

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 119TH NATIONAL CON-  
VENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
OF THE UNITED STATES

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COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL, THE VETERANS  
OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 119TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF  
THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HELD IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI: JULY 21-25, 2018, PURSUANT  
TO 44 U.S.C. 1332; (PUBLIC LAW 90-620 (AS AMENDED BY PUBLIC  
LAW 105-225, SEC. 3); (112 STAT. 1498)



JUNE 19, 2019.—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, 2019

Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
The Speaker U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam. Speaker:

In conformance with the provisions of Public Law No. 620, 90<sup>th</sup> Congress, approved October 22, 1968, I am transmitting to you herewith the proceedings of the 119<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Kansas City, Missouri, July 21-25, 2018, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Jones", written in a cursive style.

Kevin Jones  
Adjutant General



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE SUNDAY, JULY 22, 2018

Call to Order .....	1
Commander-in-Chief Gold Star Tribute .....	1
Advancement of the Colors .....	2
Invocation .....	2
Pledge of Allegiance/National Anthem/Posting of the Colors .....	2
POW/MIA Tribute .....	3
Memorial Roll Call & Tribute.....	4
Symbolic Tribute .....	5
Memorial Address.....	6
Benediction .....	11

### JOINT OPENING SESSION MONDAY, JULY 23, 2018

Call to Order .....	13
Introduction James Mueller, Chairman VFW 119 <sup>th</sup> National Convention Committee .....	14
Advancement of Colors.....	15
Invocation National Chaplain James Gray.....	15
Pledge of Allegiance .....	16
Introduction of Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman .....	16
Remarks - Commander-in-Chief Harman.....	17
Presentation of VFW Gold Medal of Merit and Citation to Dee Guillory, National President of the VFW Auxiliary. ....	19
Remarks – VFW Auxiliary President Guillory .....	20
Introduction of U.S. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver .....	21
Remarks- U.S. Congressman Cleaver .....	22
Presentation of the Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award to Cynthia Archuleta .....	24
Remarks – Cynthia Archuleta .....	25
Introduction of Donald Ballard, Medal of Honor Recipient .....	25
Remarks – Donald Ballard .....	25
Introduction of U.S. Senator Jerry Moran.....	26
Remarks- U.S. Jerry Moran .....	27
Introduction of Scott Stump, President & CEO National Desert Storm War Memorial.....	31
Remarks- Scott Stump.....	31

Introduction of Vice Minister Lu Chia-Kai	
Veterans Affairs Commission, Republic of China .....	34
Remarks-Vice Minister Lu Chia-Kai .....	34
Introduction of Robyn Anzulis,	
First Place Voice of Democracy Winner .....	35
Speech by Robyn Anzulis	
First Place Voice of Democracy Winner .....	36
Introduction of Major General Worthe Holt, Jr.	
Special Asst.to the Commander, U.S. Africa Command .....	37
Remarks-Major General Worthe, Jr. ....	38
Presentation of Americanism Award to	
Retired Petty Chief Officer David Goggins .....	42
Remarks-Retired Petty Chief Officer David Goggins .....	42
Introduction of Prasad Reddy, President & CEO Twisted X Boots .....	44
Remarks-Prasad Reddy, President & CEO Twisted X Boots .....	45
Presentation of the VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award	
to Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen .....	45
Remarks-Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen .....	46
Presentation of the VFW Armed Forces Award to	
Command Sergeant Major William F. Thetford .....	49
Remarks-Command Sergeant Major William F. Thetford .....	50
Presentation of the VFW Dwight D. Eisenhower Award	
To General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. ....	53
Remarks-General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. ....	54
Introduction of David McIntyre, President & CEO	
Triwest Healthcare Alliance .....	58
Remarks-David McIntyre, President & CEO	
Triwest Healthcare Alliance .....	59
Introduction of the VFW National Home Representatives .....	61
Remarks-David Ouellette, Board President	
VFW's National Home for Children .....	62
Remarks-Patrice Greene, Board Executive Director	
VFW's National Home for Children .....	63
Remarks-2018 Buddy Poppy Child Chloe Johnson .....	64
Check Presentation to VFW National Home	
From VFW Post 1503 & VFW Post 9972 .....	65
Howard Vander Clute Memorial Ride Check Presentation .....	65
Presentation of Smart/Maher VFW National	
Citizenship Education Teacher Award .....	67
Introduction of Emily Cowan Ezell, Elementary School .....	67
Remarks-Emily Cowan Ezell .....	68
Introduction of Sara Gibson Coan, Middle School .....	69
Remarks-Sara Gibson Coan .....	69

Introduction of Michael Rauenhorst, High School .....	71
Remarks-Michael Rauenhorst .....	71
Presentation of the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation To Past Commander-in-Chief Brian Duffy .....	74
Remarks-Past Commander in Chief Brian Duffy .....	75
Fred C. Hall Memorial Outstanding Post Special Project Award To VFW Post 12160.....	76
Remarks-VFW Post 12160 Commander Todd Richardson .....	76
Introduction of Quartermaster General Debra Anderson World War I Commission Member .....	77
Remarks-Quartermaster General Debra Anderson World War I Commission Member .....	78
Presentation of “51 Consecutive Years of Membership Growth” Citation to VFW Department of Arizona.....	81
Remarks-Department of Arizona Commander Lewis Wood .....	82
Introduction VFW Veterans Village Director Alcides Lugo, Jr. U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, Retired .....	82
Remarks-Alcides Lugo, Jr.....	82
Announcements by Adjutant General Brian Duffy .....	83
Recess .....	84

#### FIRST BUSINESS SESSION MONDAY, JULY 23, 2018

Call to Order .....	85
Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation to the 118 <sup>th</sup> Convention Committee .....	85
Remarks-Convention Committee Chairman Larry Rivers .....	85
Report on Convention Credentials.....	86
Report on Convention Rules .....	86
Report of Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual .....	90
Report of Committee on Finance and Internal Organization.....	115
Report of Committee on General Resolutions.....	122
Report of Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs .....	125
Report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions.....	127
Closing Ceremonies.....	133
Closing Prayer .....	133
Adjournment.....	133

#### SECOND BUSINESS SESSION TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2018

Call to Order .....	134
Opening Prayer .....	134
Salute to Colors and Pledge of Allegiance .....	134

Report of Convention Credentials .....	135
Introduction of Travis Watson, Clinical Director of Walgreens .....	135
Remarks-Travis Watson .....	136
Introduction of Jared Lyon, President and CEO of Student Veterans of America .....	138
Remarks-Jared Lyon .....	138
Presentation of the Citizenship Award to Andrew Lumish .....	146
Remarks-Andrew Lumish .....	146
Introduction of Retired Major General Kelly McKeague, Director of DPAA .....	152
Remarks-Retired Major General Kelly McKeague.....	152
Presentation of VFW News Media Award to Lance Corporal Maximilian Uriarte, USMC .....	157
Remarks-Lance Corporal Maximilian Uriarte, USMC .....	158
Presentation of Awards to 2018 All-American Post, District and Department Commanders .....	160
2018 All-American Triple Crown Winners.....	164
Presentation 2018 Top Tier Conference Departments .....	164
Presentation 2018 National Recruiter of the Year Award to Kenneth Kraft .....	166
Presentation of Legacy Life Awards .....	166
Introduction of Harris Faulkner, FOX News Anchor .....	167
Remarks-Harris Faulkner .....	168
Introduction of Retired USMC Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North .....	176
Remarks-Retired USMC Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North .....	176
Introduction of Honorable Donald Trump, President of the United States of America .....	183
Remarks-Honorable Donald Trump, President of the United States of America .....	183
Recess .....	202

### THIRD BUSINESS SESSION WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2018

Call to Order .....	203
Opening Prayer .....	203
Salute to Colors and Pledge of Allegiance .....	203
Final Report of Convention Credentials .....	204
Introduction of National Sergeants-at-Arms .....	204
Introduction VFW Auxiliary President Dee Guillory .....	207
Remarks-VFW Auxiliary President Dee Guillory.....	208
Remarks-Mary Lou Harman .....	208
Remarks-Jane Ziebarth .....	209
Announcement of National Buddy Poppy Contest Winners And Silent Auction Results.....	210



Introduction of Military Order of the Cootie Supreme Commander Dan Kramer .....	213
Remarks-Dan Kramer, Supreme Commander Military Order of the Cootie .....	213
Introduction of Past Commanders-in-Chief .....	216
Nominees for National Home Board of Trustees .....	217
Presentation of Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion Award from Chapel of Four Chaplains to Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman .....	218
Presentation of 2017-18 Department Commanders' Gift to Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman .....	218
Presentation to Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Vincent "BJ" Lawrence from Jim Chancellor, President and CEO of American Veterans Collection Inc. ...	219
Motion that Proceedings be Submitted to the Speaker of the House.....	222
Nominations of Officers, Nominations for Commander-in-Chief .....	222
Remarks-Commander-in-Chief Elect Vincent "BJ" Lawrence .....	226
Nominations for Senior Vice-Commander-in-Chief .....	227
Remarks-Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Elect William "Doc" Schmitz.....	229
Nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.....	230
Remarks-Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Elect Harold "Hal" Roesch.....	233
Nominations for Quartermaster General .....	234
Remarks-Quartermaster General Elect Debra Anderson.....	237
Nomination for National Chaplain .....	238
Remarks-National Chaplain Elect Charlene Cobb .....	240
Nominations for Judge Advocate General .....	240
Remarks-Judge Advocate General Elect Daniel Nail .....	242
Nominations for Surgeon General .....	242
Remarks-Surgeon General Elect Ruth Fairchild .....	244
Announcement of Newly Elected Council of Administration Members .....	245
Announcements of Appointments by Commander-in-Chief Elect Lawrence .....	245
Presentation of Past Commander-in-Chief Lapel Pin And Gold Legacy Life Member Card to Keith Harman .....	247
Installation of Officers.....	247
List of Newly-Elected Council Members .....	249
Acceptance Speech by Commander-in-Chief Elect Vincent "BJ" Lawrence.....	251
Remarks-119 <sup>th</sup> National Convention Committee Chairman Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller .....	255
Closing Ceremonies.....	256
Prepare and Retire the Colors.....	256
Closing Prayer .....	256
Adjournment .....	257
Proposed Amendments to National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure & Ritual .....	258
Resolutions Considered by Committee on Finance and Internal Organization .....	298

Resolutions Considered by Committee on General Resolutions.....	303
Resolutions Considered by Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs .....	312
Resolutions Considered by Committee on Veterans Service .....	330
Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual .....	364
Committee on Finance & Internal Organization .....	365
Committee on General Resolutions .....	367
Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs.....	370
Subcommittee on POW/MIA .....	370
National Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions .....	372
Subcommittee I – Health .....	372
Subcommittee II – Benefits.....	372
Subcommittee III – Economic Opportunity/Other.....	372
Committee on Credentials .....	375
Committee on Convention Rules .....	375

## 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	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.
2011-2012	Richard L. DeNoyer .....	Elected at San Antonio, Texas.
2012-2013	John E. Hamilton .....	Elected at Reno, Nevada.
2013-2014	William A. Thien .....	Elected at Louisville, Kentucky.
2014-2015	John W. Stroud.....	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
2015-2016	John A. Biedrzycki, Jr. ....	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
2016-2017	Bernard J. Duffy .....	Elected at Charlotte, North Carolina.
2017-2018	Keith E. Harman .....	Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
2018-2019	Vincent “BJ” Lawrence .....	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.

### **VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 2017-2018**

Commander-in-Chief.....	Keith E. Harman
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.....	Vincent “B.J.” Lawrence
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief .....	William “Doc” Schmitz
Adjutant General.....	Brian J. Duffy
Quartermaster General.....	Debra L. Anderson
Judge Advocate General .....	Dana E. Hussey
Surgeon General .....	Patrick J. “Doc” Higgins
National Chaplain.....	James W. Gray
National Chief of Staff.....	Roger A. Frye
Inspector General .....	William A. “Bill” Backes
Adjutant General & Executive Director, Washington Office .....	Robert E. Wallace
Assistant Adjutant General .....	Kevin C. Jones
Assistant Adjutant General & General Counsel .....	John R. Muckelbauer
Director, Administration & Operations, Washington Office .....	Robert H. Jackson
Director, Administrative Operations.....	David E. Prohaska
Deputy Director, Administrative Operations .....	Johnathan Duncan
Associate Director, Administrative Operations .....	Zach Schwenk
Director, Communications, Public Affairs & Publication, Washington Office .....	Joseph E. Davis
Director, Human Resources .....	Steven A. Chambers
Director, Membership.....	Rick Butler
Deputy Director, Membership .....	Richard McKenna
Director, National Legislative Service .....	Carlos U. Fuentes
Deputy Director, National Legislative Service .....	Johnathon Towles
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs.....	Sarah Maples
Director, National Veterans Service.....	Ryan M. Gallucci
Deputy Director, National Veterans Service .....	Dawn M. Jirak
Deputy Director, National Veterans Service .....	Michael Figlioli
Director, Operations .....	Barney Hill

Director, Programs.....	Lynn W. Rolf, III
Manager, National Veterans & Military Support .....	Linda L. Ferguson
Associate Director, Programs Student Outreach, Employment & Transition Services .....	Brooklynne M. Mosley
Director, Properties .....	Billy R. Weissend
Director, Publications and Editor-in-Chief, VFW magazine .....	Vacant

**REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS, 2017-2018**

Department of Alabama	George Jones
Department of Alaska	Walter Watts, Jr.
Department of Arizona	Michael Ferguson
Department of Arkansas	Terry Callahan
Department of California	Earl Fulk
Department of Colorado	Bruce Dolan
Department of Connecticut	Richard DiFederico, Jr.
Department of Delaware	William Russell Hall
Department of Europe	Norberto Millet, Jr.
Department of Florida	Daniel Duffy
Department of Georgia	Pledge Cannon, Sr.
Department of Hawaii	Stanley Fernandez
Department of Idaho	Rick Johnson
Department of Illinois	John Davin
Department of Indiana	Gregory Baker
Department of Iowa	Darrell Blasberg
Department of Kansas	Bobby Cox
Department of Kentucky	Claud Wyatt
Department of Louisiana	Fred Wesley
Department of Maine	David Williams
Department of Maryland	R. Brian Sturgis
Department of Massachusetts	Robert Graser
Department of Michigan	Harry Croyle
Department of Minnesota	Gary Anderson
Department of Mississippi	Johnnie Richard
Department of Missouri	Phillip Pippins
Department of Montana	Arthur Widhalm
Department of Nebraska	John Iossi
Department of Nevada	Gilbert Hernandez
Department of New Hampshire	Paul Lloyd
Department of New Jersey	William Thomson
Department of New Mexico	Kathie Schiebel
Department of New York	Robert Barnhart
Department of North Carolina	Gene Kent
Department of North Dakota	James Hapala



Department of Ohio	Chuck Keller
Department of Oklahoma	Michael Devenitch
Department of Oregon	Bert Key
Department of Pacific Areas	Shawn Watson
Department of Pennsylvania	Robert Eiler
Department of Rhode Island	Guyde Lombari
Department of South Carolina	Melvin Gunter, Jr.
Department of South Dakota	Darold Couch
Department of Tennessee	Darryl McPherson
Department of Texas	Lazaro Velasquez
Department of Utah	Dennis Parizek
Department of Vermont	Allston Gilmond
Department of Virginia	Kim DeShano
Department of Washington	Frederick Green
Department of West Virginia	Robert Caruthers
Department of Wisconsin	John Giese
Department of Wyoming	Rodney Birkle
Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief	Brian J. Duffy

**NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE**  
**July 22-26, 2017, New Orleans, Louisiana**

Convention Committee Chairman	Larry Rivers
Convention Committee Operations Officer	Precilla Wilkewitz
Medical - Health Fair Chairman	Bryan Batulis
Meeting Halls, Signs & Flags Co-Chairman	Lewie Cooper
Meeting Halls, Signs & Flags Co-Chairman	Tim Sloan
Assistant Adjutant General, Administration/Programs	Kevin Jones
Manager, Meetings & Events	Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM
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**NATIONAL HONOR GUARD**

	POST
Ronald Servary, Captain	521 MD
Albert Brown	3792 DE
Jay Cabacar	5471 DC
Kathleen Carlson	160 MD

Marco De La Rosa	7356 MO
Johnathan Duncan	852 KS
Mark Herron	5789 MO
Alfred Simmons	8509 MD
Clinton Slack	475 DE
Edward Smith	2863 DE

**NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS**

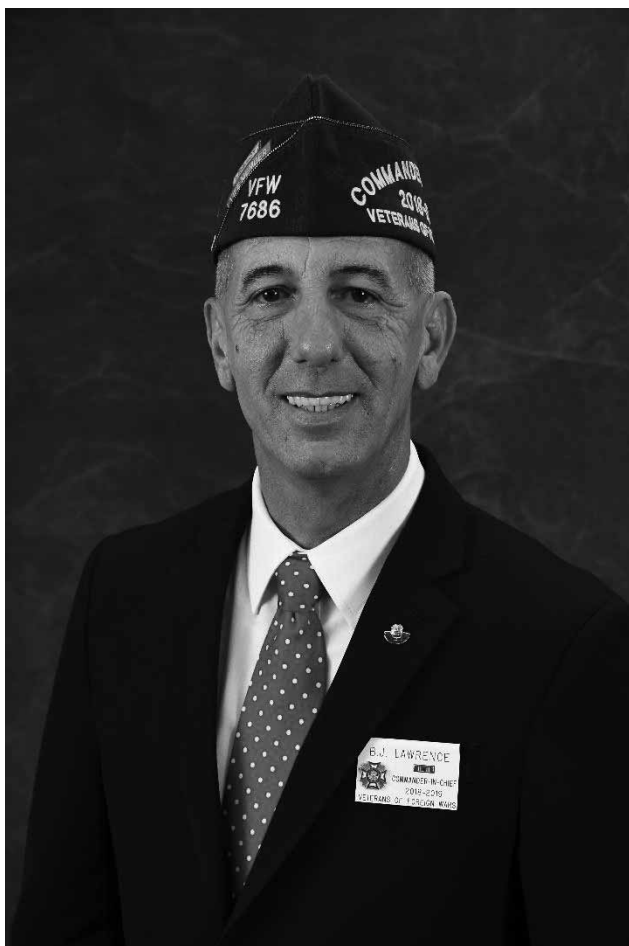
	POST
Bryan P. O’Brien	2550 FL

**NATIONAL ASSISTANT SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS**

Joy Ausman	10043 ID
Gary W. Barringer	9134 NC
Sherrod N Conyers	2122 CA
James Galen	6802 TX
Garold Gamble	345 MI
Lora Land	9191 TX
George Lott	10152 NJ
Keith Mac Donald	2275 CA
Brian Willette	3104 MA



Keith E. Harman  
Commander-in-Chief  
2017-2018



Vincent "BJ" Lawrence  
Commander-in-Chief  
2018-2019

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Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.....	William “Doc” Schmitz
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief .....	Hal J. Roesch, II
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**July 21-25, 2018, Kansas City, Missouri**

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Meeting Halls, Signs & Flags Co-Chairman	John Hoffman
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SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 119th NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, JULY 21-25, 2018

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE  
SUNDAY JULY 22, 2018

(The Memorial Service of the 119th Annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order at 8:30 a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: All rise.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please escort the Gold Star Families and Past National Chaplains to their seats of honor.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

National Sergeants, attention.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the Gold Star Families and the Past National Chaplains.

Ladies and gentlemen, please no applause.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLD STAR TRIBUTE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Please be seated.

There are times when mere words seem far from being adequate. This is such an occasion, because we're all gathered to recall those who have made the supreme sacrifice and to honor their families. Thus, our deeds speak better than words.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is founded upon the true comradeship of people bound by experiences, interests, and everlasting patriotism. It is the sort of comradeship that lives through succeeding generations from far back in your memory, because we know that neither time nor events can separate those who have joined in the common defense of our flag and country.

That is the way we feel about the men and women who are absent. While they are physically gone, we remember them. In reality, they are very close to us. They are definitely a part of our thinking and actions. We feel that they have molded the future of our great Nation. They give us strong incentive to carry on the crusades for everlasting peace and a better purpose of life.

The highest tribute this organization can render them and the most profound respect all of us can demonstrate is to apply to our own lives the strong faith and understanding the courage which were theirs.

To the families of those comrades, we pledge the sincere friendship of

this organization. Thank you again for being here with us today.

#### VFW AUXILIARY DRAPING OF THE ALTAR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I now call upon the VFW Auxiliary National President Dee Guillory to prepare the Auxiliary Altar.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: The VFW Auxiliary National Conductors and Color Bearers please prepare the Auxiliary Altar with the placement of the VFW Auxiliary Memorial Altar Cloth and Bible.

#### ADVANCEMENT OF THE COLORS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will prepare the hall for the Advancement of the Colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, the National Anthem, and posting of the Colors.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

National Sergeants, attention.

Captain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Honor Guard, advance, post, and salute the flag of the United States of America.

NATIONAL HONOR GUARD: On your command, sir.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Sir.

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

#### INVOCATION - VFW AUXILIARY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN SANDRA ONSTWEDDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We will now have our VFW Invocation by our Auxiliary National Chaplain Sandra Onstwedder.

NATIONAL HONOR GUARD: Parade rest.

AUXILIARY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN ONSTWEDDER: Almighty God, we thank You for this solemn time to remember those who have gone before us. We thank You for the grace and health to be here so that we may pay tribute to those who have helped secure the liberties and blessings that we enjoy. We ask that Your Spirit abide with us during the ceremony. May it bring healing to our hearts and peace to our organization. Let the words, music, and prayers offered this morning be pleasing, true, and honorable.

Remembering is the best way to honor, and today we honor the comrades, brothers and sisters.

All of this we ask in humility and love.

Amen.

(Amen)

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, NATIONAL ANTHEM, POSTING OF THE COLORS

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, Auxiliary members and friends, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States, followed by the National Anthem, and then the Posting of the Colors. Present arms.

(Whereupon, the Assembly gave the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the National Anthem sung by Carolyn Grusse, National Soloist, VFW Auxiliary.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Please be seated.

Comrades, members of the VFW Auxiliary, and friends, we meet at this time to commemorate the comrades of the United States Armed Forces who have answered the last call, and their families whose service and sacrifice too often goes without the recognition it deserves.

The VFW Ritual provides that the audience shall refrain from applauding. The Sergeant-at-Arms will see to it that there is no disturbance during the ceremony.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: It is my command, sir.

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

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am at your service, and I shall endeavor to carry out this solemn duty with the spirit of faith, hope, and charity.

#### POW/MIA TRIBUTE

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: We will now have the lighting of the POW/MIA Candle by the Armed Forces -- and the Armed Forces Vigil Candle by the Commander-in-Chief and the VFW Auxiliary National President.

(Whereupon, the POW/MIA Candle and the Armed Forces Vigil Candle were lit.)

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: 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. And as they are separated from their homes and loved ones, give them grace to endure their hardship.

Supply their needs and protect them from want and deprivation. Strengthen and sustain them that they may face discouragement with courage and hardship with resolution. Grant that they may find patience to endure, and peace in the knowledge of Your continuing presence.

O God, we ask that You will strengthen and protect all our members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. On the day of battle, may they be courageous and strong, resourceful and capable, resolute and

victorious.

For those serving in more peaceful situations, may they serve with dignity and honor as effective emissaries of goodwill 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 separation 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.

(Amen)

## MEMORIAL ROLL CALL

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: This year, our Memorial Roll Call recognizes recently departed Past Commander-in-Chief, James Robert "Bob" Currieo, who passed away on October 17th, 2017, and also Past National President, Lorraine Frier, who passed away on June 10th, 2018.

Bob was National Commander-in-Chief from 1982 to 1983, and Lorraine was National President from 1999 to 2000.

The family of Bob Currieo is being represented by Gunter Kent and his wife Becky. And the family of Lorraine Frier is being represented by Laurie Asmus and Barb Danielson.

## MEMORIAL ROLL CALL TRIBUTE

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: We will now prepare for our Memorial Roll Call Tribute.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, what message of comfort can you bring as we remember those who have answered the final call?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We can keep their memories bright and strong. We can remember their service to their country and their service to their fellow comrades and family members.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: VFW Auxiliary National President, how can we maintain hope in the midst of our sadness and loss?

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: Every life has a beginning and an end. No matter the time in between, we can be thankful that we have had those years together and were able to share our hearts and lives with them.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, what message of condolence do you have for those bereaved?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Mourning is a natural part of this life, and it means we have celebrated a life well lived. The pain we feel is a reflection of the deep love and friendship we shared.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: VFW Auxiliary National Senior Vice President, what can we do to make sure these lives are never forgotten?

NATIONAL SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KRIEBEL: We can continue to meet together as we are now, and to speak of them with fondness and love. We must remember and honor the memory of those we lost

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Comrade Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, what can we do in our lives today to continue the legacy of service to those gone on before us?

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SCHMITZ: We can continue our service to fellow veterans, their families, and our communities. We must always honor the dead by helping the living.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: VFW Auxiliary National Junior Vice President, what hope can you offer to those gathered here as we realize how short life can be?

NATIONAL JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT HAAKE: Every day holds the opportunity to serve those around us. Our faith, friends, and family can be our strength and hope as we travel life's road.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: VFW Auxiliary National Chaplain, what can we take away from this Memorial Service so that our lives hold meaning once we depart?

AUXILIARY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN ONSTWEDDER: Each of us must extend a hand of friendship to those around us. We must unite in our common goal of serving veterans, their families, and the military community. Remembering what brings us together will keep us united. In this way, we can best honor those comrades, sisters and brothers, we have lost.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: We are thankful for these inspiring words from each of you. Let us learn the lesson of the hour, which is that one day we too will answer the final call and someone will be remembering us.

Let us live our lives so that when our time comes to depart this life, we can do it with a good conscience in the comfort of our faith or our beliefs and in perfect charity toward everyone we meet.

Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we are indeed grateful for the service and sacrifice of our beloved comrades. May we forever endeavor and perpetuate their memory by reflecting upon their devotion to duty as they defended our country and ensured the freedom and ideas of this great country that we enjoy.

And in doing so, may we continue their efforts as courageous protectors of freedom, justice, and grace. Amen.

#### SYMBOLIC TRIBUTE

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

And I will place upon the shrine these red flowers which symbolize the zeal of our departed comrades in upholding brotherhood, truth, and justice.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, what tribute have you to offer?

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

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

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

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Members of the VFW Auxiliary, will you offer a tribute to the memory of our departed comrades?

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: 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 GRAY: The Celebration Choir of Saint Thomas More will now perform "Amazing Grace".

(Whereupon, Celebration Choir of Saint Thomas More sang "Amazing Grace".)

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: While America's military service personnel are overseas defending liberty around the world, they leave behind those who love them most.

The family members of the military keep the home fires burning. Their prayers, their care packages, their phone calls, and their emails give support and encouragement for those at war. They stand by their side in a show of love and commitment.

We honor their sacrifices today. And I ask the VFW Auxiliary, what tribute to you offer to those family members gone before us?

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: These white flowers we bring as a token of love that we have for our departed brothers and sisters.

(Whereupon, Carolyn Grusse sang "I can Only Imagine".)

## MEMORIAL ADDRESS

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, please approach the dais for the purpose of introducing our guest speaker.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce our speaker, Dr. Matthew Naylor. Dr. Matthew Naylor is President and CEO of the National World War I Museum and Memorial.

A native of Australia, Dr. Naylor began his tenure at the Museum & Memorial in June of 2013 and possesses more than 25 years of leadership in

the nonprofit arena. He holds dual citizenship in Australia and the United States.

Under his leadership, the Museum and Memorial have achieved unprecedented success, breaking records for attendance, educational/community event participants, website traffic, and media/social media impressions on each of his first four full years, 2014 through 2017, as President and CEO. In that timeframe, the number of visitors to Museum & Memorial exhibits, events, and programming has increased by more than 63 percent.

Dr. Naylor's vision significantly raises the organization's profile nationally and internationally with substantial increases in followers and impressions on the social media platforms, with more than 6 billion on his social media platform worldwide.

Dr. Naylor also facilitates the establishment of dozens of these institutional partnerships across the world. Under his leadership, the National World War I Museum & Memorial presented its first outdoor exhibit in the United Kingdom and select United States cities, underwent construction for an additional exhibit space, and was the site for the national observance ceremonies commemorating the centennial anniversary of the United States entry into World War I.

He supported a bipartisan effort from top members of Congress in passing legislation to formally recognize the institution of America's World War I Museum & Memorial in 2014.

In 2015, he was appointed as a commissioner to the United States World War I Centennial Commission, which was responsible for the Nation's commemoration of the Great War. Dr. Naylor earned his PhD from Curtin University in Perth, Australia. He serves on boards and committees for several civic and educational initiatives, including the Kansas City Economic Development Corporation Advocacy Council and the Board of Centre for Sustainable Philanthropy at Plymouth University. Dr. Matthew Naylor.

DR. MATTHEW NAYLOR: Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's an honor for me to be with you today. We gather today to honor those whose memory lives with us, the memory of those who have gone before loved ones, and those that, quite frankly, we may never have known.

As a child growing up in Australia, I participated in Anzac Day ceremonies and parades that honored the war dead. We wore red poppies as children, laid wreathes at schools, the Return Servicemen's League, the RSL, played a central part in the community life of Australian suburbs and country towns, being a gathering place for the community on ceremonial occasions.

In every town at the places such as the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, in suburbs, at the Australia War Memorial in Campbell, all through the Nation there are vestiges of memory and honor for those who have served. This is part of my heritage growing up in Australia and something which forms me.

I now find myself serving at the United States National World War I Museum & Memorial. Our work is twofold: To remember those who sacrificed, the 116,000 Americans, the millions of others who lost their lives in war that were supposed to usher in the new world of peace; and our role is to learn about the war and its enduring impact, including the 4.5 million Americans who served in World War I.

There's not a day that goes by when we do not wait to hear about events whose cause comes from World War I. We continue to live in its shadow, our world today is shaped by it, and there is much that we can learn from the sacrifice of those who served. And this includes my grandfather, Edward Naylor.

My grandfather served in World War I in France, Private Naylor, with the Leicestershire Regiment, Army No. 6392. I didn't really know him. My father immigrated to Australia soon after World War II. I met my grandfather just twice. Yet my grandfather's service shaped our family.

With millions like him, he responded to the threat of World War I presented and together with people from every inhabited continent of the globe, he fought to end its ruin. Over 65 million people served in World War I. And now over 550,000 come annually to the National World War I Museum & Memorial to remember and learn.

My father, Fred Naylor, served in World War II in the Royal Armoured Corps of the British Army. He was a -- he was in tanks. Like many of you and your families and friends, he didn't talk much about his five years of war service.

He moved away from England, in part, to leave that behind. Said he wanted to move to the land of opportunity, to the open blue skies of Australia, "the Lucky Country," as it was called. No doubt the memory of war weighed on him, of friends lost.

Some years ago, I asked dad to write down some of his collection -- some of his recollections. And I've shared some of those with just a few people, but today, ladies and gentlemen, I want to share more of that with you. You people gathered here, you understand in a way that many do not. Perhaps in these memories of Fred Naylor, you might remember too.

Dad writes, "Moving north in Holland to meet Polish Armoured Division coming from west and north. Sent on reconnaissance or 'reckie' (ph) 40 miles to Breda to ascertain enemy strength in between us. It's a long way and doubtful if we will survive that distance.

"Start moving along the road to outskirts of village. American infantry attempting to cross stream underfire. We can go no further. Roadblock covered by large mobile. Enemy gun on hillside. Answer to prayer. Thank God we saw them first.

"Yanks getting shot up. Passing the call down line, 'Stretchers, stretchers.' Paramedics moving forward. Sergeant orders to bring down artillery fire on machine gun post. I do that. Stay in support of Americans under



heavy shelling and machine gunfire. House over road half destroyed.

"In all this racket, two small children crying, holding hands, walk from house onto the road. Tears at your heart. What are the kids doing in all of this hellfire? At that moment, Jeep appears and driver grabs kids and shoots off down the road."

At the National World War I Museum & Memorial, just 1 mile from here, the Nation's official Museum & Memorial, you enter and cross a glass bridge under which is a field of poppies -- 9,000 poppies -- each representing 1,000 combatant deaths, 9 million in all, but perhaps as many as 16 million. How do you count when the scale is so massive and wave after wave of soldier is sent into battle only to fall, and the next wave comes in and the next.

At least another 22 million wounded. Many never to regain productive lives. The losses to Nations were immense.

And another entry from my dad, "Something that touched me in those days, as I think of it now, is how, in the beauty of nature, men are living and breathing, then suddenly they're dying. And all the while as men lay bleeding or burning, the sun shines, the bees hum from flower to flower, the butterflies show their beauty, and birds sing. The contrast can be heart wrenching, and I can't really convey it.

"Sleeping in the ground for as many as 80 years, poppyseeds in Belgium and France lay dormant. Disturbed by the artillery fire and nourished by the rotting corpse, they sprout, blooming in a carpet of red -- blood-red poppies across the fields of Flanders and northern France. In Flanders field, the poppies blow between the crosses row on row."

Can you imagine the grief? Whole families of young men, all the men in the village, or at least most, in towns and cities lost a generation the world over, killed or forever damaged to wear war's wounds for years to come.

What do you do? Losing one child is overwhelming. Not just mine, but yours, and yours, and yours, and yours, and theirs too.

Writes Fred Naylor, "Outskirts of German town on foot checking houses for enemy, such as snipers. Go down into the cellar. Lots of sauerkraut in very tall, glass jars standing on the floor. Round corner and in dirt floor a grave with cross. No name. Whose can it be? A Jew? Allied Airman's? Why is it there and not in a cemetery. Really want to know but cannot find out. Some touching human story there.

"In 1918 in the village of Chaumont-Damvillers, the squad approached a German roadblock with two machine guns. The soldier got up with his bayonet in hand and against the orders of his sergeant, he charged. The German troops tried to wave him off. He kept going, firing a shot or two. When he got too close to the machine guns, he was shot in a burst of automatic fire and killed instantly.

"At 10:59 a.m., the last Allied soldier was killed just one minute before the armistice took effect. Just one minute. Knowing that the armistice would soon come into force at 11:00 a.m., the German soldiers had tried to stop him,

to wave him off, to stop the bloodshed.

"This last man who died, shot by a German machine gunner, this last man, Henry Gunther, a German-American, born to German parents in Maryland. Had he waited just one more minute, they may well have welcomed him as a brother, 'mein bruder, mein bruder.'

"As many as 35 million dead, millions more wounded, families torn apart with another 50 to 100 million dead from the flu of 1919. The founding catastrophe of the modern age over. Could it really be? Would the peace be held? A war to end all wars? But for now, the pieces that remain were slowly put back together."

As the defining catastrophe of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the centennial of the Great War, this centennial of the armistice that we approach provides us with an opportunity to reflect on how the world was swept into this global conflict and, ladies and gentlemen, what it means to live in its shadow.

One last memory from my father. "Moving through outskirts of German city, destruction all around. Enemy on the way out the other side. Must stop for some reason. Very tired. Get out and stretch. Look into half-destroyed building. Black grand piano sitting there covered in dust and debris out of the weather.

"Call Edwin, a short Welshman with stubby, workmanlike" -- "workman's hands and a little mustache. Edwin played the piano wonderfully. He had a Silver Medal from the Royal Academy of Music. Most Army canteens had a piano. Whenever he went into a canteen in England, we'd say, 'Play us something, Edwin.'

"He needed persuasion. And when he played, it was always classical music. He only had to sit down in the noisy canteen and strike up a couple of cords for complete silence.

"We go into the building through the broken wall. Clear wood and bricks off the piano. Lift lid, keys look white and black and perfect. Edwin sits, tries keys. He plays 'Warsaw Concerto.' A sublime moment. Such unexpected beauty and grandeur amongst such destruction. The contrast tears at the heart and the emotion. Experiencing real life as powerful drama reminds me that real things still do exist."

Ladies and gentlemen, what strikes me about dad's experience is that in the midst of such destruction, such seeming lack of hope, he was still able to lift his sights in the midst of loss and sorrow all around.

We have the capacity to cause our gaze to rest beyond the horizon to a brighter tomorrow, to never forget the song they sang, to play their melody, to keep their memory alive.

The world in which we live is arguably more like the world of 1913 than it has ever been in the past 105 years. More than ever, the voices of hope and courage need to be heard.

In this conflicted world where threats are more consequential than we might ever want to consider, when it seems easier to give in to the voices of

fear and suspicion, when we are tempted to believe the worst in each other and give in to the notion that our best days are behind us, when the dreams of our youth are swept away by the realities of today, in this world of 2018 but looking and feeling more like the world of 1913, more than ever the voices of hope and courage and service and patriotism need to be heard.

In this work of memory and remembrance, we honor those who serve.

And I invite you to come and visit the National World War I Museum & Memorial. We join with you and commit ourselves to never forget their honor, courage, sacrifice, and patriotism.

Lastly, inscribed on the monumental stone wall on the north side of the National World War I Museum & Memorial, above the great freeze are these words that speak to us today that honor you and those who we remember, "These have dared bear the torches of sacrifice and service. Their bodies returned to dust, but their work liveth forevermore. Let us strive on to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all Nations."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is our pleasure to have with us today Sailor Jerri to perform, "Hallelujah."

(Whereupon, Sailor Jerri sang "Hallelujah".)

BENEDICTION - PAST VFW NATIONAL CHAPLAIN  
REVEREND PETER R. HOOK

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Please stand for the benediction by Past National Chaplain Reverend Peter R. Hook, followed by the playing of "Taps" by Sam Gibbons, a Life member of Golden Valley Post 1894, in Clinton, Missouri.

PAST NATIONAL CHAPLAIN REVEREND HOOK: Almighty God, as we conclude our annual Memorial Service, we are reminded that you, O Lord, are God, creator and the giver of life. You have blessed all present here today with life, and we are grateful for each day we have been given.

As we have remembered and honored those who once sat with us, we give thanks for the time we had with them, and for their commitment and service to preserve liberty and freedom in our own land and in the world. The fallen -- whether in the air, on the land, or on the sea -- have provided for all that which we appreciate today.

May we continue to remember our comrades with grateful hearts, full of thanksgiving to You for Your grace and mercy to them. And now, Lord, be gracious and merciful to us, and let Your light shine upon us for You are our God, our Savior, king of kings and lord of lords. And unto You we ascribe glory now and forevermore. Amen.

(Amen)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Present arms.

(Whereupon, Sam Gibbons played "Taps".)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Honor arms.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: This concludes our Memorial Service. I'd like to acknowledge and thank all of you for your special respectful participation in this solemn service. Thank you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: National Sergeants, fall out.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Also, please be advised that Tuesday's Business Session will be at the Municipal arena where the Trace Adkins concert is being held this evening. The President is to appear later that morning.

So we ask of those of you who want to attend that you are to arrive early because you must go through magnetometers. The mags will open at 6:00 a.m., and the convention credentials are mandatory for everyone. Thank you for coming.

(Whereupon, the Memorial Service was concluded at 9:39 a.m.)

JOINT OPENING SESSION  
MONDAY, JULY 23, 2018

(The Joint Opening Session of the 119<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 105th National Convention of the VFW Auxiliary, held in the Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order on Monday, July 23, 2018, at 7:30 a.m., by Adjutant General Brian Duffy.)

INTRODUCTORY CALL TO ORDER ADJUTANT GENERAL BRIAN DUFFY

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Brian Duffy, adjutant general of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Welcome to Kansas City, home to your National Headquarters.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And welcome to the Joint Opening Session of the 119th VFW National Convention. And as you make your way in and to your seats and as we get started this morning, please draw your attention to the large screens as this year's convention sponsors are displayed. We thank them for their generous support of our convention. And a special appreciation goes to USAA, Humana, Burger King, Sport Clips, Henry Repeating Arms, Twisted X, and the Texas VFW Foundation.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And I'd like to extend a special shout-out to Sprint as the provider of closed captioning for the convention this year.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: The representatives of the 2017-2018 Outstanding Community Service Posts are with us this morning, and I'd like to ask them to please stand and be recognized for their incredible efforts. Let's give them a hand.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Well done. This year 319 Commanders have earned the title of All-American. That's 21 Department Commanders, 99 District Commanders, and 199 Post Commanders.

And while they will receive their awards tomorrow morning, Commanders, if you're here, please stand so we may also thank you for your excellent work over this past year.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I have a few announcements before we proceed with this morning's business.

First, tomorrow's Business Session has been changed to the Municipal Auditorium, the same venue that many of us celebrated, last night, the concert with Trace Adkins. All attendees must enter through the door on 13th Street. All attendees must enter through the door on 13th Street. And doors will open at 6:00 a.m.

And due to the increased security, please, please plan to arrive early, but keep in mind the doors will not open until 6:00 a.m.

Leave all prohibited items, the things you might think of like guns, knives, pocket knives, and things you may not think of like E cigarettes behind or they will be confiscated.

And we'll have a lot of media on-site this year; so please also remember if you are interviewed by a member of the media, you do not speak on behalf of the national organization but rather as an individual veteran or member of the auxiliary.

Tomorrow we will hold the traditional Patriotic March of the departments and lineup is at 5:30 p.m. A shuttle will be run between the event and the Sheraton, Westin, Courtyard by Marriott, and the Downtown KC Marriott. That shuttle will run every 10 to 15 minutes between 4:30 and 9:30 p.m. That event will be held right here in this hall.

So tomorrow, the main Business Session is in the arena, and tomorrow evening the Patriotic Rally will be right here.

Also, a reminder, those of you who plan to attend the Commander-in-Chief and National President's Reception on Wednesday, you must attend the installation of officers and receive a ticket to the reception. Once the installation concludes, the Sergeant-at-Arms and/or members of our staff will distribute tickets. You must have a ticket in hand to enter and attend the reception that evening.

Finally, if you have not already done so, please download the VFW Convention app. The app will provide you immediate access to all pertinent convention information and, more importantly, allows you to receive immediate notification of scheduling, venue, or room changes.

Additionally, it has many other useful tools to make your convention experience even better. The app is available at both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. Just search VFW Convention. VFW Convention.

#### INTRODUCTION OF JAMES MUELLER, CHAIRMAN VFW 119TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Now, please join me in welcoming this year's Convention Chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief James Miller -- Mueller. (Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Good morning, VFW and Auxiliary members and special guests. As this year's convention chairman, I am pleased to welcome you to not only the 119th VFW National Convention but also to my home state, the great Show-Me State, Missouri.  
(Cheering)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Our convention serves to reinforce our commitment to America's veterans and military, and bring new excitement to our work as members of the VFW and the Auxiliary.

We sincerely hope that this time you spend with us this week is enjoyable, and that you will leave here with a great sense of pride in belonging to our wonderful organization.

#### ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS VFW HONOR GUARD

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Now, please rise as we officially open the convention with the Advancing of the Colors.

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Past Commander-in-Chief.

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

#### INVOCATION BY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JAMES GRAY

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: We will now have our invocation from our National Chaplain.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: National Sergeants, parade rest. Uncover.

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Most gracious and loving Heavenly Father, we come together today to kick off our national convention. And as we begin these important deliberations, we ask for Your divine guidance and wisdom in all that we do.

Let us not forget who we are and who we serve. We pray everything that transpires here throughout our sessions will be acceptable to You, O Lord. We ask that You would inspire and bless all who actively participate. We ask that You would uplift and strengthen our National Commander and all the officers of this great organization.

And, Dear Lord, we ask that You would be with those who even now are serving the country throughout the world. Be with their family members left behind and comfort and care for them. In Your precious name we pray.  
Amen.

(Amen)

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, sisters, and friends, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States, followed by our National Anthem, and then the posting of the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was given, followed by the singing of the National Anthem by VFW Auxiliary National Soloist Carolyn Grusse, and then the posting of the Colors.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, the opening for the 119<sup>th</sup> National Convention has been completed, sir.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Please be seated. Now, please dim the lights for a special presentation.

## VIDEO PRESENTATION

(Whereupon, a video was shown at this time.)

## INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KEITH HARMAN PRESENTATION OF OFFICIAL CONVENTION BADGE, BELL, AND GAVEL BY 119TH NATIONAL CONVENTION CHAIRMAN, JAMES MUELLER

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Ladies and gentlemen, it brings me great pleasure to introduce a man who has served his country and the VFW for nearly 40 combined years. He is an Army veteran and has served the VFW at the Post, District, Department and National levels of this organization.

Chief Keith Harman was elected to position of Commander-in-Chief on July 26th, 2017, at the VFW's 118th National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Keith served in the United States Army during Vietnam, including service as a crew chief and door gunner on Huey helicopters.

He joined the VFW in 1983 at VFW Post 3035 in Delphos, Ohio, where he maintains his Gold Legacy Life membership. Keith achieved All-American status as the VFW Department of Ohio Commander in 2004.

He is well-known for his commitment to service to others, having spent 22 years as a county veterans' service officer and leading the organization under the theme "Service Not Self."

He is a life member of the VFW National Home for Children, Military Order of the Cooties, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans



of America, and a member of the American Legion and Alpha Troop Alumni Association.

Please join me in welcoming our National Commander-in-Chief, Keith Harman.  
(Standing ovation)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: It is my distinct honor to present you with this gavel for this convention.  
(Applause)

(Whereupon, Past Commander-in-Chief Mueller presented Commander-in-Chief Harman with the convention badge, bell, and gavel.)

#### REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KEITH HARMAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Good morning, fellow VFW and Auxiliary members, distinguished guests, supporters and friends, and welcome to the 119th VFW National Convention. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to those joining us livestream this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege and an honor to stand before you this morning as your National Commander. When I took this office 362 days ago, I couldn't have imagined the true outpour of support that would come my way during my tenure as your National Commander. I could not be more proud of what we have done. So please accept my heartfelt thank you -- oh, I skipped a page. Can we start over?  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I couldn't be more proud of we've accomplished together over this past year, more honored by the hospitality you've shown me, or more humbled by your generosity, a commitment to serving America's veterans, service members, their families, and our communities.

To put it simply, what we do is hard work. We work tireless hours. We sacrifice. We sweat. And sometimes we cry. But, ladies and gentlemen, sometimes, many times, we rejoice. And we're able to because our focus remains on service, not self.

No matter how large or small the feat, everything we do for veterans is important and works to solidify the statement that "No one does more for veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

So please accept my heartfelt thank you, each and every one of you, for the tireless dedication to upholding the mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. While there isn't possibly enough time during our convention to thank each of you individually, I would be remiss not to mention a few individuals

who have helped me to serve to the best of my ability as your National Commander.

