproved)

Resolution No. 657 (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 pay 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 only to those veterans who have received a disability rating from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) rated at 50% or more; and

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 requiring the concurrent receipt of military longevity pay and VA disability compensation for any veteran who is compensably rated by the VA. (Approved)

Resolution No. 658 (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 veteran' 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, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we 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. 659 (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 handicapped 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 affirmation 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 it is a legislative priority to require Congress to require enforcement of Title 38 section 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 Service as this Agency currently enforce Chapter 41 and 43 of Title 38, U.S.C.
(Disapproved)

Resolution No. 660 (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 Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits for survivors of certain veterans noted totally disabled for ten or more 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, must in many cases limit, give up, 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 veteran 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 as Amended)

Resolution No. 661 (Submitted by Department of Michigan)

CHILDREN DAY CARE CENTERS

WHEREAS, the influx of OIF and OEF veterans are seeking care within the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Care system in record numbers; and

WHEREAS, many of these veterans have to report for compensation and or pension exams or medical care on short notice; and

WHEREAS, several have small children that need to be cared for in their absence; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United State that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement a feasibility study for the purpose of developing an onsite day care center so that veterans with children will not miss their C&P evaluations or medical care. (Disapproved)

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

Chairman: Glen M. Gardner, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

Vice Chairman: Larry W. Rivers, Past Commander-in-Chief, Louisiana

(Room 107-10, Indianapolis Convention Center)

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Alaska	Martin Miller	9785
Alaska	Walter Watts	3629
Arizona	Lindsey Botkin	10342
Arizona	Allen "Gunner" Kent	9972
Arizona	Anthony Mangine	6790
Arkansas	Bobby Julian	6527
Arkansas	Christine Oldham	4548
Arkansas	Ruben Tamariz	2278
California	Louis Bickford	9454
California	Jim Mathews	4084
California	Mike Maynor	52
California	Danny Stevens	811
Colorado	Charles Watkins	3917
Connecticut	Alfred Meek	2046
Connecticut	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
Delaware	Paul Phillips	2863
Dist. of Col.	Troy Gatling	341
Europe	Stephen Ward	9534
Florida	W. Benny Bachand	4287
Florida	Michael White	3559
Georgia	Ronald Keller	8385
Hawaii	Nicholas Young	1540
Idaho	Glenn Nielsen	63
Illinois	Robert Crider	2801
Illinois	Rick Frank	1461
Illinois	Donovan Smith	3455
Illinois	Barbara Wilson	2649
Indiana	Johnny Capps	6653
Indiana	Darrel Knight	972
Indiana	David Lantz	1130
Iowa	Harold Kobriger	6161
Kansas	Robert Greene	7397
Kansas	Vernon Russell	852
Kentucky	Brian Duffy	1170
Louisiana	Douglas Nunley	5951
Maine	Raymond Lupo	4633
Maryland	Victor Fuentealba	9083
Massachusetts	Augustus Gatti	608
Michigan	Leonard Milewski	1136
Michigan	David Prohaska	4434
Michigan	Robert Weiss	2406

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Minnesota	David Adams	1782
Minnesota	Alcuin Loehr	4847
Minnesota	Stephen O'Connor	4114
Missouri	Robert Easton	1894
Missouri	Thomas Hartman	35
Missouri	Kevin Jones	7356
Missouri	Lawrence Maher	7356
Missouri	Jack Polete	7628
Nebraska	Dan Petersen	131
Nebraska	Harold Schlender	5289
Nevada	Michael Musgrove	2350
New Jersey	William Grieman	4303
New Mexico	Kathie Schiebel	401
New York	Robert Barnhart	686
New York	Harold Burke	1895
New York	William Schmitz	524
North Dakota	William Tuff	7564
Ohio	Andrew Caprella	9648
Ohio	Harry Crabtree	8402
Ohio	Danny Crow	3343
Ohio	James Pisegna	1662
Ohio	Gerald Ward	5713
Oklahoma	Donald Fenter	5263
Oregon	Roger Ege	1909
Pacific Areas	William Wichmann	727
Pennsylvania	John Brenner	2493
Pennsylvania	Robert Eiler	8805
Pennsylvania	Frank Mills	1754
Pennsylvania	Albert Thomas	974
Rhode Island	Salvatore Capirchio	2396
Rhode Island	Robert Stevens	4487
South Dakota	Rollin Sieveke	5969
Texas	Kenneth Burton	9182
Texas	Eliseo Cantu	2397
Texas	Carlos Sustaita	8787
Texas	Lavern Terbl	7873
Vermont	Samuel Haskins	1034
Virginia	John McNeill	5412
Washington	Richard Whipple	2886
West Virginia	Donald Young	3466
Wisconsin	Eldon Sanders	7929
Wisconsin	Jason Stearns	8057