First and foremost, to my lovely wife, Mary Lou, and to our incredible children, Adam and Keri, your love and support are more than any man deserves, truly.

To Adjutant General Brian Duffy and Quartermaster General Debra Anderson, thank you for always rising up to meet the challenges and seizing the opportunities that present themselves to our organization.

I want to thank my team, Senior Vice Commander B.J. Lawrence and Junior Vice Commander Doc Schmitz, for their steadfast support they've displayed, as well as my Chief of Staff Roger Frye, Inspector General Bill Backes, and my counterpart, National Auxiliary President Dee Guillory. It has been a privilege to serve with each of you.

To my fellow members of the Big 10 Conference, and especially those of the great Department of Ohio, thank you for your friendship and support.

Please know that my gratitude extends to each and every one of you here today and to our staff in Kansas City and Washington offices. I'm so pleased by what we have accomplished together.

After taking the oath of VFW National Commander last year, I asked each of you to take up the call of "Service Not Self," and, as evidenced by the video you watched just a few moments ago, you fully embraced this request.

Undoubtedly, our veterans will continue to face obstacles, but with our fight alongside them, there's no limit to what we can accomplish.

I take great pride in knowing that we've helped veterans recoup \$7.7 billion in earned benefits from the VA. We've provided nearly 5 million -- (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We've provided nearly \$5 million in scholarships to veterans and service members to continue their education. We've provided more than \$10 million in financial assistance to veterans who have fallen on hard times. And each year, we donate nearly 9 million volunteer hours and more than \$52 million to community service projects

Ladies and gentlemen, there's no limit to what we can accomplish together.

Please take full advantage of the environment we're in for the next several days. We have many great guest speakers lined up. Listen to their words. Attend the workshops with a thirst for knowledge. Stay open to change. Share your experiences. Thank our supporters. Supporters like Burger King.

For more than a decade, Burger King has teamed up with the VFW to support veterans and military families. Many of you know Mike DeRosa, the Burger King franchise who got the ball rolling back in 2007.

Since then, Burger King franchisees and their customers have raised more than \$5 million for our Unmet Needs program, which has helped more than 9,000 struggling military and veterans family since its inception.

Mike, you want to stand up?

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: This month Burger King took a giant leap forward in our relationship by recognizing veterans and the VFW in their American Brewhouse King promotion, a video I hope that you saw this morning before our Joint Opening Session started.

Also, there are nearly 450 Burger King stores participating in the July Unmet Needs campaign, with at least 1,000 more expected to participate in the annual November campaign.

So while you're here and when you get home, I would encourage you and all of your VFW post members to take your friends and family to the local Burger King and let them know how much the VFW appreciates their support.

In addition to showing support for our supporters, I urge you to seek out inspiration and recognize the strengths -- the strength in having thousands of members of America's largest organization of combat veterans convene in one place.

I look forward to the coming days as my tenure as National Commander comes to an end. There is no place I would rather spend time than here among like-minded individuals who so diligently work on behalf of America's veterans.

I'm so proud to have led a group of individuals who live by the same values of decency, morality, respect, patriotism, and dedication to the principles on which this foundation -- on which this Nation was founded and those we champion through our military service.

Again, it has been an absolute honor to serve as the National Commander of the greatest veterans organization in the world. No one does more for veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Now, let's have a great convention.

(Applause)

#### PRESENTATION OF VFW GOLD MEDAL OF MERIT AND CITATION TO DEE GUILLORY, NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE VFW AUXILIARY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce my esteemed counterpart, the National President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.

Dee Guillory is a Life member of the Wilkins-Edwards Auxiliary Post 176 in Newport News, Virginia. She began her journey in this organization on her 16th birthday when she joined on the eligibility of her grandfather who served in the United States Army during World War II in Korea.

Before leaving for college, Dee served as District Color Bearer and Conductress, and remained a member while attending Virginia Tech.

She has also served as Auxiliary Post, District, and Department President. When she was the Department of Virginia President, Dee was named Outstanding President of the Year for her membership group. She served several terms as both Treasurer and Secretary for her Auxiliary.

On the national level, she was director for the Legislative, Rehabilitation, Junior Girls and Extension programs. She served on the Council of Administration from 2003 to 2005 and as National Chief of Staff from 2010 to 2011.

There is no doubt her leadership, especially over this last year, has led to another incredible year for the Auxiliary.

I am pleased to now present the VFW Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit to a person of great devotion to those we serve, VFW Auxiliary National President, Dee Guillory.  
(Standing ovation)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief Gold Medal of Merit and Citation awarded to Dee Guillory, National President, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary 2017-2018, in esteemed recognition and sincere appreciation of her loyal and compassionate concern for America's veterans as the National President of the VFW Auxiliary.

Her theme, "Catch the dream for our veterans," reflects her vision and support for our Nation's veterans, and will forever serve as a true and honorable legacy of her presidency.

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

In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of July, 2018. Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief, attested to by Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY NATIONAL PRESIDENT DEE GUILLORY, VFW AUXILIARY

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: Thank you

Commander-in-Chief Harman, National VFW and VFW Auxiliary officers, Past Commanders-in-Chief, Past National Presidents, comrades, members, and guests, I am so honored to receive this award from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and I thank you very much.

It is humbling to accept this award just as it has been a privilege to represent the VFW Auxiliary members this year and work with our VFW leadership. The VFW and Auxiliary set high goals this year. To Commander-in-Chief Harman and all the members of the VFW, impressive work. Together we blazed new trails and made a great effort to reach San Juan Hill. And to VFW

Auxiliary members, you inspire me. You make me proud to represent you this year.

We are entering a new age of membership and volunteerism. It already does look different than just 20 years ago. Technology and social media have had a huge impact not just on our organization but on many others like us. It would be tempting to see only barriers and roadblocks before us. It would be tempting to let the world tell us that we are outdated.

Let us resist this temptation. Let us resist fading. Let us look to the future as the perfect opportunity to continue what we do in new and better ways.

There will always be veterans and their families that we must serve. I am sure of this. Veterans will always have family members needing our support and understanding. This reason alone will drive us into the next decade with purpose and passion. Our mission is ongoing. Our organizations are vital.

I proudly wear this medallion for all of the members of the VFW Auxiliary, their incredible dedication and their hard work. Thank you.

To every veteran here today, thank you. Thank you for answering the call. Thank you for your sacrifices. And thank you for serving our country. God bless our service members and God bless America.

(Applause)

#### INTRODUCTION OF UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN EMANUEL CLEAVER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my privilege to introduce U.S. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, representative for the citizens of the Missouri's 5th Congressional District since 2011.

Mr. Cleaver is a member of the exclusive House Financial Services Committee, the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, and also a Senior Whip for the Democratic Caucus.

Having served for twelve years on the city council of Missouri's largest municipality, Congressman Cleaver was elected as Kansas City's first African-American mayor in 1991. For eight years, he distinguished himself as an economic development activist and an unapologetic redevelopment craftsman.

Now in his seventh term representing citizens' rights here in Kansas City, he played an integral role in the creation of the World War I Centennial Commission. Some of his top priorities include economy and job growth, strengthening homeland security, and securing veterans' earned benefits and access to high quality health care.

Please welcome, from Missouri's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, Congressman Emanuel Cleaver.

(Applause)

REMARKS BY UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN EMANUEL CLEAVER

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: Good morning. It is a pleasure to welcome you to Missouri's largest city, Kansas City, Missouri. I love saying that, especially for our neighbors down the highway.

(Laughter)

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: But we're glad to have you here in Kansas City, Missouri. I -- this is one of the places I represent in Missouri's 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. And we want your stay here to be pleasurable. And so if something should happen -- you know, if you drove in and if you should find a municipal traffic ticket on your car -- which we try to make sure that our guests are not, you know, unnecessarily burdened. But if you should find a traffic citation on your windshield, our office is actually not too far from here on 31st Street. If you can come to our office, we will have a staff person take you to the municipal court, and we will try to help you get money out of the ATM machine, whatever you need to do. So ...

(Laughter)

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: But we don't mistreat our guests in this --  
(Laughter)

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: -- in this community.

Here in this congressional district, we're focused on multiple ways to remember and serve our veterans. And in working to ensure our veterans are remembered, Kansas City is the home of the National World War I Museum and Memorial.

I introduced the legislation to create it. It took almost five years to get it approved by Congress, but we've been able to get it done. And now the grassroots work of the people of this area made it possible for the Liberty Memorial, built in 1922, to serve as the National World War I Museum and Memorial.

Congressional -- congressional designation of this memorial came just in time for the centennial anniversary of World War I. It was well past time a national memorial existed to honor those veterans. I could not believe, when I was elected, that we have a memorial to every war on the Washington Mall except World War I. And so now we do have one; it's located here in Kansas City.

In working to serve our current veterans locally, I've witnessed the work of caring veterans who are combating veterans homelessness by building the tiny-home village right here in Kansas City.

(Applause and cheering)

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: And the Area Transportation Authority created a program called RideKC, a program that allows veterans to ride the bus freely to facilitate easier access to medical appointments, work, and connecting with friends and family.

In addition to those two great new additions to the area, we will see the Kansas City VA Medical Center construct a Fisher House to support the families of veterans when their loved ones are sick.

(Applause)

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: Veterans come from all walks of life. They live in small towns and big cities. They are the young and the elderly. They are men and women. There are differences amongst all of us, but there is a common thread that binds all of us: A passion for service and patriotism.

It is true that these are hypersensitive political times. It is true that we are in the midst of perhaps the most politically tribal moments since the Nation's pre-Civil War days. Yet, I do believe that we can and will reduce the chasm between us, which will allow us to forge relationships on the principle of civility.

Now, I'd like to share with you, before I leave, the words and actions of two of our great national sages: Linus and Lucy.

(Laughter)

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: Linus is in the family room watching his favorite TV show when Lucy appears at the door. And she says, "Linus, I don't like the show you're watching. Change the channels."

And he said, "I'm not going to change the channels. Why should I change the channels for you? I was the first one here."

And she said, "Linus, change those channels. And if you don't change those channels, something bad will happen."

And he said, "What?"

And she said, "Do you see these five fingers?" She said, "When I ball them up, they form a force so powerful that no one will be able to stand."

And so Linus gets up and changes the channel. And then he raises his hand up in front of his eyes and he says, "Why can't you guys get together like that?"

(Laughter and applause)

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: We will get together as a Nation. We will. We owe that to you and those who fought to preserve our freedom.

And so let me just say as I close that your work for our country, the battlefields you've been on, helped give us freedom. And we must preserve it no matter what.

I would, at this time, like to make a presentation to our -- to, yes, our Commander, Chief Harman. Your motto: "No one does more for veterans than

the VFW" -- knowing this as your motto made me do something to honor your work of the VFW that I'd like to present at this time.

I have here a congressional statement that was presented on the floor of the United States House of Representatives last week. It honors the VFW, and at the same time I would like to present you with a flag that we flew over the U.S. Capital on July 4th for this purpose.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

CONGRESSMAN CLEAVER: Thank you very much. And may God continue to bless the veterans.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW ACCREDITED  
SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD  
TO CYNTHIA ARCHULETA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: With a network of nearly 2,000 VFW-accredited service representatives, we hear some incredible stories of the work that is accomplished on behalf of our veterans. Today we honor one of those individuals who is making a true difference.

Dedicated and focused, passionate, volunteer, role model. These are just a few of the words used to describe Iraqi veteran and VFW Life Member, Department of New Mexico, Service Officer Cynthia "Gunny" Archuleta. (Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Retiring after 20 years -- 20 years in the Marine Corps, she became a department service officer in 2014. And she has helped more than 600 veterans recoup nearly 11 million in earned benefits. (Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Cynthia has twice served as Commander of VFW Post 5890 in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, where she earned All-American status and was recently elected Junior Vice Commander for the Department of New Mexico. Her leadership has set new -- new high standards for service, and she is certainly deserving of today's honor.

Please join me in welcoming the 2018 VFW Accredited Service Representative of the Year, Cynthia "Gunny" Archuleta. (Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: VFW Accredited Service Representative of the Year Award 2017-2018, presented to Cynthia "Gunny" Archuleta, Department Service Officer, VFW, Department of New Mexico, in special recognition of her exemplary achievements in support of veterans' service mission and programs of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States,



thus earning her the distinction of the VFW Accredited Service Representative of the Year.

Her remarkable and steadfast service to our Nation's veterans on behalf of the VFW Department of New Mexico is a credit to herself, her Department, and our entire organization. Her actions make real the promise that "No one does more for veterans."

In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, this 23rd day of July, 2018.

Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; and attested, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY CYNTHIA ARCHULETA,  
VFW ACCREDITED SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR 2018

COMRADE ARCHULETA: Thank you. I am truly humbled by this award. I just want to thank my NVS staff, because I would not be here today if it wasn't for them. So thank you, NVS staff. And --  
(Applause)

COMRADE ARCHULETA: -- thank you to everyone. Thank you.  
(Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF DONALD E. BALLARD, MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'm pleased to welcome our next guest, a Kansas City native and the only living Congressional Medal of Honor recipient from Missouri, a true American hero: Mr. Donald E. Ballard.

During the Vietnam -- during the Vietnam War, Don was a Navy corpsman assigned to a Marine unit in the war zone. While treating several marines, an enemy soldier launched a grenade which landed right next to him.

Without giving a thought to his own safety, he dove to smother the grenade and saved the lives of the marines he was treating. When it didn't detonate, he tossed the grenade away, and it exploded in the air.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in giving a warm welcome to Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and VFW Life member, Don Ballard.  
(Standing ovation)

REMARKS BY DONALD E. BALLARD, MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

COMRADE BALLARD: I am standing up.  
(Laughter)

COMRADE BALLARD: It comes to mind when I'm around veterans of stature like yourselves how much we actually mean to this great country. I'm here today to -- to just be with you and be part of you. I'm proud to be here today and to help represent and to support the VFW. Without the VFW, we would have a hard time getting the benefits that we deserve and having just a voice to have people listen.

So today I'm just here to thank you and also ask for your support. The Medal of Honor Society has a Character Development Program that I'd like for you to learn something about and take back to your hometowns and your posts to see if you can't help us implement our Character Development Program.

Today, I also have about 15 petitions with clipboards downstairs, stationed around, asking for you to sign a petition for the awarding of a state funeral for our last Medal-of-Honor recipient from the second world war. There was 473 Medals of Honor issued during the second world war, and we have four remaining today.

It would be a tremendous history-changing event, if we could get a Medal of Honor -- the last surviving Medal-of-Honor recipient to receive a state funeral equal to what we give the President of the United States. If you'll join me, I would appreciate that.

(Applause)

COMRADE BALLARD: I'd love to just reach out to you and thank each and every one of you. That's not possible. I don't have enough business cards to give out. But please feel free to contact me. Like I said, I get in the trenches. I'm just here being a veteran to support veterans' missions, veterans' goals, and veterans' benefits.

I appreciate what you're doing, and I'll continue to support you the rest of my life. Thank you very much.

(Standing ovation)

#### INTRODUCTION OF UNITED STATES SENATOR JERRY MORAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my privilege to introduce United States Senator Jerry Moran of Kansas. Born and bred in the Sunflower State, he is a graduate of the University of Kansas in both economics and law. Moran has served the great state of Kansas for many years.

He spent eight years as a member of the Kansas Senate before being elected to Congress in 1996, after which he was reelected five times with minimal opposition. Jerry has been a United States Senator for Kansas since 2010.

Moran holds no one higher -- in higher regard than our Nation's veterans. During his time in Congress, he has made improving the quality of life for our nearly 20 million veterans a top priority.

He was chairman of the VA Appropriations Subcommittee and remains a current and active member of the U.S. Senate VA Committee, where he lead the way on toxic exposure issues like research for children and correcting the dates of Agent Orange presumptive for Korean DMZ vets. He was also instrumental in ensuring Congress improve VA health care to better serve veterans.

Please welcome Senator Jerry Moran.

(Standing ovation)

#### REMARKS BY UNITED STATES SENATOR JERRY MORAN

SENATOR MORAN: Thank you and good morning. I start my day -- incidentally; this is the second largest audience I've ever appeared in front of. The other was down the road just a few miles to the west in Kansas at the Kansas Speedway, when I spoke at a NASCAR race, and 80,000 people ignored me.

(Laughter)

SENATOR MORAN: I start my day with you, and I will return to Washington, DC, where, at 5:30 this evening, the United States Senate will vote to confirm a new Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: It's especially pleasing to me to be here with the Kansans in the audience, but I'm truly honored to speak in Kansas City and to address the Veterans of Foreign Wars. As the introduction indicated, there is no group of people in America that I hold in higher regard than our veterans and those who serve other veterans.

I grew up with Vietnam in the peripheral of my life. My father was a World War II Army veteran, and his service and the service of many in my community during the Vietnam War is something that I have long respected. That respect for those who are serving led me to be a member of the Defense Appropriations Committee; led me to chair the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Committee; and led me, when I was first elected to the House of Representatives and continued in the Senate, to ask that I serve on the Veterans Affairs Committee.

When I was a congressman, I represented a congressional district larger than the state of Illinois but with no VA Hospital.

In my first few years in Congress, I considered myself to be a good congressman. I was a legislator I cast meaningful votes. I returned home each weekend, and I listened to my constituents. And my primary focus was the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Kansas.

A few years later, I was called to go beyond being simply a good congressman. There was a moment when I felt I needed to do more with the

opportunity that I'd been given. That moment was a few days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

I was part of a congressional trip to New York City, to Ground Zero, and I was walking through the rubble and found a memorial that had been placed there, near Ground Zero, where loved ones could pay their respects.

I passed framed photographs of those who'd fallen. I saw stuffed animals, teddy bears, flowers, things laid there to pay respect to those who were now in their final resting place. But a note, a piece of paper torn out of a spiral notebook, a jagged edge was laying there, and I picked it up.

The note read, "Dear Daddy, how much I miss you. How I hope heaven is a wonderful place, and I hope I live a life good enough to join you there some day. Amanda, age 12."

It was at that point in time, reading that note that I realized that my commitment to the people who elected me, my call to service was something much larger and something much more complicated. Public service now included the goal of making sure there were no more 12-year-olds who lost their fathers; no more Americans who were tragically harmed by terrorists.

I realized that I must be more worldly and think more broadly when legislating, and that my obligations reached beyond my home district. I realized that I needed to pay closer attention to America's position as leader of the free world. And I resolved I would return to Congress and expand my focus to better serve the needs of our nation.

Every member of this audience received and answered a call to service much more great than mine. A call to defend our way of life. And I'm so grateful that you -- each of you answered that call.

We live in a very complex world, one where the United States must lead from a position of strength. Our men and women are still fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, and are working to stabilize other nations like Iraq.

We face uncertain challenges in Iran and on the Korean Peninsula. Our nation faces threats from Russia and China and the warfare we cannot see that rages in the shadows of cyberspace.

There are operations taking place across the globe. We have troops in harm's way in Africa and other places where the situation can change quickly. And our military leaders rely on our troops to fight and to win.

We're fortunate. This country is so fortunate to be able to rely on you during world wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Operation Enduring, and Iraqi Freedom, and other operations and conflicts where the situation was dire and the need was great.

But the needs of our Nation's veterans are also great. Our Nation's needs are great, but the needs of our veterans are great, and the VFW is making a world of difference as veterans serving other veterans.

VFW members choose to continue serving by assisting others who served, promoting patriotism, and having the veterans' voice heard and felt in

Washington, DC. I see it almost every day, the consequences of the strength of the VFW and its members.

Since 1899, the VFW has created a unified voice in the care for veterans and demonstrated the qualities of servant leadership, with the core mission of putting our Nation and your brothers and sisters ahead of yourselves.

But this should not be a mission the VFW alone has to undertake. We need the support from our academic institutions providing education and training for our veterans, current service members, and their families through the GI Bill.

Industry and employers must make hiring veterans a priority and ease the burden faced by Guard and Reservists who need to take time to drill or who, when they go on deployment, return to their day jobs.

Veterans deserve the best of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the best that it has to offer. I judge whether the VA is doing its job through casework, the number of veterans contacting my office and asking for assistance because they're struggling to get the care or benefits they need.

This is something VFW understands well because the VFW also provides casework services, helping veterans navigate the VA and working to get them benefits they've earned.

Together, we must make certain no veteran falls through the cracks. We will know --  
(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: We will know that we've been successful when we no longer lose 20 veterans a day to suicide.  
(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: We -- we cannot expect our younger generation of volunteers to serve if they don't feel and know that they will be supported during and after their service. The times that I saw, as a teenager, when service members were not supported and respected by their fellow Americans must never, never, never be repeated.  
(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: Each of you, every one of you continues to serve and benefit our Nation through your membership in the VFW. And what you do for each other and all who have served our Nation inspires me and the rest of America.

That inspiration that you provide is sorely needed today. Our people, the American people, are sick and tired of politics, a Republican this and Democrat that.

When I get discouraged, I put on my running shoes, and I walk up to the Lincoln Memorial. And on that walk, I will go by the World War II Memorial;

I'll then go by the Vietnam Wall; and on my way back, I come by the Korean War Memorial.

Those memorials and monuments remind me that no serviceman or woman served his or her country because they were Republicans or Democrats.

(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: They serve their country because of a higher calling. They believe that service would protect their families at home, make their country more secure, and their world safer for freedom and liberty.

Our U.S. Senators and Representatives, our Congress, and our President need only to look to you to see how we should conduct business, how we should behave, how we should work for others. You are our role models. Not polls, not newspaper headlines, or focus groups.

The VFW and our veterans have an opportunity to make America a better country because of that role model. No one that's honored at those monuments that I see on the National Mall paid the ultimate sacrifice for the unnecessary gridlock and petty politics of Washington today.

(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: On one of those walks up the mall, I stopped at the Kansas column of the World War II Memorial, and I thought of my dad back home in Plainville, Kansas. I stepped away from that memorial, and I used my cell phone and I called him at home. Fortunately -- fortunately for me, I got his voice mail because what I said that day is hard for any son to say to his father.

I said, "Dad, I'm at the World War II Memorial. It was built in your honor. And I want you to know that I thank you for your service. I respect you. And, Dad, I love you."

(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: During my walk back to my office, my cell phone rang. It was my dad. He one-upped me. He said, "Gerald, you left me a message. I couldn't understand it."

(Laughter)

SENATOR MORAN: "Could you repeat it?"

(Laughter)

SENATOR MORAN: My dad, a VFW member, died a few years back at age 98. So I can't repeat it to him. So today let me repeat it to you. I thank you for your service. I respect you and I love you.

(Applause)

SENATOR MORAN: God bless America and those who honor it like you do with your service. Thank you. Thank you very much.  
(Standing ovation)

INTRODUCTION OF SCOTT STUMP, PRESIDENT AND CEO  
OF NATIONAL DESERT STORM WAR MEMORIAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: After Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait in 1990, over half a million America's finest bravely -- finest bravely fought to expel -- ex- -- yeah, one of the largest military forces in the world. And once the dust settled, more than 300 brave men and women died as a result of their commitment to freedom and democracy.

A major facet of our mission as an organization is to ensure those who have gone before us in war are remembered and honored properly. Time and time again, the VFW members have spoken out loud and clear in their support of constructing the National Desert Storm War Memorial. In 2015, we again voiced our support as the first major veterans service organization to financially back the project, donating \$100,000 toward our \$500,000 pledge to help ensure the memory of their commitment and sacrifices during -- endures for generations to come.

Here today to provide us with an update on the memorial is CEO and President of the National Desert Storm War Memorial Board of Directors and VFW Life Member Scott Stump.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY SCOTT STUMP, PRESIDENT AND CEO  
OF NATIONAL DESERT STORM WAR MEMORIAL

COMRADE STUMP: "America's better days are behind her. We are no match for the fourth largest army in the world. We're just a bunch of volunteers. There is no way we can win in the desert."

Does anybody remember those comments, those supportive comments of our military and our country that were made by none other than the media, not just our media, but the global media back in 1990?

I've heard some say, "Operation Desert Storm, well, Scott it was over so quickly," like that's a bad thing. That's like a boxer saying, "Gee, I really wish I wouldn't have knocked that guy out in 30 seconds. I really wish I would have let it go 15 rounds to see what could happen." Crazy thinking.

As I mention all the time, I sincerely believe that the reason we had such a rapid and resounding success back in 1991 was the fact that all of our leadership were Vietnam veterans, and they were not going to let what happened to them the first time around happen to us. And I do give them all the credit for my being able to be here before you this morning.

(Applause)

COMRADE STUMP: I hope the senator and the congressman aren't within earshot, but I would even go a step further and say that what you saw in Operation Desert Storm you would have seen in Vietnam if the government and the politicians weren't monkeying around.

(Applause and cheers)

COMRADE STUMP: And Vietnam veterans in the crowd, spouses, this victory, this memorial is yours as well. Thank you for all that you've done.

(Applause)

COMRADE STUMP: And although Operation Desert Storm was a resounding success, we can never forget the 383 Americans, 15 women made the ultimate sacrifice. And it's the same sacrifice that's been made since the beginning of our country's founding, and that continues to be made to this day. Those 383, along with the close to 700,000 who answered the call and were prepared to make that same sacrifice, they cannot be forgotten.

Well, the good news is that they won't be forgotten through this memorial. This effort to build the memorial is now in its eighth year. And I've got to be honest with you, it's not been a lot of fun. And most of the time, it's been a real slog because of the B word.

Does anybody know what the B word is in Washington? I bet you -- I bet you the senator could tell you. The B word is bureaucracy. I know you've heard that little rumor going around that there is a little bit of it up there. I hate to break -- you know, bust the bubble, but it's true.

But I'm happy to report this morning that after a three-year battle that was only supposed to take 18 months, we have finally secured the location for this memorial in Washington, DC.

(Applause)

COMRADE STUMP: And I can't see it up here, but I think you may see on your screen there's a map, an overview. And if there isn't, I'll tell you where it is. You just heard the senator talk about where he takes his walks. It's right in that neighborhood.

It's at 23rd and Constitution. It's in the shadows of the Lincoln Memorial, and it's very close to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which we've -- and we had a number of Vietnam veterans that wrote to the commission as well as came to testify, explaining this unique connection that we have, and the need to be in the same neighborhood. I'm proud to report that we are right, essentially, next door, two notches over from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. So we're very happy; we're very relieved.



Now we move ahead with the process, and now we have to have the design approved. And our goal is to have this completed in 2021. Does anybody know what the significance of is 2021?

Don't tell anybody, but it's the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I don't like to think about that because then my knees start hurting. But it's the 30th anniversary. So we have to have 110 percent of the funding in the bank in order to break construction. We are on track, and we're going to get this done. And we're very excited to move forward.

Now, I keep hearing the slogan -- and I'm sorry if I'm using the wrong terminology, but I hear the slogan, "No one does more for veterans," or motto, slogan. I want to tell each and every one of you in this auditorium this morning. That is not a buzz word, that's not a catch phrase. The VFW lives this motto. And I'm here to tell you and I'm so happy to say firsthand that they do, we do, live that motto.

The chief had mentioned the \$500,000 commitment in installments of 100,000. That has been critical to our success in getting to where we are now. You see a lot of people think, well, but really, the work doesn't start until you break ground. They have no idea what all leads up to just getting to where we are.

It's been a tremendous burden, and it's been a tremendous challenge.

But just know that the VFW is at the heart of the success of this, and all of you can take pride and credit in that.

I'd also like to recognize one of our own, and I know he's going to get mad at me, but he's off to the side here, Mr. Joe Davis, our communications director. Joe?

Joe showed up for the Commission of Fine Arts hearing on June 21st. He delivered some passionate remarks, delivered them in -- in a way that was very powerful. It made a big difference.

Joe, thank you for your support. It really did make a difference.  
(Applause)

COMRADE STUMP: And I'd also like to thank all of you in the audience, all of you individuals, posts, districts, as well as departments, who have donated to this cause and helped us with this mission. It's been vital, and it's greatly appreciated.

And I'd just like to say to those of you that have not joined us, I'd like to invite you to participate. We'd love to work with you. We have a booth up at 145, whichever direction that I'm pointing. We're at 145. There's information on how you can get involved. You know, we have \$50 here, \$500 there. It all comes together, and it has been crucial. Thank you to all of you who have participated in this.

And I'd also just like to put a plug in. This evening we have an event at the Bar Louie. And Bar Louie is a restaurant, and they are donating 20 percent of all of the food purchases toward the memorial. You have to eat anyhow,

folks. We'd love to have you join us there here this evening. And, again, more information at Booth 145.

In closing, I would like to recognize two groups of individuals that have gone way above and beyond the call of duty. I'd like to recognize the largest donation by a post and by a department.

I'd like to first of all call up Commander Brad Reed from Post 7564 West Fargo, North Dakota, who donated \$20,000. One post.

(Applause)

COMRADE STUMP: While Commander Reed is making his way up here, I'd like to also recognize the top department donor. I'm not a CPA; so I'm not going to mince little words and little numbers. But it just shy of \$25,000.

I find it very appropriate that the top department also happened to suffer the largest casualty count at any one given time, with the 414<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Corps, the great state of Pennsylvania, I'd like to ask Commander Hanzes to please come up here. Thank you.

(Applause)

#### INTRODUCTION OF VICE MINISTER LU CHIA-KAI, VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my privilege to introduce Lu Chia-Kai, the vice minister of the Veterans Affairs Council for the Republic of China on Taiwan. Minister Lu served in the executive branch of his country's government for 18 years before moving over to the Veterans Affairs Council in 2003, first as a legal counselor, then secretary general, and now as its vice minister, where he is in charge of veterans hospitals, veterans homes, and overall administrative operations –

The VAC is similar to our Department of Veterans Affairs, and they were a gracious host when I visited them in Taiwan in May, a visit that also included meeting President Tsai Ing-wen.

The VFW has a special relationship with the Veterans Affairs Council that goes back many years, plus we have a longstanding VFW national resolution that supports the Republic of China on Taiwan.

I am very pleased that he could join us again. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Vice Minister Lu.

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY VICE MINISTER LU CHIA-KAI, VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

VICE MINISTER LU: Commander-in-Chief Harman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and other America heroes, good morning.

(Good morning)

VICE MINISTER LU: It is a great honor and a privilege to be here with you today. On behalf of the Veterans Affairs Council, the Republic of China, I would like to express our sincere regards to all of the VFW friends. The economic prosperity and the stability of Asia-Pacific region today is due to the U.S. continued commitment to the regional security and democratic development.

Taiwan, as a benefiter of the area, would like to share a valuable accumulated experiences through channels of international organization and the reciprocal diplomacy has to create a win-win situation for peace and prosperity.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous support to Taiwan over the years, especially the resolution passed at each annual convention to support my country. We will always remember your thoughtfulness.

Dear friends, we are so fortunate to have such bonds of brotherhood. We will always cherish this precious friendship. Thank you again for inviting me to address at this Joint Opening Session. Wish you a very fruitful and successful convention, and every one of you in good spirits and health. Thank you.  
(Applause)

VICE MINISTER LU: And now I would like to present Commander-in-Chief Harman the Medal of Honor of Veterans Affairs Council First Class, in recognizing his efforts to promote international justice and the dedication for the well-being of veterans.

Marco, please announce the citation, please. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Citation, Certificate of Award to accompany the presentation of the Medal of Honor with cravat of Veterans Affairs Council to Mr. Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America, in recognition of his dedication in upholding international justice and in safeguarding international status of the Republic of China, and in improving welfare of the veterans, a Medal of Honor with cravat of Veterans Affairs Council First Class is hereby awarded on the day of the 23rd day of July in the year of 2018. General Chiu Kuo-Cheng, Minister Veterans Affairs Council, Republic of China.  
(Applause)

#### INTRODUCTION OF ROBYN ANZULIS, FIRST PLACE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Since 1947, the VFW's Voice of Democracy program has been inspiring America's youth. What is reflected in the program is an extension of America's values and its ideals.

The premier scholarship program helps ensure our Nation's heritage will never be lost and allows students the opportunity to give voice to how they perceive our nation and the many liberties afforded to them.

Ms. Robyn Anzulis's outstanding entry based upon the theme "American History: Our Hope for the Future," earned her the esteemed title of the 2017-2018 National Voice of Democracy winner and a \$30,000 college scholarship.

Robyn represents the many thousands of young people who participate in the scholarship program annually, and she and her peers are truly the future of our country. What they are today, America will be tomorrow.

Please join me in welcoming and celebrate -- and celebrating Robyn Anzulis's achievement for the 2017-2018 Voice of Democracy winner.  
(Standing ovation)

REMARKS BY ROBYN ANZULIS,  
FIRST PLACE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

MS. ANZULIS: On the morning of September 11th, 2001, Aziz Ahsan woke up bright and early, heading out the door with a skip in his step. He drove to three different New York City post offices in search of a new postage stamp commemorating the Muslim holiday, Eid. His final stop was the north tower of the World Trade Center.

At 8:46 a.m., he heard what he would later describe as a "sonic boom." 102 minutes later, the north tower collapsed, leaving Ahsan, a lucky escapee covered in dust and grime. Even now debris from the towers remains trapped beneath his eyelids.

September 11th is a day that Aziz Ahsan will never forget. However, it is also a day that I will never remember. I was 18 months old on September 11th, 2001, and my knowledge of the event has come through the harrowing stories of my elders, documentaries, news articles, and, yes, history textbooks.

I have learned that on that fateful Tuesday morning, terrorists hijacked four planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the field in Pennsylvania. This resulted in the deaths of nearly 3,000 people and the deployment of troops for the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.

But this is what the history books will not tell you about September 11th. From the ashes of the World Trade Center arose a sense of unity that America has not seen since.

Then-President George W. Bush responded immediately and forcefully, earning a 90 percent approval rating, one of the highest in American history. Typically, contentious lawmakers stood together on the steps of the Capitol singing, "God Bless America," and we the people vowed never to allow terrorism to destroy the American spirit.

September 11th, 2001, is this century's version of Pearl Harbor, a rare moment in our history in which unity prevailed over the tragedy of what had

occurred and the divisions that typically exist in our country. For just an instant, we were not Democrats and Republicans, not Libertarians and Liberals, not African-Americans or Asian-Americans. We were just Americans.

But sadly, unlike the generation that united on 9/11, my generation has never experienced national unity. Our hope for the future relies on the knowledge that we are more similar than we are different. It depends on our ability to come together even when internal strife and external enemies seek to divide us. Yet today, even standing for the National Anthem is a divisive issue.

Fortunately, 9/11 survivors, such as Aziz Ahsan, are trying to keep the legacy of that day alive. Since September 11th, Ahsan has brought people of all walks of life together, working with Jewish teenagers to promote an understanding of religious intolerance, and encouraging Muslim-Americans to create a more positive view of Islam.

He even became the president of his local school board in the hopes of continuing to spread a message of unity to my generation.

Additionally, September 11th has emerged as a national day of service, a day to come together and assist those in need. On this day, students around the country mobilize to take part in service learning projects in memory of the victims of the attack and in honor of the soldiers who fought in its aftermath.

These charitable activities and unity programs instill pride in our youth and challenge them to become leaders in their communities. Still, good deeds in themselves are not enough to fulfill the responsibility that history has placed on us.

In the interest of our future, now is the time to remove the debris from our own eyes. We must heal our divisions and see each other as part of the same American family. Because history reminds us that when we act as one people, as one nation, we can overcome any obstacle. Hence, learning from our history is our hope for the future. And rekindling a lasting sense of unity must be America's No. 1 priority.  
(Applause)

MS. ANZULIS: I would just like to say thank you so much to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for hosting this competition and this program. I think I speak for all of the 34,000 participants when I say that this is a truly amazing experience, and we are extremely grateful to you for everything that you have done for our country. God bless.  
(Standing ovation)

INTRODUCTION OF MAJOR GENERAL WORTHE S. HOLT, JR.,  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE COMMANDER,  
U.S. AFRICA COMMAND, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: As a retired Major General with the United States Air Force, our next guest of more than 35 years of care, delivery, and administrative experience, including expensive -- extensive time spent as a Command Fighter Pilot in F-4s and F-16s, Chief Flight Surgeon, Special Assistant to the Commander and Chief of Staff, United States Africa Command.

With his impressive military and medical history, it should be no surprise that as Humana's vice president, deputy chief medical officer, Dr. Worthe Holt, is a driving force behind Humana's efforts to ensure America's veterans receive timely, high-quality health care they've deserved.

Dr. Holt is responsible for Humana's corporate clinical strategy as well as the oversight and implementation of its Bold Goal community-based health care initiatives, providing his operational expertise to work nationally with clients and hospitals to support business development, clinical care, and trend management.

Please give a warm welcome to retired Major General, Dr. Worthe Holt.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY MAJOR GENERAL DR. WORTHE HOLT, JR.

MAJOR GENERAL HOLT: Well, I have to tell you that I'm extraordinarily honored to be with you here today, and, frankly, a little overwhelmed. And that was a hard act to follow, I might add. Now, as you heard --  
(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL HOLT: In fact, let's see if this little device here works. There we go. Great.

I am serving currently as vice president and deputy chief medical officer with the health and well-being company Humana. But equally, if not more importantly, I am just so proud to be a veteran as a retired major general with the Air Force.

And you heard that I've been blessed with a number of opportunities throughout my career, including serving as a command fighter pilot, a chief flight surgeon, special assistant to the Commander and Chief of Staff for United States Africa Command.

I want you to know that it's certainly been a fascinating career for me, and it's one that I never could have predicted. 38 years seems like 38 days to me now. While I began in the pursuit of flying jets, my service -- like yours, I'm sure -- evolved into one of profound patriotism and a commitment to values. My dedication to quality of life, a set of enduring principles of freedom, and compassionate service to others allowed me to combine my dual and sometimes conflicted careers in combat aviation and medicine with pride.

During my time in Africa, I was fortunate to participate in what became largely special operations and intelligence framed in the context of

international aid, economic development, and health diplomacy, providing leadership on the African continent and at headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, during the challenges of Ebola, food and water insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, and violent threats was a privilege for which I will be forever grateful.

Now, I'll just tell you that the slide there, that's the F-16. But for those of you who are somewhat younger in the audience, I'm very proud to say that I've got nearly 1,000 hours in the F-4 Phantom as well.

(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL HOLT: Now, while my fellow airmen and officers all pursued different careers after our time in the service was over, I'm proud that the path I chose allows me to continue to help my fellow veterans, as Humana is a company committed to helping our servicemen and women.

Humana demonstrates its commitment in a variety of ways, such as the Veterans Hiring Initiative, which was launched in August of 2011. While our goal was to hire 1,000 veterans and military spouses by the end of 2014, I'm proud to share that we quickly surpassed that, and currently have more than 4,200 veterans and military spouses working at Humana offices across the country.

(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL HOLT: As a result of Humana's commitment to hire, develop, and retain veterans, military spouses, and wounded warriors, we are proud to have been named the Top 10 Gold-level Military-Friendly Employer by Victory Media seven times.

(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL HOLT: Humana is also one of the original corporate sponsors of the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities, an outstanding program administered through the Syracuse University Whitman school of business.

This program has graduated over 1,500 student veterans, 72 percent of whom started his or her own business, and 92 percent of which are still in business, generating over \$288 million in revenue.

(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL HOLT: In addition, Humana's a longtime partner to the Department of Defense's TRICARE program, and currently administers health benefits for more than 5.9 million active duty and retirees as well as their families across 32 states.

We're grateful for the opportunity to provide access to high-quality, innovative, and cost-effective health and well-being services to those who have served our Nation and their families. And while we help veterans with their

jobs and with their health care, we also wanted to do something to help our veterans in their homes.

When we found out that 25 percent of our Nation's total active duty and reserve personnel were seeking aid from food pantries, we knew something had to be done to combat this serious issue. No one should be food insecure, especially not our veterans and military families who sacrificed daily to protect our country.

With one in every four servicemen or women struggling with food insecurity, defined as the lack of access to enough nutritionally-adequate foods to live an active, healthy lifestyle, Humana set out to improve this societal problem. Of course, we knew that to be successful, we needed to enlist support from the organization that knows veterans best: The VFW.

Humana also partnered with the national nonprofit Feeding America to help combat food insecurity, which can also contribute to poor health, lower productivity, and higher medical costs.

Now, here are a few interesting facts to consider. Two-thirds of Feeding America clients previously had to choose between food and medical care. Seniors who are food insecure have a 50 percent higher prevalence of diabetes and are 60 percent more likely to have congestive heart failure or a heart attack.

Individuals who are food insecure have a three times greater incidence of depression, and a decreased capacity to maintain independence.

"Health Affairs," a popular healthcare journal, notes a 27 percent increase in hospitalizations during the fourth week of the month for low blood sugar as funds run out before replenishment at the first of the month.

We found that 86 percent of individuals who screen positive for food insecurity will, in fact, accept a referral and meet with a representative of Feeding America. Something extremely important for our physicians and their staffs to recognize.

Now, I've got to ask you: How many things a physician recommends are ever followed by 86 percent of individuals? You can see this is a tremendous opportunity and a great need that we stand ready to assist with.

Leveraging Feeding America's network of more than 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs, together we are staging a series of events throughout the year that will drive food donations and elevate the issue of food insecurity.

You may have seen our teams at Rolling Thunder in Washington, DC, over Memorial Day weekend as Humana was the official corporate sponsor honoring the 58,000 Vietnam veterans who paid the ultimate price and the almost 1,600 Vietnam servicemen still unaccounted for.

At Rolling Thunder this year Humana wanted to do its part to honor the dead while helping the living. Among the many initiatives at this annual event, we kicked off a food drive to raise 10,000 meals for DC area food banks.



We encouraged the public and Rolling Thunder participants to drop off nonperishable foods at the tent or a local food bank. And, in addition, people had the option to make a financial contribution as every \$1 donated to Feeding America provides ten meals to people facing hunger.

As of the last report, we raised 9,233 meals for the Virginia/DC area. And that's simply magnificent as we were able to help so many people in need. (Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL HOLT: Humana is also conducting food and fun drives at our company-sponsored Rock 'n' Roll Marathon Series events across the country with upcoming runs in Virginia Beach, Savannah, and San Antonio to help the food banks in each of these important markets.

We've also executed a series of events here in Kansas City. Nearly 14 percent of area residents here face food insecurity. That's just unacceptable.

Working with the VFW and two local food banks, Harvesters - The Community Food Network and After The Harvest, we launched a collaborative campaign called "Uniting to Combat Hunger" that aims to provide 50,000 meals to local individuals in need with a special focus on veterans.

And I'm proud to share that last night, just last night following the concert, we exceeded that goal through several initiatives, including a volunteer day in early June when employees from Humana and the VFW cleaned fresh produce and packed it for local food banks.

Now, as you can see in these pictures, we had a tremendous turnout for the volunteer day as dozens of employees went to a local farm to pick fresh produce for residents in need.

Community-wide food drives are also a way to get the public involved.

More than 50 of the blue barrels pictured in the upper left have been located throughout the Kansas City community, making it easy for the public to donate nonperishable items at their convenience.

And, finally, we appreciate the support of convention-goers who are donating canned goods this weekend as those items will be distributed to Kansas City area food pantries.

Now, our efforts do not stop here as we will remain steadfast in our support of our Nation's servicemen and women. Humana remains committed to combating food insecurity and other social determinants of health that can impact our community, such as loneliness and social isolation.

And we're doing this through our Bold Goal initiative, which aims to improve the health of communities across the country, including Kansas City, 20 percent by 2020. We're confident that by working together, we can help our neighbors and fellow veterans as no one should be food insecure.

I invite you to learn more about these efforts as well as Humana's commitment to helping veterans achieve lifelong health and well-being by visiting our booths at the health fair and the main exhibit hall throughout the convention.

Thank you so much for your time here today and for your service to our country. Again, it has been a tremendous privilege for me to join you, and I hope you enjoy the rest of your time at the convention. And safe travels wherever they may take you. Thank you.  
(Applause)

#### PRESENTATION OF AMERICANISM AWARD TO DAVID GOGGINS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Retired Chief Petty Officer Dave Goggins is well-known for his physical and mental toughness and for his practically inhuman level of determination.

From barely passing his Navy SEAL physical screening test to becoming one of the world's best ultra-endurance athletes and the only person to complete Navy SEAL training, Army Ranger School, and Air Force Tactical Air Controller training, David routinely pushes his body to the limits.

In 2005 a chopper carrying eight SEALs and eight Army special operations aviators were shot down, many Navy men who David had personally trained with. Touched by their loss, David was determined to find a way to help. Running 135 miles in just under 26 hours, taking first place in the Infinitus 88K in only 12 hours, and holding the Guinness World Record for over 4,000 pull-ups in 24 hours, all to raise awareness in support for severely wounded warriors and their families.

Ladies and gentlemen, it brings a great deal of pleasure to present to you the recipient of the VFW's Americanism Award, Retired Chief Petty Officer David Goggins.  
(Standing ovation)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Americanism Award and Citation awarded to Chief Petty Officer David Goggins, United States Navy, Retired.

In heartfelt recognition and sincere appreciation of his fervent love of country and his tireless dedication and commitment to supporting America's veterans and their families.

His determination to bring encouragement and hope to the families of America's fallen service members by pushing his body, mind, and spirit to its limits is a reflection of his resolve, patriotism, and true character, and justly earned him the utmost respect and admiration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand, this 23rd day of July, 2018. Approved by the National Council of Administration, signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; attested, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY RETIRED CHIEF PETTY OFFICER DAVID GOGGINS

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GOGGINS: First off, I'm very humbled to be up here talking to you-all today.

For a living, I'm a motivational speaker, and I speak to thousands of professional athletes, from the biggest names to the smallest names. And when I saw Doc walk in here with the Congressional Medal of Honor, this is the first time in my life I got nervous to speak in front of a crowd. That's how much I respect this man up here. I was reading about this man back in the day.

So I will thank the VFW very much for giving me this -- this award. It means more to me than anything I've ever received in my entire life.

I'd like to thank my grandfather, Sergeant Jack Gardner, who is now deceased. This would be the happiest day of his entire life.

I'd like to thank my mom up here who-  
(Applause)

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GOGGINS: --who never picked me up -- who never picked me up when I fell. She taught me how to get up when I was knocked down.

I'd like to thank my uncle for always being there for me.

I'd like to thank all of you out here who fought in these wars. You have no idea how big of a deal this is to me. I was not always this strong a guy you see. I went through a lot of hard times in my life to get here today.

And a story I'll tell you with -- real quick. I tried once to get in the Air Force to be an Air Force Pararescueman, and I quit for fear of the water. I was 175 pounds. I left the Air Force four years later at 300 pounds. I went from 175 to 300 pounds. There's a long story in there on how that came to be.