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Chairman: George J. Lisicki, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Jersey

Vice Chairman: Norman G. Staab, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kansas

(Room Ballroom 500, Indianapolis Convention Center)

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Delaware	Mark Newman	3238
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Florida	Laurence Schatz	3559
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Illinois	Raymond Soden	2149
Illinois	Stephen Thomas	2955
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Kansas	Robert Greene	7397
Kansas	John Stang	3147
Latin Amer/Carib	Ruth Thomas	3835
Louisiana	Philip Volz	5951
Maine	David Williams	1641
Massachusetts	Thomas Brennick	834
Massachusetts	Thomas Canada	1012
Massachusetts	William Madera	1702
Massachusetts	Anthony Manfredi	5988
Massachusetts	Dana McQuaid	2017
Massachusetts	Clifford Olson	8699
Massachusetts	Norman Richard	6538
Michigan	Paul McIvor	8594
Minnesota	John Shalloe	8510
Mississippi	Johnnie Richard	2539
Missouri	Robert Harmon	1831
Missouri	Christian Hummel	3118
Missouri	Lawrence Maher	7356
Nebraska	Leonard Gauchat	8221
New Hampshire	Michael Annis	2860
New Jersey	Patrick Botbyl	1593
New Jersey	Thomas Farrell	3020
New York	Donald Mackey	5088
New York	Bernard Thompson	1896
North Dakota	Thomas Bernotas	4324
Ohio	Robert Brenot	606
Ohio	Ervin Yoder	7424
Oregon	H. Merle Jackson	4108
Pennsylvania	Dominic De Franco	764
Pennsylvania	John Getz	3376

Department	Name	Post No.
Pennsylvania	Jack Snyder	3376
Rhode Island	Roger Lavoie	5392
South Carolina	Albert Landsperger	5928
South Carolina	William Trask	9138
South Dakota	Marvin Czerwonka	1273
South Dakota	Linda Nelson	791
Tennessee	Darryl McPheron	9754
Texas	John Lozanski	5076
Utah	Dennis Parizek	1481
Vermont	Donald Dockter	792
Virginia	Kim Deshano	9480
Virginia	Joseph Longstreet	3219
Virginia	John McNeill	5412
Washington	Stephen Stetson	4278
West Virginia	William Lambert	9097
Wisconsin	Dennis Landen	7591
Wisconsin	Thomas Robinson	2126
Wyoming	Harold Lowe	4343
Wyoming	Loren Norby	10969

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

Chairman: Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Wisconsin

Vice Chairman: Rick W. Barg, Inspector General, South Dakota

Vice Chairman: John M. Carney, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida

Vice Chairman: John E. Moon, Past Commander-in-Chief, Ohio

Vice Chairman: James E. Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

(Room 101-03, Indianapolis Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	James Lorenzo	924
Alaska	John Mattison	9785
Arizona	Shane Anderson	769
Arizona	Gary Harlan	4903
Arkansas	Gary Wellesley	3031
California	Sara Campbell	4084
California	James Lopez	10859
California	Buford Maples	5985
California	Michael Murphy	4084
California	Dale Smith	3783
Colorado	James Mauck	2601
Colorado	Steven Rylant	41
Connecticut	Stanley Borusiewicz	1946
Connecticut	Gregory Smith	7788
Dist. of Col.	Dominador Carreon	5471
Dist. of Col.	Rodolfo Ines	5471
Europe	George Gilgore	10614
Europe	Peter Luste	8862
Florida	Gene Carroll	3282

Department	Name	Post No.
Florida	Chester Pyatt	8087
Florida	Ernest Sandman	2500
Georgia	Henry Epps	5897
Georgia	Michael O`Steen	5976
Georgia	William Sandberg	3679
Hawaii	Joseph Bragg	2875
Hawaii	Frank Lamson	970
Hawaii	Richard Wong	3292
Idaho	Denny Croner	2738
Idaho	John Crotinger	3520
Illinois	John Fessler	1308
Illinois	Vincent Long	1756
Illinois	Philip Maughan	3873
Illinois	Roland Porter	9759
Illinois	William Regan	7452
Illinois	Kenneth Seay	9759
Indiana	William Davis	1431
Indiana	Richard Shirley	1563
Indiana	William Thien	3281
Iowa	Paul Arnold	941
Kansas	Darrell Bencken	2981
Kansas	David Cuba	6654
Kansas	Robert Greene	7397
Kansas	Charles Shoemaker	12003
Louisiana	Douglas Crowell	6640
Maine	Arthur Roy	1603
Maryland	Paul Kauffman	10078
Maryland	David Oswald	9862
Massachusetts	Martin Columbo	1018
Massachusetts	Theodore Eaton	2104
Massachusetts	Walter Gansenberg	834
Massachusetts	Ronald Smith	8892
Massachusetts	Robert Van Kirk	2394
Massachusetts	Edward Walsh	6712
Michigan	Charles Abner	9885
Michigan	Ronald Lomasney	796
Michigan	Larry Thayer	9455
Minnesota	Patrick Bohmer	246
Minnesota	Thomas Tweet	1296
Mississippi	James Darrah	3036
Missouri	Debra Anderson	7356
Missouri	Christopher Bell	30
Missouri	Troy Danderson	7356
Missouri	Kenneth Davis	5789
Missouri	Ashley Hastings	1894
Missouri	Joseph Liles	10906
Missouri	Lawrence Maher	7356
Missouri	Kim Wischmeyer	3987
Montana	John Fish	1448
Montana	Raymond Lutz	1087
Montana	Thomas Pouliot	1116

Department	Name	Post No.
Nebraska	Matthew Jones	7722
Nebraska	Richard Morrison	8334
Nebraska	Billy Smith	7028
Nebraska	Gary Steckelberg	7419
Nebraska	Dale Wittrock	10579
Nevada	Greg Bashaw	3848
Nevada	John Labombard	3848
New Hampshire	Richard Angwin	1631
New Jersey	Ernest Cuff	1795
New Jersey	Andrew Henkel	7856
New Jersey	John Kane	493
New Mexico	Joe Ford	401
New Mexico	Roger Miller	6917
New York	John Brunato	53
New York	Anthony Ferrarese	16
New York	Dennis Sullivan	4927
North Carolina	Jack Campbell	2423
North Carolina	Michael Edwards	2417
North Dakota	Robert Volk	1868
Ohio	Richard Cuff	7424
Ohio	James Dickens	5532
Ohio	Floyd Franks	7424
Ohio	Roger Frye	8487
Ohio	Wayne Hutchison	7670
Ohio	John Keirns	7174
Oklahoma	Ronald Slowik	2270
Oregon	George Carroll	3973
Oregon	James Willis	584
Pacific Areas	William Bradford	2917
Pacific Areas	Laurence Lyons	11016
Pennsylvania	Michael Bolli	6495
Pennsylvania	Richard Getz	1463
Rhode Island	Armondo Azzinaro	8955
Rhode Island	Joseph Cerrito	8018
Rhode Island	Allen Wagonblott	5392
South Carolina	Harry Bishop	3034
South Carolina	Lyn Dimery	10420
South Carolina	Frank Fogner	10804
South Dakota	Rick Barg	628
South Dakota	William Barlow	3442
South Dakota	Gary Knudson	2038
South Dakota	Dick Pickering	4726
Tennessee	Ronald Gilbert	1294
Texas	Roy Grona	3377
Utah	Michael Baker	1481
Vermont	John Boardman	6689
Vermont	Gary Villa	792
Virginia	David Kipfinger	2820
Virginia	John McNeill	5412
Virginia	Harold Roesch	3219
Washington	George Berthiaume	969

Department	Name	Post No.
Washington	Charles Virititti	9430
West Virginia	Ralph Honaker	1064
Wisconsin	Lemuel Ellis	7591
Wisconsin	Kerry Metoxen	7784
Wisconsin	Bruce Sorensen	7534
Wyoming	Wayne Mordahl	4343

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Chairman: John Furgess, Past Commander-in-Chief, Tennessee

Vice Chairman: John W Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief,
New Hampshire

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA

Chairman: John F. Gwizdak, Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia

Vice Chairman: Edward S. Banas, Past Commander-in-Chief,
Connecticut

(Room 208, Indianapolis Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Lawrence Sepanski	4190
Arizona	Michael Talerico	6310
Arkansas	Howard Cothren	3543
California	Alexander Brown	1512
California	Herbert Hillaker	3919
California	Elden Monday	85
California	John Warner	4851
Colorado	Warren Tellgren	9644
Colorado	Warren Wellensiek	4171
Delaware	Richard Norman	4961
Dist. of Col.	William Bennett	346
Dist. of Col.	Charlie Smith	284
Florida	Scott Barber	10094
Florida	John Hamilton	7909
Florida	John Mingo	9272
Florida	Julius Sallette	1966
Georgia	Al Lipphardt	12002
Georgia	Dean Smith	5290
Hawaii	Joseph Davis	3391
Hawaii	Richard Haake	3850
Idaho	Donald Riegel	889
Illinois	Raoul Barnes	1769
Illinois	John Burke	5788
Illinois	Marshal Hawk	454
Illinois	Russell Rieke	5694
Indiana	Gregory Baker	6978
Indiana	John Dahman	857