But I sat around and read a book on the Medal of Honor. And those guys -- all I wanted to be was an uncommon man. In my whole life, I was not that. Much worse than that. But I read stories about men like you, Doc, who had the courage to jump on grenades and stuff like that.

So I came home one day from working at a job for called Ecolab, where I sprayed for cockroaches. I made \$1,000 a month, weighing 300 pounds.

And I got home and I watched a show on Discovery Channel of guys carrying boats and logs, Navy SEAL training. And I decided to make a change in my life. And I called the recruiter up, and he asked me these questions. You had to meet -- you had to meet a certain -- like, a certain height and weight limit.

I was 6-foot-1 and 300 pounds. He laughed at me. Seven other recruiters laughed at me. One recruiter finally said, "Come on in. I'm too busy to talk to you on the phone."

He didn't know how much I weighed. I walked in the recruiter's office, and he looked at me and he said, "You're fat and you're black," because I said, "I want to be a Navy SEAL." I didn't know there had only been 45 African-American Navy SEALs, at that time, in over 70 years.

He said I basically had to lose 106 pounds in less than three months because of my age. I was getting too old. I came back three months later 106 pounds lighter. I --  
(Applause)

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GOGGINS: Thank you.

And, literally, I spent 18 months going through BUD/S, which is a six-month program. Went through three more weeks. That is when I met Marcus Luttrell; Danny Dietz; Michael Murphy, another Medal of Honor winner I went through Hell Week with all these guys, real heroes. I am not a hero. I served with real heroes.

And from there I went on to raise over \$2 million for Special Operations Warrior Foundation.  
(Applause)

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER GOGGINS: But I'll end you with this right here, I have the most respect I can possibly muster up for all of you in this room. I know what it takes to be a combat soldier, and I used to look for courage. I thought courage was a man who won the Medal of Honor. It is.

But courage is a man who's willing to put those boots on every single day of his life to go out there and fight for his country, when nobody even knows what the hell they're doing or where the hell they're at. You do it for the man beside you.

Thank you.  
(Standing ovation)

#### INTRODUCTION OF PRASAD REDDY, CEO, TWISTED X BOOTS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Over three decades ago, our next guest completed his American naturalization ceremony. He pledged to return the kindness, support, and encouragement he received from VFW members who welcomed him to America with smiles and a copy of the United States Constitution.

Now, as President and CEO of Twisted X Boots, Prasad Reddy has gone above and beyond to satisfy that pledge. Twisted X continues to support the VFW and our country's brave service members, veterans, and their families.

Founded in 2005, Twisted X Boots has spent more than a decade designing and developing handcrafted, design-patented comfortable western and comfortable shoes -- footwear for men, women, and children. It also launched a specialty line of patriotic VFW-inspired boots, complete with unique American flag elements.

Now, without further ado, I am pleased to introduce Mr. Prasad Reddy, founder, President, and CEO of Twisted X Boots.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY PRASAD REDDY, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF TWISTED X BOOTS

MR. REDDY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

I just get such goosebumps whenever I come here. This is my fourth convention I have come to. The minute I walk into the hotel lobby when I come in, I just see these -- I lose it. You are the true heroes. You are the reason all of us have the lifestyle we have, the freedom we have.

And I want to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, on my family's behalf and on my colleagues of the company. And we are so privileged and honored to become a small part of what you do in supporting the veterans of our great country.

I have here a check for ...

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you for your generosity.

Thank you very much.

Do I keep this?

(Laughter and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I think that it -- that it's fair that you know how much that check was for. Twisted X was just generous enough to contribute \$75,000.

(Standing ovation)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW JAMES E. VAN ZANDT CITIZENSHIP AWARD  
TO DR. BARBARA VAN DAHLEN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my pleasure to welcome our next guest and award recipient, Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, the president of Give an Hour.

Dr. Van Dahlen has spent her career interacting with and coordinating services with large systems, including school districts and mental health clinics. As president of Give an Hour, she mobilizes thousands of mental health professionals to volunteer countless hours of counseling for those in need, especially in the veteran and military communities.

Under her leadership, Dr. Van Dahlen helps VFW members host events to help facilitate -- facilitate mental wellness conversations.

We are called to tackle the stigma of mental health head-on. Dr. Van Dahlen is helping facilitate those conversations and is breaking down the barriers that our communities face when it comes to accessing quality mental health care.

I am proud to present to you the recipient of the 2018 VFW James Van Zandt Citizenship Award, a true champion of the mental wellness fight, Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award and Citation awarded to Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen.

In spirited recognition and lasting appreciation for unwavering commitment to provide access to mental health counseling for those in need at a time when they need it most.

Her dedication to offering hope and healing to veterans, service members, and their families, while addressing the barriers that prevent them from receiving the support they deserve and justly earned her the utmost admiration, respect, and gratitude of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand, this 23rd day of July, 2018, as approved by the National Council of Administration, signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief, and Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY DR. BARBARA VAN DAHLEN,  
VFW JAMES E. VAN ZANDT CITIZENSHIP AWARD

DR. VAN DAHLEN: Good morning.  
(Morning)

DR. VAN DAHLEN: It is an extraordinary honor to receive this incredible medallion and all that it signifies. So I want to tell you a story about how I come to be standing here.

And it began with my father, who was a first-generation American. He lied about his age to join the Navy after Pearl Harbor. My father served in the Pacific. He was injured. He saw many things that were, I'm sure, very troubling and very disturbing and distressing to him.

I didn't hear about any of those things because my father died when I was 27. I think had he lived long enough to see what I have done; we would have had many conversations about what really happened to him.

But what did happen and what I do know is that he came home from war, he married my mother, and he had my three older brothers. And my father, who was so proud and loved this country so much and all that it had given to him, wanted to give his family more.

And so he moved my brothers and my mother to rural California. Unfortunately, that move and the stress that it put on my mother,

unbeknownst to my father, it triggered a psychotic break, and my mother was later diagnosed as schizophrenic.

My father, here he was now in 1959, with three little boys, a baby girl, and a psychotic wife. In rural California, there was not a whole lot of help available to people who were suffering from schizophrenia. Sadly, in our rural communities, there still isn't a lot of care for people who are struggling with severe mental illness.

But my dad did what all veterans do. He continued to serve his family.

And he took care of us. My dad became mother and father to me. In fact, one of my first memories is sitting on my dad's lap when he was pulling my hair -- I'm sure he was thinking he was tying a knot in the Navy because he was yanking that hair back and made the tightest ponytail I think ever existed. (Laughter)

DR. VAN DAHLEN: So my father gave me a tremendous amount. Unfortunately, we suffered many other traumas. I lost my brother when I was 15 to a drowning accident. And, once again, my dad, in his own grief, took care of me.

And so when I grew up, I wanted to become a psychologist. I wanted to help people who, like my mother, had severe mental illness, and like my father, who had come home with posttraumatic stress, but we did not call it that then because we didn't know exactly what that was.

I moved east to go to graduate school. And while I was in graduate school, my father passed away. But he was very proud of what I was trying to do.

Fast-forward to 9/11. I lived -- I currently live outside of Washington DC. And on that bright blue day, that Tuesday that none of us who were alive then will ever forget, I watched the Twin Towers fall holding my one-year-old daughter. And I thought, we have to do more. We have to be ready to care for those men and women who I knew were going to be going to war.

And then four -- four years later -- I had that idea. I didn't know what to do, but I knew I wanted to serve. There didn't exist a place for me to give my skills and my expertise as a psychologist.

Four years later, I was driving with my two daughters in that same community in Bethesda, right outside of Washington, DC. And my oldest daughter, who was nine at the time, saw a homeless Vietnam veteran standing on a street corner, and he held a sign that said, "Vietnam vet. Please help. God bless."

And my daughter, who never knew my father but she knew the service he had given to our country, erupted in outrage and said, "Mommy, how can we let this happen to these men who served our country? And at that moment, I realized that even though I had no idea how, I was going to try to build an organization that could provide free care.

And so I drove my "mom van" to Barnes & Noble, and I sat on the ground, and I let my daughters run around and read their own boring books while I read "Nonprofit For Dummies." And that was the beginning of Give an Hour.

Give an Hour, thanks to the generosity of over 7,000 mental health professionals all over the country, have given over 250,000 hours of free mental healthcare to those who serve, their families, and their communities. (Applause)

DR. VAN DAHLEN: A few years ago, we realized that it wasn't just -- it wasn't enough just to provide services. We had to do something to change the barriers that prevent people from talking about their emotional pain and suffering.

And I met an amazing young man, Ryan Gallucci from the VFW. And Ryan really liked what we were beginning to work on. We were beginning to work on a public health campaign that would focus on changing the culture of mental health for everyone.

Because we reasoned that we can't just focus on our veterans and our military families and talk to them as if they're the only ones who deal with mental health challenges in life. We all do. It is part of being human.

And so we reasoned that if we changed the broader culture, then no service member, no veteran will ever have trouble seeking care for mental health challenges again.

And so Ryan took me to someone who became a good friend, Brian Duffy, who was National Commander at that time. And Brian realized that the VFW, in his words, could be the point of the spear to change the culture of mental health.

And so Brian, with Ryan, with B.J. Anderson, with Lynn Rolf, with Bob Wallace, my heroes at VFW, because they embraced me and the work we were doing. And the VFW became our national partner to change the culture of mental health.

Many of you have seen the work we've been doing through The Campaign to Change Direction. Hopefully you know that sign, know those five signs of emotional suffering, so that people you care about can get the help and support they need.

We have reached thus far because of the work of the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary because Colette Bishop was part of that group that said, "Yes, it is time that the VFW lead." And, indeed, the VFW is not only leading now here in the country, but around the world. And together, we have reached 1.2 million members of the VFW and family members throughout this country and around the world.

I am so proud and honored. We are just getting started, but yesterday I was at a panel here, and there was a discussion of about 80 of you in the room, standing up, talking about your own challenges, your own recovery, and



how your awareness has helped to reach and save buddies, family members, brothers and sisters who are hurting, who are suffering.

We have much more work to do, but this partnership with the VFW is being held up now as an example around the world. We are now partnering with the UK Ministry of Defense. We're doing a huge event in London. And the VFW will be there, and we will be proud to say, "It began here with this partnership."

So in closing, what I'd like to do, if you will indulge me, you heard before how times are changing and that we are all very much now a part of social media generation, which I still don't quite know how to do all that.

But I know how to take a picture, and I brought my phone. And what I'd like -- if you're willing, I'd like you to help me spread the word about what the VFW is doing. So you-all know the sign, put your hand up to say, "I know those five signs of emotional suffering, and I'm going to make sure that everyone I know and love knows them too." And I am going to capture this on photo, and we are going to share it proudly in social media.

Thank you again for all you're doing. Together we will change direction. Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD TO  
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR WILLIAM F. THETFORD, UNITED STATES ARMY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my honor and privilege to present the VFW Armed Forces Award to Command Sergeant Major William Thetford.

He was -- he has worn Army green since 1981, an infantryman by trade, having served as a rifleman, fire team leader, and squad leader, with the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Reassigned to Special Missions Unit in 1990, he would go on to serve as a team member, team sergeant, troop sergeant major, and its operations and training command sergeant major.

In 2011, he was selected as command sergeant major for the joint special operations command. In 2014, he became the command senior enlisted leader of the United States Special Operations Command. And today, he serves as command senior enlisted leader of the U.S. Central Command.

He is eligible for the VFW four times over, having served in Grenada, Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He also has a peacekeeping deployment to Bosnia under his belt.

As the National Commander of the largest -- of America's largest and oldest major veterans' organization, we greatly appreciate what you continue to do for America, for your Army, and for your joint command, and all who serve and their families.

I am especially pleased that your wife, Alison, can join you here today.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: With all your deployments and responsibilities, I can't imagine how you will ever be able to repay her.  
(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrades, Auxiliary members, and guests, it is with great pride and honor that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States present the 2018 Armed Forces Award to the recipient of the Silver Star for -- to a recipient of the Silver Star for his heroic actions in Somalia, the Bronze Star with combat "V" device for Iraq, plus two awards of the Combat Infantry Badge, the command senior enlisted leader of the U.S. Central Command, and a Life member of the VFW Department of Florida, Command Sergeant Major Bill Thetford.  
(Standing ovation)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Armed Forces Award Gold Medal and Citation awarded to Command Sergeant Major William F. Thetford, United States Army.

In special recognition and sincere appreciation to Command Sergeant Major William F. Thetford for nearly four decades of faithful and dedicated service to America and to his Army, to his soldiers, and joint service teammates and their families at home and abroad.

As a warrior deployed to Grenada, Somalia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and as a peacekeeper, instructor, and leader, his selfless and continued service to Nation 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 July, 2018. Approved by the National Council of Administration.

Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; attested, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR WILLIAM F. THETFORD,  
UNITED STATES ARMY, VFW ARMED FORCES AWARD

CSM THETFORD: Well, good morning to you.  
(Good morning)

CSM THETFORD: Wow. Who would have thought many years ago a young airborne ranger and his beautiful wife would one day stand in front of this audience. I am humbled.

So, Commander Harman, thank you for this honor. And I accept the Armed Forces Award on behalf of all my fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen, but especially those troops deployed in the CENTCOM region today, where I hail from.

I should first tell you that I recently became a VFW member. And it was because of your core values that resonated with me, because of how they impacted me as a special operations candidate many years ago, and the core values that we share. Your core values, such as always put the interests of our members first, promote patriotism, and honor military service.

My military service began years ago in the Ranger regiment, where we share values expressed in our Ranger creed that say, in part, "I will never leave a fallen comrade. And under no circumstances, will I ever embarrass my country."

(Applause)

CSM THETFORD: Those ethos expressed both in the VFW and the Ranger regiment are unwritten by what we say in the special operations community is the first soft truth, and that is humans are more important than hardware.

Likewise, the VFW's mission to foster camaraderie of veterans of overseas conflicts is still incredibly relevant today. I know this because today's troops serving proudly in the CENTCOM region, which as you know is still a pretty tough neighborhood with four ongoing armed conflicts right now. So we say in CENTCOM, "Prepare, pursue, prevail."

We have fought there for many years against al-Qaeda. And more recently, alongside our coalition partners under the superb leadership of my boss, General Joseph Votel, the CENTCOM Commander, in our ongoing campaign to defeat ISIS, as well as our current efforts in Afghanistan to finally bring the Taliban into the reconciliation process under President Trump's South Asia Strategy.

On the home front, our troops and their families are making the same sacrifices that you-all did in your respective careers. And like you, they do it with pride. They serve to support one another and for the love of this fantastic country of ours.

And speaking of this country, anybody make it to the Trace Adkins concert last night?

(Cheering and applause)

CSM THETFORD: If you listened to Trace Adkins' song about Arlington National Cemetery and you didn't get a little choked up, wow, I don't know what to tell you. But Trace Adkins, what a patriot.

(Applause)

CSM THETFORD: And I know I hear a lot of talk about membership in the VFW. And I can offer to you that I suspect one-day today's service members, they will find their way to you and enjoy the support and, more importantly, the camaraderie that you offer one another, just as I have found since I've joined.

Now, we've had some pretty good news in the Department of Defense lately, like a healthy budget from our Congress that will help modernize our equipment and provide training resources to improve our readiness against our adversaries. This is great both for our troops' readiness and their morale. But not from a sense of entitlement, but because our troops want to succeed, and they want to win. And we will win.

(Applause)

CSM THETFORD: In addition, our troops have some real heroes at the national level today, like the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Dunford, and Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

(Applause)

CSM THETFORD: The Chairman's and Secretary's guidance in the national defense strategy to make the joint force more lethal and resilient really strikes a cord with the troops. That is the message they wanted and needed to hear. And now they've got it.

(Applause)

CSM THETFORD: Because as you can imagine, within the ranks today, General Dunford and Secretary Mattis are viewed as national treasures. And we appreciate everything they do for us.

Finally, I'd like to share with you a story that affected me years ago that I think this audience can appreciate.

It was October, 1993, in Mogadishu, Somalia. And Task Force Ranger, as we called ourselves, had just fought a battle to capture a Somalian warlord and some of his key lieutenants. And in that fight, sadly, we suffered many casualties.

The task force commander was Major General Bill Garrison, who presided over a Memorial Service for us, and who, no doubt, recognized that our morale was a little beat up.

General Garrison offered these words from Shakespeare for the task force members still standing: "Whoever does not have the stomach for this fight, let him depart. Give him money to speed his departure, since we wish not die in that man's company. Whoever lives past today and comes home safely will rouse himself every year on this day, show his neighbors his scars and tell embellished stories of their great feats of battle."

Anybody embellish any stories out there, maybe just a little bit? I may have heard a few last night at the hotel bar. They were good ones.

(Laughter)

CSM THETFORD: "These stories he will teach his son. And from this day until the end of the world, we shall all be remembered. We few. We happy few. We band of brothers. For whoever has shed his blood with me shall be my brother. And those men afraid to go will think themselves as lesser men as they hear how we fought and died together."

I have tried to live up to those words since that October day, just as I know each of you have in your own lives. So congratulations to all of you on 119 years of service to the nation and our veterans. You have much to be proud of. And I'm proud to be among your ranks today.

Thank you for this award. And if no one has offered to you lately, welcome home.

(Standing ovation)

PRESENTATION OF THE VFW DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER AWARD  
TO GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my honor and privilege to introduce the recipient of this year's Dwight D. Eisenhower Award, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps General Joseph F. Dunford, Junior.

The general hails from Boston. He was commissioned in 1977, and has faithfully served as an infantry officer and commanded Marines at all levels. Prior to becoming chairman on October 1, 2015, he was the 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

As chairman, he is the law -- he is, by law, our nation's highest-ranking military officer, but he is prohibited -- again by law -- from having operational command of more than 2 million active-duty, Guard and Reserve service members. He does, however, serve as the principal military advisor to the president, the defense secretary, and the National Security and Homeland Security Councils.

The chairman inherited a military that is still at war on multiple fronts, not -- not the least of which he is having to fight budget battles at home, namely sequestration and Congress's inability to pass an on-time defense budget.

He has also had to adjust to societal changes in America where less than one percent of the total population currently serves, and where less than seven percent of Americans have ever worn the uniform. Meanwhile, more than 70 percent of draft-age men are unfit to even wear it due to aptitude, health, and physical fitness reasons, as well as police records.

On Monday, September 10th, 2001, no one -- to include then-Colonel Dunford -- could have imagined our Nation's capable of fighting a multi-front war for almost 17 years with an all-volunteer force.

That we have -- that many of you have -- and done so magnificently, is a testament to the patriotism of all who volunteered to -- voluntarily raise their right hand when the great majority of Americans do not.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The Dwight D. Eisenhower Award is named after our 34th president, who, along with seven other United States presidents, proudly called themselves members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

This award has been presented annually since 1970 to one individual for his or her contributions to America's 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.

Comrades, Auxiliary members, and distinguished guests, please award -- please welcome the recipient of this year's Eisenhower Award, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joe Dunford.  
(Standing ovation)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Dwight D. Eisenhower Distinguished Service Award Gold Medal and Citation awarded to General Joseph F. Dunford, Junior, United States Marine Corps, in special recognition and sincere appreciation of more than four decades of faithful and exceptional service to America, from platoon, battalion, regimental, and Marine Expeditionary Force Commander, to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and now Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

His dedication to mission from leading Marines and joint forces in combat to ensuring their families were properly cared for at home is true to the ideals and the 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 July, 2018. Approved by the National Council of Administration.

Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief, and Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.  
VFW DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER AWARD

GENERAL DUNFORD: Hey, good morning, ladies and gentlemen.  
(Good morning)

GENERAL DUNFORD: And, Commander-in-Chief Harman, thank you so much for the introduction and, more importantly, for your leadership over the past year.

And I also want to recognize that I'm sure, once again, one of the Kansas City's native sons, Medal-of-Honor recipient Doc Ballard, my good friend over there. We meet at least once a year in Boston.

It's good to see you, Doc. Thanks for all you have done in your 35 years of service, as well as your distinguished actions in Vietnam.

It's also an honor to share the stage this morning with the other award recipients. Dr. Van Dahlen and Mr. Goggins have made significant contributions to our veterans community. And I can tell you from personal observation, that Command Sergeant Major Thetford is the real deal. He's the absolute epitome of our senior-enlisted leadership.

And to all the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Auxiliary around the world, and those still in uniform, thanks for what you do for our veterans, for our service members, and their families.

Each of the veterans here today represents the individuals who have had an impact on me along the way. I had seven uncles that served in World War II.

And in 1950, my dad fought in Korea with the 1st Marine Division. He remains a proud member of the VFW today.

I grew up admiring what they did in uniform, and what they did in their communities when they came home. And they inspired me to serve.

Those of you who served in the Vietnam generation were the big kids on the block when I was growing up. And when I came on active duty in 1977, you taught me what it meant to be a leader. You were my instructors at officer candidate school, you were my platoon sergeants when I was a platoon commander, and you've been my mentors throughout my career.

And to those who served during the Cold War and during our most recent conflicts, I have served alongside you. And I have remained in uniform over four decades because of that privilege. Like your predecessors, you've carried the colors high on your watch.

Ladies and gentlemen, you'd expect me to say it, but I'm truly humbled and honored to join you here today at your national convention. It's also a distinct privilege to accept the Eisenhower Award on behalf of the men and women in uniform today.

President Eisenhower's wisdom and his vision carved the path that the United States has followed for 70 years, and his legacy of service is an example that guides me today. Eisenhower actually wrote one of my favorite lines.

When he was reflecting on his time in uniform, he said, "The old tactical textbooks said that the commander always visits his troops to inspire them to fight." But Eisenhower observed, I soon discovered, that one of the reasons for my visiting the front lines was to get inspiration from the young

American soldier. I went back to my job, ashamed of my own occasional resentments or discouragements.

Now, I don't claim to have too much in common with the Great Dwight Eisenhower. But in my current assignment, I know exactly what he meant. I say that because I have the honor of representing the more than 2 million men and women who serve today. And over the past three years, I've had the opportunity to visit with many members of the Joint Force and their families.

And we used to say, "It's the most rewarding part of my assignment."

In my travels, I've met soldiers like Sergeant Major -- Sergeant First Class Ivan Moreira. He's a medic with the 7th Special Forces Group. Sergeant Moreira lost his left hand in combat in Afghanistan, and spent two years fighting to return to active duty. Today he's a fully-qualified Green Beret, and he continues to deploy.

(Applause)

GENERAL DUNFORD: And I've met Marines like Corporal Adam Shaner.

He's in (unintelligible) and he supported operations near Mosul, Iraq, under Sergeant Major Thetford's leadership.

I had the privilege of presenting Purple Hearts to Adam and members of his section at the battery position, where they were wounded and their section chief was killed in action.

After a direct hit by an enemy rocket, Adam and his fellow Marines quickly got the battery back in action, because they knew that there were soldiers in Mosul that were counting on them.

I've met airmen like Staff Sergeant Dick Hunter. He's an Air Force combat controller who deployed three times to combat. Most recently, he was on a combined team of Army and Afghan commandos who were ambushed on patrol.

After the ambush, Dick Hunter performed in 31 danger-close missions to repel the enemy. Some were as close as 10 meters to his position. His actions were responsible for the medical evacuation of 20 soldiers and the exfiltration of his entire Special Forces team. This past October, he was awarded the Air Force Cross.

And I met a lot of sailors, like those aboard the U.S.S. Monterey, the most deployed cruiser in the Navy. Several months ago, at the time I visited the Monterey's Carrier Task Force, the sailors had been at sea for 14 of the previous 24 months. And anyone who's ever been in the Navy knows what you're doing in the period of time between deployments.

They were supporting the ISIS fight and maintaining freedom of navigation in the Gulf region. And despite an exhausting schedule, the sailors were spirited, they were focused, and they were committed.

These are just a few of the many men and women across the Joint Force who are providing a wide range of missions from a watch floor in Colorado, keeping an eye on our airspace, to enhancing interoperability with



our allies in Poland, to conducting counterterrorism operations against ISIS in Iraq, Syria, and Africa, and to standing the watch in Korea.

To use a Marine Corp expression: Your soldiers, your sailors, your airmen, your marines, and your coastguardsmen are literally in every clime and place. In fact, as we gather here this morning, more than 300,000 Americans are deployed or forward-stationed in 177 different countries. Many of them are in harm's way, and I'd ask you to keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

And it's because of what they are doing and it's because of the quality of men and women that we are retaining and recruiting today that I'm able to deliver the most important message that I have for you this morning. I can stand here, as your chairman and say, with absolute confidence, that today's armed forces can defend the United States in our way of life.

I can say, with absolute confidence, that today's force can meet all of our alliance commitments around the world. And I can say, with absolute confidence, that the United States military has a competitive advantage over any potential adversary. It's important that our allies and enemies understand that, and it's important that the American people understand that. You have a force that you can and you should be proud of.

(Applause)

GENERAL DUNFORD: You know, Commander-in-Chief Harman alluded to it in his introduction, this fall will be the 17th anniversary since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. And since 9/11, we've asked an awful lot of our men and women in uniform.

And to be honest, if you'd asked me in 2001 or 2002 could an all-volunteer force maintain commitment over that period of time? Could they maintain focus? Would we still be would recruiting and retaining high-quality people in 2018? Would our families be able to endure that sacrifice?

I think I would have said back then, "You know what? I'm not sure." But today if you go around and you talk to a soldier, a sailor, a marine, an airman, a coast guardsman, you'll get a sense right away that we underestimated this generation. Today, they are still focused, they are still committed, and their families are still enduring extraordinary sacrifice.

When times are hard -- just like their predecessors, just like those of you in this room, when times are hard, today's warriors simply tighten their chinstraps and drive on. They don't focus on strategy or policy. They just focus on taking care of their buddies and winning. And I don't think that's a coincidence.

First, they're incredibly well-lead. They're well-trained. And thanks to the President, to the Congress, they have the resources necessary to do the job.

But there's another very important factor behind the motivation of today's force. The men and women in uniform today, they don't have to look

over their shoulder to check their 6:00 o'clock. They can focus on the mission because they know that their service is recognized and appreciated. They know that what they're doing is important.

They also have confidence in knowing that if something happens to them in service, someone will be there to take care of their families. They know that when it's time to transition to civilian life, there'll be someone to help them at that point as well.

And while we can always do better, no generation has deployed or returned home with greater support. And much of that credit goes to those of you in this room.

No organization does more for our veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars. No organization does more to ensure that our veterans are respected for their service. And no organization does more to ensure that our veterans and their families are recognized for the sacrifices on behalf of our Nation.

Since 1899, the VFW has led the way in advocating for veterans. When a recently separated veteran needs assistance in finding a job or transitioning back to civilian life, the VFW is there. When a wounded serviceman or woman requires help with prosthetics or assistance in cutting through bureaucratic red tape, the VFW is there. And when it's time for TAPS, the VFW is there too.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me close by making a commitment to you. As long as the VFW is there, men and women like Command Sergeant Major Thetford, Sergeant First Class Moreira, Corporal Shaner, and Staff Sergeant Hunter will continue to do what they are doing. And as long as they keep doing what they're doing, we'll continue to be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Again, it's truly an honor to be with you this morning. And on behalf of the men and women of the Joint Force, thank you for recognizing us with the 2018 Eisenhower Award. And, more importantly, thanks for all you do. God bless you and semper fidelis.

(Standing ovation)

#### INTRODUCTION OF DAVID MCINTYRE COFOUNDER, PRESIDENT, AND CEO OF TRIWEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Our next guest has more than 30 years of experience, success, and accomplishments in national health care policy development, business development, and leadership in both government and the private sector.

As TriWest Healthcare Alliance cofounder, President, and Chief Executive Officer, David McIntyre spends days in and days out ensuring veterans and roughly half the nation have access to high-quality healthcare when it is unable to -- unable to be provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Based in Phoenix, Arizona, TriWest is one of the two third-party administrators actively running the VA Choice Program. TriWest serves VA across 28 states in the Midwest and along the West Coast.

Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to TriWest Healthcare Alliance president and CEO, David McIntyre.

REMARKS BY DAVID MCINTYRE COFOUNDER,  
PRESIDENT, AND CEO OF TRIWEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

MR. MCINTYRE: Commander-in-Chief Harman, thank you for that warm introduction.

I know many of you put your phones away. Because I started -- I'd like to ask you to take them out. Don't turn on the ringer, but turn it on. And when I get to the end of my remarks, you'll understand why.

We're privileged to support the VA, as Commander-in-Chief Harman said, in delivering health care needs at the side of VA in 21 states, including here in Missouri and in the state of Kansas.

While the early days of responding to the crisis in access that was first disclosed in our hometown of Phoenix, Arizona, were challenging for all concerned, I'm pleased to report that the provider network that we constructed, along with our nonprofit owners, the Blue Cross Blue Shield plans, and universities that own us across 21 states, has now delivered 10 million appointments in support of VA.

(Applause)

MR. MCINTYRE: Everything from chiropractic services to brain surgery and everything in between. It really depends on what the gap is in a VA facility or where a veteran lives as to what services we're called on to provide.

By the way, we know that providers across this country have not been getting paid on time. That was true long before we arrived. I'm pleased to tell you, though, that in the area that we deliver services, the providers are being paid to an accuracy rate of 98 percent within 30 days for the services that they're providing.

(Applause)

MR. MCINTYRE: You know, there's been a lot of debate about privatization/non-privatization of the VA. I'm here to tell you, as a former -- as a fellow citizen, not a former citizen, I hope -- but as a fellow citizen, it's not about the private sector replacing the VA.

It's about making sure that when a veteran has to wait for a long time or has to drive for a very long distance, that they have options. And there are great Americans in this country that are providers that say, "I'll take a couple." And that's what this is all about. It's about providing the right elasticity for the VA to be able to deliver on its commitment to our Nation's heroes.

So I'd like to say three things today. First, thanks to all of you who have worn or currently wear the uniform of the United States for your service. Know that those of us privileged to work in support of your health care needs – whether we'd be in the private sector or whether we'd in the VA -- will not rest until we believe we've delivered on our responsibility to reset an enterprise that's critical to delivering on this Nation's commitment.

And, ladies and gentlemen, we still have work to do. We're focused. We're doing our job, but we've got a lot left to do.

Second, I'd like to thank VFW for setting the pace for responsible engagement in keeping all of us focused on what matters for this Nation's veterans. Were it not for your effective leadership, the future would not look as bright as it does with regard to the future of VA.

And as we look forward to continue to be pushed by all of you to ensure that we're rising to the occasion to achieve the "art of the possible" for current and future veterans, I'd just like to tell you that some of us will remain deeply focused in that fight.

Third -- and the reason why I asked you to take out your cell phone -- is I'd like to bring to your attention a program that we're privileged to support on behalf of the federal government. It makes available services to veterans, their families, and those that currently serve. It's a "Peer-to-Peer" Call and Outreach Center called "Be There."

That's a great term. Right? Being there for your buddy, being there for a friend, being there for a fellow citizen.

It's staffed by combat veterans and family members that are available 24/7 to assist our Nation's heroes if they're struggling. It's part of the fabric of the fight to make sure that we reduce the number of 20 a day -- 22 a day that ought to be reduced down to a zero when we accomplish our job.

The initial concept was actually conceived up by the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, Jim Amos. He lost a staffer to suicide at 3:00 in the morning. He reached out every day at 3:00 in the morning for a week and called all the lifelines that should be available to that individual. He didn't know why he was struggling. He didn't even know he was struggling. But he also found that he couldn't find a lifeline at 3:00 in the morning that he was happy with.

He picked up the phone; he called me. I was landing in D.C., and he said, "I need to see you in the morning."

And it was a very snowy day in Washington. I said, "What have I done?"

I served at the side of the Defense Department in TRICARE for a long time, from the start of TRICARE through its maturation. Then we needed to be moving on to the next fight at the side of government to get things right.

And Jim Amos said, "I need to see you in the morning. I'll tell you when you get here."

And I arrived and there were four of us in that office. It was a snowy day. There weren't many in the Pentagon. And we spent six hours in his office. And out of that came this program. And it was really designed to make sure that when you called at 3:00 in the morning or whenever you might call or text or Skype, or whatever you might do to reach someone, that someone was going to be on the other line that was relevant, that was immediately available, that could take your arm and make sure you didn't jump from that ledge.

And then the Marine Corps made a commitment to address the issue in its own culture by making it okay to reach out for help, and okay to say, "Hey, I'm struggling," led by then-General Amos.

So if you could, I'd like you to take out your phone, and I'd like you to write in the word "Be There," B-e-T-h-e-r-e. We don't do this program as a company. We do it as fellow citizens. We do it for the government. This is not a marketing campaign.

At the end of the day if you have a friend or you have a colleague or you know someone that's struggling, or, more importantly, you're at a bar and someone's articulating some concern because they've had a drink or two, dial the phone number and walk away, handing them your phone.

The phone number is (844) 357-PEER, which is 7337. I know it's up on the screen. But for those of you in the back, let me repeat the number, (844) 357-7337.

This has been up for nine years serving the Marine Corps. Now it serves all services. We've never lost a Marine. That's because of the commitment and the faithfulness of a general who was leading from the front.

Thank you for your service. Thank you for your attention. Thanks for what you do. Thanks for the great organization that you're a part of. And I hope you have a great convention. Have a good day.  
(Applause)

## INTRODUCTION OF THE VFW NATIONAL HOME REPRESENTATIVES

**COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN:** Since 1925, the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, has remained a prominent representative -- representation of the very best that the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its -- and its Auxiliary has to offer. There is no better example of how our organizations work together to support America's military families and by the services offered by the VFW National Home.

Joining us this morning are three amazing individuals: National Home Board President, Dave Ouellette; Executive Director, Patrice Greene; and, most importantly, the 2018 Buddy Poppy Child, Chloe Johnson, who resides in the Kansas House.

Chloe's favorite subjects in school are math and writing. She currently -- she recently completed first grade and enjoys playing softball, soccer, and

being a cheerleader and a Girl Scout. Chloe wants to be a veterinarian when she grows up. She is quite a remarkable young lady.

In keeping with our great time-honored VFW tradition, our Buddy Poppy Child will now mingle among the generous donors of VFW and Auxiliary members here today to "pass the hat" on behalf of the National Home. So please give what you're able to to this ever-impactful organization. Your donation is such a worthy cause. It will further eliminate Chloe's day -- illuminate.

David?

(Applause)

REMARKS BY VFW'S NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN  
BOARD PRESIDENT, DAVID OUELLETTE

MR. OUELLETTE: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Harman, for inviting us today. It's an honor for me to serve as Board President at the National Home. This board is made up of 12 elected and five ex officio trustees. I'm from Trustee 1, which includes the Departments of Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, and, of course, New Hampshire.  
(Cheering)

MR. OUELLETTE: Our ex officios: Adjutant General Brian Duffy, Quartermaster General Debra Anderson, and our Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman.

Thanks to each of you for all you do. Thank you, Brian, for your service to all the veterans. We want to present you with a small token of appreciation.

Thank you, Brian, for your service to us and to all the veterans. We want to present you with this small token of our appreciation, and we wish you all the best.

Debra, we appreciate your expertise and your guidance to the board, as chairman of our finance committee.

And, Commander Keith, I know you have visited the National Home many times, and you are a great supporter. Thank you for all your leadership on the board and for all the VFW.

We thank all of our VFW comrades. Your hard work and support makes the good work we do at the VFW National Home possible. I have met with so many wonderful people while working on the board, and I've enjoyed every minute of it.

We recently held our National Home orientation for all of our VFW department junior vice commanders and presidents. And we had a really big crowd, a lot of first-time visitors. We worked everybody pretty hard learning all about our National Home. We had a lot of fun also.

People said the best thing that – was hearing, in person, from military and veteran families and some of our alumni who have helped over the years.

Pretty touching to hear how the National Home really changed their lives.

I get the opportunity to visit a lot of homes to see families for myself. One suggestion I have to all of you is to schedule a visit to our home. You'll really enjoy it, and it will open all of your eyes to the good things that we do for the veterans and their families.

Today, we thought that we would bring a video that will help you see for yourselves what good we do.

Can you please show the video.

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION

(Whereupon, a video was shown at this time.)

(Applause)

MR. OUELLETTE: Thank you, everyone.

And now I'd like to introduce our National Home Executive Board Director, Patrice Greene.

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY VFW NATIONAL HOME BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PATRICE GREENE

MS. GREENE: Well, I don't know who picked that film to show right now, but it wasn't somebody that was ready to speak right after that. That is one excellent young man. And that's somebody that you-all can be proud that you made that difference in a person's life that is so significant. And you do it every day at the National Home.

We really, really appreciate Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman for his dedicated service and his decades of work on behalf of our veterans. He's been a longtime friend of the National Home and has visited many times along with all of our friends from Ohio. And I know that when his work here is done, he's going to continue to come and visit the National Home and be a wonderful supporter.

I wanted to -- whoever was responsible at the VFW for the fantastic video that was shown last night during the Trace Adkins concert, kudos. It was fantastic.

(Applause)

MS. GREENE: For me, it builds on that firm, strong foundation of the VFW, and it demonstrates what you-all need to share. You have a foundation that goes back so many years, and there's no other organization like you.

As you just witnessed in Brian's story, the National Home program has a powerful impact on struggling veterans' families, and it always has. It helps

them to heal, to build strength and resiliency, and then they can have the brighter future that they so much deserve.

At our recent junior vice orientation, one of our alumni from the National Home spoke to that group, and he shared his personal story. He talked about how the strength of the VFW made a difference in his life.

Back in 19- -- in the 1960s, his father was a proud veteran of World War II, and he belonged to a VFW post. So he was a faithful VFW member, but unfortunately, he was murdered during a candy store robbery, leaving behind his wife and four small children, one of them that was handicapped.

After the tragedy of the funeral was over, the commander of his VFW post came to his mother and said, "I have a solution for all of you. A solution that will make a difference in your life." And that solution was the VFW National Home for children.

That young man, along with his three brothers and his mother, came to the National Home and made all the difference. It helped them to heal and to grow into strong, fine young people. And then they became contributing members of society, and they're all very, very successful members of society today. And that is because of what you-all have done.

That's one example. Brian's one example. We can tell you so many more. So why not each of you take advantage of what you've given, what you've done since 1925, and when you run across a veteran family who needs your help – and you do; every one of you do I know, because they're everywhere – let them know about the National Home. Don't let one veteran family who needs us miss that opportunity.

You should be so proud. You can do what that VFW post commander did all those years ago. You can reach out, and you can help one family. And every one of you can do it, and you can be so proud of what you've done for all these years.

Help them connect to the National Home. Help them connect to the National Home. Thank you so much for everything you've done.

And now, speaking of one other family that you've helped at the National Home, we've got a representative here. And I know you've been waiting to see her. She's a wonderful young lady, her name is Chloe Johnson, and she just can't wait to talk to all of you. She has been practicing. Here she is, Chloe Johnson.

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY CHLOE JOHNSON - 2018 BUDDY POPPY CHILD

MISS JOHNSON: Hello, my name is Chloe Johnson. I am seven years old. I live in the Kansas House at the VFW National Home for Children. My mom's name is Brandy. My dad's name is Bobby. I have two brothers: Caleb and Chase.



I'm going into the second grade next year. My favorite subjects in school are math and writing. When I grow up, I want to be a veterinarian. I love being a Girl Scout, cheerleading, and playing softball and soccer with my friends.

We do lots of fun things at the National Homes. I am thankful for living there because we have a nice house; I have made a lot of friends to play with.

And my dad was in Iraq, Afghanistan, and he is going to Kuwait later this year. My mom says living at the National Home will make things much easier for us while he's gone. There will be steak days and lots of fun things to do until my daddy comes home. I am glad to be the Buddy Poppy so I can say thanks to all of you for the VFW National Homes.

(Applause)

MS. GREENE: Commander, we have a presentation for you. We have a National Home shirt, number one. Number two -- here you go -- and we have a brick in the walkway at the VFW National Home for Children in your name.

(Applause)

#### CHECK PRESENTATIONS TO VFW NATIONAL HOME FROM VFW POST 1503 AND VFW POST 9972

COMRADE BROWN: Good morning. My name is Tim Brown. I'm the outgoing Commander of the General Lewis P. "Chesty Puller" Post 1503 in Dale City, Virginia.

And on behalf of our 2,974 members and our 850 auxiliary members, making us the largest membership post in the world, I'd like to present a check to the National Home in the amount of \$3,000.

(Applause)

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It's my privilege and honor, as the outgoing commander of James R. "Bob" Currie Post 9972 in Sierra Vista, Arizona, to present this check for \$3,500 to the National Home. Thank you.

(Applause)

#### HOWARD E. VANDER CLUTE MEMORIAL RIDE CHECK PRESENTATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Nearly two decades ago, members of the VFW and its Auxiliary who shared a passion for riding motorcycles and for the VFW mission came together to honor Howard E. Vander Clute, Junior, the VFW Commander-in-Chief from 1997 to 1980, and Adjutant General from 1981 through 1995.

Since 2002, these dedicated members have shown their commitment to veterans and our mission by organizing the annual Howard E. Vander Clute, Junior, motorcycle ride, a cross-country ride to the VFW National Convention to

present money raised through entry fees and sponsorships to support the VFW veterans and military support programs.

Please help me give a warm welcome and a heartfelt thank you to Lynn Rolf, VFW Programs Director, along with David Dibs, Terry Fletcher, Don Harris, and William Shepherd, who are representing this year's Howard E. Vander Clute, Junior, Memorial Riders.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Good morning everyone.  
(Good morning)

COMRADE ROLF: What an amazing morning. It's about to get better. Commander-in-Chief, Department of Virginia VFW Riders has donated an incredible amount of money, \$15,001, thanks to the state commander.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: And thanks to that donation, riders across the world converged in Leavenworth, Kansas, to start our ride this year. And we raised, as a team, a record-setting amount of \$32,748.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I've just been given a note by our adjutant general. As you're all aware by now, leading up to this convention, the VFW teamed up with our friends at Humana, as well as local Kansas City area food donations organizations, Harvesters and After the Harvest, in an effort to fight food insecurity.

Knowing that 20 percent of America's hungry households have at least one member who has served in the military, knowing that one out of -- one out of every four veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan doesn't have the essential amount of proper nutrition. We knew that we had to do something, and we knew we could rely upon you.

So last month, together with our partners, we launched a Uniting to Combat Hunger campaign with a goal of raising 50,000 meals for the hungry with an emphasis on veterans, beginning with those living here in our host city.

It brings -- it gives me -- it brings me great pleasure to announce that we've crushed the goal of 50,000 meals, and together we'll deliver 50,839 meals to local veterans and others in need. Thank you all --  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you all to those who contributed to this important campaign, whether it was through canned goods, monetary donations, or through voluntary hours, including those who volunteered over the weekend here at our packing event. You have helped to make a positive impact on so many.

And a special thanks goes to Humana, Harvesters, and After the Harvest for your commitment and dedication to the cause. It has been an absolute pleasure working with your teams, and we look forward to continuing our working together in communities across the nation.

PRESENTATION OF SMART/MAHER  
VFW NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION TEACHER AWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Since our founding in 1899, the VFW has placed great emphasis on educating our Nation's youth on civic responsibilities and patriotism, enhancing [sic] in 1999, the Smart/Maher and VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award as a way to recognize teachers who go above and beyond to instill the core values into their students' daily lives.

America's teachers play a vital role in raising our nation's next generation of leaders as civic-minded patriots. And this year's award recipients undeniably are -- undeniably stand out.

The three teachers you're about to meet were selected for their innovative teaching methods, creating class projects, and eye-opening trips used to bring history alive and encourage their students to become better citizens. Each recipient will receive the \$1,000 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award for personal development; and their school, likewise, will receive a \$1,000 award.

To this year's recipients, I want to personally say thank you for going above and beyond for our next generation of leaders. Congratulations on a job well done.

INTRODUCTION OF EMILY COWAN EZELL  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AWARD RECIPIENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: First up, I'm pleased to introduce to you the National Citizenship Education Teacher of the year representing grades 5 -- K through 5: Emily Cowan Ezell of Cowan, Tennessee.

Emily has dedicated her 22-year career to instilling patriotism in her students. She was inspired to write, "This is Our Country," a play that informs students about America's history and traditions, emphasizing an appreciation for the veterans who sacrificed for our freedom. Under her direction, the play has been performed annually, in conjunction with Veterans Day, for at least 15 years.

Ms. Ezell goes above and beyond the call of duty when it comes to educating her students about veterans. Emily is known for planning annual field trips to military museums, inviting local veterans to visit her classrooms, and her showcasing veterans' pictures and stories to help ensure patriotism lives around -- year-round in her school.

Please join me in welcoming Emily Ezell, sponsored by VFW Post 10904 in Manchester, Tennessee.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And the plaque reads Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year, Grade Levels K to 5, presented to Emily Cowan Ezell, Cowan Elementary School, 2017-2018.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY EMILY COWAN EZELL

MS. COWAN EZELL: Well, hello, VFW. I really like you now. You are a game-changer, and you are a difference-maker. You have been in my life.

I want to thank you for this high honor and for encouraging me to pursue my passion, which is to instill patriotism in the hearts and minds of the next generation.  
(Applause)

MS. COWAN EZELL: And it is my pleasure each year to also teach them and educate them on the importance of honoring and respecting our veterans, for it is you who provide us with all of our freedoms. And we appreciate you, and you are remembered.

Aside from being a game-changer and a difference-maker, the VFW has inspired me to dream. You have pushed me to dream bigger and bolder dreams than I have ever thought possible. Once upon a time my dream was: If I could just meet a living president, what would that do for my classroom?

That was before I met the VFW. Now, I understand what makes the difference in my classroom are our veterans. And when I bring those veterans in each year and I see the connection that they make with those students, that is what warms my heart. That's what makes me feel that I'm doing a small part -- you-all do a much bigger part -- but it's the veterans that make this country great.

I would like to thank Kimberly King, the Post Commander that has made all of this possible for me. And I'd like to thank my family that I drug all the way here. They all came with me. Thank you for coming and supporting me.  
(Applause)

MS. COWAN EZELL: All that I am able to accomplish each year is by God's grace. And it is my prayer that God will bless each of you as He has -- as you have blessed me. And your motto says, "No one does more for veterans," but I believe it is much bigger than that. I believe that no one does more for America. Thank you, VFW.  
(Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF SARA GIBSON COAN  
MIDDLE SCHOOL AWARD RECIPIENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Next I'm very pleased to introduce the National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year, representing grades 6 through 8: Sara Gibson Coan of Milford, Virginia.

Sara is not just any U.S. history teacher. From spearheading her history club's creation of a Korean War Memorial in Caroline County and portraying important historical figures from every era, to leading field trips to local war and military museums, Sara was chosen for her unique ability to bring history to life while helping her students understand the service and sacrifice of America's veterans.

Through field trips and events hosted at the school, she connects her students to veterans who give firsthand accounts of their time in the military, going as far as to host a welcome home event, where students and staff spent time interviewing and getting to know the veterans.

Please join me in welcoming Sara Gibson Coan, sponsored by VFW Post 8529 in Sandston, Virginia.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the year grade level 6 to 8, presented to Sara Gibson Coan, Caroline Middle School, 2017-2018.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY SARA GIBSON COAN

MS. GIBSON COAN: I saw Virginia, so hey.  
(Cheering and applause)

MS. GIBSON COAN: Please forgive my nerves because this is a far bigger crowd than I'm ever used to I usually, max, have 38 in my classroom. So ...  
(Laughter)

MS. GIBSON COAN: And you're a lot bigger. Hopefully better behaved too. We'll see.  
(Laughter)

MS. GIBSON COAN: Thank you so much for having me here today. When I entered into teaching, I had no idea what was in store for me. This award means so much to me, not because of the title, the prestige, or the sheer award, but because of the fact that our country's heroes feel I am worthy of this recognition.

I always tell my students that our veterans are our national treasures and should be honored and treated as such. My students hear me say every year, all year, "If you see a veteran, be sure to thank them," not just for their service to our country, but also for the sacrifices they made for us. They sacrificed time with their family, their education, their youth, and sometimes deeper parts of themselves for us. So a big thank you to you-all. I could not have achieved success in my career without the help of some very important people in my life. First and foremost, thank you to Tina Darby and her dad James Pitts, and VFW Post 8529 for the nomination.

My partner in crime, Ms. Ruth Judd, who without her our school's history club would not be possible. She is the yin to my yang and a very dear friend.

My parents who actually still answer the phone even though they know I'm calling to ask a favor for one of my many, many crazy ideas. They are always there to support me -- to support not only myself but all of my veterans. Yes, I consider every veteran I meet to be one of my veterans, including the thousand-something of you. I can't shake all of your hands. I'd break my wrist. But thank you.

And finally to my new husband. The last time I thanked him, he was my fiancé. Teaching isn't just a career. It's a lifestyle. And I'm sure he did not -- that poor man did not realize what he was getting into when he said, "I do."

But he has been my rock and my shoulder to cry on when I think I've taken on more than I could handle, and my biggest cheerleader in my chosen path.

I'd also like to thank every VFW member for sponsoring my scholarship to attend the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. I was just there last week taking a class on the Medal of Honor in World War II, and it was an experience I'm not likely to ever forget.

And I did learn and will use the Character Development Program in my classroom. I'm actually meeting with my principal on Wednesday to get it instilled school-wide.

(Applause)

MS. GIBSON COAN: While at that class last week, I had a teacher ask me how she can get veterans more involved in her classroom. I told her email anyone and everyone you think will be able to help, and to start with her local VFW post. Bringing veterans into a classroom provides an education to my children that I simply can't give them.

I've never served and I like to think I'm still fairly young; so a veteran who can give a firsthand account of history is truly magical.

We take veterans with us on field trips to museums. We host them at our annual Veterans Day ceremony, and we have them in whenever the opportunity allows.

I'm pretty well liked by my students, but they often tell me that I should have vets in to teach the class more often, not to be offensive to me, you know, Ms. -- Mrs. Coan.

Bridging the gap between generations is helping my students to understand the country they are lucky enough to call home. I'm trying to teach future generations to not take for granted all that our veterans have provided for us. Earning this award has only made me want to find more ways to honor our veterans in my classroom.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

(Standing ovation)

#### INTRODUCTION OF MICHAEL RAUENHORST HIGH SCHOOL AWARD RECIPIENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: And last but certainly not least, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to you VFW Life Member and National Citizenship Education Teacher of the year, representing grades 9 through 12, Michael Rauenhorst from North Pole, Alaska --  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: -- an Air Force veteran and aerospace science teacher at North Pole High School in Alaska.

Michael was selected at the high school level for encouraging community volunteerism. His leadership of the school's Air Force Junior ROTC in a curriculum of action tours, which reinforce not only science in the classroom, but encourages citizenship and strengthening students' perspectives of aviation and America's military, past, present, and future.

Please help me in congratulating VFW Life Member Michael Rauenhorst, sponsored by VFW Post 10029 and its Auxiliary in North Pole, Alaska.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: The Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year, grade levels 9 to 12, presented to Michael Rauenhorst, North Pole High School, 2017-2018.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY MICHAEL RAUENHORST

COMRADE RAUENHORST: Well, good morning.  
(Good morning)

COMRADE RAUENHORST: Thank you for this award, and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I am humbled by this recognition and

honored to be able to share a few words about teaching patriotism to today's youth with you, my fellow veterans.

Almost eight years ago, after 28 years of military service, where I started as a private in the Marine Corps Reserve, and retired as a colonel in the Alaska National Guard, I took on one of the greatest leadership challenges of my life. I became a teacher.

The person I'd like to thank most for myself becoming a teacher is my wife, Heather. Without her, I probably would not have had the courage to retire from the military to accept a teaching position in our school when the opportunity presented itself.

Heather spent her entire career in education, and she opened my eyes and heart to working with kids and making a difference in their lives. Without her, I probably would not have heard or heeded the voice of God calling me to this profession.

And teaching is indeed a calling. And I wasn't exaggerating when I called it one of the greatest leadership challenges of my life. See, I have six kids; so I might have slightly underestimated how hard it would be to teach civic responsibility and patriotism to other people's children.

That's the mission of the Air Force JROTC program: To develop citizens of character dedicated to serving their Nation and community. To achieve this mission, each JROTC program takes a branch of the military and we use that culture, history, traditions, and values as the foundation to develop better citizens.

In our high school, we start with the Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all that we do. Each summer, our JROTC cadets participate in the leadership camp led by instructors, like myself, and mentors from each of the four branches of the military.

During the camp, we have a flag retirement ceremony in which cadets place each of the 13 stripes of the flag into a fire, followed by the field of blue as we retire a flag. There is a script that is read aloud for each stripe.

While that ceremony itself stirs patriotism in all participants, we then have each JROTC instructor and military mentor write a name on a piece of the flag and then proclaim aloud the name of a vet killed in action or in the line of duty as they place it in the fire.

I can see the astonishment in the students' eyes as 15 to 20 adults each recite names of friends and family members they've lost to service in this country.

I think this part of the ceremony has a lasting impact on each student because of the -- because most of these military mentors are not much older than our students, and they're only a few years out of high school themselves. It is readily apparent how much these young military members have already given to their country.



Needless to say, it is an emotional time for all as we reverently remember those who've made the ultimate sacrifice. And that's one way that we introduce students to the important concept of sacrifice.

In today's culture, filled with instant gratification, sacrifice is not a familiar concept to a lot of high school students, and yet I know nothing worth having comes without sacrifice. My students won't win competitions or trophies without all their sacrifice and practice. They won't get the best with grades they can without sacrificing a few social engagements. Those are the everyday, little sacrifices I need them to understand and embrace in order to grow up, be productive citizens, and have good lives.

But I also want them to know that their freedoms are the result of sacrifices of others. I want them to be inspired by those like you who have lived a life of service before self.

I want to assure you that your sacrifices have not been in vain, because my students are learning to follow your example. These kids amaze me with how much they demonstrate service before self.

One of the things we take special pride in is setting and achieving lofty goals for community service hours. Over the last four years, our cadet corps of approximately 95 cadets have averaged around 3,800 hours of community service per school year.

And they aren't just supporting activities at their school. They're organizing blood drives. They're doing setup and teardown for community health fairs. And they're serving our community's first responders with an annual awards banquet. They ask what more they can do for our community long after they've already met our goal for community service hours.

I'm also pleased to tell you that dozens of our students from our JROTC program have enlisted to serve our country. While JROTC program is prohibited from being a military recruitment program because our mission is to function as a high school citizen's development program, we do expose the cadets to the military in the same manner that we expose them to college, apprenticeship programs, and career opportunities after high school.

We are fortunate to be able to expose our cadets to the Army, the Air Force, and the Alaska National Guard, thanks to the outstanding support of the military members, units, and bases in our great state. In the last eight years, more than 50 of my cadets have enlisted or been commissioned to serve in our Nation's military. I want you-all to rest well tonight knowing that the future of our great nation is in good hands with these young people.

So I accept this award on behalf of the students who give me the hope that those names that we placed into the fire were not lost in vain. And I look forward to displaying this award in our school for all of our students to share in the success acknowledged by this award.

As is often the case in the military, the one receiving an award or decoration is usually standing on the shoulders of a great team that put them in the position to succeed. And this award is no different.

So in closing, I'd like to share credit for our program's success with -- and express my gratitude to the North Pole VFW Post 10029, especially to Chief -- retired Chief Master Sergeant Brad Spilinek who nominated me for this award; the leadership at North Pole High School in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District; the parents and guardians of my cadets; and community supporters, such as the many members of the VFW, who inspire my students with your great example.

God bless the VFW and our great nation. Thank you.

(Applause)

#### PRESENTATION OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BRIAN DUFFY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'm pleased to present our next guest with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation in recognition of his years of dedicated service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Brian Duffy joined the VFW back in 1983 with the United -- with service in the United States Air Force. Brian served as a jet engine mechanic on F-4 Phantom Fighter aircraft, and later as a flight engineer aboard C-141 Starlifter Transport Aircraft.

He deployed in support of several campaigns to include Grenada, Panama, Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Then successfully transitioned to a career in civil aviation, serving as a flight engineer instructor, and ultimately retiring from UPS as Assistant Chief Pilot, having flown worldwide as an instructor/check captain on Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft.

Brian was elected VFW Commander-in-Chief on July 27th, 2016, at our 117th National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, making him the first Desert Storm veteran to lead our organization.

True to his Irish heritage, Brian harnessed the battle cry, "Clear the Way," during his year as National Commander, and encouraged all VFW members to look for ways to say "yes," looking for innovative ways of doing business, looking for that easy button, looking for all the ways in which we can best serve America's veterans. His contribution to our organization and to all those who exist to serve are many.

Please join me in honoring Brian Duffy with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation.

(Applause)

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Distinguished Service Medal and Citation awarded to Brian Duffy in sincere appreciation and spirited recognition of his more than 35 years of dedicated and unwavering service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

His passion for serving others and progressive thinking has earned him the respect of his peers and served him well in clearing the way for veterans,

service members, military families, and local communities during his many leadership roles within the VFW, to include his time in the organization's highest office as Commander-in-Chief.

His steadfast commitment to upholding the values and mission of the VFW has left an indelible mark on the organization, earned him our deepest respect and appreciation.

In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hand, this 23rd day of July, 2018. Signed Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BRIAN J. DUFFY

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. And, Kevin, thank you as well.

Let me thank -- where to begin. Let me thank Post 6590, Cookstown, New Jersey. Let me thank Post 120 in Garden City, New York. And let me especially thank Middletown Post 1170 in Kentucky.

Let me thank the Department of Kentucky for helping me along the way. And let me thank the commanders, 2016, "Clear the Way" the Irish brigade, if you're here, one last time please stand and be recognized.  
(Applause and cheers)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I was mentioning to Keith, I think it was last week, I think as we -- we progress through these opportunities in life, we think of those that have helped along the way. And I've talked about mentors many times, but let me -- and he mentioned about the easy button and looking for ways to say "yes." And some of that is obviously borrowed.

I could tell you one of the best quotes is from Bob McDonald, the former VA secretary, when he encouraged all of us, and me in particular, to always be willing to make the hard right decision versus the easy wrong one.

I can always -- I'll also tell you that an old chief pilot told me, when he was talking about leadership but he used the aviation term, he said, "The only way you can gain lift and altitude is by leaning into the wind. You will never gain altitude with the thrust reversers deployed."

And let me add another one. Cooper T. Holt, the great commander -- past commander from Tennessee. Perhaps -- as he understood I was progressing, he told me, "Wherever you go, whatever you do, never sell your soul."

And, finally, let me add one to all of you, let me continue to encourage you that wherever you find VFW dragons, slay them.

Thank you.  
(Applause)

FRED C. HALL MEMORIAL OUTSTANDING POST  
SPECIAL PROJECT AWARD TO VFW POST 12160

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Community service is the foundation -- is the founding VFW tenet, and our rich tradition of service can be evidenced by our members' nearly 9 million hours of volunteerism each year. Spent in a variety of ways, these hours represent everything from visiting with veterans, service members and their families at local VA facilities, to maintaining veterans' memorials and teaching classrooms of children proper flag etiquette.

On August 25th, 2017, Category 4 Hurricane Harvey made landfall barely 30 miles away from VFW Corporal Mark R. Goyet Memorial Post 12160 in Sinton, Texas.

In the days immediately following the storm, post members jumped into action. Converting their new post building into a headquarters for disaster support, members collected and stored nonperishable food while setting up distribution points across several local towns to help support those who had lost everything.

In addition to providing school supplies to displaced students, when several county disaster shelters were cut off from receiving aid and supplies, members of the post rallied together. Rolling up their sleeves and rolling out barbecue pits, they prepared and served hot meals to over 2,500 people a day, ultimately feeding between 5,000 and 8,000 of those in need in the region.

But their work didn't stop there. Post 12160 paid it forward by loading leftover donations, including over 500 cases of water, boxes of clothing, and thousands of pounds of food to assist relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

During times of crisis, it is the kindness, support, and tireless work like that of the members of VFW Post 12160 help illustrate why "No one does more for veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

Please join me in presenting the Fred C. Hall Memorial Outstanding Post Special Project Award to Corporal Mark R. Goyet Post 12160. Accepting the award on behalf of the post is Post Commander Todd Richardson.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: The Fred C. Hall Memorial Outstanding Post Special Project, 2017-2018, Corporal Mark R. Goyet Memorial VFW Post 12160.

REMARKS BY COMMANDER TODD RICHARDSON  
CORPORAL MARK R. GOYET MEMORIAL VFW POST 12160

POST COMMANDER RICHARDSON: Good morning, Comrades, and thank you. We are honored to be presented this Fred C. Hall Award.

To be standing up here in front of you is just -- it's very humbling as we are a new post. We were established in May of 2017. As we were trying to establish our post --  
(Applause)

POST COMMANDER RICHARDSON: As we were trying to establish our post, Hurricane Harvey tore through south Texas. We had an opportunity to help veterans and the community. Our comrades stepped up and took action. Many of their own homes were damaged. It's times like this that we must support our communities and do what the VFW does best.

We've learned so much in a short year. And I would like to personally thank our mentors from the state of Texas: Lupita Perez, Dan West, Roy Grona, and the Department -- and the rest of the Department of Texas who's been with us every step of the way, even going door to door distributing food and coordinating more food to come into Sinton.

We also want to thank those departments out there that sent food into south Texas coming through Sinton and our post.

Keep serving others, and thank you again for choosing Corporal Mark R. Goyet Post 12160 in Sinton, Texas, for this award. We are honored.  
(Applause)

#### INTRODUCTION OF DEBRA ANDERSON, QUARTERMASTER GENERAL AND WORLD WAR I COMMISSION MEMBER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Commemorating the wars and conflicts of our Nation's past and honoring all those who have served in them is a VFW priority. We help the local -- we help to rally local-level support of national endeavors, because we know that by working together, America's heroes will never be forgotten. It's just another way we're able to give back to those who have sacrificed so much for our way of life.

As a World War I commemoration supporter, the VFW helps spotlight events, publications, productions, activities, and programs that allow people in the United States to learn about the history of the "Great War," the United States' involvement in the war, and the war's effects on the remainder of the 20th century, all while commemorating and honoring the participation of the United States and its citizens in the war effort.

Our next speaker is not only quartermaster general for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but in 2016 she was also sworn in as the newest commissioner to the United States World War I Centennial Commission, tasked with writing public outreach, education, programs and commemorative events.

Please join me in welcoming Quartermaster General and World War I Centennial Commission member, Debra Anderson.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY DEBRA ANDERSON QUARTERMASTER GENERAL  
AND WORLD WAR I COMMISSION MEMBER

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL ANDERSON: Good morning. As Commander Harman said, in addition to being your Quartermaster General, I am a commissioner on the World War I Centennial Commission. And because this is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I really wanted a few minutes this morning to give you an update on some of the things going on with the commission.

I should have a remote. Okay. We'll just talk through the slides.

The commission was formed in 2013 by act of Congress. There are 12 members, 12 commissioners, on this centennial commission. Three were appointed by the president of the United States, and six were appointed by senior members of Congress. The other three are appointed by their organizations.

There is always a commissioner representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars. There's a commissioner representing the American Legion. And there is a commissioner for the World War I National Memorial and Museum, and that happens to be Dr. Matthew Naylor, who you heard speak at the memorial ceremony on Sunday.

So there's only 12 of us, but we've got a staff and a lot of advisers in order to make sure that America adequately, appropriately recognizes the centennial of the war and takes the appropriate actions to educate Americans.

We actually have three missions: To educate Americans about the service and accomplishments of U.S. forces in World War I, to commemorate those events of a century ago that truly continue to shape us today, and to honor the 4.7 million Americans who served during that war and the 116,000 who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

At last year's VFW convention, the delegates approved a resolution to support the mission of the World War I Centennial Commission. And this truly gives us another way to do as our charter says, "perpetuate the memory and history of our dead." 4.7 million served, 2 million deployed, and 116,000 did not come home.

There are no more living veterans of World War I; so it's up to us to ensure that they are not forgotten.

The VFW has supported every major memorial in Washington, DC, including the Vietnam Wall, the Korean War Memorial, the World War II Memorial. And they're all located, as I said, on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

A major, major conflict that has not been commemorated in DC is World War I. And we've got the beautiful memorial here in Kansas City. I encourage you to visit that. But there really needs to be a memorial in Washington, DC.

Now, Congress has said no more memorials on the National Mall, and the Desert Storm Memorial was really fortunate to get into that space that they

got. But we recognized several years ago that we weren't going to get on the mall, and we had to find an appropriate location to put that memorial.

And in Washington, DC, just two blocks north of the mall, is a park called Pershing Park. And on this map -- I know it's really hard to read there, so I will just tell you to the -- to the left or west of the red space is the White House. So it's just a block off the White House. South of that is the Washington Monument, the tall monument in Washington, DC. Bottom of the photo is the National Mall and the Capitol buildings are just off the page to the bottom right.

So it's very close to the Capitol, the White House, and the other memorials. The red space is Pershing Park. It's not on the mall, but symbolically it's right there in a high-traffic area on Pennsylvania Avenue and close to those other monuments.

This is what the park looks like today. The central figure -- the central feature is a pool that could also be used as an ice skating rink back when it was first designed, but it hasn't had water in it for 10 years.

To the east side is a statue of General Pershing and two walls commemorating the American Expeditionary Forces of World War I.

As you can see in the photos, the park is truly in disrepair. And if you walk it today, you'll just see that, you know, the water's not flowing, things are falling apart. The statue is still there. But it's really a mess. It just -- it looks terrible. So you would think that we would be able to revitalize this park and make it beautiful and it be a done deal.

But as Scott Stump spoke about the bureaucracy in Washington, DC, we have also been dealing with that. But we're very fortunate and appreciative that last week the Commission of Fine Arts did approve the design that I'm getting ready to show you. So we've passed that major hurdle that what we plan to do is -- everybody's in agreement, and we can very soon get started on this memorial.

The next picture should show the design for the new memorial. There it goes. The shallow pool will be rebuilt. The landscaping will be all redone to make it a beautiful, peaceful retreat; a nice park in a busy city, where it's quiet and people can enjoy nature and enjoy the water.

The focal point will be this sculpture wall to the far end -- or the west end of the pool of water. So in this photo, you're standing at the Pershing statue looking across the water to this -- to this wall. And this wall is going to be 56 feet long. So just imagine how big that's going to be. And then from the other direction, here you're looking from the wall back toward Pershing.

And then the next slide is some details from the wall. It started out as bas-relief. And if you know what that is, it's a flat surface that then has some dimension to it with figures.

But our sculptor was able to, through some new technology, find a way to have his figures pop from the wall. So it's like a half or a three-quarter sculpture, but it's still all connected in the background on the wall.

The sculptor is Sabin Howard. The figures will be slightly larger than life. And they – the wall itself will tell a story.

The next picture has got the entire wall, but the photos don't do it justice. You'll see a model of this or a maquette at Booth No. 541. And that will -- that will give you an idea of what it actually looks like.

But I want you to hear this story because -- because it does tell a story of a soldier during the war. But it isn't just that soldier. It really represents all veterans. I think it's something that many people in this room will relate to as you hear the progression in terms of what's happening to that soldier.

So I want you to hear that story. We're going to play a five-, six-minute video clip with Sabin Howard, the sculptor, talking about the wall and what it took to design that and what the meaning is behind it. So if we'll play the video, please.

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION

(Whereupon, a video was shown at this time.)

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL ANDERSON: Isn't that beautiful?  
(Applause)

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL ANDERSON: So imagine this 56-foot sculpture wall at the end of a pool, and it symbolizes courage and sacrifice and transformation and brotherhood and family. So it's all there in the story, and really no matter what service you were in and what conflict you were in. It speaks to me, and I hope that it speaks to you.

In addition to supporting the memorial, the commission has those other functions I talked about. I won't go into any detail, but there's an educational component so that -- so that teachers can have access to materials to teach from. There are -- there's a Poppy program so that if posts want to sell these Poppy seeds, the proceeds that they earn after buying the package, stays in the post. But what they -- what they pay for the package, then, goes to build the memorial.

In partnership with the Pritzker's Military Museum & Library, the commission-funded 100 Cities/100 Memorials, we're trying to bring attention to memorials across the country. We want to identify all those memorials through the Memorial Hunter program, and there -- there was 100 selected for this honor to be selected as a commission for recognition.

There's also a silver dollar coin through the U.S. Mint, with profits going to the memorial. And a stamp is coming out next week with a World War I theme. So lots of different things going on that individuals and posts can get involved in.

I do want to talk a minute -- a moment about bells of peace. If we'll advance the slides. There we go. Bells of peace is really the next big



opportunity. The 11th day of the 11th hour, 2018, is when the war ended, and so -- excuse me, 1918. 2018 we want to commemorate that.

So on that day, at that time, we are asking cities and churches across the country to toll their bells 21 times. And you can get involved by talking to your local churches, getting proclamations from mayors and governors, and doing what you can to support the tolling of the bells so all across the country, at 11:00 o'clock, people are recognizing the sacrifices of World War I.

That day there'll be a ceremony in Washington, DC. I expect there'll be ceremonies all across the country. And so be aware and support those as well.

So that is a really quick summary, but it's -- it's an important commission. This is the year that everything is happening. I wanted to bring you up to date on what is going on with that.

I'm really honored to be a member of that commission, and I thank you all for your support. Thank you.  
(Applause)

PRESENTATION OF "51 CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP GROWTH"  
CITATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: For those of you who regularly attend the national convention, the next presentation will not come as any surprise.

For 51 consecutive years, the members of the Department of Arizona come together -- have come together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the Grand Canyon state.

What this department has accomplished is truly remarkable. And I commend each and every member of the Department of Arizona for their years of devotion and the tireless efforts that they have gone into reaching this momentous achievement.

Now, in honor of the hard work and dedication, I would like to call on Lewis Wood, 2018-2019 Department Commander of Arizona, to accept this consecutive years of membership growth citation. Congratulations to all in the great Department of Arizona.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Certificate of accommodation awarded to the Department of Arizona in recognition of the remarkable achievement of 51 consecutive years of membership sustained by a department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

In Witness Whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, 23rd day of July, 2018.

Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; attested, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

(Applause)

REMARKS BY COMMANDER LEWIS WOOD DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WOOD: I'm honored to receive this award on behalf of the Department of Arizona, and I will tell you that we've already started on 52 years in a row.

(Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF RETIRED U.S. ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
ALCIDES LUGO, JUNIOR, DIRECTOR, VFW VETERANS VILLAGE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Our next guest is here representing a very unique and special endeavor by the VFW Department of Florida. Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Alcides Lugo, Junior, is executive director of the VFW Retirement Home in Fort McCoy, Florida.

The retirement home is -- the VFW Retirement Home is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit veterans' organization owned outright and operated by the VFW Department of Florida. And it is the only facility of its kind anywhere in the world.

The goal of the facility is to provide a homelike atmosphere to veterans who have proven their loyalty and patriotism by serving our country in foreign lands during times of war.

The home's guiding principle is to provide affordable, independent living accommodations to VFW and auxiliary members and their spouses.

The doors of the VFW Retirement Home opened in October of 1991. The facility is spread out over 42 acres and rests among tranquil oaks and palms.

Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Al Lugo.

REMARKS BY RETIRED U.S. ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
ALCIDES LUGO, JUNIOR, DIRECTOR, VFW VETERANS VILLAGE

(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL LUGO: Good morning, Commander-in-Chief; our National Auxiliary President, Ms. Dee Guillory; Past Commander-in-Chief, National Officers.

A special hello to the Department of Florida and our current state commander, Mr. Danny Anderson, and our incoming National Council member, Mr. Benny Bachand.

Commander, you have had a phenomenal year, and the VFW veteran affiliates cannot thank you enough for always remembering us and taking care of us every step of the way.

Back in 2016, our Commander-in-Chief -- Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief -- Keith Harman came and visited us for our 25th-year anniversary, and that was very special to us.

As -- as you know, the Chief took all my thunder and gave my speech for me; so I'm going to move forward a little bit, but he did a great job saying what I was going to say. So I appreciate it.

But I started (unintelligible) in September and -- at the village. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to take care of our Nation's heroes that so readily and proudly serve our country. And it's refreshing to know that I can count on the support of the national organization along the way.

Lastly, I'd like to thank publically Past Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien from the great state of Indiana. For the past three years he has spent four to five months there working -- basically working for food, but basically working and doing whatever he can to assist our veterans. And our veterans cannot wait for him to get back this -- this December.

So, Commander, as an old calvary guy, you know that I've got a small token of appreciation for everything you have done for us, for all our veterans and for us at the village. Sir?

The Key to the Village Director Award presented to Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, 2017-2018.

Commander, thank you for your leadership, mentorship, and your friendship from the men and women of the VFW Veterans Village, Fort McCoy, Florida. Chief?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. Thank you, AI.  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL LUGO: Thank you very much. And come visit if you're ever in Florida. Scouts out.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my distinct pleasure to present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 118th National Convention --

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: We have to move to announcements --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. All right. Okay. Go ahead. I kneel.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY ADJUTANT GENERAL BRIAN DUFFY

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: A change we are moving to announcements. Time is now 11:50. We were scheduled to be done at 12:15. So this is good.

The announcements: The Past Commander-in-Chief Furgess and our current Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman's Commander Reception is at the

Marriott downtown. The room is actually called 12th Street. As you go in the lobby, it'll be to your left. And that will take place at 6:00 to 8:00. Again Furgess/Harman Commander Reception at the Marriott 6:00 to 8:00.

I've been getting several texts, and I appreciate it that folks saw a lot of the Trace Adkins VFW concert T-shirts and were inquiring as to they didn't see them at the arena. We were not able to sell them at the arena, and folks may not be aware that they are available, but I understand they're going very fast.

Hopefully I'm not telling you this and they're gone. But if you have interest, please visit for other items. But if that's of particular interest -- the VFW store for those commemorative Trace Adkins concert shirts.

And, finally, continue to monitor the -- download and monitor the VFW app for any changes in the schedule.

Commander, I yield back to you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We will -- we will just break for lunch. So you are dismissed. We will -- I'm sure that's -- that probably breaks your heart, but we are recessed until 2:00 p.m.

(A lunch recess was taken.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION  
MONDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 23, 2018

(The First Business Session of the 119th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was called to order in the Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, at 1:31 p.m. by Commander-in-Chief Harman.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll now call this order -- for our afternoon Business Session in order.

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION  
TO THE 118TH NATIONAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is my -- it is now my distinct pleasure to present a Certificate of Appreciation to the 118th National Convention Committee for their work in planning and conducting last year's very successful national convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Here to accept the award on behalf of the committee is Larry Rivers, the National Convention committee co-chair for the 118th National Convention.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Certificate of Appreciation presented to 118th National Convention Committee in extraordinary appreciation and esteemed recognition of its outstanding dedication and persistent drive to ensure the success of the 118<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in New Orleans, Louisiana, July 22nd-26th, 2017.

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 July, 2018.

Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; attested to, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY 118TH NATIONAL CONVENTION  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN LARRY RIVERS

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much.

On behalf of all of us in Louisiana and with our State Commander, we want to thank all of you for coming to New Orleans and being such gracious hosts. It's always an honor when we have a chance to host our fellow VFW

members. We enjoyed it last year. We hope you had a great time, and we hope you'll come back to our beautiful state many, many times.

On behalf of Matt and myself and the entire committee -- would the Louisiana delegation in the rear please stand. These men and women here are the bulk of those that worked so hard for you last year.

And thank you for your special recognition. Thank you very much.

#### REPORT ON CONVENTION CREDENTIALS - BARNEY HILL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now request that Barney Hill give us the initial credentials report. Barney?

COMRADE HILL: Good afternoon, Commander-in-Chief, Council Members, and delegates.

The Opening Credential Report for the 119th National Convention at the close of business yesterday at 4:00 p.m., July 22nd, 2018:

Total Delegates, 10,733; total Department Commanders, 47; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 13; total National Officers, 43; for a grand total of 10,836. Total registered for the 119th National Convention is 1,598.

That is my report, sir.

#### REPORT ON CONVENTION RULES – CHAIRMAN AND PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALTER G. HOGAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll have the Report of Committees on Convention Rules, Chairman Walter G. Hogan.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Harman.

Our committee met yesterday, July 22nd in the year 2018. I would like to thank the Vice Chairman, Clifford Olson, Past Commander-in-Chief from Massachusetts, and certainly Dave Prohaska, our staff adviser for their assistance.

This year printed in your Schedule of Resolution Booklet on pages 55 and 56, you will find the proposed convention rules for the 119th VFW National Convention.

During our deliberations and with input from Convention Parliamentarian Larry Maher, one additional adjustment to the proposed printed version has been recommended. Please amend your printed version by replacing the word "session," which appears twice, with the word "meeting" where it appears in Rule 14. Everybody got that? Wonderful.

With that, the committee has agreed on the following recommendations which I have respectfully submitted for your consideration.

119th VFW Convention Rules:

No. 1: That in accordance and in conjunction with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure and with any exception noted here, the current

addition of "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised," shall be recognized as parliamentary authority for this convention.

No. 2: That when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or adjust the convention, the delegate shall rise, address the Chair as Comrade Commander-in-Chief; and after being recognized, shall state their name, post number, and department before proceeding.

No. 3: A registered delegate shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject or pending resolution for a period not to exceed five minutes each, except by consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of this convention present and voting, provided that the chairman 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 delegation presenting the resolution an opportunity for five minutes of final rebuttal.

No. 4: All resolutions offered by individual registered delegates must bear the name of -- 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 the committee no later than 4:30, Tuesday, July 24th, 2018, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the department convention for consideration.

No. 5: All resolutions offered on the floor at the convention will initially be in writing and shall automatically and without reading be referred to the adjutant general for assignment to the proper committee.

No. 6: Committee chairmen, in reporting on resolutions referred to their committees, shall first read the number of 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 automatically be rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it be approved, in which case it will be brought up for debate and convention action.

No. 7: This convention will not consider any resolutions dealing with race, creed, or religion, or endorse anyone for public office. No resolutions will be considered on the expenditure or appropriation of organizational funds.

No. 8: The conventions will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by other veterans' organizations or requesting us to join with any other organization in supporting legislation not expressly proposed by the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

No. 9: Only delegates to this convention may speak in debate, make motions, and vote during convention proceedings.

No. 10: Delegates shall vote individually on any item of business coming before the convention and cannot be required to vote as a block with others from their delegation.

No. 11: Voting strength shall be determined by those delegates registered as of the close of the credential registration booth the previous day and as reported to the National Convention.

The department commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each Business Session, a list of posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates registered those posts listed on the report will be afforded voting privileges

No. 12: On roll calls, the department commander of each delegation shall poll their delegation's registered delegates on the floor and shall announce the vote of their delegation.

Number -- where am I? No. 12 -- yeah -- no.

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 fractional part of a vote.

No. 14: Reconsideration of a motion or a resolution upon which final disposition has been made shall not be allowed after the meeting at which it was acted on has been recessed, unless the body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that meeting.

No. 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 -- department-registered delegations is demanded by those registered delegates of said department, the adjutant general shall poll the registered delegates without discussion of question.

No. 16: In accordance with Section 621 of the National By-Laws, voting shall be by acclamation, except a roll call may be demanded by ten registered delegates representing posts in ten separate departments or by order of the Commander-in-Chief.

No. 17: Nominating speeches for the national office shall be limited to five minutes each. The time allotted to encompass all seconding speeches shall be limited to four minutes' total. Nomination and election of National Officers will be according to the Congressional Charter By-Laws in Section 617 of the National Manual of Procedure.

No. 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 disturbance which interferes with the orderly business of the convention.

No. 19: The Commander-in-Chief may, as deemed necessary and appropriate, through informing the members of the activities of this



convention, authorize that all parts of the convention be streamed through the website of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

No. 20: Consent of two-thirds of the voting strength of the convention present and voting is necessary for suspension of the rules of the convention.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that these rules be accepted by the convention at this time.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OLSON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Cliff Olson, delegate from Post 144, Massachusetts. I second the motion.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we have one other item of business that we must do before we're dismissed. And I would ask Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief Cliff Olson to read a little blurb.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion made and seconded to adopt the rules of the convention. Is there any discussion on the motion? Is there any discussion? Any discussion?

Hearing no discussion, all in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The motion is carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OLSON: Comrade Commander, again, Cliff Olson, a delegate from Post 144, Massachusetts.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, in addition, our new parliamentary authority calls for the adoption of a convention agenda. Therefore, I move that the convention agenda, as currently displayed on the VFW Convention app, and as from time to time may be adjusted by the Commander-in-Chief, be adopted as the official agenda of the 119th National Convention. I so move.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Wally Hogan, delegate, Post 6498, Department of Wisconsin, seconds.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion and a second to use as the agenda – the agenda that's on the VFW app.

Is there any discussion? Discussion? Discussion?

Hearing no discussion, all in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay. The ayes have it. The motion is carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Cliff and I wish to thank for you this distinguished appointment, and ask that we be dismissed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. You are dismissed.

Before I go on to the next committee, I'd like to make a very brief announcement. We understand that everybody from time to time has to go outside and -- and smoke. But when you do that, if you're standing outside one

of the doors, please use a little discretion in disposing for the remains that you have. It's -- from what I've been told, it's getting to look kind of tacky. So we would ask you to be a little discreet in disposing for the remains.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS,  
MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL –  
CHAIRMAN AND PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LARRY W. RIVERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll have -- we'll continue on for the Report of Committees on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual, Chairman Larry Rivers.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much.

We met with our committee yesterday. And the ones of you that attended the meet- -- committee meeting, you know it was a pretty interesting session and long. We went on for almost three hours. And we had a thorough discussion of the By-Law and Manual of Procedure changes that were presented to us.

And, Commander-in-Chief, I'm pleased to report that we did finish our work and we are prepared to make our report.

At this point, please allow me to introduce the vice chairman of the committee: Past Commander-in-Chief Glenn Gardner, from the Department of Texas.

And I would also ask would the members of the by-law committee, would you please stand and let our fellow delegates see who you are so you can be recognized. Please stand, please.

If you would give these men and women a big hand, I'd appreciate it. They worked very hard yesterday.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Now, fellow comrades, the By-Laws -- proposed changes for the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure are in this little booklet that you got in your registration packet.

Now, I don't know if there were any additional ones brought up for the meeting or not. But this is the booklet that you need to review the by-laws. It's just not practical. There's so many that we can't read at full length all of those. We'd be here all day and more.

So please get this booklet that says "119th National Convention, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Proposed By-Law and Manual of Procedure and Ritual Amendments, Schedule of Resolutions, General Information." You need this booklet.

And also in keeping with the rules, as read by Chairman Hogan just a few minutes ago, there are pretty strict procedures we have to use when addressing these resolutions.

What we will do, we will -- first of all, we will read a list of the committee's recommendations for approval. And once we've read that list, there will be a motion made to adopt those proposed resolutions.

At that time, if someone wants to set aside one of those resolutions, you'll go to the microphone, name, post number, department, and ask that that resolution be set aside.

After all the resolutions that you would require be set aside has been done, we'll vote on the motion to adopt the other resolutions that were not set aside in bulk.

After we complete those resolutions in the discussion and pass or fail, then I'll read the resolutions that we recommend for disapproval. And unless those are asked to be set aside, no motion is required. They will die based on the recommendation of the committee.

So with that, if you will get your booklets ready, and I'll try to go slow so you'll have a chance -- or slower so you'll have a chance to review.

Commander-in-Chief, the committee recommends for approval the following proposed\ By-Law amendments: B-2, B-3, B-5, B-6, B-7, B-8, B-9, B-10, B-12, B-13, B-14, B-15, B-16, B-17, B-19, B-20, B-21, B-22, B-23, B-24, B-25, B-26, B-27, B-28, B-29, B-31, B-33, B-34, B-35, B-36, B-37, B-38, B-41, B-42, and B-43.

Commander in-Chief, in keeping with the rules of this convention, I move adoption of those proposed amendments.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Commander-in-Chief, Glenn Gardner, delegate of VFW Post 3359, Dallas. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion made and seconded to adopt those By-Law changes.

I recognize Microphone No. -- is it 1?

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Victor Smith, delegate from Post 1239, Beardstown, Illinois. I ask that you set aside, No. 5, No. 12, and No. 19.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I recognize Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JASON CARROLL: Commander-in-Chief, Jason Carroll, delegate, Post 3973, Department of Oregon. I request set aside B-37.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Did you say 37?

COMRADE JASON CARROLL: 37.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. Are there any others?

So we will set aside B-5, B-12, B-19, B-37. Is there any other discussion? Is there any other discussion?

Hearing no other discussion, we'll vote on the adoption of the previously read by-law changes. All in favor signify by saying aye. (Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. Motion carried.

Now we'll talk about the set-asides.  
(Inaudible)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yes. We'll call for discussion on B-5.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Chief.

B-5 was recommended by the National By-Laws Study Group and proposed by the Commander-in-Chief and deals with Eligibility to Office. Amend Section 215 to read as follows: "Eligibility to Office, National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, by replacing 'elective' with 'elected' and 'appointive' with 'appointed' where it appears.

"In the last paragraph, remove the comma after 'membership' and add 'or committee membership' after," quote, "'any office,'" close quote.

The By-Laws Study Group comment is as follows: "The change to replace 'elective' with 'elected' and 'appointive' with 'appointed' was implemented to create consistency when referring to elected and/or appointed officers throughout the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. The change clarifies that membership not in good standing -- "that members not in good standing are ineligible to serve as committee members."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH: Yes, Comrade Commander, Victor Smith, VFW Post 1239 in Beardstown, Illinois.

This proposes two there's changes. Each should be voted on separately, but neither is needed. In the first sentence, on the first "elected" says "elective offices." It doesn't say "elective officers."

We don't elect offices; we elect officers. So where the term "elected officers" is fine, but "elected offices" is not.

And the second paragraph, the paragraph that's there, it's already covered in Section 105 in "Membership" and "What's in Good Standing." So you don't need it there.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Is there any other discussion? Is there any other discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH: I move to reject B-5.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The motion on the floor was to adopt B-5. And you're speaking in opposition?

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH: In opp -- yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Is there any other discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLENN HOHMAN: Glenn Hohman, James R. "Bob" Currieo, Post 9972, Department of Arizona.

Commander-in-Chief -- Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am in support of this motion as it helps provide uniformity throughout our By-Laws, and allows us to have language be consistent throughout.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Is there any other discussion? Any other discussion?

Hearing no further discussion, all in favor of adopting B-5, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it. The motion's adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Let's go on to B-12.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: B-12. Is there any discussion on B-12?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Do you want me to read it, Chief?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yes, would you please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: "B-12, Recommended by the National By-Laws Study Group, Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief, Article IV, Districts, Section 415, Eligibility to Office. Amend Section 415, Eligibility to Office, National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, first sentence, by removing the first comma and adding 'that' after 'provided.' Replace 'elective' with 'elected' and 'appointive' with 'appointed.'

"In the last paragraph, add," quote, "'or committee membership,'" close quote, "'during'" -- quote, "'during the period of suspension.'"

The bylaws study committee comments were as follows: The change -- the changes to replace "elective" with "elected" and "appointive" with "appointed" was implemented to create consistency when referring to elected and/or appointed officers throughout the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Mic- -- chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH: Victor Smith, VFW Post 1239, Beardstown, Illinois.

My argument is the same. "Elective" describes an office and not an officer. Elected -- officers are elected. Offices are not. And the third paragraph about Membership is covered in -- under "The Good of the Order," in the "Members in Good Standing" paragraph.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. Any other discussion? Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLENN HOHMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glenn Hohman, James R. "Bob" Currie, Post 9972, Department of Arizona.

Again, this was looked at and discussed in committee regarding consistency and our change from Demeter's to Robert's Rules in the past year. And it goes along with the other two. I am --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. Thank you --

COMRADE GLENN HOHMAN: -- in favor of this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Is there any other discussion? Any other discussion?

The motion was to adopt B-12. All in favor of adopting B-12, signify by the usual sign of aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: The next is 19. B-19.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The next resolution is B-19. And I'll have the -- have it read.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: B-19 is -- it's the -- I'm not going to read this. Like Glen just mentioned, this is the same thing under -- only it applies to departments instead of the posts and districts, but it's the same issue.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Any discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE VICTOR SMITH: Yeah. Victor Smith, delegate from VFW Post 1239, Beardstown, Illinois. Since he's identified the problem, the argument would be the same.

(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Victor.

Is there any other discussion? Is there any other discussion? Any other discussion?

The motion is to adopt B-19. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it. The motion's adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: One final one, Chief, is B37.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: B-37 and we'll have the Chairman read it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: I'm going to wade through this stuff. Bear with me, Comrades.

"B-37, Recommended by the National By-Laws Study Group, Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief, Article VII, Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 709, Control of Units.

(As read) "Amend Section 709, Control of Units, National By-Laws, by replacing the fourth paragraph with the following and adding a fifth paragraph," fourth paragraph to be as follows: Quote, "No Post, County, Council, District or Department and no activity, clubroom or holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of any Post, County, Council, District or Department may own property jointly or in common with any individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation, or other business or charitable entity, except that property may be held jointly or in common a post or unit of a congressionally chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for prominent display of names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and is not contrary to any provision of law or these By-Laws.

"No Post, County, Council, District or Department or activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on its behalf, may participate in any arrangement whereby its funds are expended on property held by another entity for the joint use of such Post, County, Council, District or Department and other individuals, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations or other business or charitable entities, including veterans organizations, except that such arrangement may be made with a post or unit of a congressionally chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for prominent display of the names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States nor is contrary to the provisions of any law or these By-Laws."

The By-Laws Study Group comment is as follows: This provides posts with an opportunity to jointly own property with another veterans' organization, provided that organization is a national congressionally-chartered organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Any discussion?

Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JASON CARROLL: Commander-in-Chief, Jason Carroll, delegate, Post 3973, Department of Oregon.

The comrades who wrote the original Article 709 did it with a great deal of wisdom and experience. These joint ownership deals can be very complicated. And I'm sure that some posts are -- have a great deal of members with MBAs from Harvard and law degrees from Yale and can work through them. Most posts are not able to do that.

The experience in Oregon has been that any of these joint ownership programs never work out well. And when it comes time to unravel them, it gets very complicated. +The easiest way is just to not allow them to start with.

Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLENN GARDNER: Commander-in-Chief, Glenn Gardner, delegate, VFW Post 3359, Dallas, Texas.

I stand to approve this proposed By-Law change. Comrades, when the change was made at the beginning, perhaps that was the wise thing to do. Perhaps we didn't have all the small posts in the different areas that needed a place to meet.

Now we have a lot of small posts. We have a lot of posts that are going into community buildings with other organizations so they can have a meeting place. We've had posts, through the years -- I can tell you in Texas, for instance, we've had a lot of posts that have had dual ownership with organizations even though it was in the By-Laws.

This By-Law change allows them to do that within the By-Laws, but it specifically says that they have to do it with another federally-chartered veterans organization. So it can't be just John Doe's Veterans Group that have formed in a -- in a town and becomes the co-owner with a Veterans of Foreign Wars post.

Comrades, this is a sensible thing to do, to look at the future of this great organization and to help some of these smaller posts in some of these areas that need to have this proposed change. And I ask that you support this By-Law change.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Is there any other discussion?

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE GEORGE CARROLL: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, George Carroll, Department Judge Advocate for Oregon -- or Junior Vice. I'm sorry.

Even though it has been done in the past and undoubtedly will be done in the future, I do not believe that this is a wise decision to make.

Every time that we have to unravel these things, it just gets almost impossible sometimes to deal with people that are no longer around. Property is a long-term deal. We've got to keep our assets within the organization, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Is there any other discussion?

Yes. Sure.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Chief, I might add just one or two things that was discussed in our committee.

Number one, some of the departments -- some smaller departments said, "Look, we have posts that will never be able to afford a post home if they can't jointly own property with the American Legion, the DAV, or another congressionally-chartered organization."

The purpose of this resolution, as Past Commander-in-Chief Gardner pointed out, was -- was kind of twofold. One, over the years we've had too many cases where a VFW property was bought in the name of individuals. We used VFW monies to buy that, and then when the post goes defunct, individual is on it instead of organizations.



And so the purpose of this was to allow smaller posts or our posts to go in with other veterans' organizations on the property. But it has to be in the organization name. It has provided to for being able to prominently display our trademarks, et cetera.

And it's our hope that when you start to enter into these type of agreements, you get the right kind of legal counsel to include provisions as to how you intend to dissolve it if one or the other goes defunct. Otherwise, joint ownership is handled by the laws of that particular state.

So we thought this was about the best we could do to handle a very difficult situation. One, we don't want to prohibit small posts from the opportunity of having their own facility, even if it's with another veterans' organization. But we want to make sure individuals don't profit from VFW funds paying off property that's in the name of someone other than a congressionally-chartered veterans organization. Thank you.