Department	Name	Post No.
Iowa	Dennis Abel	1797
Iowa	Larry Larson	839
Iowa	Roger Schwieso	941
Kansas	Lynn Rolf	56
Kentucky	John Ranson	6095
Kentucky	Joe Schnitterbaum	8639
Louisiana	Thomas Kijak	5951
Louisiana	Precilla Wilkewitz	4224
Maine	Mark Reilly	6859
Massachusetts	Roland Gendron	6643
Massachusetts	Donald Lafond	7239
Massachusetts	Louis Stifano	1012
Michigan	Larry Coleman	1888
Michigan	Garry Goff	8260
Michigan	Douglas Masseau	701
Michigan	Ernest Meyers	2406
Minnesota	Gary Anderson	6587
Minnesota	Stan Kowalski	363
Minnesota	Steven Van Bergen	6587
Missouri	Philip Duncan	7356
Montana	Larry Longfellow	1087
Nebraska	Roger Broeker	1504
Nevada	Charles Jamison	8336
New Hampshire	John Calo	1772
New Jersey	Albert Bucchi	3020
New Jersey	Duane Sarmiento	5579
New Jersey	Arthur Taylor	5479
New Jersey	Michael Wysong	9503
New Mexico	Tyrone Benson	7686
New Mexico	Warren Booker	7686
New York	David Czarnecki	7967
New York	Melvin Garrett	6396
North Carolina	Elree Smith	10999
North Dakota	Joy Mikyska	7564
Ohio	George Dountz	8736
Ohio	Samuel Hixson	6772
Ohio	Michael Hughes	3035
Ohio	Bradley Price	1516
Ohio	Marvin Scott	6772
Oklahoma	Robert Clark	4876
Oregon	John Stanks	3965
Pennsylvania	William Allen	7213
Pennsylvania	John Biedrzycki	418
Pennsylvania	Cecil Dennis	5958
Rhode Island	Frank Lightowler	6342
South Dakota	Darold Couch	3442
Tennessee	Carl Jackson	684
Texas	Danny Henry	4372
Texas	Tashawnya McCullough	4676
Texas	Ferrell Warden	8552
Utah	Norman Nelson	1695

Vermont	Ronald Gascon	792
Vermont	Edward Laviletta	778
Washington	Roger Fleishour	3067
Washington	Charles Keller	969
West Virginia	Melvin Reed	573
Wisconsin	Wilfred Johnson	10544
Wisconsin	Steven Lawrence	10272
Wisconsin	Edward Stockel	6498
Wyoming	Gary Mathisen	2221
Wyoming	James Pedersen	2673

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE

Chairman: Gary L. Kurpius, Past Commander-in-Chief, Alaska

Vice Chairman: John Wasylik, Past Commander-in-Chief, Ohio

(Room 116, Indianapolis Convention Center)

Department	Name	Post No.
Alabama	Johnny Boyington	3568
Alabama	Valentin Obregon	3568
Alaska	Joseph Simms	10252
Alaska	Scott Thorstad	9785
Arizona	William Chagnon	5990
Arizona	Dominico Tamilio	720
Arizona	Donald Taylor	3632
Arkansas	Michael Switser	4548
California	Frank Contreras	8547
California	Howard Hagen	2967
California	Arthur Harris	5179
California	Ronald Harshman	5689
California	Scott Langhoff	11387
California	James Sehrt	275
California	Wendy Sehrt	275
Connecticut	Ronald Christopher	5095
Delaware	George Ritchie	7234
Delaware	James Withrow	6483
Dist. of Col.	William Bradshaw	284
Dist. of Col.	Clifford Fields	2979
Europe	Thomas Buffington	8862
Europe	Leo Robbins	3885
Florida	Talmadge Markham	8205
Florida	J. Douglas Morris	3559
Florida	Kenneth Thie	10094
Georgia	Joel Willis	5290
Georgia	Joe Wood	8452
Hawaii	Norbert Enos	2875
Idaho	Tom Ressler	63
Illinois	Gary Andrews	3601
Illinois	Paul Kallembach	2287
Illinois	Robert Migalich	4763
Illinois	Barry Walter	5220