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

COMRADE SAM HASKINS: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Sam Haskins, delegate from Post No. 1034.

And in the past that I -- I've seen these smaller posts, most of them are disappearing from our organization on a regular basis. And our membership continues to go down due to losing posts. And I -- and I see where if we combine with other veterans' organizations, that the predominant organization will exist and the other one will disappear. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLENN HOHMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glenn Hohman, James R. "Bob" Currieo, Post 9972, Department of Arizona.

Comrades, I would encourage you to heavily consider endorsing this in favor of this because we are getting smaller. And as several other comrades have already talked about, it's getting harder and harder.

This is a tool that we can give our posts in order to survive in the conditions of membership that we have now. Without this and other tools, sometimes we're telling a community that they cannot have a veteran presence. However, with this provision, we are allowing for a veteran presence to endure.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Is there any other discussion?

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE LEON JOHNSON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Leon Johnson, delegate from Ohio.

As Past Commander-in-Chief Rivers and -- and -- has said, the biggest thing is getting legal counsel when you enter into these issues. I can tell you I have been in many of the states, and some of these states, quite honestly, exist under these conditions now.

And this organization does not need to move backward. It needs to move forward. We have to help our younger veterans and these posts to be able to exist for our future in some of these locations. So I strongly recommend adopting this resolution. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BOB COX: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Bob Cox, 2715, Kansas, National Council Member. I'd like to oppose -- we need to oppose this. Because what happens when you and your wife are together, and she decides to get rid of you? Who's going to take care of the property? Who's going to continue to pay the bills when half of it goes here and half of it goes there?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

COMRADE BOB COX: Think about that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Is there any other discussion?

Chair -- again, Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAROLD COUCH: Commander-in-Chief, Darold Couch, Council Member, VFW Post 3442, Custer, South Dakota.

In South Dakota, we've had one post in Sturgis, South Dakota, that's been allegiant in the

VFW for quite a few years. And with change of leadership every year, they have had many, many struggles. When they get along, it's good. When they aren't, it's bad.

I just want to address change of officers might be good -- or the officers, when they implement, it will be good, but it does change. It's a can of worms. I oppose it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE SERENA: Commander-in-Chief, Serena, Post 7967, Department of New York.

My area of New York state, we do have a smaller post, and we have multiple posts that are combining with American Legions. Not only does it help in the community that both the American Legion and/or DAV and Veterans of Foreign War work together and cooperate, it builds comradeship amongst the community with the veterans. And we have not had problems. I propose that we adopt this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Is there any other discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ROSALYN COX: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Rosalyn Cox, delegate, Post 2413 El Dorado, Arkansas. I call for the question, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The motion on the floor is to adopt B-37.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander, we have to have a vote on the call for the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. I need a second to Ros's motion.

COMRADE GLENN GARDNER: Commander-in-Chief, Glenn Gardner, delegate, Post 3359. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion and a second to call for the question. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll do this again. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: That was on -- that was on the vote -- they think --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yeah.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: They think they're voting on the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yeah, no.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: The rules require -- can I speak for a second?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yeah.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: The rules require, when somebody calls for the question, that that motion be seconded, and then the body vote solely on the motion, which is basically to terminate debate. And that requires a two-thirds vote.

That was the motion that the commander was calling. So if you're voting no, you're saying, "Let's keep debating all night."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The motion on the floor now is to adopt B-37. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, Chief.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: I thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

And before proceeding, let me read again the procedure so the floor doesn't get confused.

"When all the resolutions recommended favorably by the committee have been acted upon, the chairman will read, by number and title, those resolutions in which the committee recommends disapproval. These are automatically killed without floor action unless a member of the convention moves the adoption of a specific resolution. Such a motion duly seconded would bring the resolution up for individual action."

Commander-in-Chief, I would now report that the committee reviewed and recommended the following resolutions for disapproval: B-1, B-4, B-11, B-18, B-30, B-32, B-39, and B-40.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No.3.

COMRADE DENNIS PARIZEK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dennis Parizek, delegate, Post 1481, Department of Utah, I move for adoption of B-40.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Which one?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: 40?

COMRADE DENNIS PARIZEK: B-40.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: You're asking that that's –

COMRADE DENNIS PARIZEK: B-40.

(Inaudible discussion)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion to adopt. Now we need a second to adopt B-40.

Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JERRY PETERSON: Is this for a second? Is this for a second?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yes, it is.

COMRADE JERRY PETERSON: I'll go ahead and second it.

Commander-in-Chief, Jerry Peterson, Department of Nevada  
Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. We'll open it up for discussion for B-40. Is there any discussion on B-40?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE DENNIS PARIZEK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dennis Parizek, Post 1481, Department of Utah.

I hold positions as Post Adjutant Quartermaster, District Adjutant Quartermaster, and Department Adjutant Quartermaster. And I just completed a two-year term as Secretary/Treasurer of the Western Conference.

I do a lot of dealings with government agencies and financial organizations. And when I tell them I'm the Adjutant Quartermaster, they ask me, "What do you do?"

My answer is usually, "Secretary/Treasurer," which everybody understands. This is not requiring the use of secretary/treasurer or other titles, but it helps clarify who we are. And especially on some government documents, I think it makes it more clear what my position is. So, therefore, I move for adoption of B-40.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. Is there any other discussion?

The Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GUNNER KENT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Gunner Kent, delegate, VFW Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

I speak in opposition to this. Comrades, we're a military organization. We use military terminology. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff got up this morning, when he left he said, "semper fidelis." Most of you don't even know what it means. But we in the Marines know what it means, and that's all that's important. If you're --  
(Laughter)

COMRADE GUNNER KENT:-- a quartermaster -- you're a quartermaster, you go to the bank, and they say, "What do you do?"

You say, "I handle the money." That's all the bank wants to know.

This is tradition. If we start getting rid of tradition, what do we do then? Get rid of titles? What's next if we do away with this? This is crazy.

I mean, change is good but just to make change for the sake of change does not make sense. Nobody has ever said to the VFW, "Adjutant General Kent, I'm not going to give you a check because you're an adjutant general, not a CEO." This is nuts. We are an organization. We've got our titles. Let's keep our titles.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Commander.  
(Inaudible discussion)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Before we continue, I'll have the -- Mr. -- the chairman read it so you know.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

So I know that some of you don't have the -- the booklet, so let me just read this very quickly.

It's "B-40, Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group, proposed by the Commander-in-Chief, Article VII, Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 720,

Definitions. Amend Section 720, Definitions, National By-Laws, by adding the following at the end of this section:" Quote, ""Alternative titles,"" close quote, "when necessary or appropriate in the conduct of business with persons or entities not familiar with the Veterans of Foreign Wars or when necessary to comply with legal requirements, the following examples of alternative titles may be used in conjunction with official titles.

Commander - President, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director

Adjutant - Secretary, Chief Administrative Officer

Quartermaster - Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer

Council Member - Board Member or Director."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, delegate from North End Post 144 in Boston.

I rise in strong opposition to this By-Law change. I understand that there is a movement, among certain individuals in our organization, to create a corporation-type atmosphere.

I would not stand still for that because we are a membership organization. We are a military membership organization. And if any individual who holds a position in this organization cannot, in six words or less, explain to somebody what their title is, perhaps they shouldn't hold the office.

Thank you.

(Cheering and applause)

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

COMRADE DUANE SARMIENTO: Commander-in-Chief, Duane Sarmiento, delegate, Post 5579, Department Commander from New Jersey.

I speak in -- I speak in opposition of this as well. For 119 years, our founding fathers gave us these titles. They thought long and they thought hard. And this is who we are. And I agree with Gunner and I agree with Paul. This is who we are.

When you explained -- when my esteemed comrade said he had to explain to people, and I'm sure that was fine when they said, "What are you?"

"I'm a secretary/treasurer." And I'm sure that three seconds the person you were dealing with understood. And like Gunner Kent said, when you're the person cutting the check, they're going to know what a quartermaster is.

So, again, I speak in high opposition --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank --

COMRADE DUANE SARMIENTO: -- for rejecting this. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

COMRADE DUANE SARMIENTO: Thank you.

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

COMRADE MARY SMITH: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Mary Smith, Post 6830, South Carolina delegate.

I speak in support of this By-Law amendment. Nowhere in here does it say that we are getting rid of our VFW titles. Nowhere in here does it say that we are removing them. Nowhere in here does it say that we are trying to get rid of our traditions.

We are a nonprofit organization. We do conduct business. As such, we have to work with other business entities. Oftentimes -- and many quartermasters can speak to this -- when we're dealing with a financial institution, they only have certain options of titles that can be placed on a signature card.

I know that we've been placed on the signature card as things like chief executive officer, chief financial officer simply because they don't have the option to put us in as a quartermaster or an adjutant, or a commander.

All this resolution does is puts us then in compliance when places and businesses like a financial institution, such as our banks, put these titles on our names, all it is saying is now those titles are authorized under our By-Laws, and we're not violating anything in our By-Laws by having those titles on our signature cards.

So I support this.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

(Applause)

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

COMRADE DONNA BARNETT: Good afternoon, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Donna Barnett, delegate from Post Red Rock 12156 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Call the question.

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

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JERRY PETERSON: Comrade Commander, Jerry Peterson, delegate, Department Commander. I call it -- excuse me, I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion and second to second. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it.

The motion on the floor is to adopt B-40. To adopt B-40. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Nays have it. The motion's defeated.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHEIF RIVERS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

Now, my fellow delegates, let's go to the proposed amendments –

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I think we've still got another set-aside on Microphone 1.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHEIF RIVERS: Oh, we do?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Yeah.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHEIF RIVERS: Okay. Chief?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: I think we've got one more set-aside on Microphone 1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JERRY PETERSON: Commander-in-Chief, Jerry Peterson, Department of Nevada Commander,

Post 12101.

I make a motion that we adopt B-4, B-11, B-18. That's posts, districts, and department.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: B-4, 11, and 18?

COMRADE JERRY PETERSON: Correct. They're all the same. Just different posts, districts, and departments.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: And your motion is to adopt?

COMRADE JERRY PETERSON: Correct.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I need a second.

COMRADE DONNA BARNETT: Good afternoon, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. Donna Barnett, delegate from Post 12156, Las Vegas, Nevada.

I will second that motion to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yeah, we'll have the chairman read those.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHEIF RIVERS: Thank you, Commander.

"B-4, Proposed by the Department of Texas, Article II, Posts, Section 215, Eligibility to Office. Amend Section 215, Eligibility to Office, National By-Laws, by replacing the third paragraph with the following:" Quote, "Any officer or committee member who is on anniversary dues must submit to the Post Quartermaster dues in an amount to recover the term of their first" -- "of their office for the appropriate administrative year."

Staff comments: Staff recommended rejection. Members are in good standing when elected. And it is up to the individual member to ensure they are current on their dues.

The proposed amendment to Section 415 is out of order because districts do not collect dues. The proposed amendment. Is in conflict with



Section 105 of the National By-Laws. Section 105 of the National By-Laws was amended to remove an officer from office if delinquent on dues.

Leaders within this organization have a responsibility to be current on their dues, and members are notified multiple times for dues renewal and could receive as many as six notifications: Three by mail, and three by email if they have an active email address on file.

And it's the companion bill with B-11 and B-18, which we are considering altogether.

Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JERRY PETERSON: Comrade Commander, Jerry Peterson, Department of Nevada Commander, Post 12101, delegate.

The reason why I would like this adopted is administratively, we all work very hard supporting our veterans, but now we have to go out and track these folks down. I believe I heard the number 52 officers out of Texas were removed from office because they did not pay their annual dues.

So that creates all kinds of problems because those people cannot pay their dues at that time and remain as an officer. They have to wait until the next administrative year.

So it creates just this administrative logroll, basically, that requires a lot of administrative time of line officers tracking these people down to make sure that they pay their dues.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Any other discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE MARK DECKER: Comrade Commander, Mark Decker, Department Commander, New Mexico, Post 9517, delegate.

I oppose this amendment because for a three-year trustee, you are now making him have to pay for three years because that would be his term.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Is there any other discussion?

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WARREN BOOKER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Warren Booker, Post 7686, Alamogordo, New Mexico.

I stand up in opposition of this motion. If an officer of the post, district, or department is not competent enough to know when they're due and to pay their dues, maybe they shouldn't be in that office in the first place. (Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Is there any other discussion? Is there any other discussion? Any other discussion?

We have a motion on the floor to adopt B-4, 11, and 18. B-4, 11, and 18.

All in favor of adopting those three resolutions, signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The nays have it. They are defeat- -  
- B-4, 11, and 18 are defeated.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: You're welcome.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: I don't think we needed a roll  
call on that one, Chief. Thank you.

Now let's move on to proposed amendments to the Manual of  
Procedure. And I'll read these fairly slow so you can follow along and note on  
your booklets.

The committee recommends for approval the following proposed  
Manual of Procedure amendments: M-1, M-2, M-4, M-5, M-6, M-7, M-8, M-9,  
M-10, M-11, M-12, M-13, M-14, M-15, M-16, M-17, M-18, M-19, M-20, M-21,  
M-22, M-23, M-24, M-25, M-26, M-27, M-29, M-30, M-33, M-34, M-35, and M-  
36.

Accordingly, Commander-in-Chief, and in keeping with the rules of this  
convention, I move adoption of these proposed amendments.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Commander-in-Chief, Glenn  
Gardner, delegate, VFW Post 3359, Dallas, Texas.

I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any set-asides? Are there  
any set-asides?

Seeing no set-asides, all in favor of adopting those -- those Manual of  
Procedure changes, signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The motion is approved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Chief.

The committee reviewed other submissions in the Manual of  
Procedure and has recommended disapproval of the following: M-3, M-28, M-  
31, and M-32.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAROLD COUCH: Commander-in-Chief, Darold Couch, Post  
3442, Custer, South Dakota, delegate.

I'd like to set aside M-32.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: He has to make a motion to  
adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrade, you need to make a  
motion to adopt.

COMRADE DAROLD COUCH: I'd like to make a motion to adopt.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We need a second.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CODY MANGOLD: Comrade Commander, Cody Mangold,  
Post 791, South Dakota.

I make a motion to second.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion and a second to  
adopt M-32.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Discussion?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Discussion?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: You want me to read it, Chief?

You want me to read it?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yeah, the chairman will read that.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: "M-32, Proposed by the  
Department of South Dakota, Article X, Rules of Order, Section 1004, Order of  
Business-Posts. Amend section 1004, Order of Business-Posts, Manual of  
Procedure, under (b), by adding the following as a new numbers 3, 4, 5, 16, and  
17, and renumbering appropriately:"

Quote, "No. 3, Salute the Colors.

No. 4, Prayer at the Opening of an Informal Meeting.

5, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

No. 16, Prayer at the Closing of an Informal Meeting.

17, Salute the Colors," close quotes.

The staff comment is as follows: Recommend rejection, delegates at  
the 118th National Convention passed the contemporary meeting option in  
order to streamline the meeting -- the meeting, giving posts the freedom to run  
their meetings as they see fit.

However, there is nothing prohibiting a post from adding another  
ritualistic feature to the meeting as the post desires.

Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAROLD COUCH: Commander-in-Chief, Darold Couch,  
Custer, South Dakota, Post 3442, delegate.

The situation I'm looking at is I think it was out of order last year under  
Convention Rules. No. 7, "The convention will not consider any resolution  
dealing with race, creed, or religion, or endorse anyone for public office."

I place it was out of order. And if we take -- we are a military  
organization. And it's been echoed quite a few times. A salute, the Pledge of  
Allegiance, and take the Lord and the prayer out of our system, the defining  
person that's got us -- most all the combat veterans to be in this position, I  
think we're defeating our purpose as an organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone –

COMRADE DAROLD COUCH: I strongly agree to approve -- a motion to approve.

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

COMRADE TOM HAFNER: Tom Hafner, Post 3298, South Dakota.

My position on this is every committee meeting, every meeting that I've been here at this convention we've started with a salute, a pledge, and a prayer.

Are we only doing this in the public's eye and behind closed doors? We are lax in our own rules. You and I both know that human nature tells us that we will take the path of least resistance. If we don't set the standard for our posts and require them to start with the salute and the pledge, they will not.

So I strongly urge that we adopt this. It takes 30 seconds to say the pledge. We should never, in the interest of brevity, look -- back up on our standards as an organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CODY MANGOLD: Cody Mangold, 791, South Dakota, delegate.

I'm going to echo my fellow South Dakotans on that one. Just saying -- just adding to it that, you know, we're -- we all fought together, and we do need to say the Pledge of Allegiance. We all have, especially in the climate right now that's going on in the sports.

And, you know, something my -- some of my friends and I discussed is right now you have high-schoolers kneeling during the Pledge of Allegiance. We don't want that to be happening. And we need to set that example.

And it doesn't take long to do the prayer and to do the Pledge of Allegiance. And we need to set a positive example for the young individuals. So I -- I strongly urge you to support -- to support this. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLENN HOHMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Glenn Hohman, James R. "Bob" Currieo, Post 9972, Department of Arizona, delegate.

I stand in strong opposition of this. After adoption of this resolution and its incorporation into the Manual last year at the 118<sup>th</sup> Convention, I was able to conduct 11 post meetings under the streamlined procedures, and not one time did I leave out any of the things that we're supposed to -- that we're asking now to put back in.

I was also able to do 9 of those 11 meetings in under 59 minutes, which allowed the streamlined process to work effectively.

I think what we have, we've only had for a year. I would allow any comrades who have had bad experience with the streamlined procedure to come forward and tell us what those are. Otherwise, I strongly oppose the adoption of this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHRIS STURGIS: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Chris Sturgis, Post 7397, Lenexa, Kansas, delegate.

Comrades, wasn't the whole reason why we developed the streamlined process was so the posts could choose to use it or not use it. It sounds like with this resolution that we're trying to basically get rid of the streamlined process for the meetings.

I -- I think having that option in the By-Laws for the posts that choose to use it is a good thing. You don't have to use it if you don't like it. Keep in the -- everything in the standard procedure if -- if that's what you choose to use. But some of these posts are choosing to use the streamlined one. And if they want to add in other things, that's on them. But I think we should leave the option for them to have it available.

Thank you, Commander.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE CHUCK CARROLL: Commander, Chuck Carroll, Post 6774, Billings, Montana, from the Department of Montana.

Sir, we -- last year when we discussed this, we said -- when we are doing a meeting and that time is of an essence, as in say another organization or another group has to come into our meeting room, it gives us the latitude to shorten our meeting slightly so that we would have room for the other group to come in when their time is allotted.

As a commander, I'd never allow this to happen. We follow the procedure as it is written because I have the time. I don't need to be slowed down or speeded up. We still go ahead and do it exactly the way it's written in our procedure.

In our By-Laws, it says if we choose or if we need to use this abbreviated version, we may. But it doesn't say we have to, and I don't ever do it.

Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Again, Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAROLD COUCH: Commander-in-Chief, Darold Couch, Custer, South Dakota, Post 3442, delegate.

Again, Rules of the Convention: "The convention will not consider any resolutions dealing with race, creed, or religion." I place that the prayer is religion.

I think it's out of order from the last convention. And that's what I'd like to have a ruling on. Because these are run by the same rules this year as last year. Right? These are consistent every year?

(Inaudible discussion)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Well, it wasn't out of order when we did it, and it's the same way now. And, quite frankly, prayer is not a religion. A nonreligious person can pray. Prayer is a procedure. It's not a religion.

So, Commander-in-Chief, I would recommend the Chair rule it's not religion.  
(Applause)

COMRADE DAROLD COUCH: Thank you for your decision.

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

COMRADE RICK RASKIN: Commander, it's Rick Raskin, Post 7589, Manassas, Virginia, delegate.

Just for purposes of clarification, we are a nonsectarian organization, and our prayers are nonsectarian. Even though some posts may elect to add verbiage to a prayer that may slant it toward a particular creed, that is not required by the By-Laws.

I stand in opposition to this resolution to adopt that because I feel this is a post issue and should be kept at the post level. And we don't need more laws telling us how to run our meetings beyond what has been already put into the By-Laws.

Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.  
(Cheering and applause)

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

COMRADE PHIL PATTERSON: Phil Patterson, Department of Michigan Commander, Post 6695.

I call for the question.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do we have a second?  
Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE KATHIE SCHIEBEL: Chief, Kathie Schiebel, Post 401, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

I'll second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion and a second to call for the question.

All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
The ayes have it.

We have a motion on the floor to adopt M-32. M-32 to adopt.  
All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: There is no doubt in my mind the nays have it. The motion is defeated.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: You're welcome.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Comrades, we're almost there.

(Inaudible discussion)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Yes. We're almost there, Comrades. In addition to part of our work, we also considered five Ritual amendments that had been proposed, and the committee recommended disapproval of all five of those Ritual proposals.

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

COMRADE STEVEN WILLIAMS: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Steven Williams, Post 5867, out of the Department of California.

I motion to adopt M-28.

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

Motion dies for failure of a second.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Chief.

I would go back again and say we had five Ritual amendments proposed to the committee, and the committee recommended disapproval of all five of the Ritual proposals.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No.3.

COMRADE ROGER ALLISON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Roger Allison, Post 3500, delegate, Department of Missouri.

I move for adoption of Resolution R-4.

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

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CHRISTINE TRON: Comrade Commander, Christine Tron, Delegate, Post 545, Massachusetts.

I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Larry -- Mr. Chairman, will you read that, please.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Chief.

"R-4 (Page 24, 35, 37) Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group, Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief, Ritual Member's Obligation.

Amend Chapter Title Member's Obligation, Ritual, by adding the following as a fourth paragraph:" Quote, "I pledge to treat everyone, be they a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Auxiliary member or guest with respect and dignity and in a nondiscriminatory manner," close quote.

The By-Laws Study Group comment was this: Additional language added to the Member's Obligation to ensure the members uphold themselves in a professional manner and treat all members and guests with respect.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Is there any discussion?

Microphone No. 1 -- or 3. I'm sorry.

COMRADE ROGER ALLISON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Roger Allison, Post 3500, delegate, Missouri.

I attended the committee meeting yesterday, and listened very carefully to the pros and cons on this particular resolution. I spent last night thinking about it, and I think it's important for me to share my thoughts with the convention.

My first thought is that in the 23 years that I spent in the Army, active duty and the reserve components, my support of Army equal-opportunity programs and policies was a condition to my continued service, my employment.

I never had a problem with that because sometime in my life -- I don't recall exactly when -- I realized that treating people with respect, dignity in a nondiscriminatory manner was an important trait of an effective leader. And so that's one of my norms of behavior.

Another thought that came to my mind was a family story. I'm the proud father of two Millennials. And when they were young kids, their mother, my wife and my fellow comrade, took them along to her reserve unit -- her reserve -- reserve training center because she was donating time between drills to improve the readiness of her unit.

And she had two young children, and she had -- wasn't going to spend the money for childcare. So they came along and played on the drill floor while she worked with the full-timer that she had in her unit.

One day, she came back and told me a story about my daughter -- a question my daughter had asked that -- that day. And Ronald, at age of six, had experienced a cognitive dissonance, which is where when you're confused. Because she could not, like, deal with the reality of the work environment that her mother was working in with the full-timer, who happened to be an African-American, with the information one of her grandparents had given her.

And my wife, being the hardass she is, said, "Well, Ronald, what do you think?"

I'm proud to report that 26 years later, Ronald approaches people with respect, dignity, and nondiscriminatory attitude. And it's one of her most fiercely-held values.



So I would say that if that's a -- if treating people with respect and dignity and a nondiscriminatory manner is a value of a -- of an effective leader -- and that's my firm belief -- and if a six-year-old can figure out that's the right thing to do, and if our By-Laws Study committee -- Study Group thinks it's an important thing to put into our Ritual, I would recommend that this convention do so.

Now, I said I spent the afternoon listening to the pros and cons of this particular resolution as the others. And, you know, it was brought up that the -- the Member's Obligation, if we changed it, would only be taken by new members, and -- and it wouldn't be very effective if other members didn't agree with that.

I would suggest that, you know, hearing new members make that part of the obligation may, in fact -- if people have that problem -- have them, you know, experience a cognitive dissidence and maybe resolve it in the best manner for our organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Excuse me, Comrade, you have 20 seconds remaining on your five minutes.

COMRADE ROGER ALLISON: So I'd ask, once again, for the convention to approve this resolution.

Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE GLENN GARDNER: Comrade commander-in-Chief, Glenn Gardner, delegate, VFW Post 3359, Dallas Texas.

I stand in opposition of this proposal because, at the present time, we have plenty of sections in the By-Laws that covers conduct of a member who would perform such things as being dis- -- discriminatory against someone.

If we put this in there, the first thing that's going to happen is somebody's going to walk in the bar, and they're going to say some kind of word that the commander doesn't like, and they're going to throw them out because they say it's disrespect to the bartender or disrespect to another member.

We can't continue to put words in there that can be used by barroom lawyers to -- to bring charges against members or throw them out of the organization. We have plenty of things now under the cover of our Ritual and Manual to keep it in the order the way it is. And I would ask the delegates to vote no on this motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE CHRISTINE TRON: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Christine Tron, Post 545, Massachusetts.

I strongly recommend adoption of this proposal for the following reasons: If a commander does not consider that an individual's behavior is not already covered under the Constitution and By-Laws, this will cover it.

And, comrades, I consider this to be a membership issue. Whenever a member feels harassed, demeaned, belittled, disrespected, or otherwise unwelcome, they will not return to the post, and they will not renew their membership. This is why I strongly recommend adoption of this proposal.

Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE DONNA BARNETT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Donna Barnett, delegate from Post 12156 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

I stand in opposition of this. I think that this is a waste of the Chair's time, the Comrades' time. This is covered --  
(Applause)

COMRADE DONNA BARNETT: Thank you.

This is covered under disciplined behavior unbecoming a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Let's be done with it. Let's get "plays well with others" on our report cards. Be nice to everybody. Be kind.

I call the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Do we have a --  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do we have a second for the question? Do we have a second for the question?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JASON JOHNS: Comrade Commander, Jason Johns, Post 10272, Oregon-Brooklyn, Wisconsin, delegate.

I second the motion to call the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

We have a motion and second to -- for the discussion on this -- on our floor. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it.

We have a motion on the floor to adopt R-4. R-4 for adoption. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The nays have it, then. It's rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much.

That concludes the work of the By-Laws Committee. And on behalf of myself and Vice Chairman Gardner and all of our members, we thank you for the confidence placed in us to administer this committee. And we thank your staff, Adjutant General Brian Duffy, and his staff as well, in particular, Dave Prohaska for a job well done for all of the assistance.

And thanks to all of you for being with us during this report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HOGAN: Thank you, Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Mr. Chairman, your committee is relieved.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION – CHAIRMAN AND PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RICHARD L. EUBANK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We will now call on -- have a Report of Committees on Finance and Internal Organization, Richard L. Eubank, Chairman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Good afternoon. We met yesterday on the proposed resolutions for Finance and Internal Organization Resolutions.

Could I have all the committee members that sat on that committee please rise and be recognized.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Job well done. Thank you so much.

I also want to recognize Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas, from the great state of Connecticut, served as the Vice Chairman.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much.

Comrades, I'm pleased to report that the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization met yesterday afternoon for over an hour and thoroughly discussed the items before the committee.

The proposed resolutions were distributed to each department and posted online on July the 3rd, 2018. These resolutions are contained in the booklet that you received at registration, plus each member of the committee received an additional booklet at our meeting.

Commander-in-Chief, the committee recommends for the approval of the following resolution: "Resolution 203, Recognize submarine crew members who deployed on special operations as eligible members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move to adopt this resolution.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BANAS: Commander-in-Chief, Edward Banas, Post 10004, Department of Connecticut. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion to adopt 203. Is there any discussion? Any discussion?

Seeing no one at the microphones, all in favor of adoption of 203, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The motion is adopted.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you, Chief.

Also reviewed by the committee and recommended for disapproval are the Resolutions 201, 202, 204, 205, and 206.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BOB GRASER: Comrade Commander, Bob Graser, National Council of Administration, delegate, Post 1822, America's hometown Plymouth, Massachusetts.

I move for the adoption of 201.

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

COMRADE KEITH JACKSON: Commander-in-Chief, Keith Jackson, Townsend Post 6538, State Commander, Department of Massachusetts, second that motion

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Discussion?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BOB GRASER: Comrade Commander, Bob Graser, 1822, delegate. I move for the adoption of this resolution.

As we've gone through the years with subscription dues, we have heard nothing but complaints, part of the complaints being because of the contests. We are looking to get members to pay their dues so we can win these contests. We're asking people that may have their dues not due till March, April of the following year to do the -- to make their -- pay their dues so we can win these contests.

The other thing that we've had -- and I don't know where it came from -- were our annual dues members previously were due from December 31st, which makes no sense whatsoever when the Commander-in-Chief's year goes from July to July.

So the -- what we are recommending is that the dues years change to coincide when the Commander-in-Chief is in, and also that it would be from July 1st to June 30th, any new member joining.

Because that was part of the thing with the subscription dues, we feel they shouldn't pay for the whole year and then have to be due again in December. We feel that we should have them prorated for the first year.

Any member that joined from -- up until September 30th would pay the full dues. From October 1st to December 31st would be 50 percent. From April 1st to -- yeah, 75 percent. I'm sorry. From January 1st to March 3rd -- 30th would be 50 percent, and from April 1st to the June 30<sup>th</sup> would be 25 percent.

Comrades, we can stand up here every single year we talk about dues.

We talk about subscription dues. Every year we kick the can down the road to the next administration. It's time that we got our heads out of the sand and started doing something about it.

This would work. It may be a hiccup in the first year, but it will work. Everybody would be on the same playing field, an advantage to the Commander-in-Chief also coming in and also the commanders and the quartermasters.

Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

And our parliamentarian just informed me that that motion is out of order because it's a By-Law issue versus -- and it should have been brought up under By-Laws.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: With your permission, Commander-in-Chief.

The reason for rejection, Comrades, was the proposed change is contrary to the convention rule -- convention rules includes the consideration of any resolution pertaining to the expenditures or appropriation of organizational funds.

This resolution directly impacts the expenditure and approval or appropriation of funds. This is a By-Law change, and it would require extensive changes.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Yes, Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BOB GRASER: Comrade, question: What funds? Where does it say anything in here about funds? It could be wrong. I just -- you're talking about dues. That -- that's funds.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. Comrade, the reason that it's out of order, not disrespecting the committee's comments, is that what you're trying to accomplish is covered by the By-Laws. It's the same as Resolution No. 202, and it requires a By-Law amendment. You can't accomplish, with a resolution, the overruling or changing of the By-Laws.

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: Very good, sir. Thank you.  
(Inaudible discussion)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yes, Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DAVID SOUSA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Dave Sousa, VFW Post 3396, Sparks, Nevada, delegate.

I would like to make adoption of Resolution No. 204.

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

COMRADE HAL BURKE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Hal Burke, Department of New York, Post 1895, delegate.

I'll second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Mic- -- yeah.

COMRADE DAVID SOUSA: Dave Sousa, delegate, VFW Post 3396.

Reading this resolution, it just says, "BE IT RESOLVED, by Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Voice of Democracy program shall continue as it has been established and intended, to include an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC, for all the States with winning Students entries and a Department funded trip to Freedom Hill."

I don't know why we're not passing this or favoring it.

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: With your permission, again, Commander-in-Chief, the reason for the rejection, again, was dealing with the expenditures, appropriation of organizational funds.

Moreover, the National Council of Administration has already established that the Voice of Democracy program will not be changed and will continue to include the trip to DC. This proposed resolution, therefore, is unnecessary.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Does anyone else have anything you want set aside?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BRYAN BATULIS: Commander-in-Chief, state surgeon of Louisiana, Bryan Batulis, delegate.

I challenge the -- the Resolutions Committee decision to abolish 206 concerning bingo.

COMRADE J.D. MALONE: J.D. Malone, Post 9854, Department of Louisiana, delegate.

I second that.

(Inaudible discussion)

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: You can ask for a discussion -- the motion was made on 204. The committee gave its report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yeah.

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: Ask for any discussion on 204, then vote on 204 and --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: All right. Is there any more -- before we move to 206, is there any other discussion on 204? Is there any other discussion on 204?

All in favor of the rejection of 204 -- or the adoption of 204 -- I'm sorry -- signify by saying aye.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The motion is defeated.

So you have a motion to adopt 206?

COMRADE BRYAN BATULIS: Commander-in-Chief, yes, sir, to adopt 206.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. Not to abolish it.

And a second?

COMRADE J.D. MALONE: Yes. J.D. Malone with Post 9854, Department of Louisiana, delegate.

I second that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Discussion?

COMRADE BRYAN BATULIS: Commander-in-Chief, Bryan Batulis, State Surgeon, Louisiana.

Bingo is our life bread for many of our posts throughout the nation. And many of our delegates that were in the resolution committee were not aware of how to -- how bingo is conducted and what the regulations are of that. Yet, they did vote. And that's fine.

But I wanted the -- I wanted the entire convention hall to know that when you do bingo, the IRS had determined that it is a social event for the community. And anyone can go in that building and play bingo. You don't have to be a VFW member. And if you are a VFW member and you win a progressive, the community goes ballistic because they think it's rigged.

So it's a -- normally, it's -- you do not have to have VFW members. Unlike the bar, you can't just go into the bar if you're a community person and buy a drink. You can do that in the bingo session. Not to buy liquor, but to play bingo.

Now, when you play bingo, you also do pull-tabs. You barely break even on the bingo game, that social game. But on pull-tabs, it brings in three-quarters of your profit. So if you eliminate -- if you eliminate pull-tabs, you're going to probably close your bingo, you'll probably lose your post. That's the way it's -- we see it happening.

So what we'd like -- Lois Lerner, when she went to Congress and put her right hand up and took the Fifth against the charitable organizations who were trying to get licenses. She was hostile to our veteran organizations.

And she was because she came up with enforcements that cause your organizations throughout the nation -- the American Legion, the DAV, any of them that were doing charitable gaming -- caused them to lose their charitable gaming status, and they had to -- because they didn't send in this card that came up, the green card or the 10- -- or the 1090.

And those of you who are familiar with gaming, that's what you have to submit. If you don't do it in three years, they shut you down. And then you've got to start all over again, causing a lot of problems. That happened in 2009. No one has brought this up because we're afraid of the IRS.

Commander-in-Chief, we don't want to cause any waves, but it's gotten out of hand. Bingo is -- is taxed one way, and the first 50,000 is not taxed. That's great if you can make 50,000 in a year. But on the pull-tabs, it's taxed at full taxation because Lois Lerner felt that it was not a social event, a community event. But it's crazy.

Here you have a bingo, and you buy your bingo cards, and you're buying your pull-tab cards, and they're telling you, "We're going to tax you this way on bingo, and this way on pull-tabs."

My motion is to go ahead and abolish this unfair, unrelated business tax in saying that it shouldn't be an unrelated business tax. It is related and to go ahead and --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: And adopt the resolution.

COMRADE BRYAN BATULIS: And adopt this resolution. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'll have John Muckelbauer address that.

COMRADE JOHN MUCKELBAUER: Thank you, Comrade Commander.

The resolution, to be clear, is -- is to change the way that pull-tabs are currently taxed. Opposition to that is simply to say keep the way that it's taxed the same.

There's too much risk in moving forward. The National Convention of the VFW should not take the position that unrelated business of the organization should be free from federal tax. If it's unrelated, it is not the primary business of the post.

And the resolution to abolish the tax on pull-tabs only furthers the negative perception that the posts that are out there are nothing but smoky bars and gambling halls. That's not what this organization needs, particularly now.

Gaming is not our primary mission. It's unrelated. It's like a restaurant. And by itself, pull-tabs, as it exists in the law, are not related activities.

The proceeds may or may not support veterans' programs. And anything that encourages activities of nonmembers could rise -- raise questions as to the activities that are occurring in the posts. Public perception could be negatively influenced by moving forward with this.

Again, the opposition to it is simply to say keep the way the pull-tabs are calculated the same. Veterans' organizations are largely 501(c) (19) organizations. The 501(c) (19) organization is currently the most flexible of all tax-exempt organizations. This simply invites more scrutiny onto that.

I recommend opposition. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Is there any other discussion?



Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE HAROLD PETERSON: Honorable Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, Harold Peterson, Post 56, Leavenworth, Kansas.

I'd advise that this -- this -- this proposal basically be dropped due to the fact that as of all states, we come under in that state -- state laws on dealing with, basically, bingo and also pull-tabs. Each state has its own regulations.

The federal government really does not dictate that posts or veterans' organizations or any other organization on that, how they conduct it. It is the state that basically makes up the guidelines. We abide by those guidelines.

When it -- basically, when that says dealing with the federal government, the federal government really doesn't have anything to do with it. The only time it does is if it's over a certain amount. Then it does. And only when it goes over a certain amount. Otherwise, the state takes care of everything else.

I, basically, in that -- see it as a useless bill.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE JASON JOHNS: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jason John, State Junior Vice Commander, delegate, Post 10272, Oregon-Brooklyn.

Call the question.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do I have a second? Do I have a second to the question? Do I have a second?

Microphone No. 2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, delegate from North End Post 144, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. We have a motion and a second to call for the question. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed no -- or nay.  
(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The ayes have it.  
We have a motion to adopt 206. A motion to adopt 206. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The nays have it. It's rejected.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Commander-in-Chief, this concludes my report. And I want to thank you very much. And I also want to thank John Muckelbauer for sticking right with us through the whole thing. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. And your committee is dismissed. And I –

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF EUBANK: Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: -- certainly thank you from the bottom of my heart for doing this.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS - CHAIRMAN AND PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JOHN F. GWIZDAK

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll have the -- follow on with the Report of Committees on General Resolutions, Chairman John F. Gwizdak.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

I'm John Gwizdak, delegate from Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia, and Past Commander-in-Chief.

The General Resolutions Committee met yesterday, and they discussed and discussed all of the resolutions presented to the committee.

I would like to thank vice chairmen of the committee Past Commanders-in-Chief John Stroud from Nevada and Thomas Tradewell from Wisconsin. Also present was Barney Hill, who assisted us.

And my personal many thanks to all the outstanding committee members.

In accordance with the convention rules, I will read first the resolutions recommended for adoption.

The committee recommends for adoption Resolution 304, 306. Resolutions 301 and 308 have minor grammatical corrections and amendments, which do not impact the intent of the resolution.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that these resolutions be adopted by the convention floor.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF STROUD: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Stroud, delegate from Post 2313, Department of Nevada.

I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any set-asides? Any set-asides?

Seeing no one at the microphones, all in favor of adoption of 304, 306, 301 as adjusted, and 308 as adjusted, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
The ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the following resolutions are recommended for disapproval and not adoption by the convention floor: 302, 303, 305, 307.

Are there any of those you want set aside?

Microphone No. 1.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I would move to adopt 302.

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

COMRADE STEPHEN GIBBS: Comrade Commander, Stephen Gibbs, VFW Post 10047, Las Vegas, Nevada, and I second.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Discussion?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE MIKE MUSGROVE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Mike Musgrove, delegate, Post 2350, Elko, Nevada.

A few years ago, this adopt- -- this same motion was across the floor and adopted by this floor -- this body. And it stayed on the resolution list for a couple of years, and then just disappeared.

We brought it back again because we feel that the guys that were in Thailand and on the ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, and in the harbors cleaning the lines out, deserve recognition from their government for the service they put in.

Even though the ground troops were out of Vietnam, we were still fighting from the air, defending South Vietnam and the South Vietnamese Army from the continuing invasion of the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong.

We are moving to recognize now that the airmen and soldiers that were in Thailand were actually exposed to herbicides and should be also accepted in the VA under those conditions.

But they still need some recognition. There were no -- no medals given out for everything that we'd done from '73 to '75. The government recognized the Armed Forces members in Vietnam from '55 to '64 with the Expeditionary Medal. And that gave them the chance, once the Vietnam Service Ribbon -- or Medal came out, to either -- accept either one.

So I move to adopt and I highly support 302 to issue the Expeditionary Medal to those that served in Thailand and in the coastal waters from '73 to '75.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE STEPHEN GIBBS: Comrade Commander, Stephen Gibbs, VFW Post 10047, delegate of Nevada.

I stand here to fully support this oper- -- I mean, fully support this resolution because I am a disabled veteran of the Vietnam War. And I know that later on, after the war was over, we found out there was 100- -- I mean, 11,800 advisers and air support there during the -- while they were advisers.

Thank you, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE JASON CARROLL: Commander-in-Chief, Jason Carroll, delegate, Post 3973, Department of Oregon.

I stand in opposition of this resolution. It's -- I guess it's easy to just go back and try and rewrite history, but we won't be successful.

We must remember that in the spring of 1973, May or June, Congress passed legislation that prohibited the use of any funds for U.S. combat operations over or in or off the shores of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Now, we're proposing to ask another secretary of defense to say, "Yeah, well, we authorized some combat operations, and they did take place in spite of this law."

I stand in opposition of this resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Is there any other discussion? Is there any further discussion?

We have a motion to adopt 302. All in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Nays have it. The motion's defeated.

Are there any other set-asides?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE ROBERT FUREIGH: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Robert Fureigh, Post 9095, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Everything went so fast a few minutes ago when we were considering the -- the group of resolutions to approve, I failed to realize in time that I would like to set aside 304.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: It's been acted on.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It's already been acted upon.

COMRADE ROBERT FUREIGH: I know, that's -- you-all acted before -- faster than my thumbs could work through the pages.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We can't do that.

Is there any other set-asides?

We have a motion then to reject 303, 305, 307. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

Motion carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade, Commander, that completes our assignment as far as these resolutions. And, again, we thank you for the high honor of having this assignment.  
(Inaudible discussion)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I can't release you. I'm sorry.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Okay.

(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Maybe another day.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Can I go home today?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Maybe another day. Thank you to the committee.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS –  
CHAIRMAN AND PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JAMES E. NIER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll have a Report of Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs, Chairman James Nier.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier, delegate, Post 8919, Texas, Chairman of the committee.

Commander-in-Chief, your Convention Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs convened at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, 22 July, 2018. Your instructions were read, roll call was conducted, and action was taken on the resolutions referred to this committee.

For their support, wisdom, and guidance, I would like to thank the Vice Chairman of the National Security & Foreign Affairs Committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera from Massachusetts; the Chairman of the POW/MIA subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief John Furgess from Tennessee; and the Vice Chairman of the POW/MIA subcommittee, Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller from Missouri.

Also, I extend the committee's gratitude and my personal appreciation to our committee adviser, the VFW National Security & Foreign Affairs Director, John Towles.

A very special thank you also is extended to all the members of the National Security & Foreign Affairs Committee and the POW/MIA subcommittee for their thoughtful deliberation and active participation in the committee meeting.

Would you all please stand to be recognized. Thank you very much.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Commander-in-Chief, we will now report on those resolutions the committee recommends to be approved as

written. We had 19 resolutions, Nos. 401 through 419; 17 were for the main committee, and 2 for the subcommittee.

If for any reason you or the delegates to this convention would like a resolution set aside for discussion, please so indicate.

At this time, I'll call on Past Commander-in-Chief John Furgess, Chairman of the POW/MIA subcommittee to come forward to report on the two resolutions pertaining to that subcommittee.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FURGESS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
I will read the two resolutions and the captions.

"Resolution 418: Protect POW/MIA Full Accounting Mission Funding."

Second, "Resolution 419: Call For More Unilateral POW/MIA Actions by Vietnam."

Mr. Chairman, I move that those two resolutions be approved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Jim Mueller, delegate, 5077, Missouri, seconds the motions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any set-asides? Any set-asides? Any set-asides?

We have a motion to approve 418 and 419. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Chief.

I will now read the resolution numbers and titles of Resolutions 401 through 417. The committee has recommended approval for adoption as written for all of the resolutions.

"401: End Sequestration.

"402: Oppose TRICARE Fee Changes.

"403: Keep Defense Budget Relevant.

"404: Preserve the All-Volunteer Force.

"405: Link Military Pay Increases to Private Sector Increases.

"406: Increase and Extend Thrift Savings Program Match.

"407: Sexual Assault Incident Reporting and Treatment.

"408: Ensure DOD Compliance with Transition Assistance Program Mandate.

"409: Establish the Armed Forces University.

"410: Support Stability and Relief For Military Families.

"411: Provide Full Concurrent Receipt of Military Retirement Pay and VA Disability Compensation.

"412: Revise Unfavorable Discharge Review Procedures.

"413: Repeal SBP/DIC Offset.

"414: Provide Equity in Benefits to All Reserve component members.

"415: Support the Republic of China on Taiwan."

And "416: Support the Republic of Korea."

And "417: Support the State of Israel."

Commander-in-Chief, I move to accept the committee's recommendation to approve these resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade, Commander-in-Chief, Paul Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, delegate from Post 144.

I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do I hear any set-asides? Anybody have anything that -- any of these that they want set aside?

Hearing -- seeing no one at the microphones, all in favor of adopting 401 through 417, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Commander-in-Chief, this concludes the committee's report on National Security & Foreign Affairs resolutions and the subcommittee on POW/MIA.

Thank you for the appointment. It's been a pleasure serving as your chairman.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS CHAIRMAN JOHN E. HAMILTON

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll have the Report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions, Chairman John Hamilton.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAMILTON: Afternoon, Commander.

Report the Veterans Service Resolutions convened at 2 -- Committee convened at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, July 22nd, 2018. Roll call was taken, and the preliminary matters were discussed. The committee was divided into three subcommittees to carefully deliberate each of 37 resolutions that were assigned.

The subcommittees were established as follows:

Subcommittee 1, which was health, chaired by Raymond Denisewich -- I apologize. I'm sure I messed your name up again -- from Rhode Island; and vice chairman, Christine Smith from Pennsylvania. Staff advisers James Moss and Kayda Keleher were in attendance.

Subcommittee No. 2, benefits, chaired by Paul Pirlot from Michigan; and vice chairman, Eric Drake from Ohio. Staff advisers Brad Brazil -- Hazell, excuse me, and Carlos Fuentes.

Subcommittee No. 3, economic opportunities and others, was chaired by Cynthia Archuleta from New Mexico; and vice chairman, Jason Smith from Florida. Staff advisers Tony Lowe and Patrick Murray were in attendance.

I want to thank, of course, Big John Biedrzycki, Past Commander-in-Chief, who served as vice chairman of this committee.

I'd like to thank all those in the committee that attended for their hard day of deliberations and hard work.

I'd like to thank Ryan Gallucci, Director of National Veterans Service; and Carlos Fuentes, Director of National Legislative Service for their work and valuable technical guidance during this process.

Also, Gregg Orto on the NVS staff, who took the role and prepared the minutes and notes for us.

Comrade Commander, with your permission I'll begin the committee reports by presenting those resolutions the committee recommends to be approved as written, then proceed to those resolutions that were approved as amended.

If for any reason you or the delegates to this convention would like a resolution set aside for further discussion, please so indicate after we have completed each segment of this report.

I will now proceed by reading the resolution numbers and titles that the committee recommends approval as written.

"601: Adequate Department of Veterans Affairs Budget.

"602: VA Pharmaceutical Co-Payments.

"603: Competitive Reimbursement Rates for VA and DOD Health Care Programs.

"604: VA Medicare and TRICARE Reimbursement.

"605: Consider Treatment for a Presumptive Service Connected Condition as a Claim for VA Compensation.

"606: Extending Gulf War Presumptions and Health Care Beyond 2021 and to Afghan Theater Vets.

"607: Nursing Home Eligibility.

"608: Traumatic Brain Injury Health Care.

"609: PTSD and Mental Health Care.

"610: VA Health Care for Women Veterans.

"611: Expand VA Caregiver Benefits.

"613: Improve VA & DOD Policies and Procedures for Hepatitis B.

"614: Extend Service Connection Presumption to Blast Survivors.

"615: Tinnitus and Hearing Loss Presumptive Service Connection.

"616: Hearing Loss Compensation.

"617: VA Claims Workload.

"618: Improve Education Benefits for Survivors.

"619: Burial Plot Allowance.

"621: Digital Claims Process.

"622: National Service Life Insurance.

"623: VA Automotive Allowance.

"624: Homeless Veterans Priorities.

"625: Ensure Veteran Success in Education.



"626: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program Eligibility.

"627: Support Veterans Employment and Training Programs.

"628: Veteran Entrepreneurship.

"633: Disabled Veteran Leave.

And finally, "637: Research on Medical Cannabis Treatments."

Commander, I move for the acceptance of the committee's recommendations to approve these resolutions.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BIEDRZYCKI: Commander-in-Chief, John Biedrzycki, Post 418, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do we have any of those that we want set aside? Any set-asides? Any set-asides?

Then I would -- from Resolution 601 through -- I would approve adoption of 601 through 611, 613 through 619, 621 through 628, and 633 and 637.

All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The motion's carried.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAMILTON: Thank you, Chief.

I will now read the resolution numbers and the titles that the committee recommends as amended.

"612: Sustainable Community Care Options for Veterans.

"620: Toxic Exposure.

"629: Support the Transfer of Mare Island Cemetery to Veterans Affairs.

"630: Equitable Education Benefits for Dependents.

"634: Recognition for Early Vietnam Veterans.

And 635: "Green Alert."

Commander, I move the acceptance of the committee's recommendations to approve these resolutions as amended.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BIEDRZYCKI: Commander-in-Chief, John Biedrzycki, Post 418, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any set-asides? Any set-asides? Any set-asides?

We have a motion and a second to approve 612, 620, 629, 630, 634, and 635 as amended. All in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The motion's approved.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAMILTON: Thank you, Chief.

Now I'll read the resolution numbers and the titles that the committee recommends for rejection.

"631: Medical Cannabis Legislation." Recommended for rejection in favor of 637, which you just passed.

(As read) "Opposing Future Efforts to Privatize DVA Beyond the Choice and C and P Exams. Recommend rejection of 632 in favor of Commander-in-Chief's 612, which you've already passed.

"636: Toxic exposures." Recommend rejection of 636 in favor -- excuse me, in favor of Commander-in-Chief's Resolution 620, which you've already passed.

Commander, this concludes the committee's report on Veterans Service Resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any of those proposals that you'd like to have set aside? Any set-asides? Any set-asides?  
(Inaudible discussion)

COMRADE BILL THOMPSON: Commander-in-Chief --

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yes. Yes,  
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BILL THOMPSON: Bill Thompson, delegate, 6192,  
Department of New Jersey.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, in reviewing Rule 14 on reconsideration, a point of parliamentary inquiry. I wanted to know if when we say "session" that that means while we're doing these here. And if it does, I would like to make -- move a motion to reconsider B-1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I assume that's what it means.  
You may make a motion to reconsider.

COMRADE BILL THOMPSON: I did make a -- yes, sir, I did move a motion to reconsider B-1.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion to reconsider B-1. Is there a second? Is there a second?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BOB GRASER: Bob Graser, Department of Massachusetts,  
Post 1822, second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.  
Discussion?

COMRADE BILL THOMPSON: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

One of the things that we have discussed numerously is our ability to get to 100 percent as a national organization that hasn't done so since 1992.

And one of the things -- as a post quartermaster, as a district membership chairman, as a department membership chairman, one of the things that we keep running into as our hazards are the subscription dues.

When do I have to pay my dues? Why do I have to pay my dues now? My dues aren't due until March or April.

What this would do is that it would allow a post to sign up a member in August or September. And during that first year, prorated his dues in that first

year, and then the following year, his dues would come during the month of July.

You would still have subscription dues for those people who are in there. I understand that. I wasn't a big fan of the idea of going to subscription dues to begin with.

But I believe that this is a way, going forward, that we can go back to the way we had it where our membership dues run from July 1st to June 30th. And I think that would enhance our abilities in membership across the board, at post, district, department levels, and nationally as well.

And that's my argument for B-1, Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Is there any other -- Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BOB GRASER: Comrade Commander, Bob Graser, Post 1822, delegate.

Just to make a point, this is the same -- 201 is basically the same except this is a By-Law.

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: We haven't voted yet to reconsider. This was not discussion on the underlying B-1. This is discussion on whether or not we're going to reconsider what we did two hours ago and after everybody's left.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: And it takes a two-thirds vote.

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: It's simple majority.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It's simple majority? Okay.

We will vote on -- I'm sorry, Chief.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Comrade Commander, that's what I was standing for. Because when you ask for reconsideration, you've got to get approval of this body before you move forward.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Correct.

I'm sorry. I apologize.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And not only that, but I think does it not require two-thirds?

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: Simple majority.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: So we have a motion on the floor, been seconded, to reconsider 201.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chief, as I understand the By-Laws -- and the Commander-in-Chief, I believe, is absolutely correct. I think we need ten people in order to do the motion to reconsider. I could be wrong.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: No, that's -- that's only for a roll call vote.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I stand corrected.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion and a second to ask for reconsideration. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

(Nay)

The motion's defeated.

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

COMRADE ROBERT FUREIGH: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Robert Fureigh again, delegate, Post 9095, Arkansas. Under the rules of the convention, the convention rules move to reconsider Resolution 304 concerning the ending of hostilities – or recognizing the end of hostilities in Korea.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: 304?

COMRADE ROBERT FUREIGH: Yes, sir.

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

Seeing no second, the motion dies for lack of second.

COMRADE ROBERT FUREIGH: Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We'll have announcements by the AG.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Comrades, thank you for your patience. Richard DeNoyer 2011-12 class dinner today, VFW Post 7397. Three buses at -- well, 4:00 is not going to work. 5:00 is looking doubtful. 6:00 o'clock. So that applies to you.

The executive director of the Washington office, Bob Wallace, would like me to reiterate again that the doors tomorrow open at 6:00 a.m. There is the only one entry point into the arena, and that is through the main doors.

Do not try to access the arena through any other means from underneath, through the bridge area. Through the main door only. That's the only way you'll get in. That's where the security will be. The normal on the security, if you do find yourself with loose change in your pocket, the National Home will gladly take it. There will be collections for that.

Please -- it sounds simple, but if you are bringing bags from the -- from the convention and such, please leave them back at the hotel or find a place where you can pigeonhole them over here. Do not bring bags, backpacks, things of that nature.

Dynamic changes are likely. Again, I emphasize the importance of the app.

And, lastly, seating. Seating, because we are doing this in an area that is not the norm for -- we're going to have the All-American prior and a few other events. Seating is going to be highly controlled.

We ask for your full, full cooperation to respect those areas that have to be reserved for the various groups. We ask that you please honor that request and make sure that we hold a professional decorum all the way through. If somebody tells you that that seating area is reserved, that should be the end of it.

Lastly, John -- is that -- are we okay to release that information?

Just keep in your prayers right now Past Commander-in-Chief John Staum of Minnesota. He's undergoing some health issues. And I'll give you more details tomorrow after we qualify what we can say.

Commander-in-Chief?

#### CLOSING CEREMONY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Sergeant-at-Arms, you'll now please perform the closing ceremonies for today's Business Session.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

National Sergeants, attention.

Comrades, please rise.

Comrade National Chaplain, closing prayer.

Uncover. Parade rest.

#### CLOSING PRAYER

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Dear Heavenly Father, as we prepare to leave this place, let us not forget to always look to You for guidance and protection. Keep us from harm and danger until we meet again. In Your name we pray. Amen. (Amen)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Cover. National Sergeants, attention.

Comrades, facing the flag of the United States, join me in the salute.

Present arms. Honor arms.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, we stand in recess, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms.

#### ADJOURNMENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We are adjourned until 7:30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 4:31 p.m., to reconvene on Tuesday, July 24th, 2017, at 8:00 a.m.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION  
TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2018

(The Second Business Session of the 119<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in the Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order at 8:00 a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Good morning. We will now reconvene the 119th VFW National Convention.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will please conduct the opening ceremony.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

National Sergeants, attention.

Comrades, please rise for the opening prayer.

Comrade National Chaplain.

OPENING PRAYER

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Mighty Ruler of the Universe, we come before You today as we continue our deliberations. We thank You for the opportunity to convene openly in a free country.

And let us not forget those who have given so much to ensure our freedom. We ask that You would bless our veterans, our military, and their families.

We seek Your divine guidance in all that transpires in this room today. We ask that You bless all participants and, Dear Lord, we ask that you would inspire us with wisdom, compassion, and the courage to make difficult decisions.

All these things we ask in Your holy name. Amen.

(Amen)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Cover. National Sergeants, attention.

SALUTE TO COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrades, Auxiliary members, and friends, facing the flag of the United States, join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. Present arms.

(Whereupon, Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance were given at this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Senior Vice Commander, the opening has been completed, sir.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir.

Sergeants, left face. Forward.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Is Barney ready for credentials?

#### REPORT ON CONVENTION CREDENTIALS - BARNEY HILL

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: I will now call on Barney Hill for the report on the convention credentials.

COMRADE HILL: Good morning, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Council Members, and delegates. The credential report for the 119th National Convention at the close of business, 4:00 p.m. yesterday, July 23rd, 2018, total delegates, 11,032; total Department Commanders, 47; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 13; total National Officers, 41, for a grand total of 11,133. Total registered for the 119th National Convention in-house 1,674. That is my report.

#### INTRODUCTION OF TRAVIS WATSON CLINICAL DIRECTOR OF WALGREENS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Our next guest is a VFW member who retired from the U.S. Army in 2013 as a lieutenant colonel after a 21-year career as a pharmacist in the Medical Service Corps, and now works with one of the VFW's biggest allies in the fight to combat the stigma surrounding mental health.

Travis Watson uses his military experience gained from being deployed in support of Operation Restore Hope and holding leadership roles at the Defense Health Agency, Office of the Surgeon General and medical treatment facilities, to now provide clinical support to federal agencies while communicating the value of community-based clinical programs and specialty pharmacy services as clinical director for Walgreens.

With his impressive military record, it's fitting that his work with Walgreens now primarily focuses on improving pharmacy access, increasing quality, and reducing drug costs for the Department of Defense, Veterans Health Administration, Indian Health Services, and other governmental agencies, tirelessly working to help ensure our Nation's service members, veterans and their families have access to affordable medications.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Walgreens' Clinical Director, retired Lieutenant Colonel Travis Watson.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY TRAVIS WATSON  
CLINICAL DIRECTOR OF WALGREENS

COMRADE TRAVIS WATSON: Good morning, everyone. 2018 marks the second year of agreement among Walgreens, the VA, and the VFW to begin a program to discuss awareness of mental health conditions, reduce the stigma around seeking treatment, and improve awareness of community resources and VA programs.

You may not think of Walgreens as your typical partner when it comes to talking about mental health conditions. But actually Walgreens has a long history of serving the military and veteran community, being able to begin with our founder, Charles Walgreen, Senior, who actually enlisted in the first Illinois volunteer infantry during the Spanish-American War.

He deployed to Cuba. Eventually came back to Chicago in 1901, opened his first pharmacy in Chicago and carried that military spirit and culture throughout his organization, and it still exists today.

In 1941, Walgreens opened a pharmacy in the Pentagon. That Pentagon pharmacy donated all of its profits to the Pentagon Food Service, which at the time was responsible for feeding and taking care of the employees there. That pharmacy stayed open until 1980.

More recently, Walgreens has been awarded a contract from the Veterans Administration to be the sole community provider of their flu shot program. Hopefully many of you are familiar with that program and taking advantage of that.

It's very simple. You find a Walgreens pharmacy; you walk in; you show your Veterans Health ID card. The pharmacist will administer you a vaccination at no cost to you, and your record will be electronically transmitted back to the VA. No paperwork for you to file.

And, most recently, we've returned back to the TRICARE pharmacy network in December of 2016, where we're able to take care of all military and veterans -- or military, retirees, and family members. Excuse me.

The incidents in mental health cuts across many different groups and populations in the United States. And mental health conditions are far more common than even heart disease or diabetes in this country.

One in five people have a mental health condition. And, sadly, about half of those, 50 percent, are not receiving any treatment. And in some states that number can be as high as 70 percent. It's clear mental health conditions take a toll on families, individuals, communities, and the health care system.

As these statistics show, mental health conditions don't exist in a vacuum. Chronic conditions such as heart disease, pain, diabetes, and cancer pose serious risks -- or serious health and financial burdens on patients in the health care system. When they are accompanied by a mental health condition, those effects can be exponential.

Having a conversation about our emotional well-being for a lot of us is



probably more difficult than discussing our physical well-being. The power to achieve total wellness, we need to have balance with our emotional and our physical well-being.

Getting a mental health screen is one of the most important things you can do to begin that conversation. What I like about the health screen is that it's simple. It takes about five minutes. It's private. You can do it in the -- in your own home on a computer, and it's actionable. The way you answer the questions, the screening tool will give you information that you can take back to your provider and have a discussion.

Why this is important is because Walgreens has a partnership with Mental Health America and they've conducted about 2.5 million mental health screens since the program began. About 1.7 million of the people who took a screen tested positive -- or screened positive should I say, for a moderate or severe mental health care condition. And of those who screened positive, about 65 percent of those have not ever received a diagnosis.

I know most of you-all are familiar with the five signs, and the work that Dr. Van Dahlen has done. What I really like about the five signs campaign is that I think about it as the buddy system. If you recall the buddy system when you were deployed or in an exercise, this is your buddy looking out for you. This program is veterans looking out for veterans.

And I'll tell you, you don't have to be a mental health care provider to make a difference. Simple things you can do to engage with your social circle, your family. It could be something as simple as a phone call or calling somebody to have a cup of coffee with you.

These simple acts of kindness have a way of offering hope and helping your friends or loved ones through a tough time. And getting those loved ones through a tough time or a crisis may depend on you knowing what resources are available.

If you could forward to the resources slide, please.

Please take a picture of this if you have a phone. A lot of the organizations on this slide are here at the conference. Some are community-based. Some are the VA programs, such as the Veterans Crisis Line. Give an Hour has also been here. The Vet Centers I saw had a mobile truck in there.

So if you haven't already stopped by to visit these programs and individuals running these programs, I encourage you to do so and learn more about them.

So as -- as fellow veterans and family members, we can all do something -- something for our families, for our friends, for ourselves. Number one, I would encourage you to take care of yourself. Our mental health and our emotional well-being is just as important as our physical well-being. And please take the time to make sure that those are in balance.

Number two, having the awareness to act if you see someone is

struggling with their emotional health. Simple things that we can do could be something as simple as asking someone to go for a walk with you and have a way of inspiring hope and getting that person through a crisis.

And, third, please familiarize yourself with the VA community resources. Don't wait until there's a crisis to familiarize yourself with these.

And, lastly, I would just say Walgreens has been at your state conventions for the last two years, giving a presentation similar to this. We've done about 17 of these so far. We're trying to get to all of them.

So if you'd like us to come to your state convention, please reach out to the national leadership; they'll connect us; and we'll try to get a time scheduled we can come and visit you. Thank you for your time, and thank you for your service.

(Applause)

#### INTRODUCTION OF JARED LYON, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF STUDENT VETERANS OF AMERICA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Our next guest is a VFW member of Post 3308 in Tallahassee, Florida, served as a submariner and diver during his time with the United States Navy, deploying multiple times throughout the world in support of Global War on Terrorism.

As president and CEO of Student Veterans of America, Jared Lyon has helped forge critical business relationships, like the one with our organization, to help ensure America's service members and veterans have the tools and support needed to achieve educational success.

SVA's vision is one we wholeheartedly support - to ensure all veterans succeed in higher education, achieve their academic goals, and gain meaningful employment, and we remain dedicated to advocating alongside them.

This time last year, the VFW was heavily involved in fighting over the Forever GI Bill, and Jared's leadership was vital to not only developing an important legislation which expanded education benefits for America's service members and veterans, but also to help ensure it to pass and was signed into law.

Now, please give a warm welcome to an outstanding leader and veterans advocate, Jared Lyon.

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY JARED LYON, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF STUDENT VETERANS OF AMERICA

COMRADE JARED LYON: Thank you very much.

Good morning, everyone. I'd like to take a few minutes and say a couple of thank yous before I jump into my prepared remarks.

Commander-in-Chief Harman, I have very much enjoyed your service

over the past year. As a proud VFW member of Post 3308, you've led with absolute true honor and a big heart for veterans, especially the veterans of the post-9/11 era, my generation.

Additionally, sir, that beard is outstanding.

To incoming Commander-in-Chief, B.J. Lawrence, the pride of New Mexico, I wanted to thank you for the time that we've gotten to know each other over the past few years. I'm letting you know that with a very open and whole heart, Student Veterans of America very much looks forward to working with you and supporting you in your leadership of one of the finest veteran organizations in the United States.

To Bob Wallace, the tallest man I know and an outstanding Marine, I was in Washington, DC, to watch Bob receive a national honor from his sisters and brothers in arms. And I think they captured it best when they said that this man truly has a servant's heart.

Bob has served student veterans nationwide for the entire time that SVA has been in existence. And, Bob, honestly, if it wasn't for your daily leadership and mentorship, I'm not sure that we'd be half as successful as we are. So thank you very much, sir.

(Applause)

COMRADE JARED LYON: To our Adjutant General, Brian Duffy, not too bad for an airman.

(Laughter)

COMRADE JARED LYON: It's early. Right? It's early.

But Brian has been somebody that anytime, night or day, I can give a call to, has always been there to support, and, you know, has -- has really rolled up his sleeves for quite a few service projects with student veterans nationwide. This is a man not afraid to get dirty.

Brian, I've really enjoyed getting to know you. And I very much look forward to hopefully having the chance to visit you in Florida in the not-too-near distance future. So, Brian, I just wanted to thank you for all of your support for student veterans.

And a personal thank you to a gentleman from the great state of Florida, where my home post is. Former State Commander Dan Duffy is an individual that, while I was a student veteran and coming up through the ranks in my local post, was always there for me. He was there for student veterans throughout the state.

And I had the chance to travel around the state with Dan and stay in a hotel room. And it probably comes as no surprise to anyone that knows Dan, I get outdrank by Dan in just about every situation that I've ever found myself.

Dan, I wanted to thank you very much for showing me the ropes very early on and teaching me what being a true leader is, and it's honestly taking care of others. From the bottom of my heart, Dan, thank you so much for

everything you've ever done for me. I appreciate it, Brother.  
(Applause)

COMRADE JARED LYON: I'm thrilled to be back to speak at your 119th annual convention. It's my convention as well, as was mentioned, a proud member of the VFW.

Each year I've had the privilege and honor to stand before all of you. And today I'm proud to share the partnership between the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Student Veterans of America is stronger today than it has ever been before.

I'm deeply inspired by the vast number of committed leaders that are in this room, each continuing to serve here at home. And I'm further struck by all that we can achieve when we're working together toward our shared goals.

As president and CEO of Student Veterans of America, it is also with great joy and humility that I can tell you that with each passing year the partnership between Student Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars continues to thrive. Serving not only the student veterans we empower, but also fulfilling a larger mission for the long-term success of these United States.

Now, more than ever, we're working together to improve the livelihood of veterans who are in college and who consistently burn the midnight oil to lead in the classroom, on campus, and in their communities.

Now, more than ever, we are standing closer, shoulder to shoulder, to advance the interests of our community as one family.

Last summer, as Keith mentioned, we fought side by side with the Veterans of Foreign Wars to secure the GI Bill for all future generations of veterans. A lot of groups will claim credit for that achievement. But I want you to know that VFW has -- with us, hand in hand, as we called on Congress to pass the Forever GI Bill.

After months of work, Congress passed the \$4.35 billion expansion over a two-week period, and they did it unanimously. Talk about bipartisanship. This is but one example of the work that we're doing together to give every veteran the chance to succeed upon their return home and taking off the uniform.

The education that veterans obtain is repaid to our society many times over in what veterans contribute to all citizens as teachers, scientists, entrepreneurs, artists, engineers, health care providers, and in every role between in our home towns and in our Nation's capital.

As we say at Student Veterans of America, we are yesterday's warriors, today's scholars, and tomorrow's leaders. And we also say that at SVA that our most important partner in this work is our friends, our colleagues, and our mentors at the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The unwavering and united support of each one of you ignites in our work and guarantees that the light of student veterans in school today will

shine on generations of veterans to come.

I do not make these statements lightly. To illustrate why our relationship with the VFW is so important, I'd like to share some of our history. 2018 marks the 10th anniversary of Student Veterans of America.

Can anyone guess who the largest student-centric organization with chapters in America is? If you guessed Student Veterans of America, you guessed right. We are now representing more than 1,500 chapters and over 750,000 student veterans of the 1.1 million veterans that are currently enrolled in college and using the GI Bill.

But not everyone out there is a believer in the transformative power of higher education and the role that it plays in supporting veterans towards a successful transition from military service.

Some say that veterans aren't good enough for college, as they did in 1944 as Congress prepared to bring a generation of World War II veterans home. And they were all proved wrong.

They said that we weren't good enough for college. And with the passing of the post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008, we proved them wrong yet again.

Today's student veterans have the highest grade point average nationwide. We graduate at a significantly higher rate than just about any other student in all of higher education.

We get better degrees, such as accounting, electrical engineering, biochemistry and health care, just to name a few. Student veterans lead the Nation to greatness once before when we were in our uniforms, and we are going to do it again today and beyond.

And because we've done some research at Student Veterans of America, we found that -- through our research that the fact is the first-of-its-kind research, studying more than 854,000 individual records of post-9/11 GI Bill users from 2009 to 2016, because of this research dubbed the "National Veterans Education Success Tracker" -- or NVEST for short -- because of this research we know that student veterans are quite literally among the most successful students in all of higher education by any measure. But that, I'm sure, doesn't surprise anyone here. We know how successful veterans are.

I know that there's a lot of statistics about student veterans because I am, myself, a statistic. On August 5th, 2001, I joined the United States Navy.

Where are my sailors at?  
(Cheering)

COMRADE JARED LYON: I joined -- at least I'm not -- we can't let the Marines have all the fun. Right?

I joined a peacetime military. But when I was in boot camp, evil men, hell-bent on destroying the very fabric of our Nation, successfully carried out the largest attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor.

Our recruit division commanders gathered us, and our division with

our sister division, and rolled out a television set later that evening to turn on the news. We sat in silence as we watched our Twin Towers fall. This was not a training.

From that day forward and for everyone who came after, service above self-took precedence before all. My life and the lives of millions of my sisters- and brothers-in-arms changed on that day because from that moment forward, we were not just learning how to shine our boots, iron our uniforms, and march. We would prepare for war.

After finishing my time in the Navy, I used the GI Bill. And I was a chapter leader at Florida State University, where I'm proud to say I'm a member of Post 3308 in Tallahassee, Florida.  
(Applause)

COMRADE JARED LYON: Give it up for Tallahassee. Right?

Post 3308 was the post on my campus at Florida State. The members of the post invited those of my generation into the posts, and they encouraged us to take on leadership roles. I eventually became junior vice commander of Post 3308.

Not only am I the president and CEO at SVA, I'm also a product of the VFW and the GI Bill. It is my belief that student veterans are talent hiding in plain sight, excelling alongside of our civilian peers. And though the statistics show us that today's student veterans succeed at higher rates than traditional students, with student veterans having a 72 percent success rate versus an only 66 percent rate of those who have never served in the military.

Unfortunately, the prevailing narrative about veterans in this country does not reflect the success we are, in fact, having. Counter to the facts, a sadly elastic myth persists that veterans are charity cases, or perhaps that we're broken and that we're not smart enough for college. Whether spoken aloud or even lurking initially as a subconscious thought, this is a false perspective. And we must challenge it every time we see it.

Likewise, if you ask the American – the average American who "the greatest generation" refers to, they'll most likely answer it was the World War II generation of veterans facing horrors abroad for the sake of their fellow citizens, as well as the world's safety, returning home to usher in a new era of productivity and innovation, if they have even heard of the phrase "the greatest generation" that is.

Far too many Americans do not know veterans nowadays. We refer to this as the civilian-military divide. If you look at a U.S. college campus today, less than one in three current students states that they know a veteran firsthand. That means that two-thirds of today's college students, the over 27 million students in higher education, no one in their family served in the military. Shoot, no one in their neighborhood served.

But what of this next greatest generation that we see now, the post-9/11 veterans who were called to service by unthinkable tragedy and unbridled

terror on the world's stage; those who changed their plans, put off their education and careers to face unparalleled modern dangers?

Those some women and men who I've been telling you about, who according to the as-of-yet-released 2018 Veterans Civic Health Index demonstrate that veterans are volunteering at 177 hours annually compared to only 132 annual hours for nonveterans.

None of you will be surprised to hear that today's veterans are among America's most dedicated voters, with 73.8 percent of veterans voting in local elections, compared to only 52.7 percent of nonveterans. We are a civically-engaged group.

And this generation of veterans are increasingly female, ethnically diverse, and even giving more to charity than nonveterans. Today's veterans are the same veterans that you've seen over the last few years of devastating natural disasters at the front lines, mobilizing recovery operations, and now owning this critical service globally.

Today's veterans are continuing the legacy of our predecessors known as "The Greatest Generation" from World War II; and also from the "Forgotten War" in Korea; and from my father-in-law's generation who fought in Vietnam; and from the Gulf War. But we are not recognized as such in popular culture. Whether it is because the media is dominated by sensationalized portrayals of veterans who might be struggling to reintegrate or because veterans are simply less aware that these leaders in America's classrooms and America's corporate offices and nonprofits and government.

This myth is one of the barriers is one of the greatest barriers to our success of the new generation of veterans, and repeatedly the Nation's success causing many of us to worry about our limitations rather than to recognize our possibilities. It's a narrative that serves only the doubters, and it's simply not true.

This is where the VFW and each and every one of you comes in. Across the country, student veterans rely on your leadership to inspire our local SVA chapters.

You heard that right. Though you have already completed your time and service, we are asking you to extend your commitment to serving and to mentor student veterans to help us fundraise at the local level, and for hosting local chapter events at your posts and in community centers back home.

As you learned in the military, no single person can fulfill the mission by themselves. It takes a group of dedicated patriots who share a sacred oath to make great and sustainable progress in the country.

Likewise, in order to fulfill each individual student veteran's full potential, it'll take the cherished efforts of our guides, like each and every one of you as leaders in the VFW.

Each year we cohost the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Student Veterans of America Legislative Fellowship with ten student veterans who are also VFW members. For those of you who come to DC to the VFW legislative

week, ask about getting a student veteran as a legislative fellow.

We couldn't do this without help from a few important VFW leaders: Ryan Gallucci, Carlos Fuentes, Tony Lowe, and Pat Murray. As a small aside, Pat Murray was the one walking the halls of Congress with us last summer. And he's the VFW's very own "Mr. Forever GI Bill." I think he deserves some applause for that. Congrats, Pat.  
(Applause)

COMRADE JARED LYON: For those of you who serve in our communities, go to Student Veterans of America or [studentveterans.org](http://studentveterans.org) and look up the closest SVA chapter to where your post is. Connect with the student veterans near your posts for coffee when you get back and see how you can build the relationship at home for student veterans to better understand the VFW, what a post does, and its true impact to our communities nationwide.

Or you can always give our headquarters a call in Washington, DC, and we'll be happy to connect you directly to a chapter nearby you.

And in taking these steps, the support that you offer will extend and reach far beyond what you can see. Like ripples on a pond, (unintelligible) afford as these students enter into their careers building a new world, each day closer

to a country free from fear, free from oppression, and free from tyranny; a future in which service members are no longer widely seen as a population who needs, but a population who offers help and is willing to continue to serve.

As my old commander used to tell us, "If you want to go fast, go alone.

If you want to go far, go together." SVA needs VFW so that we can go far together, leading the rest of the country into a bright future.

So you see, this year, SVA celebrates our 10-year anniversary not just with you, but more importantly because of you. By including us in your great work, by inviting us to your national convention here in Kansas City, and into your posts, and empowering our chapters nationwide, we at Student Veterans of America owe our success to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

All of us share a common bond. As VFW, members and student veterans alike, each of us can reflect, with a great degree of pride, on what we've done as members of the most lethal fighting force for freedom and democracy that the world has ever known.

I want to thank you -- each and every one of you -- for the difference that you've made in my life and will continue to make in both the lives of individual student veterans and our SVA chapters, and for the Nation by fostering the next greatest generation of leaders.

Thank you all for the time. Thank you for the support. Thank you for your help on Capitol Hill. Thank you for always defending the rights of student veterans. God bless each and every single one of you. And I hope that you enjoy the rest of your convention. Thank you.



(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Okay. You heard the shot on the Air Force.  
(Laughter)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I respect Jared, and I seriously respect and I'm a great proponent of the works of the Student Veterans of America.

Many people have asked me, as I step down from adjutant general, what my plans are. My plans are to trade this into a (inaudible) and finally finish my degree.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And it's a lot of you out there in a similar situation. SVA has inspired me and I -- I hope some of you, but it might give you that opportunity perhaps to slow down to think about doing the same thing. Finish it up.  
Thanks, Jared.

COMRADE JARED LYON: So we will proudly welcome Brian back to ranks as a student veteran. Brian and I have a wonderful relationship, and sometimes he gives me a little bit too much crap for being young. And sometimes, well, I give him a little crap for being old.  
(Laughter)

COMRADE JARED LYON: Tenured. Tenured. A seasoned -- seasoned gentleman.

But I want share with all of you that just a short year ago in our SVA chapter at the University of Southern California we had a World War II veteran 93 years young graduate with his bachelor's degree as the oldest graduate from the University of Southern California.  
(Applause)

COMRADE JARED LYON: Brian would be a spring chicken compared to a World War II veteran. But it's evidence that you're never too old to go back. I'm so proud of you, Brother.

Thank you.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I'm just not sure if I'm ready to figure out how to multiply and divide compound fractions and all those other algebraic PEMDAS formulas that are starting to come back.

You know what? We're going to go ahead and if the house can dim whatever you need, I'm going to show you a couple of videos that also will show you the importance of the mission of the VFW, and some of those like the SVA that work alongside of us, to make all of us more effective, not just for the veterans, but those that we serve in our communities. Please.

## VIDEO PRESENTATION

(Whereupon, a video was shown at this time.)

(Applause)

## PRESENTATION OF THE CITIZENSHIP AWARD TO ANDREW LUMISH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is now my pleasure to welcome our next guest and award recipient: Andrew Lumish.

Andrew Lumish spends his free time in unusual places: Cemeteries. Dubbed the "Good Cemeterian," Andrew has made it his life's goal to honor veterans by cleaning the headstone of fallen soldiers in disrepair -- in disrepair and restoring them to their former glory.

For Andrew, it isn't just about cleaning something that needs it. It's about sharing the stories of veterans. Forgotten soldiers cannot be honored. By restoring the headstones, you can help tell the veteran's story and, in a way, bring them back to life.

He has spent the last five years attempting to return honor and dignity to the graves of fallen heroes, and, to date, has now cleaned more than 500 monuments.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'm proud to present to you the recipient of the 2018 VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award, a truly amazing man, Andrew Lumish.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award and Citation awarded to Andrew Lumish, in spirited recognition and lasting appreciation for his unwavering commitment to restoring honor and dignity to the graves of all those who have lost their lives serving in America's Armed Forces.

His dedication to offering hope and healing to the families of veterans who have fallen in service to our country, has justly earned him the utmost 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 24th day of July, 2018.

Approved by the National Council of Administration. Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; attested to, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

## REMARKS BY ANDREW LUMISH

MR. LUMISH: Good morning everyone.

(Morning)

MR. LUMISH: Thanks for coming out. It's really early.

Moments in life -- I'm not a polished speaker per se, but I do speak from the heart. So this may be a little bit different. I'm just going to talk to you and have a conversation. And I've got a few notes here, and we'll just see how it goes. And hopefully it goes well.

Moments in life, they include potentially a graduation, a wedding day, the birth of a child, some of the greatest moments of our lives. It's important -- and I think I've learned as I've gotten older -- to appreciate those moments. I think I appreciate them more so now than I have at any other time in my life.

I know I'm in Kansas City, so I'm going to -- I'm going to quote -- or I'm not going to quote somebody, but in the spirit of someone who's from my hometown of New York City, a New York Yankee --  
(Applause)

MR. LUMISH: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Before you boo me, I was going to start this off first so you could boo me, and then I could gain your love and trust later.  
(Laughter)

MR. LUMISH: Lou Gehrig on July 4th, 1939, 79 years ago, I understand what it meant to him when he said on this day he considered himself the luckiest man on the face of this earth.

Today I consider myself one of the luckiest men on the face of this earth. The honor that -- that I'm receiving today, it's unspeakable. It's difficult to describe. I'm so appreciative of all of the men and women of our military and the members -- the men and women of the VFW. I'm so appreciative of everything that you do.

And to think of honoring me, it's -- it's just hard to believe. And I'm very, very appreciative. I want to give a few thanks to all of you, first and foremost.

Secondly, I want to -- my parents aren't here. A lot of my family isn't here. But I do want to, you know, think of my father today. My father served in the United States Air Force.  
(Applause)

MR. LUMISH: He became very successful. He did very well in life. And I'd like to think some of my -- my best qualities that I have from him would be drive and determination. And, of course, I have incredible stubbornness. Definitely something that I gained from my father.

My mother: Empathy, value of being humble. Incredibly important. And I've learned from that, and I think I've evolved into becoming a more empathetic person to people in my life. And, of course, she also passed on my incredible stubbornness.

My son, my son's mother, they keep me grounded. They are a reminder of what's most important in this life. And I've -- as a former business guy who saw goals in a certain way, I've learned, again over time, what's really important. And it's not so much status or money or where we are and stand in society, but it's how we give back and what we do for others. I want to leave a legacy for my son that he can be proud of. That's one of the more important things to me.

Now, I don't know if any of you know who I -- I'm called the Good Cemeterian. I'm more known as the Good Cemeterian than I am as Andrew Lumish.

Those of you who do know me or know of what I do will know the next person that I want to -- to mention and tell you how important this person is to me is so integral in not just what I do here, but in my life in general. Her name is Jen Armbruster.

Jen is standing on stage with me right now. She's probably getting a little warm. The lights are kind of strong, and she's worried about what I might say. She is -- puts up with some amazing -- my stubbornness passed on from my parents that I've previously talked about.

We restore monuments. And we have now -- we've really expanded upon what it is that we do. So the monuments that we restored have now exceeded 1,500 monuments in and around -- all across Florida, predominantly in Tampa.  
(Applause)

MR. LUMISH: It began as -- and I'm going to go into the journey. I'm just going to touch on it because I want to talk about Jen real quick. It began as restoring monuments, and I'll tell you why as I get a little further along here.

But then it evolved pretty quickly that I wanted to tell each person's story. I wanted to delve into their genealogical background and find out who they were, what they were all about, what was most important to them, their lives, their families, their children, their successes, their failures. So we tell all of that story.

But none of that would be possible because Jen does the genealogical research and helps me to tell their stories. Jen spends countless, endless hours researching so that we -- when we share a restoration and story, you'll see a before photograph of what the monument looked like before, and you'll see a brand-new monument of someone who may have served for one of the early Seminole Wars, the second Seminole War or the Civil War or the Spanish-American War. And you read that story.

But we won't -- we won't share anything until that story is ready to go.

And she is so passionate about programs that we are, you know, developing and bringing to the forefront in honoring veterans not only of the past, but to all of you who -- who serve or served. And so her passion -- and she may be more passionate than I am. And I want to give her a moment to shine

So, Jen, would you stand up.  
(Applause)

MR. LUMISH: I get a lot of credit, and I wanted to make sure that everyone recognizes Jen, because she is equally -- she is an equal to what it is that I do. She is -- she's fantastic. And I wouldn't -- don't know what I would do without her.

So thank you, Jen.

I have many friends who have served and currently serve in every branch of the military. One in particular, he's at the forefront of what I do.

You know, I -- I tell different stories about why I got into creating the Good Cemeterian and doing what I do.

And at first I didn't want to talk about it. I kind of made some stories up. I said, "Oh, I noticed a problem, and I wanted to fix it," which is actually true.

But there's someone who's important to me, a good -- a great friend who worked with me side by side for many years, didn't feel comfortable having a conversation -- or conversations with family members. And he wanted to talk to me, and he made it really clear that he had stuff going on in his world. And he felt comfortable describing challenges he was having in his life.

So he would come in every day -- and he was another Air Force veteran, 12 years served. He served three tours in Iraq. And he would tell me all the things going on in his world. And I tried to be neutral, like Switzerland for him, because I didn't want to -- I didn't want his wife to hate me. So I would try to give him advice that would -- would provide him with solutions he may not have thought of.

And we got along fantastically. A very big personality, Italian guy, Christopher Scala is his name. And we lost him in -- five years ago on the 27th of July, this month. He lost the battle with -- once he returned home.

And I always think of what he would talk to me about. And that day, I wasn't that person to him. He didn't confide the things that were going on in his world. So I carry that and honor him every day, every time that a restoration is completed. So he's important. He's so integral in what we do.

And, again, I -- he's such an important part of my life and why I do what it is that I do.

Now, I've observed from near and far the incredible sacrifices that so many friends have absorbed, not to mention their spouses and their children, incredible support that they provide, pillars of strength, reminder of why it is that they've chosen such a path in life.

Today society -- I mean, we often value heroes. So you think about heroes -- and I used to be a big sports guy. I got booed for the Yankees earlier. I like the Yankees, but not like I used to. My heroes aren't -- my heroes aren't Derek Jeter anymore. They're not -- that's not who my heroes are. My heroes

are those who have chosen to serve their country.  
(Applause)

MR. LUMISH: We do everything that we can to honor each and every one of you every single day. It's so important to us. Again, we do -- what we're mostly known for is honoring the past. But we really do honor the present.

You know, there's a popular saying that on your -- your first day of your freshman year in college a lot of people say you, you know, look to your left and you look to your right, and that person next to you is not going to be there by the end of the year.

What does that have to do with anything that I'm saying right now? I thought about that saying, and then I look at this room. Now, if you look to your left and you look to your right, there's heroes standing and sitting beside you right now. You are all heroes. You are what makes this country what it is. You represent everything that's right in this country.

And to -- to make -- to ensure that you are recognized is so -- so -- it's so important to me and to so many others. But I look around, and you should look at one another. And you already know this. You're a part of a very special fraternity.

And I -- I look and I'm in awe of each and every one of you. You are the true heroes, not our sports heroes, not our entertainers and singers and dancers that make millions of dollars. That's not what our heroes are. That's not what we should emulate. Each of you are the fabric of our society in the United States of America.

So that's who I look to as heroes, and I try to teach others who may -- younger people especially -- to let them know that, you know, your sports stars, they're great forms of entertainment, but your heroes walk amongst you each and every day.  
(Applause)

MR. LUMISH: So my -- my journey -- let's call this my journey. I began this about five and a half years ago. I actually did go to -- I went to a cemetery. I love photography, and I took photographs of all kinds of things. I found a beautiful old cemetery and I took some photos.

And after I'd done that, I went to a second cemetery. And there was something I noticed and that was the monuments of our -- of our heroes, those who served in every conflict, you know, in our country's history, and they were in really poor shape.

So what I decided to do was train myself, learn how all of our national cemeteries are maintained and restored by the Department of Veterans Affairs. And I purchased all the products, and I began to silently, working with a couple cemeteries, you know, that we -- we helped, you know, again, to do some restoration work on these beautiful stones and tell their stories.

Now when you visit the cemeteries, you can read all about these

incredible heroes. And then we just developed it even further. That's when Jen came along, and she helped me with the genealogy of it all. And it has exploded in popularity.

We are overwhelmed with thousands of messages every week from people who see our stories and want to partake in doing what we do. We are overwhelmed with volunteer requests from people not only across the United States, but all across the world.

We have -- we get videos and photographs of children that either want to complete or have completed restoration projects, and it's -- it's the opposite of what we often hear about our current youth of today, today's society. My -- my specific interaction with younger people today is that they do work really hard and that they want to learn.

So I have them stand back when I do take a younger person, or even -- even an adult, and we stand in the footsteps of where the descendants may have once stood. And we think about -- we talk about their service to the country. We talk about the time in which they lived.

So right now we are developing more programs to expand upon what we do so that we can honor the requests of the -- the thousands and thousands of people who want to take this on and restore the cemeteries all across the country.

So in 2017, we have a very young nonprofit that we began. So it's growing more and more. And we are providing and have provided guidance and products so that people can do what we do so that they can honor their veterans in their local areas. So we're really excited about that.

But in addition to that, we have developed some new programs where we have -- we are donating time and -- time and money to vetted organizations who support veterans with PTSD -- PTSD who came home. And they are organizations that help them -- help integrate them back into -- into society and make their lives more -- more full.

We do -- we work with a variety of different organizations, and -- and they've been very helpful to some great people that we've worked with and whom we've been honoring.

And we also work with Gold Star Families. And we -- we do things to honor those same Gold Star Families. So that's what we do.

Today I pledge to each and every one of you that what we're doing currently across the country is going -- we pledge to you that we are going to grow this organization. We are going to continue to honor those in the past and those in the present who serve, served. And we're going to do everything that we can to continue our dreams and our goals and to help all of you.

So I just want to say thank you all so very much for honoring me today. I'm humbled beyond your wildest dreams. I am honored to be here. Thank you so very much for having me.  
(Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF RETIRED MAJOR GENERAL  
KELLY McKEAGUE, DIRECTOR OF DPAA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: It is my now privilege to introduce the director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, retired Air Force Major General Kelly McKeague.

The general is the former commander of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, which merged three years ago with two other organizations to create one unified agency tasked with recovering, identifying, and returning America's missing to their families.

Now a civilian, he is in charge of DPAA's worldwide fullest possible accounting mission that includes not only the operational recoveries, but also policy negotiations with host governments; testifying before Congress; and increasing outreach initiatives with the families of our missing.

Those who attended Sunday's National Security & Foreign Affairs Committee meeting learned a lot more about the agency's mission, challenges, and initiatives. I am proud to say DPAA and the families of our missing have no greater friends than the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We have sent our senior leadership to Southeast Asia every year since 1991, to Russia since 2004, and now to China since 2008 to highlight the importance of this humanitarian mission on a vet-to-vet recovery.

We have pushed for greater access to foreign military archives and worked with our own Congress to increase mission funding to coincide with a congressional requirement to more than double their number of identifications, which they have finally surpassed last year. Adequate funding will even -- adequate funding will be even more important if and when we are allowed back into North Korea.

DPAA knows the VFW has their back and always will. We have been there for -- understanding how formidable their task is to try and account for some 83,000 missing servicemen in some of the most remote -- remote parts of the world.

We know we can't find them all, but we are still rejoiced in every new identification, because it means another American family somewhere is finally getting to welcome their loved one home from their war.

Comrades, please welcome a friend of the VFW who served his nation for 34 years in the Air Force Blue, the director of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, Kelly McKeague.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY RETIRED MAJOR GENERAL  
KELLY McKEAGUE DIRECTOR OF DPAA

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: Good morning. (Unintelligible), greetings to all of you.



Commander-in-Chief Harman, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Lawrence, Executive Director Wallace, distinguished veterans, Auxiliary members, it is a deep honor to share in this 119th National Convention of the VFW.

In a 34-year Air Force career, I can unequivocally say that the highlight was the last three years spent in uniform dutifully serving the POW/MIA mission.

Let me start -- if I could have the first slide, please.

Let me start by profusely -- hopefully it works -- profusely thanking the VFW for your extraordinary support to the POW/MIA mission. As your Commander-in-Chief stated, we know you have our back. But we also know you have our side, our front. Thank you.

Your letter signed by your Commander-in-Chief, Keith Harman, was instrumental in commitment for being added to the Joint Statement signed by President Trump and Chairman Kim on June 12th.  
(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: It singularly paved the way for that commitment to be included in the Joint Statement, such that the repatriation and the recovery of our missing from the Korean War was agreed to by both senior leaders.

And because of your support to that commitment, 5,300 families now have restored hope in their loved one eventually coming home, here to the United States.  
(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: But this is not an episodic event. Because year after year, it's because of your education in the halls of Congress that we enjoy tremendous support from the Congress in terms of authorities, in terms of resources.

And as you heard your Commander-in-Chief say, for 27 years your leaders have dutifully visited Southeast Asia countries to advocate to those host nations on behalf of this mission.

Here's the latest. This is your Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, B.J. Lawrence, Executive Director Bob Wallace in Guangdong Province visiting our recovery team that had been deployed there, led by U.S. Army Captain Dave Mockasbaugh (ph).

Quick commercial. There is only one finer person to come out of Alamogordo, New Mexico, than B.J. Lawrence, and that would be my wife of 34 years.  
(Laughter and applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: We at DPAA are truly grateful, and I know the families of those we serve are grateful for the inordinate support

from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.  
(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: Simply put: Our mission is to search for, to find, and to account for missing service members who paid the ultimate sacrifice in war on behalf of this great nation. These are veterans, your comrades in arms, who did not return.

And inherent to the POW/MIA mission is the fulfillment of the promise made to those service members when they went off to war, that this country would never forget. And it's also a commitment and a promise that we need to fulfill on behalf of their families who dutifully wait for news of their loved one.