Department	Name	Post No.
Indiana	Lawrence Blankman	717
Indiana	Kenneth Fisher	1152
Indiana	Arnold Marion	6606
Kansas	B. J. McGee	1650
Kansas	Larry Rowlison	2981
Kentucky	Gerald Kayrouz	1170
Kentucky	Dwight Riggle	1170
Latin Amer/Carib	Arthur Littesy	3835
Louisiana	Alton Olinde	6640
Maine	Arnold Leavitt	1603
Maine	Charles Warden	11553
Maryland	Francis Elliott	8276
Maryland	Phillip Medlin	2678
Massachusetts	Donald Couture	3236
Massachusetts	Carmen Dello Iacono	2017
Massachusetts	Robert Gallagher	834
Massachusetts	Ronald Patalano	529
Michigan	Daniel Crocker	796
Michigan	Gene Furgason	4249
Michigan	David Hutson	8846
Michigan	Elmer Liimatta	6507
Michigan	Richard Redfern	7581
Michigan	Jerry Smith	7581
Minnesota	Tate Doom	742
Minnesota	Thomas Hanson	1639
Minnesota	Donald Heuer	9433
Minnesota	Louie Mrozek	6316
Mississippi	William Ellerby	10024
Mississippi	Raybon Windham	9122
Missouri	Dennis Flynn	2866
Missouri	Charles Patrick	2203
Missouri	Donald Watts	5553
Montana	Robert Schwegel	6786
Nebraska	Bernard Brosnihan	10727
Nebraska	James Pierce	5547
Nevada	Paul Ruprecht	2350
Nevada	John Stroud	2313
New Hampshire	John Lilly	1698
New Hampshire	Roland Miller	5791
New Jersey	Lawrence Berman	133
New Jersey	Joseph Retkovis	5579
New Mexico	Fred Ortiz	5890
New York	Michael Pascal	9486
New York	Firth Turner	8259
North Carolina	Roy Meares	10400
North Carolina	Donald Priem	8593
North Carolina	Roland Rochester	6018
North Carolina	Cleophus Summers	1134
North Dakota	Steven Hoikkala	762
North Dakota	Dale Ronning	7564
Ohio	Charles Adams	892

Department	Name	Post No.
Ohio	Francis Clendenen	9473
Ohio	Keith Harman	3035
Ohio	Christopher Haynes	7670
Ohio	Ralph Jeffers	4464
Ohio	Robert Poole	2850
Oklahoma	William Bender	4446
Oklahoma	Darrell McGee	5263
Oklahoma	Gordon Wheeler	9969
Oregon	Cheryl Campos	10626
Oregon	Dennis Guthrie	4108
Oregon	Daniel Wakefield	1442
Pacific Areas	Clifton Wilsey	2485
Pacific Areas	Robert Zaher	2485
Pennsylvania	John Foster	7213
Pennsylvania	Franklin Lopes	92
Pennsylvania	William Mayer	8896
Pennsylvania	John Rybcinski	3474
Rhode Island	Gary Maddocks	2929
Rhode Island	Michael O'Rourke	4487
South Carolina	Jimmy Wallace	11079
South Carolina	Johnny Wilson	4262
South Dakota	Donald Dahlin	2975
South Dakota	David Parr	628
South Dakota	Jeffrey Wilkes	628
Tennessee	Harry Carroll	1733
Tennessee	William Maillet	7175
Texas	Orville Hayes	9167
Texas	David Herod	3359
Utah	Mark Lamb	1481
Utah	Vernon Wade	3586
Vermont	Catherine DeMarco	771
Vermont	James Lane	6689
Virginia	Eric Hilleman	9274
Virginia	Gerald Manar	609
Virginia	J. Gary Wagner	3150
Washington	William Broadwater	3386
Washington	Court Fraley	2886
West Virginia	Clifford Gwinn	3466
West Virginia	Charles Haney	7048
Wisconsin	Wally Bandomir	5158
Wisconsin	Arlene Banks	10549
Wisconsin	Earl Banks	2708
Wisconsin	David Goeldner	1865
Wisconsin	Dale Hundt	8483
Wisconsin	Allen Kochenderfer	10406
Wyoming	Earl Sellers	4343

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Chairman: Bertha Gripp, Post 10008, Arizona

COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: James R. Mueller, Past Commander-in-Chief, Missouri
Vice Chairman: John S. Staum, Past Commander-in-Chief, Minnesota

Department	Name	Post No.
Missouri	Kevin C. Jones	7356
Michigan	David E. Prohaska	4434