But this mission also serves as a marker for those in uniform today, as well as to all of you veterans whose comrades in arms did not return. As I like to tell the families, I'm the proud son of a father who went off to war in Korea as an infantry private, and then served two combat tours in Vietnam as part of the 25th Infantry Division.

And I tell the families that for me I cannot fathom the loss in their life, given the blessing that my family and I had in having our father return from three combat tours.

Our scope is -- our scope is global as you see. 75 percent of the losses are in the Indo-Pacific region. And while the numbers are daunting, as you see, every number is a unique story. They're much more than just figures.

Memories have transcended generations and time, have been passed down to family members. And it's a loss that leaves an enduring void in both heart and mind for those families who still wait. This is why this endeavor is a humanitarian one in nature. It's one why the 46 host nations that we work with and partner with recognize it as a humanitarian effort.

Here at home the POW/MIA mission is made manifest by, among other things, the iconic black and white POW/MIA flag that you see here on stage. And that nobly flies over towns all over America.

The POW/MIA mission also stirs and evokes hope across the Nation to everyday Americans who, when they hear of an unreturned veteran coming home, recognize how important that is not just to the family but also to our Nation.

Allow me to share the story of United States Army Air Forces Second Lieutenant John Mumford from St. Petersburg, Florida. He's here with his mother, Mildred, just before he shipped off to war in the European theater.

A P-51 "Mustang" pilot, he was shot down in June, 1944, over Ukraine and was unaccounted for until 2016. After extensive research and field investigations, a joint DPAA and Ukrainian Armed Forces recovery team excavated his remains from a field in Novi Troyany, Ukraine.

In the upper left picture -- I think this is really neat -- that is the mayor of Novi Troyany assisting the team in helping to recover the remains of Lieutenant Mumford. It's bilateral cooperation in this effort such as this that's

typical of the support we receive worldwide.

The nations we've worked with understand why this is so important to the United States of America. It understands why for you, the veterans, why your comrades in arms need to be brought back home. And they surely understand why it is that families pine for their loved one to be home.

Needless to say, Lieutenant Mumford's nephews, Ronald and (inaudible), from Tampa, Florida, were overwhelmed with joy to learn that their uncle was found and would be brought home and afforded a full military honors burial.

This is a great picture. So here you see a DPAA team led by U.S. Army Captain Tamika Robinson and Army Sergeant First Class Nimrod Springle working with South Korean Army soldiers on a joint recovery in Yangon, South Korea, this past May.

They were excavating a Korean War battle area in search of two unaccounted-for U.S. soldiers. And what's neat about this is that -- just as we did in the early '50s -- DPAA and the South Korean Army, hand in hand, are working together embodying their famous line, as you all that fought in the Korean War know, "Katchi kapshida," "We go together." To this day, DPAA works arm in arm with our South Korean partners to recover Korean War unknowns in the south.

I'd like to tell you about several noteworthy accomplishments. Last year, as you heard Commander-in-Chief Harman tell you, DPAA achieved a record milestone in our history, 201 identifications made.

And what's significant about this is not so much that our scientists were able to identify these missing Americans, but that 201 families now have some solace in their life. A void has been closed. Our host nation partners, particularly Vietnam and Laos, are readily embracing improvements, efficiencies, and effectiveness that we're offering to them.

In one case in Vietnam, Vietnamese teams are embracing the opportunity to conduct unilateral investigations and recoveries. This mission was the building block to what we today enjoy as a strategic partner on the Asian continent, and that is a Vietnam that's strong, peaceful, prosperous, and, more importantly, willing to help the United States in this noble endeavor.

Having last worked in North Korea in 2005, we are encouraged by Chairman Kim's commitment to President Trump regarding the remains of U.S. service members lost in North Korea.  
(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: We are looking to negotiate with the North Korean Army in the weeks ahead to be able to find and recover over 5,300 Americans that currently remain missing in North Korea. If permitted to resume operations there, I can assure you DPAA will be ready to execute.

Despite the U.S.'s rocky relations with Russia, I can tell you that we are

still working together when it comes to the POW/MIA mission. The U.S.-Russia Joint Commission has been reinvigorated and making some progress.

Your Executive Director, Bob Wallace, was an observer last year, last November, in a plenum that the commission held in Moscow. And what I told our Russian counterparts is by having Bob Wallace there, along with Ann Mills-Griffiths, a staunch supporter/family member whose brother remains missing from the Vietnam War -- by having both a combat veteran as well as a family member looking for their loved one, it put a face on why we asked the Russians for access to their archives. It puts a face and a story behind why we endeavor to do everything humanly possible to bring them home.

Lastly, public/private partnerships are critical to expanding our capacities/capabilities. And they are delivering excellent results. We have 60-plus arrangements with U.S. universities, foreign universities, nongovernmental organizations, and all are producing impressive results, because these organizations, just like us, are seized by the opportunity to participate in this mission. And, more importantly, make a difference in the lives of families who still wait.

One such example is a private partner of ours, History Flight, based out of Florida. History Flight has been operating on the island of Tarawa in the nation of Kiribati. One of the most incredible finds was several years ago they found a missing cemetery that had left -- that had been left behind after the Battle of Tarawa. 35 Marines were found by History Flight in a grave on the island of Tarawa. (Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: One of those 35 Marines that were found and repatriated to the United States was a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. Absolutely incredible. (Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: For all of these accomplishments, the overriding factor here is it allows us to do more and to do it faster, to do it better. But I can assure you and I can say unequivocally that none of these accomplishments would have been achieved without the staunch support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. No doubt. (Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: In July, 1966, then Major Roosevelt Hestle of Orlando, Florida, an F-105 Thunderchief pilot, was shot down over North Vietnam. His remains were found by a Vietnamese farmer and were eventually identified by DPAA scientists as belonging to Colonel Hestle, who had then been posthumously promoted.

His wife, Candace, pictured here, never remarried because, according

to their daughter, she had found the love of her life. Thank God that before Candace passed in November, she had been notified that the Department of Defense had identified her husband, Hestle.  
(Applause)

MAJOR GENERAL McKEAGUE: In May, Colonel Hestle was laid to rest at Arlington, where his daughter, Corda -- you see pictured here -- she was 12 when her dad went missing -- and along with six siblings, the oldest being 88 years old, were there at Arlington to pay tribute to her father and their brother.

And I remember distinctly that Corda told me that before her dad went off to Vietnam, he told her and her two sisters, "Don't cry. Little soldiers don't cry." And 12-year-old Corda remembers that moment distinctly.

And after hearing that story, I told her, "This day little soldiers can cry tears of joy."

It's because of what the United States does that stories like Corda and Candace become fulfilled. The fact that the United States of America vigorously pursues this noble mission is the right thing to do, and it defines us as a nation. The fullest possible accounting of those missing in action, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in war, is both a sacred and a moral imperative.

I can assure you it is a high priority for the Department of Defense, not just in resources, but also in resolute commitment. I know firsthand that DPAA's 720 military and civilian professionals bring in inordinate talent, devotion, and passion to their work so that more Lieutenant Mumford's and Colonel Hestle's can be found and brought home.

Thank you again to the VFW, thank you to your leaders, for your long and unwavering support and advocacy for the POW/MIA mission. Without you leading the way, our job would be so much more difficult; those numbers would be so much more daunting; and, more importantly, those answers would be left -- be left unsaid.

God bless each and every one of you. God bless the families of our missing. And, as always, may He shed His grace on our United States of America. Thank you.  
(Standing ovation)

#### PRESENTATION OF VFW NEWS MEDIA AWARD TO MAXIMILIAN URIARTE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The VFW News Media Award recognizes an American media provider for outstanding contributions to a better understanding of our American way of life, its institutions, and interests. Our next award winner exemplifies just that.

Armed with a pen and the unique life experiences only afforded to a 0351 assaultman in the Marine Corps, veteran Lance Corporal Maximilian Uriarte uses humor and sarcasm to create a character well-known to military

men and women around the world, "Terminal Lance."

Originally created to poke fun at the Marine Corps in a satirical way, the Terminal Lance comic strip brings with it a unique level of humor and understanding that whether it's making fun of horrible -- horrible military food or more timely issues like training and promotions, many familiar with military life are all relatable -- or are able to relate.

Now, it is my distinct pleasure to present to you the recipient of the 2018 VFW News Media Award, United States Marine Corps Lance Corporal Maximilian Uriarte.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: 2018 News Media Award and Citation awarded to Lance Corporal Maximilian Uriarte, Terminal Lance, in special recognition and sincere appreciation of the indomitable American spirit and creativity he displays through his Terminal Lance comic strip.

His generous efforts to sustain and improve the morale of the United States service members and veterans through his comedic talent is a reflection of his patriotism, as well as his enthusiastic support for our service members, and has rightfully earned him the admiration and utmost 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 July, 2018, as approved by the National Council of Administration.

Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; and Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

(Applause)

REMARKS BY LANCE CORPORAL  
MAXIMILIAN URIARTE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

LANCE CORPORAL URIARTE: Good morning, everybody.  
(Morning)

LANCE CORPORAL URIARTE: Oh, hell no. Good morning everybody.  
(Morning)

LANCE CORPORAL URIARTE: It's very early. I'm sorry. I'll try to keep it short because it is very early.

I would like to thank the VFW, everybody at the VFW. It is a fantastic crowd in here. A lot better than those American Legion guys. Am I right?  
(Laughter and applause)

LANCE CORPORAL URIARTE: As you saw with the award recipient before me, Mr. Andrew Lumish and as well as everybody that spoke before me,

awards and organizations like this are usually reserved for very good people that do great things in the world.

I'm not one of those. I don't know if you-all are very familiar with Terminal Lance, but I mostly make a living drawing obscene things for the entertainment of lance corporals around the Marine Corps. However, I am honored nonetheless.

People often ask me how and why I keep doing Terminal Lance so many years after my glorious EAS day. And to be honest, I have no idea how I keep doing it, but I do know why. Those of you that read Terminal Lance probably know that I have quite a tumultuous relationship with the corps itself.

But I -- I believe the Marine Corps to be two things: It's the Marines and the Corps. And they're really two different things. So while my relationship with the Marine Corps hasn't always been great, I can't -- I have to admit that I absolutely love Marines. I see them differently than most people, I think. I think that -- I think most of you do.

Where are my Marines at, by the way?

(Oo-rah)

LANCE CORPORAL URIARTE: Can I get a oo-rah?

(Oo-rah)

LANCE CORPORAL URIARTE: I was in the Marine -- just a little background about me. I was in the Marine Corps from 2006 to 2010 with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines. I was infantry, went to Iraq twice, did that whole thing. But to me -- so because of that background, though, I do -- I see Marines differently than most people do. And I'm sure most of you do as well.

To me, Marines, and other service members as well -- you guys are cool; you can hang as well -- are the funniest, most profoundly crude, inventive, and fundamentally human people I have ever met. To me they are not the killing machines, the baby killing, whatever, oo-rah, semper fi, all that, people that they're often made out to be. But to me they are deeply human in a way that no one else in this world is.

All of us are here because we share an experience that most people did not. The organization itself is called the Veterans of Foreign Wars. While we can wax poetic about patriotism and all that, I personally believe that, at its root, all of us have deeply personal reasons for why we enlisted and why we did what we did.

But I ultimately believe that it was in the pursuit of finding meaning in this deeply human experience that we all share.

So that's all I've got for you. I'd like to thank everybody again for being here. I know it's very early. And I hope you-all have a great convention.

(Applause)

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO 2018 ALL-AMERICAN POST, DISTRICT, AND  
DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KEITH HARMAN,  
SENIOR VICECOMMANDER-IN-CHIEF B.J. LAWRENCE, AND JUNIOR VICE  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DOC SCHMITZ

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: For every Commander in the  
Veterans of Foreign Wars, being honored with the highest distinction of All-  
American is the culmination of years of dedication and hard work.

Today we honor these Commanders' unrelenting passion and devotion  
to our organization. We have 21 Department Commanders, 99 District  
Commanders, and 199 [sic] Post Commanders who have earned that distinctive  
--distinctive title and most are here with us today.

I will now be joined by Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief B.J. Lawrence  
and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief William "Doc" Schmitz to present the All-  
American Commander Awards to this exclusive group.

2018 ALL-AMERICAN DEPARTMENT COMMANDER WINNERS

Alabama - Dennis P. Doherty  
Arkansas - Ashley A. Little  
Delaware - Russ Hall  
Europe - John L. Leffler  
Georgia - Richard H. Attaway  
Hawaii - Jonathan K. Hoomanawanui  
Idaho - Dan R. Neal  
Massachusetts - Eric Segundo  
Mississippi - Norman A. Copeland  
Nebraska - Larry M. Gerlt  
New Jersey - Carey W. Pritchett  
New Mexico - Charles W. Eaton  
North Carolina - Gregory A. Stafford  
Oregon - Kenneth L. Kraft  
Rhode Island - William G. Siano  
South Dakota - Rick L. Williamson  
Texas - Edward C. Torres  
Vermont - Charles A. Magnant  
Virginia - Michael P. Boehme  
West Virginia - Todd C. Kingsbury

2018 ALL-AMERICAN DISTRICT COMMANDER WINNERS

Alabama District 7 - James R. Rathburn  
Arizona District 7 - Clarence J. Larson  
Arkansas District 1 - Franklind R. Lee  
Arkansas District 7 - Earl D. Duty  
Colorado District 1 - Gary L. Williamson  
Connecticut District 2 - Stanley W. Borusiewicz  
Delaware District 2 - John R. Morrow



Florida District 1 - Kevin S. Hice  
Florida District 14 - William C. Thompson  
Florida District 18 - Kurt B. Schuh  
Florida District 6 - Robert J. Hernandez  
Georgia District 1 - Kevin F. Hammond  
Georgia District 2 - Richard J. Hack  
Georgia District 3 - Earl B. Lewis, Sr.  
Georgia District 4 - Jimmy F. Willis  
Georgia District 5 - John H. Skinner  
Idaho District 4 - Gordon W. Petrie  
Idaho District 5 - Nathan W. Suekel  
Illinois District 14 - John E. Barrett, Jr.  
Indiana District 11 - Russell L. Pryor  
Indiana District 6 - Richard W. Leirer  
Iowa District 5 - Stuart D. Juarez  
Kansas District 1 - Larry D. Albright  
Kentucky District 14 - Bruce M. Ashley  
Louisiana District 2 - Gerald G. Dugas  
Massachusetts District 15 - Douglas E. Wood  
Michigan District 4 - Garold T. Gamble  
Mississippi District 2 - Laura S. Franklin  
Mississippi District 5 - Thomas C. Rollins, Jr.  
Mississippi District 8 - Marjorie R. Wesley  
Missouri District 6 - Micheal D. Fisk  
Nebraska District 11 - Kenneth R. Yount  
Nebraska District 7 - Jerome L. Halladay  
Nebraska District 9 - Dionne R. Gorji  
Nevada District 5 - Donna M. Barnett  
North Carolina District 11 - Russell L. Chambers  
North Carolina District 13 - Jack M. Campbell  
Oregon District 10 - Floyd W. Leach  
Oregon District 12 - James E. Horton  
Pacific Areas District 6 - Shawn C. Watson  
South Carolina District 1 - Edwin A. Tufts, II  
South Dakota District 1 - Colin G. Reisner  
Texas District 13 - Andrew Camplen  
Virginia District 10 - Charles P. Wilson  
Texas District 14 - Lora A. Land  
Texas District 17 - Phillip J. DuBois  
Texas District 18 - Loren F. Pogue  
Texas District 20 - Jose I. Duran  
Texas District 24 - Marvin L. Lockhart, II  
Texas District 9 - Richard H. Herman  
Vermont District 2 - Kevin T. Maloney

Vermont District 3 - Jeffrey R. Young  
Virginia District 12 - Eddie L. Reasor  
Virginia District 3 - Mark P. Maggio  
Virginia District 8 - Ronald H. Link  
Washington District 3 - Ben W. Cummins  
West Virginia District 1 - David R. Sisler  
West Virginia District 2 - Jeffrey T. Elkins  
West Virginia District 5 - William G. Cusson

2018 ALL-AMERICAN POST COMMANDER WINNERS

Alabama Post 5850 - John Boley  
Alabama Post 6226 - Scott F. Gedling  
Alabama Post 6837 - James E. Teal  
Arizona Post 1796 - Tammie A. Welter  
Arizona Post 3632 - Michael K. Ferguson  
Arizona Post 40 - Bobby Jones  
Arizona Post 9400 - Mark A. Short  
Arizona Post 9972 - Glenn E. Hohman  
Arkansas Post 4548 - Michael B. Ritchey  
Arkansas Post 7769 - Kenneth B. Cox  
Europe Post 10692 - James R. Joyce  
Europe Post 10810 - Wayne J. Holder  
Europe Post 3885 - Jessie L. Williamson  
Florida Post 10139 - Adam J. Zavardino  
Florida Post 3282 - Jose A. Rosa, Jr.  
Florida Post 424 - Jose L. Vazquez  
Florida Post 4864 - Eugene L. Perrino, Sr.  
Georgia Post 2667 - John H. Skinner  
Georgia Post 2681 - Willie R. Guzman  
Georgia Post 5255 - John A. Veverka  
Georgia Post 7402 - Richard M. Callahan  
Georgia Post 8385 - Patsey E. Nuzum  
Hawaii Post 10276 - Dean T. Anzai  
Hawaii Post 12138 - Joseph F. Bragg  
Idaho Post 4000 - Troy H. Junier  
Idaho Post 7019 - Bobby D. Tettleton  
Illinois Post 5917 - John W. Davin  
Illinois Post 805 - Edward J. Martinez  
Indiana Post 1587 - Sheila J. Corcoran  
Indiana Post 261 - Larry L. Dennis  
Indiana Post 2714 - Cory S. Mahan  
Kansas Post 56 - Thomas C. Poulter  
Kentucky Post 3769 - Merlin N. SESCO  
Kentucky Post 6937 - Edwin D. Vincent  
Louisiana Post 3121 - Willie L. Johnson

Louisiana Post 3750 - Robert J. Lovergne, Jr.  
Louisiana Post 4317 - Philip Lawrence  
Maryland Post 3285 - Joseph T. Allen  
Maryland Post 5118 - Kenley T. Timms  
Maryland Post 9376 - Michael J. Eason  
Massachusetts Post 3104 - Brian W. Willette  
Massachusetts Post 3236 - Paul A. Chrzan  
Massachusetts Post 529 - Robert W. Hardy, Jr.  
Mississippi Post 5393 - Edward Corker  
Missouri Post 10906 - Carla A. Gleaton  
Missouri Post 2426 - Melvin L. Brinkley  
Missouri Post 2646 - Dennis J. Desmond  
Missouri Post 4238 - Richard C. Depontee  
Missouri Post 7356 - Jeffrey L. Fox  
Missouri Post 8220 - Richard C. Moon  
Montana Post 4067 - James L. Layton  
Nebraska Post 1581 - Christopher Leighter  
New Mexico Post 11999 - Jack H. Smith  
New York Post 5350 - William M. Hughes  
North Carolina Post 2423 - Timothy P. Woods  
North Carolina Post 6018 - Helen Nelson  
North Carolina Post 8969 - Mickey Joe Biggs  
North Carolina Post 8466 - David L. Martin  
North Carolina Post 9134 - Alecia L. Judd  
Ohio Post 8445 - Delmar E. Merricle  
Oklahoma Post 2592 - Michael L. Merit  
Oregon Post 3203 - Dennis R. Pratt  
Oregon Post 3232 - Kennith E. Smith  
Oregon Post 4108 - Dennis G. Guthrie  
Oregon Post 4273 - Bert W. Key  
Pacific Areas Post 8180 - Warren Maxson  
South Carolina Post 11079 - James F. Fox  
South Carolina Post 3137 - Henry C. Gillam, Jr.  
South Dakota Post 17 - Sean D. Johnson  
South Dakota Post 628 - Diane J. Diekman  
Tennessee Post 5066 - Brian K. Walker  
Tennessee Post 8422 - Robert M. Landis  
Texas Post 12041 - Larry L. Sanders  
Texas Post 12104 - Scott A. Rebman  
Texas Post 12160 - Todd T. Richardson  
Texas Post 1475 - Ben Lowrance  
Texas Post 1533 - Gilbert R. Uriegas  
Texas Post 3990 - Harvel E. Mackey, Jr.  
Texas Post 4709 - Floyd W. Stewart

Texas Post 76 - Johnny Ornelaz  
Texas Post 7843 - Ricky L. Williams, Sr.  
Texas Post 8564 - Arthur T. Martinez  
Texas Post 9174 - Armando P. Gonzales  
Texas Post 9191 - Melvin E. Pernell  
Utah Post 6395 - Warren J. Johnson  
Virginia Post 6364 - J. Steven Bryan  
Vermont Post 778 - Rene E. Rocheleau  
Vermont Post 782 - Allston J. Gilmond  
Virginia Post 1503 - Timothy M. Brown  
Virginia Post 1827 - Robert Wyman  
Virginia Post 2582 - Michael R. Chism  
Virginia Post 2894 - Christopher U. Mulholland  
Virginia Post 3150 - Walter R. Sweeney  
Virginia Post 3160 - Douglas E. Hoffman  
Virginia Post 4411 - Stephanie M. Cowart  
Virginia Post 4639 - Kenneth A. Shannon  
Virginia Post 9808 - Charles E. Mann  
Washington Post 7392 - Perry L. Taylor  
Washington Post 9430 - Chad M. Hassebroek  
West Virginia Post 4442 - Vernon Anderson  
Wyoming Post 7756 - Donnell E. Nichols  
(Applause)

2018 ALL-AMERICAN TRIPLE CROWN WINNERS,  
DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS - ASHLEY LITTLE  
DEPARTMENT OF DELAWARE - JOHN MORROW  
DEPARTMENT OF LOUISIANA - GERALD DUGAS  
DEPARTMENT OF NEVADA - DONNA BARNETT  
DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS - EDWARD TORRES  
DEPARTMENT OF PACIFIC AREAS - SHAWN WATSON

(Applause)

#### PRESENTATION - 2018 TOP-TIER CONFERENCE DEPARTMENTS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: In a time-honored tradition individual members are presented before you and honored for their diligent recruiting efforts throughout the year. Today, we wish to also distinguish the VFW Departments that have excelled in this area.

Finishing 100 percent in membership and with the highest percentage of membership in their conferences, I'd now like to recognize our top-tier Departments. These Departments are Nebraska from the Big Ten conference.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Delaware from the Eastern Conference.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Mississippi from the Southern Conference.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: And from the Western Conference, Oregon.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, please give these departments a round of applause as their department leaders join us.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Sharing the VFW's story with veterans and recruiting them to join our organization is vital to our success, and I'm sure every person in this room understands. Today, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge some very special individuals who have worked hard, day in and day out, to accomplish this vital mission.

Before announcing the 2018 National Recruiter of the Year, I'd like to take a moment to recognize this year's elite recruiters, each of whom recruited more than 250 new or reinstated members. Please give them a round of applause.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: From the Department of Arizona, Glenn Hohman with 250 recruits.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: With 267 recruits, Glen Tilley from the VFW Department of Oregon.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: And from the VFW Department of Nebraska, Larry Gerlt, great job with an impressive 459 recruits.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Gentlemen, please stand and be recognized for your hard work.  
(Applause)

## 2018 NATIONAL RECRUITER OF THE YEAR AWARD KENNETH L. KRAFT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Now, I'm pleased to recognize the 2018 VFW National Recruiter of the Year: Kenneth L. Kraft from Post 12140 in the Department of Oregon. If you look up --  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: If you look up VFW recruiter in the dictionary, I'm positive Ken's picture would be displayed. As the National Recruiter in 2015 and 2016, his unending dedication, strong work ethic, and passion for the VFW mission and commitment to his fellow veterans is unmistakably evidenced in his continued recruiting efforts. By successfully recruiting an astounding 500 new members, Ken continues to set the bar high.

Please join me in a big round of applause for the 2018 National Recruiter of the Year, Mr. Ken Kraft.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: National Recruiter of the Year Award 2017-2018 presented to Kenneth L. Kraft, Department of Oregon, in special recognition and sincere appreciation of your exceptional efforts in recruiting the most new or reinstated members for this membership year out of all recruiters.

Your outstanding performance has earned you the designation as the National Recruiter of the Year. You are commended for your personal achievements and dedication to the goals 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. Signed by Keith E. Harman, Commander-in-Chief; attested to, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

## LEGACY LIFE MEMBER AWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: The VFW Legacy Life members have the unique opportunity to leave their mark on our organization. Membership in this fraternity of renowned and committed VFW members not only offers expanded and exclusive benefits, but also helps to ensure the VFW's vital work continues aiding veterans today and well into the future.

Today I'm pleased to recognize four VFW Posts, each of which has earned a Legacy Society Post Proclamation in recognition of having at least 25 Legacy Life members. Ladies and gentlemen, please stand as your post is recognized.

The Raymond A. Walling Post 149 in Danbury, Connecticut, for having

25 Legacy Life members.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Florence Post 3232 in Florence, Oregon for having 25 Legacy Life members.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Bob Milby Post 6450 in Chester, West Virginia, for having 25 Legacy Life members.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: And Angeles City Post 2485, Pacific Areas, for having 125 Legacy Life members.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Congratulations on a job well done.

#### VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I would now ask that we pay attention to the two screens left and right as we give you a few videos, again showing the accomplishments of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and our Auxiliary and some of our partners.  
(Whereupon, several videos were shown at this time.)

#### INTRODUCTION OF HARRIS FAULKNER, FOX NEWS ANCHOR

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Our next guest is no stranger to the sacrifice our Nation's military families make each and every day. Harris Faulkner is an Emmy Award-winning news anchor of "Outnumbered Overtime" with Harris Faulkner and cohost of the talk show "Outnumbered."

She also is the daughter of a decorated career Army officer who served three tours in Vietnam, and knows what it's like for a family who serves.

In her new book, "9 Rules of Engagement: A military Brat's Guide to Life and Success," she shares the lessons she's learned growing up in a military family, while paying homage to the military ideals that shaped her and shows how everyone can benefit from bringing the wisdom of military service into their lives.

There is no doubt these formative lessons in leadership and work ethics became the guiding principles for her career as a journalist. Lessons she creates with her rise to becoming one of the top executive hosts on Fox News.

Harris will be signing copies of her new book at the First Timer's Booth immediately after today's session. So be sure to stop by.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Harris Faulkner.

(Applause and cheering)

REMARKS BY HARRIS FAULKNER, FOX NEWS ANCHOR

MS. FAULKNER: Oh, wow. It is good to be home.

(Applause and cheering)

MS. FAULKNER: Thank you. Thank you very much. And when I say, "It's good to be home," I mean it on a couple of different fronts.

First of all, my biggest days up until now in television news happened right here in Kansas City, with the Fox station WDAF Channel 4. I hadn't done much in the business yet, and eight years later there wasn't much that I wasn't willing to try. This town helped me so much in my development and my respect as a human being and as an Army brat.

I'm also home because I'm with you. And my military pilot dad taught me that, "Harris Kimberly, you must be aware of who you are and whose you are." I belong to this veteran family.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: And let me tell you a little bit about what you all put into the bloodstream of America that I write about in my book so that no one misses it, particularly those civilians because they need this stuff that you taught us and continue to teach us.

The No. 1 lesson in every battle in life -- and, boy, don't we face them?

Whether it's on the battlefield, at the hospital, in our relationships, losing/gaining jobs, change all around us as human beings. In every battle in life, there are two rivals: Belief and doubt. Doubt has a bigger team. And as veterans, I know you know that.

Belief is often outnumbered, but it's never outworked. That's who you are.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: And that's who I want to tell everybody about. It's so important. I loved it when I walked in this morning, and I saw you doing the -- the roll count, the with shout-outs to each -- the leadership in each state.

And I realize that I'm a military brat because I could cheer for several states. I didn't actually really have a dedicated one. I know the state of New Jersey would be disappointed to hear that. But, I mean, we traveled a lot. You know how it is. And so I'm from the Nation of America.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: And we have just a few states that we recognize, but we're in this thing together.

You know, the other thing that growing up in the military taught me,



and that I know that you helped in your generations of fighting to instill in all of us, is -- all politics aside -- we are patriots.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: No matter what, we are one. And, you know, my dad used to tell me when I was growing up that when he was coming back from war -- although I was too little probably to do anything other than be hoisted up in my mom's arms to look out for dad -- my dad said that on the way -- on that long journey home, he would triple and quadruple spit-shine his shoes so that when he walked across the tarmac, my mom would recognize his boots.

(Laughter)

MS. FAULKNER: And I laugh about that now, just like you do. But it is our identity together, and it's what guilds us. We are special. And we do have the best, shiniest shoes on the planet.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: I want to get serious now about a message that I'm taking across America, and I hope you'll help me carry it.

First of all, a Presidential tweet can change your life. I didn't know my book would get one until it happened. And then it was, like, more a responsibility from the Commander-in-Chief to make sure I got my message out.

We do nothing. We do nothing well. We complete nothing. We go forward zero steps without our military.

(Cheering and applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Yes. Don't be shy. You keep us free. You keep us safe. And you keep us focused on what is important. Sacrifice and survival. Survival is not overrated. You give us that. You're a constant reminder of what that is. So thank you very much.

So the messages now in "9 Rules of Engagement" have to do what we know to be true in the military. We don't cut and run. In fact, when it gets tough, we're the people that are rushing in, and everybody else is going, "Where are they going?" They're rushing past us to get out. We are the tough stuff. And we do it with love.

In my book, I talk about those times when my dad served and he had taken hits in his fighter plane, and how he would have to dig deeper then, at that moment, to come up with, "Okay. Now, I know I had a contingency plan" -- because in the military, what do we do? We stay ready so we don't have to get ready. Say it with me, "Stay ready so we don't have to get ready." We're on it.

In fact, sometimes our Plan B is so good, most people would write it down first.

(Laughter)

MS. FAULKNER: The other one they wouldn't have even thought of.

And I love telling young people about the legacy among us, and how if we just meet a veteran and put the phone down how truly our lives can change. Please applaud for that.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: I'm excited that you gather and you celebrate each other. But I'm also excited to be given, by the good Lord above, the platform to spread the word that you're doing it. It's important. I don't want anybody to miss it.

We have so many men and women who give their daily lives and sacrifice to be away from home and their families, as my dad did, and the entire family serves. And our [ck] communities need to know who's among them. The heroes on the battlefield and the heroes on the home front.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Yes. Absolutely. My mom was one of those heroes. You know, she said, "Harris Kimberly, the bar is high for you and your friends on posts," because the world is watching us. We're on the nightly news via the loved ones. My dad's war was Vietnam [ck].

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: And while it may not have been celebrated, those very same people who served in that war -- and I just met a gentleman today who said it was because of the Vietnam vets that there were parades for those who were returning from Desert Storm. Can I get an amen?

(Amen and applause)

MS. FAULKNER: That's what we do. Our warriors fight and then they create the legacy of respect, of integrity, of appreciation. They continue to be our heroes at home and abroad. Wow, what a -- what a blessing for America.

We are so grateful for your service, and we need you today more than ever. We need you to help me to get those young people to look up from their social media and to find out where the real words that can help them win come from.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Things like recruit your Special Forces. Oh, I want to get this into people so badly. Because as I look out at all these faces, those who are here to support and those who have served as one big family, I realize that who we are with matters.

Scientifically, we become most like the five people we spend most of

our time with. The military gets this. That's why they don't send 250 people on a SEAL or a Special Forces/Beret mission. They don't need 250 people. They just need a couple dozen people to really get it done. That's what we all need in our lives.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: I'm telling people to look to the military past and present for how to win. We don't go into battle with the idea that, Well, you know, we might have to come back with a -- with a good reason why it didn't happen.

Have you ever heard -- first of all, you can't cut a general off because he's not going to let you get that sentence in. Or as my dad, a colonel, they're not going to let you get that in, that negative -- no, no, no, no, no. In fact, don't just go stand over there, take a walk down the hall.

We need all the people who believe. Because remember, doubt has a bigger team. People can be heading to a fire with a hose and still doubt if they can get water on it, but not the military. Heck, they can go with a cup and a Q-tip to put it out.

(Laughter and applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Oh, yeah. Now, I'm just preaching. But it's so true. And the responsibility that I feel with the platform that I've been given -- oh, I don't think I mentioned, I work at Fox News. Have you ever heard of it?

(Cheering and applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Okay. Good. That's where you find those "Outnumbered" shows.

But, you know, I made choices early in my career as early as in Kansas City. My husband says, "Before the dawn of age," because he thinks no life happened before I met him.

(Laughter)

MS. FAULKNER: You know; we were still creating things like the wheel. And then came along Tony, and suddenly everything was Pillsbury dough.

(Laughter)

MS. FAULKNER: But, you know, back in those days, I would talk to my parents on a daily basis. I was covering bigger stories than ever before, and I was worried that I might make a mistake.

And my mom said, "No, no, no, no, no, my child. Just keep at it. Remember who you are, and becoming, and whose you are and where you come from. You have the stuff that makes sure you only know what victory feels like.

"It may not be a victory that you planned, and it may not go exactly like the mission that you devised," along those lines, "but the military has instilled in you to believe that you can get there. And 'there' will be important, and 'there' will be worthy of your effort."

The military teaches us to surround ourselves with great people and not to settle.  
(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Absolutely. So what I tell people is look at your squad. There may be some people you might have to fire.  
(Laughter)

MS. FAULKNER: The military will look and it will say, "Okay. You're not quite for this mission. I may have a place for you, but not this mission."

That's what I tell people to do in their own lives. I'm raising children with that husband I talked about, two daughters, 9 and 11. My 11-year-old is a bit fresh like broccoli.  
(Laughter)

MS. FAULKNER: So I'm sometimes challenged. But I know that I can get to victory with her too.

But we do have challenges. We have challenges as (unintelligible). We have people now who can help us to get the job done, and we need to make sure that they know we've got their back. No matter who they are, where they come from.

You know, I always liken this to when my mom was stateside and my dad was serving, she would give me a mission in the house, housework to do. And what she was trying to do was create space for me to stay away from the people who were not supposed to be in my inner circle, what she used to call the "fast girls."

Anybody of the generation where the word "fast" means something other than for a car?  
(Laughter)

MS. FAULKNER: Okay. Because I didn't want to have to explain it. There might be some younger folk in here, and that creates problems for parents.

Anyway, there were a couple of fast girls that I had hooked up with. And mom made sure that my chore list, my mission list, was so long I didn't have much time for them. But then she would plant herself right in front of me as I was ironing pillowcases. I've never seen so many pillowcases -- in fact, at one point, I caught her walking into the house with a bag of pillowcases. I think she was recruiting the neighbors, her Special Forces, to give her some, or she

was buying them.

But then she'd plant herself right in front of me, and she would say things like, "You're going to hear people say that integrity is that thing that you do for someone when they are no longer in a position to watch you. It's what you do quietly."

And then she would say, "But the military teaches us about charity too. We have clothed, loved, and fed more people in the world than any other nation on the planet."  
(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Because we don't just fight against things. We fight for things and for people. We are in that belief category, pressing against doubt so we can get to a better life together.

So there was my mother with all the pillowcases in the world. And just as soon as I would iron one, she'd put another one in front of me. "Oh, I think you missed a crinkle spot right where Dad's going to place his head when he comes home."

I'm like, "Really? Really? He's been sleeping in the battlefield. Do you think he needs an ironed pillowcase, Mom?"

"Oh, just keep up, Harris Kimberly. You don't want to fall behind because I've got another chore for you."

She got my attention. And the kind of people that I associated with during the pillowcase-ironing days of my life understood the journey, and they became my civilian Special Forces. I had a different group of friends because of what mom had created in that (inaudible).

One of those lessons was about integrity. I write about unleashing the power of integrity. So I go back now to what she said the saying should be, according to the military, "Do things for people who can offer you nothing more than their company. That's all they have. And they will love you and appreciate you more than you can even imagine.

"But it isn't about any of that. It's about knowing that you lived to help a fellow man or woman at a time when they could really offer you nothing else."

That is the integrity of our military. They do it every day. I'm looking out at the VFW hats and those who have served. And, again, I say thank you because you set the gold standard on that.  
(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: All right. I want to get down to a couple of other rules that I hope that you'll help me get across the country as well.

When things fall apart, believe you have the answer. Potential and belief are such a huge part of our lives, and I don't think we say it enough. I really don't think we say it, and we don't hear it enough. But we need to.

Because what? Things fall apart sometimes. They do.

Another one is: Own your moment. And I'm kind of getting through these quickly because I just -- I love it when I look out in the audience and I see that reflection back of, "Oh, yeah, I know what that means."

You know in the military what we do? We make sure that we recognize. We celebrate with the soldiers and marines and sailors by pinning and decorating them in such a way so that they have their moment.

But it isn't just about that particular officer who served or infantryman who's done something amazing. It's also about creating space for the next one. Because when you don't appreciate the greatest among you -- and they don't feel appreciated, it's hard to create more space.

We want more like you so we celebrate you. We understand that the younger generations will step right up behind you and want to be like you. We decorate you because you are our inspiration.

Wow. Think about all the things in life that try to be our inspiration. Stand in the grocery store line. Plenty of faces on magazines. I'm sure the Kardashians are very nice people. And Lord knows they've got great hair.

I would like to stand and have to push aside the VFW, the Wounded Warriors, the U.S. Army, the Navy.

Oh, wait a minute. Wait a minute. Is that -- is that a Marine book back there? What is it? Oh, these magazines are so thick I can barely get in there. That's what I want to see in the grocery store line. Because that's true inspiration.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: Now, I don't want to take up too much time because I don't know if you've heard, the President is coming.  
(Laughter and cheers)

MS. FAULKNER: The Commander-in-Chief is coming. I'm telling you I just about had a heart attack when my team advised me -- tells me, "Harris, the President tweeted about your book. It's about the military."

And I'm like, "Really? No, that can't be true." And I looked, and I thanked him on the air because politics aside, when the President, the Commander-in-Chief, recognizes that you are trying to lift up the military, that's a blessing. And I was grateful --  
(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: -- and I'm thrilled to be here on the day that he is here with you.  
(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: -- because I understand the importance that the VFW

plays in our daily lives.

You know, I went to check into the hotel last night, and I put my room key in and it said "USAA." Now, only those in the military know what that's about. Right? We're in a special group. We really are.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: And I'm so thrilled to be in this group with you.

So let me tell you the rest of the story about doubt and belief. Doubt doesn't win. Belief does.

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: I believe in all of you, with all my heart, as that answer when things get tough. When things fall apart, you are my answer because I belong to you. I'm part of your family.

God bless and thank you for having me today. And I hope --

(Applause)

MS. FAULKNER: -- you come out to the book signing, "9 Rules." You'll see my mom and me by my dad's fighter jet. And I would love to shake your hand personally. God bless you.

(Standing ovation)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Thank you, Harris. And to once again -- once again say Harris is going to do a book signing. It's going to be immediately following the end of today's session, and it will be over in the First Timer's Booth area in the convention area. So head on over there after the session, the First Timer's Booth area in the lobby of the convention.

Harris spoke of and the Commander-in-Chief asked me to recognize this sign. We have a lot of partners here. And undoubtedly the biggest part that we have are those that have continued our legacy and are continuing to serve in the Nation's uniform.

At this time, can I ask the Six-String Soldiers to represent those serving in uniform and stand and be recognize.

(Cheering and applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Thank you. Through your mission of music pushing the patriotism, it means so much. And one of the other individuals that joined us at this convention that also uses the vehicle of music to help us understand patriotism, Sailor Jerri. Sailor?

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And, finally, some call them sponsors. I think a better term is partners. Would the sponsors/partners please stand in unison to be recognized with our thanks.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Indeed, without your support, we would not be able to be nearly as effective an organization as we are. Thank you.

Now, let's give a big hand as I welcome back to the podium the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Keith Harman. Chief?

(Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF RETIRED UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL OLIVER NORTH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Let me get on the right page here.

From 1983 to 1986, he served as the counterterrorism coordinator on the National Security Council staff. He helped plan the rescue of U.S. students on Grenada, the capture of the Achille Lauro hijackers, and the raid on Moammar El-Gadhafi terror bases; after which he was targeted for assassination by Abu Nidal. President Ronald Reagan described him as a national hero.

In 1990, he founded Freedom Alliance, an organization that has provided over \$13 million in college scholarships to more than 1,000 children of military personnel killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty.

For 17 years, he was a war correspondent and host of award-winning "War Stories" shown on Fox News Channel. In May of 2018, he retired from Fox News to serve as the 66th President of the National Rifle Association of America.

Despite those accolades, he says his greatest achievement is being husband of one, father of four, and grandfather of seven.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a fellow combat veteran, a Life member of former VFW Post 3492 in Fairfield, Alabama, and recipient of the 2004 VFW News Media Award, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North.

(Standing ovation)

REMARKS BY RETIRED UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL OLIVER NORTH

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Thank you-all. Harris is taller than I am. That's why the mic was up that way.

(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Commander-in-Chief Harman, thank you very much for your kind introduction and the chance to be mustered with you from this 119th gathering of the VFW leadership. And I'll let you know that



it's an honor to be introduced by a fellow Vietnam combat veteran and to be reminded of the times I've been with you before.

Second, Harris, she is a tough act to follow.

(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: I've got some experience with that. But it's a privilege for me to be on this platform with a former Fox colleague and a dear friend.

I saw that she put up her book. If you have not gotten a copy of "9 Rules of Engagement," you need to, you ought to. And I'm going to leave time at the back end of my remarks before the next speaker so that we might get an autograph.

(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: I'm not sure they'll be happy because the crowd is going at noon.

Even before I met -- I first met her at Fox News. But even before I had met Harris, I had read her book "Breaking News: God Has a Plan." And I read it because I know that that's true. I know that from personal experience.

And so I commend to you not only an Army brat as I am, and also a wonderful broadcaster, but also a person of great faith. Thank you for inspiring us all.

(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: The third reason I'm grateful is because Commander-in-Chief Harman arranged for me to precede the next speaker. Several years ago -- in fact, I mentioned this the last time we were all together at kind of an occasion such as this, I often had to follow on the stage the president for whom I worked, Ronald Reagan. That's a really tough act to follow. And so I'm glad --

(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: -- I'm up before the President, the current Commander-in-Chief.

Finally, my thanks to Veterans Airlift Command, which made it possible for me to get here and -- and, quite frankly, to address an organization that's actually older than I am.

(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: That's a rare thing nowadays.

So why am I here? Well, very simply: This is a time for the National Rifle Association and the VFW to work closely together as allies for the good of our country.

(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: We share a common heritage. Both organizations were founded by military veterans who knew the challenges of service in time of war. The NRA was chartered in 1871. It's still our Nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization.

The VFW dates back to 1899. It's America's oldest and largest war veterans' organization.

Both the NRA and the VFW have had U.S. presidents as members. Both organizations have a long lineage of service to our citizens, our communities, and our country.

The National Rifle Association and the VFW publications each carry each other's ads. The ad you see up right now has been seen by 4.5 million NRA members. And, of course, those are the ideas and ideals that both organizations believe in.

And on top of that, unspoken, but I'm sure those of you who went on Sunday night know both organizations love Trace Adkins's patriotic music. (Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Both organizations are full of members who understand what situational awareness is and how crucial that is to mission success.

Now, for those who don't know back there in that riser -- who are going to be roundly criticized by -- for sure by the next speaker here -- of which I was a long member for 17 years along with Harris, situational awareness defined -- for those of you who don't know what it is back there in the risers -- is knowing what's going on around you and having a plan to deal with it.

Well, every one of us who served in war or combat has situational awareness; so does every first responder, every law officer, and certainly every firearms owner who belongs to the NRA. We also know that situational awareness is not a flower that grows in every garden. In fact, it is most often evident in its absence. And I'll give you an example.

Betsy and I, my wife of now nearly 50 years, lead trips -- (Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: -- to the Holy Land each year. Oh, wait. It's getting better. (Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Betsy and I lead trips to the Holy Land each year. And last January, we were waiting in the hotel lobby in Jerusalem for some friends to come down in the elevator, and we were going to go out for dinner with some Israeli friends of mine from long ago and far away.

And because I have great situational awareness, I realized that the tour bus that had just pulled up in front of the hotel is full of Americans. I know

this because of my situational awareness, and on the sides of the bus it said,  
"Mike Huckabee Holy Land Tours."  
(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: The first guy gets out of the bus, walks right over to me and says to me, "Did anybody ever tell you, you look a lot like Ollie North?"  
(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: And at this point, I can't help myself. I said to him, "It's a good thing I look like Ollie North because I'm sleeping with his wife."  
(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Guess who's not laughing at this? Ollie North's wife is not laughing at it.  
(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: And the guy, without missing a beat, turns to me and says, "You better watch yourself. He's a U.S. Marine. He'll kick your butt."  
(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: And as he walked away, Mrs. North says, "Don't quit your day job, Big Boy."  
(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: "You're never going to make it in stand-up comedy."  
(Laughter)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Unfortunately, the lack of situational awareness to many of our political and media elites is no laughing matter. There are innumerable ways for the NRA and the VFW to work together to make our communities and our Nation better. But in the brief time that we've got together today, let me describe one of extraordinary urgency that those of us with situational awareness can truly see.

Now, full disclosure, for me this is very personal. Our four kids are all grown. We have 17 grandkids. I have skin in this game.  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: In just a few short weeks, most of America's school children will be going back to school. Among them will be 12 of our 17 grandkids.

There are more than 130,000 public and private elementary, intermediate, and high schools in America. According to public surveys, 65 percent of those schools have a recorded one or more incidents of some type of violent criminal behavior in those schools, either during school hours or during extracurricular activities.

Yet in this country, our banks, our airports, office buildings, sports stadiums are more secure from attack than our schools. That ought to be unacceptable for all of us.  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: It's a sad and all-too-often tragic reality in our Nation that our most precious resource, our children, are not better protected. It was recently reported that even the National Zoo in Washington, DC, is considering extra security measures to protect its resident animals and their guests.

Are our schools and our children less important than zoos? I hope not.

I believe that protecting our children, while they're learning in their classrooms, ought to be a national imperative.  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: As the next president of the National Rifle Association, I am fully committed to the mission of safeguarding our schools and saving our children the mayhem of madmen that unsenseless murder. That's why we're promoting our National School Shield program. Its singular mission is to protect school children in their learning environment.  
Here's one of our TV ads.

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION

(Whereupon, a video was shown at this time.)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: You know, thousands of NRA's nearly 6 million members and supporters are contributing to directly assist schools and school districts nationwide. It's available free to any American school.

Let me repeat that. Any American school that needs discreet, professional consultation and help defining and designing their own specific security solutions should contact National School Shield. Our expert assistance is provided absolutely free, thanks to the generous support of donors to the NRA Foundation.

That's right. Our members truly care about protecting our school children. National School Shield assistance is offered free of charge. No other political group, media conglomerate, or Hollywood crowd has ever offered anything like this.  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: It is sad but true that evil walks among us. That stark reality is one reason NRA members so fervently treasure the Second Amendment, the right to keep and bear arms to defend ourselves and our families. We never waiver from our fight to protect our constitutional freedoms, and we will never waiver from our right to safeguard our children.

The National School Shield program engages communities and empowers local leaders to make our schools safer. Schools and districts nationwide apply for and receive National School Shield grants for pragmatic and effective security solutions. These grants are often crucial because so many schools report inadequate funding as the number one reason for not enhancing security.

Of course, you won't hear much about this from the so-called mainstream media. This extraordinary effort is good news. And for reasons beyond my control, it doesn't fit their agenda to demonize the NRA and the freedoms for which you and I fought on battlefields far and wide.  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: It somehow seems that if the masters of the so-called mainstream media have their way, the Second Amendment would be repealed. There's measures to that effect in the Congress right now. It's also been suggested by a former Justice of the Supreme Court.

Apparently, their utopia is every one of us disarmed.

But now if disarming American citizens leads to greater security, greater safety, let's remove armed security from Congress, Hollywood. Let's disarm our banks --  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: -- office buildings, sport venues.  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: But if those institutions and people deserve protection, don't our children deserve at least that much safety?  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: At its core, the Second Amendment secures our individual freedom to secure, protect, and honor those who are defenseless, like children in school, our homes, our families, and their lives. When we stand and fight for that freedom, we fight for the freedom for all Americans, including the freedom for our children to go to school and be safe in their classrooms.

Now, here's why synergy between the NRA and the VFW can truly be lifesaving, not just ads in our publications, not just occasionally showing up at each other's meetings.

When you go home from this 119th VFW Convention, you can do what

we used to call in the military some "reconnaissance." If you have a child or grandchildren in a school that's not protected, ask the principal, the superintendent, the school board to contact National School Shield immediately.

The NRA and the VFW are natural allies. Our ranks are full of patriots who fought for our freedom on foreign soil. You and your families have sacrificed much on behalf of our great Nation. For your heroic service, I'm joined by nearly 6 million NRA members who salute you for your service.

These days too many of our countrymen treat patriotism as some sort of cliché. For media elites and political power brokers, the idea of fighting to preserve our unique American freedoms is no longer necessary in this post-modern America. Those of us who stand and place our hands over our hearts to honor our anthem and our flag are now viewed to be somehow archaic or even irrelevant.

Perhaps that's because so few of them have mourned the loss of fellow comrades in arms as they're carried to their final resting place draped in that red-white-and-blue banner. But we have. We've all done it.

The NRA and the VFW believe that patriotism, love of country, and standing to salute our flag aren't flaws. They're virtues. Let me close with that thought --  
(Applause)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Let me close with that thought with one of our newest TV ads. Please watch.

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION

(Whereupon, a video was shown at this time.)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NORTH: Thank you. Thank you. God bless you and I look forward to joining you again maybe at No. 2120, semper fidelis.  
(Applause)

#### VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I would now ask for your continued focus on the screens as we have a few more VFW videos.  
(Whereupon, several videos were shown at this time.)

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Ladies and gentlemen, as we prepare for the President, please bear with us and we will be back very soon.  
(Whereupon, several videos were shown at this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated. Clear the aisles. The sergeants have strict orders of anybody wishing to

take pictures of the President -- we know everybody would like to -- but we'd like to have you stand by as close to your seat as possible.

The aisles will be unrestricted, and he should be out real shortly. So, please, a little movement around here during his speech, but thank you very much for waiting for him. And like I said, we expect him in about three minutes or so.

(Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome back to the stage VFW National Commander Keith Harman.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you. We are grateful for your service and your -- and your -- oh, that's not mine.

(Laughter and applause)

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORABLE DONALD J. TRUMP  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: But that's a great way to start off.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: (Inaudible) What a great way to bring greetings to the president of the United States. And he took my -- my introduction so it is with a great deal of pleasure and honor for me to introduce the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

(Applause)

REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE DONALD J. TRUMP  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you, (inaudible). Thank you, (inaudible).  
(USA! USA! USA!)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And thank you also to Commander Harman. We're grateful for your service, for your leadership in this incredible organization. That's what it is. It's incredible.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I'm honored to be here today in Kansas City, Missouri --  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- to pay tribute to the men and women who

make freedom possible. Kansas City. And what a special place. What a special group of people.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, you people should be very proud of yourselves. I want to personally thank each and every one of you who served our country in uniform, defended our Nation in battle, and protected our great American flag.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I also want to recognize a great Kansas City legend who I met today at the plane. Somebody that I've been a fan of for a long time, a member of the baseball Hall of Fame, George Brett of the Kansas City Royals. (Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Where is George? He's around here somewhere.

"George, how many years?"

"20."

"What was your batting average --"

"305."

I said, "That's pretty good. 305 for 20 years." Special guy.

I want to thank a true patriot, your Executive Director Bob Wallace, along with your outstanding National Auxiliary President Dee Guillory. Thank you, Dee.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And congratulations to VFW's incoming leadership, B.J. Lawrence and Sandi Kriebel. Where are they? (Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Congratulations.

We're also joined by our brand-new VA Secretary, Robert Wilkie. He's going to be fantastic, who was just confirmed by the Senate last night with an overwhelming vote. The only ones, actually, that voted against him were all of the people -- super lefts that are running against me in two and a half years. (Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Every one of them. If you want to know who's running, just take a look at Wilkie's score. Because every single one of them -- there'll be probably quite a few more, but in the Senate that was it. But what a great vote, and he's going to do a fantastic job. There's been nothing more important to me. (Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you. I also want to thank acting-VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke for doing such a fantastic job in the meantime,



holding down the fort until Wilkie got approved. And Peter is going to be joining the whole team.

And they are doing numbers, and they are doing the job with choice and with all of the other things that we've gotten approved. They're doing some job for our vets. It was a very important commitment that I made to you during the campaign, and we're fulfilling that commitment.

Several terrific members of Congress are here today as well, great friends of mine. They've helped me so much. We're joined by Kevin Yoder from Kansas.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Incredible guy. Kevin? Kevin Yoder. What an incredible guy.

And members of Missouri's congressional delegation: Vicky Hartzler, Billy Long, Jason Smith, along with your state's attorney general, hopefully -- we need him so badly -- hopefully your new senator-to-be, Josh Hawley. We need Josh badly.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Josh, thank you.

In fact, Josh, do me a favor and come up here just for a second. Just shake my hand.

This guy is a special man.

Come here, Josh. Come here.

(Applause)

ATTORNEY GENERAL HAWLEY: Well, it's an incredible honor to be here today. Thanks to all of you for your service and what you mean to this country. But how about the leadership of President Donald Trump? What do you think? (Cheering and applause)

ATTORNEY GENERAL HAWLEY: You know, when I think about President Trump, there's one word that comes to mind. That word is courage. Do you agree? (Yeah)

ATTORNEY GENERAL HAWLEY: How many people over the years have said that they'll do this or they'll do that? But there's one guy who had the guts to actually fulfill his promises, the guts to move our embassy to Jerusalem, the guts to actually stand up against our enemies overseas, the guts to put conservatives on the Supreme Court of the United States. And that's Donald Trump. (Cheering and applause)

ATTORNEY GENERAL HAWLEY: You know, the President always says -- the President always says, "We're at a turning-point moment as a country. It's a critical time for our country."

And he's providing the leadership that this country needs as we lead the world into this new century. And now I tell you what, I think he needs reinforcements in Washington, DC. Do you agree with that?  
(Yeah)

ATTORNEY GENERAL HAWLEY: So let's -- let's do this: Let's show our appreciation again for President Trump and the leadership that he is giving to this country. And let's redouble our efforts and recommit ourselves to standing together, working hard, and making America great again.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Wow. Good-bye, folks.  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: That was great. What a great young man.  
Before going any further, I want to take this moment to send our prayers to the victims of the tragic boat accident that took place in your great state last week. And I have to tell you the whole world was watching that.  
We lost 17 beautiful souls, including nine members of one family, and babies for whom life was just beginning. Their lives were cut short, but they and their loved ones will never, ever be forgotten. A tragedy. We will hold their memory close to our hearts.

I want to thank your governor, Mike Parson, a friend of mine, a great person, for his leadership during this terrible tragedy, along with the Coast Guard and all of the first responders who were incredible. Thank you very much. Thank you.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Next year will mark the 120th anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the oldest major veterans organization in our country. That's pretty good. Right?  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: For more than a century, the VFW has represented American heroes who promoted American values, and they did so with honor. You are the universal symbol of the patriotic pride that beats loudly in every single American heart.

We don't apologize for America anymore. We stand up for America.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We stand up for the patriots who defend America.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And we stand up for our National Anthem.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're putting America first again, and we are seeing the incredible results.

We're destroying the blood-thirsty killers known as ISIS. Almost gone.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're calling the threat by its real name, a name that wasn't mentioned for a long time. It's called radical Islamic terrorism. That's what it is.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: You have to know your enemy before you can defeat your enemy.

Earlier this year, I recognized the true capital of Israel, as Josh said, Jerusalem, where we just opened the American Embassy.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: They thought it would never be named. And after it was named, they thought it would never get built. And I built it within four months. How about that one?

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Four months.

They came to my office. They had a document to be signed: \$1 billion for the embassy. I said, "1 billion?" They didn't have a site. They didn't know anything.

And our great ambassador to Israel called, David Friedman -- who's a very successful lawyer in New York City, one of the most -- and he said, "You know, we could do it a lot faster. We have a great site. We have a building already on the site. We could renovate the building quickly, and we could open the embassy, if you'd like to do that, sir."

I said, "How much would it cost?"

He says, "\$150,000."

(Laughter and cheering)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I said, "What? What?" He said, "I think we can do it in four months." So we're talking about 1 billion, maybe in 20 years, maybe never. Probably never happens. Right? We know what goes on. Besides that, I'd rather build ships or I'd rather build something else, if we can save the money.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: If we can save that money, let's use it wisely.

So I said, "David, let's not do 150. Let's do like -- how about 400,000 and make it nicer?"

And it's beautiful. It just opened, and it is beautiful. So we're many years ahead of schedule. And I understand, frankly, every president for the last many presidents have said, "We're going to open our embassy in Jerusalem," and they never did it. They all failed. They never did it. And I understand why.

Because when it came time and when people were hearing rumors about it, I was inundated from calls of every leader from all over the world, imploring me, even demanding that we not do it, to a point where I never took their calls. And then I called them back after I did it. You know, it's one of those type of, "Let me call them back."

(Laughter and cheering)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I was getting calls from kings and presidents and dictators. I was getting calls from them. And when I knew what it was about, I'd say, "Tell them I'll call them next week."

(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I called them and I said, "Oh, I didn't know you felt that way." I wasn't (inaudible).

(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: But I understand they did it. Because there was tremendous pressure. We did it. We're proud of it. It's there. Enjoy it.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And by the way, the biggest fan may very well be the evangelicals. They wanted that built. They wanted that there. So we're very, very proud of it.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We have removed unnecessary restraints on our war fighters in Afghanistan. Those who risked their life and limb for our country deserve rules of engagement that give them the best opportunity to finally defeat the enemy.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And we're making – for the first time in years, we're making a lot of progress in Afghanistan.

I withdrew the United States from the horrible one-sided Iran nuclear deal.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And Iran is not the same country anymore. That I can say. And we'll see what happens. But we're ready to make a real deal, not the deal that was done by the previous administration, which was a disaster.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're also pursuing the denuclearization of North Korea; and a new future of prosperity, security, and peace on the Korean Peninsula and all of Asia. New images, just today, show that North Korea has begun the process of dismantling a key missile site. And we appreciate that. We had a fantastic meeting with Chairman Kim.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And it seems to be going very well.  
I know we're joined today by many incredible veterans of the Korean War. Thank you for your courageous service.

As you may know, we're also working to bring back the remains of your brothers in arms who gave their lives in Korea, and I hope that --  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- very soon these fallen warriors will be coming home to lay at rest in American soil. That's starting the process.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: At the very end of our meeting, I said to chairman Kim, "Good relationship, good feeling." I said, "I would really appreciate it if you could do that."

He said, "It will be done." So I was very happy. And I think that process is starting fairly soon we hope.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Because we believe in no American left behind. We believe in that. Right?  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No American left behind.  
I want to thank the VFW for your devotion to our fallen heroes, unknown soldiers, prisoners of war, and those missing in action and their families. No one better understands the horrors of war than the people in this room.

It is the warrior who bears the scars of battle and who prays most fervently for peace. That is why we remember George Washington's advice, that the best way to preserve the peace is to be prepared for war.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And that is exactly what we do all the time. My thinking is always on military and military strength. That is why I'm proud to report that we are now undertaking the greatest rebuilding of our United States military in its history.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We have secured \$700 billion for defense this year, and \$716 billion next year approved.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're ordering 147 new F-35 Lightning fighters. This is an incredible plane. It's a Stealth. You can't see it. So when I talk to even people from the other side, they're trying to order our plane. They like the fact that you can't see it.

I said, "How would it do in battle with your plane?"

They said, "Well, we have one problem. We can't see your plane."

(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: That's a big problem. Stealth, super Stealth, the best in the world. We make the best military equipment in the world.

Also remember this: Jobs.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're ordering 239 Apache and Black Hawk helicopters. You know what they are.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: 19 major Naval vessels and nearly 8,000 Humvees.

And these will be Humvees that are used by our great soldiers, not handed out to everybody like you've been reading about in the past.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: All made right here in the USA.  
(Cheering and applause).

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And we're adding nearly 30,000 new soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. And I've directed the Pentagon to begin the process of creating the sixth branch of our military. It's called the Space Force.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We are living in a different world, and we have to be able to adapt. And that's what it is.

A lot of very important things are going to be taking place in space.

And I just don't mean going up to the moon and going up to Mars, where we'll be going very soon. We'll be going to Mars very soon. But from a military standpoint, space is becoming, every day, more and more important.

I'm also thrilled to say that we have secured, for our military service members and their families, the largest -- oh, you don't really want it. You're too patriotic for this. The largest pay raise --  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- in almost a decade. You don't want it.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: You don't want it. Anybody willing to give it up for the sake of your country? Okay. Keep it. You deserve it. You really do. It's been a long time since you've gotten a raise. You deserve it.

My administration is committed to ensuring that our war fighters have the tools, the resources, the firepower that they need to defeat our enemies with overwhelming force.

Hopefully, we will never have to use the kind of power that I'm building and helping to build for you. Hopefully people will look at us and they'll say, "Let's pass."  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: "Let's pass."  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: America is a peace-loving nation. We do not seek conflict. But if conflict is forced upon us, we will defend ourselves. And if we must, we will fight, and we will do nothing but win.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: As the great General MacArthur once said, "In war, there is no substitute for victory." Victory.

We're also committed to ensuring that when our warriors return home as veterans, they receive the best care anywhere on earth.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Since taking office and working alongside of the VFW -- and by the way, your representatives have done an incredible job on helping us with the VA. Complicated subject. So many different things. They helped us so much. Because we put in legislation.

I said, "Let's make sure it's legislation that's good and that works, not legislation that's obsolete before we even get it. If we're going to fight like hell to get everybody to approve it, let's get approved what's good."

And we've enacted some of the largest VA reforms in the history of

the VA.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Probably the largest. Last year I signed into law the landmark VA Accountability Act, which nobody thought we could get approved. Nobody. We're good at getting things approved. Nobody did.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Now, when a bad person -- maybe a federal employee in this case -- but somebody bad mistreats or neglects or abuses our great veterans in their time of need, we can turn to them, look at them in the eye and say, "You're fired. Get out. Get out."  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Before, there was nothing you could do. You had to live with these people. We've gotten rid of a lot of people over the last year. Only the bad ones. The good ones we cherish. We cherish the good ones. But we had some bad apples, and they're gone.

As promised, we've established the White House VA Hotline and every VA Medical Center now offers same-day emergency mental health care. Something very important.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're greatly expanding telehealth and walk-in clinics so our veterans can get anywhere, at any time they can get what they need. They can learn about the problem, and they don't have to necessarily drive long distances and wait.

We are also --  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: It's been a very big success.

We're also processing veteran disability claims more quickly than ever before by far. The VA has implemented the Decision Ready Claims process, where claims can be completed in under two weeks -- we're with striving for one day, but under two weeks. It used to be many, many months.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Last year I signed legislation -- it's amazing I just said "last year." It's been a long time already, hasn't it? That was some campaign, wasn't it?  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I signed legislation so that veterans can use their GI Bill education benefits at any point in their lifetime.



(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: That's a big difference. They never expire, so vets can get the education they need when it is right for them.

And with the VFW's tremendous help, we passed Veterans Choice, the biggest thing ever. The biggest thing ever. That's got to be --

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- the biggest improvement you can have. So now if you can't get treatment that you need in a timely manner -- people used to wait two weeks, three weeks, eight weeks; they couldn't get to a doctor. You will have the right to see a private doctor immediately, and we will pay for it.

And you know what? It's very, very cost-effective. And thousands and thousands of lives are going to be saved, and your quality of life is going to be so much better. So you don't have to wait in line for two and a half weeks to see a doctor, like in the past. Veterans Choice has been passed.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And my administration also understands that we cannot be a safe country if we are not a prosperous country. We have to think of ourselves.

You have to see these trade deals I'm working on. They're a disaster. We're losing hundreds of billions of dollars with individual countries a year. And they're sticking -- you've got to stick it out. We've got to just -- we've got to fight it. Nobody else fought it.

I went to some of the countries, I said, "How did it get so imbalanced?"

They said, "Nobody ever called."

(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: They said, "Nobody ever called." They'd do whatever they wanted, and we'd just put up with it. Not any longer, folks. Not any longer.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're making tremendous progress. They're all coming. They don't want to have those tariffs put on them. They're all coming to see us. And the farmers will be the biggest beneficiary. You watch and see.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're opening up markets. Just be a little patient.

They're all aiming at anybody that likes me. And they have lobbyists like nobody's ever seen. They have the best lobbyists ever put together. I was hearing and reading that they have some of the greatest lobbying teams ever

put together.

"You've got to stop the president from putting tariffs on these countries and these companies that are ripping off the United States. You've got to stop him."

Just remember, we're going to do something that honestly nobody else could do. Nobody else could do. We have a lot of -- (Inaudible)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you, darling. I like you too. I like her.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you very much. That was good timing.  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're now in the midst of a great economic revival. And it's for that reason that I chose this as the time.

Last year our country lost 817 billion -- with a B -- dollars on trade. We lost \$817 billion. And people say, "Oh, could you do it this week? Could you get it done immediately?"

These countries have been ripping us off for decades. It doesn't take a week. It takes a little longer. But we're going to get it done. But just remember, we can't lose \$817 billion.

We rebuilt China. What the European Union is doing to us is -- it's incredible how bad. They made \$151 billion last year. Our trade deficit with the European Union. They sound nice, but they're rough. They're all coming in to see me tomorrow.  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: They're all coming. I said, "You have to change." They didn't want to change. I said, "Okay. Good. We're going to tariff your cars." They send millions of cars. Mercedes. All of them. BMW. So many cars. I said, "We're going to have to tariff your cars."

They said, "So when can we show up?"  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: "When can we be there? Would tomorrow be okay?"  
(Laughter and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Oh, folks, stick with us.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Amazing. But remember they have the biggest, best, strongest lobbyists, and they're doing a number. Just stick with us. Don't believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I mean; I saw a piece on NBC today -- NBC -- not just CNN. CNN's the worst. But I saw a piece on NBC.  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: It was heart-throbbing. They were interviewing people. They probably go through 20, and then they picked the one that sounds like the worst. But they went through a group of people -- in fact, I wanted to say, "I've got to do something about this Trump."  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And that piece was done by the lobbyists, by the people that they hire. It was a total setup. This country is doing better than it's ever done before economically. This is the time --  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- to take off the rip-off of America. We have to do it. You know, other countries have tariffs on us. So when I say, "Well, I'm going to put tariffs on them," they all start screaming, "He's using tariffs!"

China charges us, when we make a car, 25 percent tariff. We charge them two and a half percent. Other than that, it's a fair deal.  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Similar things with other countries, like the European Union. They're a big abuser. But it's all working out. And just remember, what you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening.

And I'll tell you I have so many people that are so in favor -- because we have to make our country truly great again. Remember, "Make America great again." And then --  
(Cheering)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- in two and a half years, it's called, "Keep America great." So the way we keep America great is to make at least reasonable -- I'm not saying -- at least reasonable, at least fair trade deals, not stupid trade deals like we've put up with for 25 years. So we're changing it and we're changing it rapidly.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Over the last little more than a year and a half, we've created 3.7 million jobs since election. African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American unemployment has reached the lowest levels ever recorded in our country's history. The lowest unemployment, lowest levels.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Remember I used to say -- I said it here -- "What do you have to lose?" I was right.

Women's unemployment recently achieved a 65-year low. Lowest in 65 years.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: You'll like this one. Veterans' unemployment has fallen to the lowest level in almost 18 years. We're working to make it better. I'm sorry. You know, 18 years isn't so good when you hear history (inaudible). 18 years. And I'll guarantee within a month or two months that 18 we'll be even a much higher number. Take great care of our vets.

Consumer, business, and manufacturing confidence has reached its all-time highs. Confidence is all-time high. We've cut a record number of job-killing regulations.

No president, no matter how long they've been in office -- even though we're only here for a short time -- has cut anywhere near the regulations. And these are unnecessary. These are waste regulations.

It would take 20 years to get approval to build a highway. We're trying to bring it down to one year. We have it down to about two. We're trying to get it down to one. And if it doesn't work or if it's environmentally unsound or there's something's wrong, we're not going to approve it.

But we're not going to take the process 20, 21 years, and then raise the hand that it's not approved. We'll let you know that in a period of a year or maybe two. Right now it's at two. We're trying to bring it down to one.

We passed the biggest tax cuts and reforms in American history. Biggest in history.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And, unfortunately, we had tremendous opposition for lowering taxes from Claire McCaskill. She voted against it. Unbelievable.  
(Boo)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Unbelievable. And she wants to now end it so that you'll pay more. Figure this one out. I don't know. Is that -- you figure that one out.

In the first quarter of this year alone in American companies, we patroned a record of nearly \$300 billion. This is in the first quarter. And it's coming back into our country with our companies and our employment, and building plants and factories and headquarters in our country where it belongs.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We think the number -- and this is all because of

our tax reform and tax cuts. We think the number will be close to \$4 trillion dollars coming back into our country. Money that would have never been seen by you or us.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And just like I promised, we are confronting the unfair trade deals. And we are doing it like nobody's ever done because our workers have been cheated. Our companies have been cheated. They've stolen our wealth. They brought it to other countries.

As you know, I campaigned on that issue. It's very close to my heart. I understand that issue better than anybody. I don't like it when they close a factory in your state or a plant in your great state, and they move it to another country and they make the product. They fire all of you, and they make the product, and they send it back into our country to be sold tax free. I don't like that. I don't like it.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're stopping it. We're stopping it. Because companies are moving back into our country like never before. You saw Chrysler announced -- many are announcing -- Japan just announced two big companies are opening up in Michigan. We have a lot of companies coming back into our country. You haven't seen that in 25 years. You haven't seen it.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And we need workers because our unemployment rate, at 3.8 percent, is so low now we're taking people off the roles and we're training people, but we need workers. And that's why I want people coming in -- you know, people don't stay this, and they certainly don't report it, but I want people coming into our country. But I want them coming in based on merit.

I want the merit system so they can help us. Merit.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: The forgotten men and women of our country are forgotten no more. The Democrats are trying to find out who are these people that came out to vote? Where did they come from? Remember that? Where did they come from?

Now, they know. But they're not going to the Democrats, who are going so far left that nobody can believe it. They want open borders and crime's okay. We want strong borders, and we want no crime. Other than that, we're very similar.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Other than that we're very similar.

We also know that to be a strong Nation, we have to have the strong

borders. We cannot send our military to confront threats abroad, only to allow those same threats to cross our borders and to threaten us right here at home.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We help other countries protect their borders, and we don't protect our own borders. How about that?  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're fighting every day to secure our borders, and we're doing a great job. But we're not given the tools. We have the worst laws in any country ever in history. We have catch and release. You catch them, and now we say, "Give me a name. Oh, good. Come back in a couple of years, we'll take you to court. You're released."

This is -- these are -- this is the policy of fools. Catch and release. You catch even a criminal, you catch a bad person, you release the person as soon as you catch them. We have to end it. Despite that, we're doing a great job.

And ICE, ICE, oh, ICE. Thank goodness for ICE, because we have --  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- some of the worst drug dealers, terrorists, criminals and MS-13 gang members, and we're either throwing them the hell in jail or throwing them out of our country. And ICE goes up there, and they walk in like it's another day in the office. Thank goodness for ICE.  
(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: The Democrats want to abandon ICE. They want to end ICE. They're too strong. I saw one of the people go, "They're too strong. They're too strong." I think MS-13 is strong too.  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: The only thing they understand is strength. They don't understand anything but strength. And ICE is tough. It's smart. And they track them down, and they stop tremendous amounts of crime. And these are great people, and they're not being treated properly.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And the fact is instead of supporting our ICE officers, many of these Democrat politicians, who are really disciples of a very low-IQ person, Maxine Waters --  
(Booing and laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- and perhaps even worse Nancy Pelosi --  
(Booing and laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: -- they've launched vicious smears on the brave men and women who defend our communities. ICE officers work in dangerous conditions to protect our communities. And more than a third of ICE officers happen to be veterans themselves. About a third.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: But Democratic politicians want to abolish ICE. They want to see open borders. Can you imagine?

You know, every once in a while you'll hear something that usually you understand -- like in deal making, you always have to understand the other side.

When you hear "open borders," when you hear "get rid of ICE," when you hear some of the things that they're proposing, it's like you can't even understand it. Can you imagine open borders?

You'd have millions of people pouring into our country. Millions and millions of people. Many people that you don't want in our country. But you would have millions of people pouring into our country. The crime would be unbelievable.

And they want to get rid of the crime fighters on top of everything else. "Open the border and get rid of your crime fighters." You don't understand it. Nobody understands it. But I hope they keep it up, because we're going to have a lot of fun in four months. And we're going to have a lot of fun in 2020 running against them.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: My administration will always stand proudly with the heroes of ICE and border patrol. They are heroes. And I want them to know that we thank them.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: The Veterans of Foreign Wars understands better than anyone the importance of honoring those who put service to their fellow citizens before they put service to themselves. That's both at home and abroad.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Here with us today is an extraordinary man who embodies the highest ideals of loyalty, patriotism, and service. He is a World War II veteran from the great state of Pennsylvania. That's another one we won.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We won you guys by 20 points. I'm not going to bring that up. I'm not going to tell that to George Brett. 20 points. Many of you know him well. He's a Lifetime member of the VFW, Sergeant Allen Jones.

Where's Allen? Where is Allen? Sergeant.  
(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Should we bring him up?  
(Yeah)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Come on up.  
(Applause)  
(We love you)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: He's only 94, and the Secret Service made him walk about 100 yards out of his way.  
(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: But that's okay. That's okay.  
(Cheering and applause)

SERGEANT JONES: I just thank you. This is one of the highlights of this 94-year-old man. I just want to tell you a few things -- may I, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I've got time.  
(Laughter)

SERGEANT JONES: I had four brothers serve in World War II. My oldest brother was lost off of the coast of Italy. Many times I just wished that he could -- could come back to the land of the free and the home of brave again.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT JONES: I've given to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 70 years of my life.  
(Standing ovation)

SERGEANT JONES: Thank you.  
My wife's with me today, but she's -- she's not here. She's not feeling well. And my children are watching me today -- hopefully -- to know --  
(Laughter)

SERGEANT JONES: -- that their dad got to stand beside the president of the United States.  
(Cheering and applause)

SERGEANT JONES: Mr. President -- Mr. President, I want to ask you something.  
(Laughter)



SERGEANT JONES: I've been told that I could never enter the Oval Office in Washington, DC. I am going to be 95 years of age April 11th of next year. Hopefully that you will allow me to bring my family into the Oval Office –

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yes.

SERGEANT JONES: -- next year.

(Cheering and applause)

SERGEANT JONES: One last thing, Mr. President.

(Laughter)

SERGEANT JONES: I want to tell you, Mr. President, this group knows not to give the mic to Allen Q. Jones when he's at a state convention or the national convention.

(Laughter)

SERGEANT JONES: I ask you to autograph this picture personally, because this was taken of you -- with you when you were running for election as the president of the United States.

(Laughter and cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you. Beautiful. Wow. Thank you.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: That's so beautiful.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: You got it. Thank you, Allen.

SERGEANT JONES: God bless you, Mr. President. And I wish you well in the future.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I started to get a little bit concerned when he was just finishing.

(Laughter)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, this is a president that will have you in the Oval Office. So all of my people back there, they're working it out already. Okay?

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: With honor. And we pay tribute not only to Allen, but to all of the heroes of the greatest generation.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I'd like to take this moment to recognize every World War II veteran in the audience today. Each of you is a national treasure. It's true.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We will never forget what you did for us, ever. From Bunker Hill to Belleau Wood, from Iwo Jima to the Inchon landing, Americans have stormed into danger, stared down evil, and stood strong and tall for God, country, and freedom.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Any time we see an American in uniform from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard, our hearts swell with pride. And anywhere those uniforms appear, our enemies tremble with fear because they know there is no greater force for peace and justice than the United States military.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: To every single member of the VFW, because of your service, your courage, and your example, we are restoring the dreams and the glory and the greatness of America.

We will never give in. We will never give up. And we will never stop fighting for our country, our flag, and our freedom.

(Applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Together, we will keep on fighting and we will keep on winning as one people, one family, and one nation under God. Thank you.

(Cheering and applause)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: God bless you. God bless our veterans. And God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

(Standing ovation)

(Whereupon, the meeting was duly recessed at 12:45 p.m., to reconvene on Wednesday, July 25th, 2018, at 8:00 a.m.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION  
WEDNESDAY MORNING, JULY 25, 2018

(The Third Business Session of the 119th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, meeting in the Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order at 8:02 a.m., with Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now reconvene the 119th National Convention.

Sergeant-at Arms, you'll conduct -- you will please conduct the opening ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.  
National Sergeants, attention.

Comrades, please rise for the opening prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

Comrade National Chaplain, the opening prayer, please.  
Uncover. Parade rest.

OPENING PRAYER

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GRAY: Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we are once again here assembled to continue the work of our organization. We trust that all that has transpired here this week has been done honorably and acceptable to You.

We thank You for this great country and for those who have given so much to ensure our freedom. We thank You for the opportunity to serve. And may we always serve with humility, compassion, and integrity.

Bless us with Your divine wisdom and honor us as we resume our deliberations. In Your precious name we pray. Amen.  
(Amen)

SALUTE TO COLORS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Cover. National Sergeants, attention.  
Comrades, facing the flag of the United States, join me.  
Present arms.

(Whereupon, Salute to the Colors and the Pledge of Allegiance were given at this time.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Honor arms.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the opening of this convention is completed, sir. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: National Sergeants, right face.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Please, everyone, be seated.

#### FINAL REPORT OF CONVENTION CREDENTIALS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'd now like to call on Barney Hill for the final report of the Credentials Committee.

COMRADE HILL: Good morning, Commander-in-Chief, Council Members, delegates.

The final credential report for the 119<sup>th</sup> National Convention at the close of business, 4:00 p.m. yesterday, 24 July, 2018, total delegates, 11,071; total department commanders, 47; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 13; total National Officers, 41; for a grand total of 11,172. Total registered delegates for the 119th National Convention is 1,689. That is my report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Barney, for your tremendous work.

#### INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Now invite the Sergeants to line up behind me.

Ladies and gentlemen, now assembling and standing behind me are the elite, our VFW National Sergeant at-Arms. And I want to express my appreciation to this group of individuals we see annually at our National Convention and our Washington conference. They are the first ones in the hall and very often amongst the last to leave.

They work long hours in order to ensure the success of our National meetings. These individuals are strictly volunteers. So obviously this is a labor of love for them. And I am sure everyone recognizes what an outstanding job that they do for the VFW.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: It is now my privilege to introduce the National Sergeants-at-Arms.

Bryan O'Brien. Bryan is a Life member of Post 2550 in Dunedin, Florida. He has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms for 19 years, and has served as the National Sergeant-at-Arms for 13 years. He is a past All-State Post, District, and County Commander. In 1982, Bryan was named the VFW's National Young Veteran of the Year.

He served in the United States Air Force as a skilled radar intercept control technician. And his awards include the Air Force Commendation Medal,

National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and the Korean Defense Service Medal.

After working for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for 31 years as a senior controller and supervisor in Boston, Bryan is now retired and a member of Massachusetts Policemen's Association.

He is simply an outstanding leader with ultimate character and integrity.

Bryan?

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Joy Ausman has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms for 22 years and is a Gold Legacy Life member and Quartermaster of Lewiston, Idaho, Post 10043. She is also a Life member of Cloquet, Minnesota, VFW Auxiliary to Post 3979. Joy is a past District Commander, a past Quartermaster -- District Quartermaster, and a past Post Commander. And is currently employed by the Clearwater Paper Corporation as their director of Health and Safety. Joy?

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Next is Jim Galen who has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms for 17 years, and Jim is a Life member of Post 6802 in Richmond, Michigan. He is a past All-State Post Commander and a past All-State Post Quartermaster. He served as Post Quartermaster for 19 years, and is a past District 5 Commander. Jim retired after 30 years of service from General Motors.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Keith MacDonald has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms for 24 years, and is a Life member of Post 2275 in El Cajon, Florida -- or California, the other side. He has retired from the United States Navy after 23 1/2 years as a senior chief petty officer, and Keith is a past All-American Post and All-American District Commander.

He was recently selected as Veteran of the Year for the 71st Assembly District in California. Keith currently works supporting DDG-51's new construction program at the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command in San Diego, California.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: George Lott has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms for 9 years. He is a Gold Legacy Life member, a past Commander of Lieutenant Robert A. Madden Post 10152 in Ogdensburg, New Jersey, and a past New Jersey District 21 Commander.

He is a United States Army combat veteran and an Army drill sergeant who taught basic training in Fort Dix, New Jersey, for three and a half years after returning from Vietnam.

Currently George serves as the Department of New Jersey's Sergeant-at-Arms and has held that position for 30 years. George was employed as a police officer in his hometown of Ogdensburg for 34 years, and he retired in 2008 as the Chief of Police.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Gary Gamble has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms since 2015. He served in the United States Marine Corps, where he served -- or he earned the Southwest Asia Service Medal and his VFW eligibility while serving in the Persian Gulf War in support of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. He served with the 1st Marine Division during that time.

He retired after 20 years of service in the Reserves at the rank of gunnery sergeant. And Gary is a Life member of Post 345 in Redford, Michigan, where he has been a member since 1993.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Lora Land is a Gold Legacy Life member of Post 9191 in Killeen, Texas. She has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms since November of 2016. She is a past All-State and All-American Post Commander.

In 2015, Lora was named the top Commander in the state of Texas. Lora is the first woman veteran to serve as the District 14 Commander, where she achieved All-State and All-American honors. She served as the Women's Veterans Chair for the Department of Texas from 2016 through 2018.

Lora was a sergeant of the United States Army, where she was a motor transport operator. And she earned her VFW eligibility by serving in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm with the 24th Infantry Division in Fort Stewart, Georgia, and the Republic of Korea.

Lora now devotes her time to her family and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Sherrod Nathan Conyers is a native of southern California and Emeritus All-American and All-State Post Commander of Post 2122 in Inglewood, California, where he is a Bronze Legacy Life member, and he has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms for two years.

Sherrod's military career began after becoming a direct-commissioned second lieutenant from Tuskegee University ROTC program into the U.S. Army.

Sherrod earns his VFW eligibility deploying to Jordan and Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, and to Iraq during Operation Iraqi

Freedom. During his four years in the military, he was promoted to the rank of captain.

Sherrod is a Life member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., a member of 2,000 Corinthians Masonic Lodge, and was commissioned as an Honorable Kentucky Colonel.

He is currently -- he is currently the lead for remote sensing for the DOD and the Department of the Air Force in El Segundo, California.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Brian Willette has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms for two years. He is a Life member of Post 3104 in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where he currently serves as Post Commander.

Brian is an All-American Post Commander and past All-American District Commander. He has served as Department Judge Advocate, and currently serves as the Department Sergeant-at-Arms. He is also the state commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of Massachusetts, as well as Region 1 chief of staff.

Brian retired from the United States Army as a staff sergeant. He completed his basic infantry in airborne training in 1983. Brian deployed to Bosnia in 2001 with the 29th Infantry Division in support of Operation Joint Forge.

In 2010, he deployed to Afghanistan with the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. His awards include the Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, and the Combat Action Badge.

Comrades, these are the individuals 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 for all you do. All of you do a superlative job in the way that you represent our organization so well.

I am proud of the professional way in which you always conduct yourselves, and I'm honored to have had the opportunity to serve with you. On behalf of the entire organization, thank you again for your service.

One more hand for our sergeants.  
(Standing ovation)

#### GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KEITH HARMAN TO VFW AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT DEE GUILLORY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Would you all please rise as our National President, Dee Guillory, and my wife are escorted into the room, please.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Please -- please be seated. I am extremely pleased that here to visit our convention today is a woman of whom I have been proud to serve with over this past year.

Dee Guillory has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary since she was a teenager, and has certainly left an incredible legacy for others to follow. I admire her deeply. She is a true compatriot and an outstanding leader.

Please welcome a wonderful woman from Newport News, Virginia, Dee Guillory, National President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY VFW AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT DEE GUILLORY

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: Thank you. Where's the great state of Virginia?  
(Cheering)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: Hey, Comrades.

Commander-in-Chief Harman, National Officers, and VFW members, it is a privilege for me to be with you this morning and get this opportunity to greet you one last time as the National President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary. But first --  
(Applause)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: Thank you.

But first, I wish to introduce the VFW Auxiliary members that accompanied me this morning and let them say a few words to you.

I just want you to know you're going to talk in a minute.

First, I want to introduce someone very special who has taken this journey with Keith. She has given our Chief her love, time, energy, and over 50 years of commitment, his wonderful wife, Mary Lou Harman.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY MARY LOU HARMAN

MRS. HARMAN: What an honor to be up here. Thank you very much.

I want to thank you all for all your friendship, your hard work for Keith, your dedication to the veterans, and just a big thank you to everybody. We've had a wonderful time meeting so many wonderful people. Thank you.  
(Applause)



NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: The next person -- now I hope I don't really cry over this one -- is my Chief of Staff. And she was a Chief of Staff to a National President many years ago. And when I asked her, she said no.

But her knowledge, her wisdom, her mentoring, and her calmness on my team, she's been my rock. I would like to introduce to you Jane Ziebarth from Minnesota.

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY JANE ZIEBARTH

MS. ZIEBARTH: Thank you, Madame President.

To Commander-in-Chief Keith and to all the veterans in the room, thank you so much for your service. I know you hear that a lot, but thank you. It's because of you that I can enjoy the freedoms and the things I love to do. And it's because of you that my family gets to enjoy those also, as well as everyone else. So thank you for the sacrifices that you made.

And thank you for the courtesies that you've extended to me at this convention, Keith, you and your corps of officers. I appreciate it much.

And to you, President Dee, thank you for not accepting that "No."

Have a great rest of the convention.

(Applause)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: To someone -- some truly special VFW delegates in the audience, my own Department of Virginia, words cannot express my thanks for the love and support you have given me the past six years on this journey. As your first National Officer and President, I have been proud to say I'm a Virginian. Thank you.

(Cheering and applause)

NATIONAL PRESIDENT GUILLORY: And to one very special VFW member, my husband, Mark, thank you for all the sacrifices you made this year while I visited the Departments across the country, and attended so many other events. I love you, Sweetheart.

In my farewell letter to our membership, I wrote, "Wow, what a ride!"

It's ending later today, a journey that has taken me thousands of miles. I was encouraged and inspired by our members and by all of you. I wish everyone would take the kind of journey that Commander-in-Chief and National President get to take to see this country, this world, to represent our organization and our mission. It has been my greatest honor.

To every veteran in this room: Thank you for your service to our country. You share a bond with one another that is stronger than most will ever be able to comprehend. The bond of combat military service is a unique

experience that permits the VFW to achieve greater successes for veterans everywhere and the military community at large.

Keith and Mary Lou, thank you for your support and friendship this year. It has been an honor to serve with you. May God bless us in all we do, and may God bless America. Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Would you please rise as the National President exits the room, please, and give her a warm -- warm welcome.

You may be seated.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CONTEST WINNERS AND SILENT AUCTION RESULTS LYNN ROLF, DIRECTOR OF VFW PROGRAMS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Now, to announce the 2018 National Buddy Poppy Contest winners is Lynn Rolf, Director of VFW Programs.

COMRADE ROLF: Good morning, comrades.

(Good morning)

COMRADE ROLF: What an incredible show last night. Right? What about Cooper?

(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: A very special young man.

There's no doubt that Buddy Poppy is one of the most recognizable symbols around the world. To VFW members, it symbolizes the commemoration of our war debt and our service to living veterans.

For decades VFW members have distributed the beloved Buddy Poppy to millions of Americans every year. What about Chloe, our Buddy Poppy Child this year? What a beautiful young woman.

(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Today, we recognize those who have taken Buddy Poppies to the next level. These are individuals and posts and auxiliaries who took Buddy Poppies and created moving and inspiring works of art and displays, and took the time -- hopefully you took the time to view them in the exhibit hall.

The entries were judged by the National VFW Programs Committee Chairman, Gerald Gorski -- where you at, Jerry -- accompanied by committee members Christopher Haynes, Vance Hill, Vernon Luce, Doug MacArthur, Andrew Zinkievich, and the 2017-2018 Auxiliary Veterans and Family Support

Ambassador, Karen Dotson; and the 2018-2019 Auxiliary Designate for the "Buddy Poppy"/VFW National Home Ambassador, Renee Fulk.

These displays were judged on effectiveness; clarity of theme; suitability; originality; and the beauty; and, of course, the number of poppies used.

Category 1 for the public promotion of a Poppy campaign:

Honorable mention goes to the General Dwight D. Eisenhower Post No. 3279 and its Auxiliary from Abilene, Kansas.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Third place, Hometown-Murray Post 9773 and its Auxiliary from Hometown, Illinois.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Second place, VFW Auxiliary to the John Carnine-James Wiseman Post 3280, Clovis, New Mexico.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: First place, VFW Auxiliary to the James G. Lee Post 1685, Anchorage, Alaska.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Category 2 is for the use of poppies in a memorial or inspirational display:

Honorable mention goes to the Gandy-Brown Post 4588 and its Auxiliary from Bossier City, Louisiana.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Third place is the VFW Auxiliary to the Sensing Brothers Post 4641 Dickson, Tennessee.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Second place, VFW Auxiliary to the Ernest Kay Gerhardt Post 5923, Camdenton, Missouri.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: And those of you that are visiting, it is Missouri.  
(Laughter)

COMRADE ROLF: First place, Wichita Memorial Post 3115 and its Auxiliary from Wichita, Kansas.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Category 3 is for the artistic or decorative use of the Buddy Poppy.

Honorable mention goes to the VFW Auxiliary to the Fort Butler Post 826, Kingwood, West Virginia.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Third place is VFW Auxiliary, Francis Cannon Post 7589, Manassas, Virginia.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Second place, Cheyenne Mountain Post 3917 and its Auxiliary, Security, Colorado.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: First place, the Simi Valley Post 10049 and its Auxiliary, Simi Valley, California.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: The Director's Award is given to the Buddy Poppy display, 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 the Hershel "Woody" Williams Post 7048, Fairmont, West by God Virginia.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: Okay. For this year's silent auction, 43 of your departments have donated items, many reflective of their home states and common laws.

For the last 18 years this auction has raised money for issues that are close to the hearts of the VFW and its Auxiliary. I'm proud to announce that this year's recipient will be the VFW National Home for Children.

I want to tell you real quick – Patrice just told me -- thanks to you comrades and auxiliary members, your gracious donations to our Buddy Poppy Child going around the stadium, we set a new record for donations. Well over \$5,400 were collected by Miss -- Young Chloe.  
(Applause)

COMRADE ROLF: And I'm very proud to announce that this year's auction raised a total of \$6,289. And I'm proud to present this check to Patrice Greene.  
(Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF SUPREME COMMANDER DAN KRAMER,  
MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: A trip to almost any VA Hospital will reveal the important work of the Military Order of the Cooties. Each year the Cooties spend thousands of hours bringing comfort and laughs 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 Cooties at the organization's 98th Supreme Scratch in New Orleans last year.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cooties of the United States, Dan Kramer from the great state of Nebraska.

(Boo)

REMARKS BY SUPREME COMMANDER DAN KRAMER,  
MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: What a welcome.

(Boo)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: Yeah. The best I can say is: Good morning, VFW!

All right. What's it feel like to be members of the premier veterans service organization in the world?

(Applause)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: Huh? Yeah.

All right. I was remiss -- I apologize, Chief. Thank you, Chief for the introduction.

Good morning, Officers and past Commanders-in-Chief, members of the VFW. It is my pleasure to stand here in front of you and report to you that this year, Chief, the Cooties done just a little bit over \$8 million worth of reported hospital work.

(Applause)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: I'm very proud of our accomplishments this year, Chief, because I tell you what, my Cooties have worked endlessly and -- and very hard to accomplish this goal.

And, folks, I want you to know that the Cooties are called the honor degree of the VFW. I'm not sure why, other than the fact that you must be a worker in your post and your department before we will invite you to be a

Cootie, because we want you to be active once you get there. Because we serve our primary goal, and that is to keep 'em smiling in beds of white.

When we visit the veterans in the hospitals and the homes, folks, if I can get a smile out of a veteran, I have made my day. And yes, I do make my day quite often. Because to just walk in those hospitals or those homes and shake the hand of a veteran that's there fills me with so much honor and pride. Those folks are my heroes. And you-all are my heroes because I know you do this work anyway.

But just so you understand, Cooties are, number one, VFW members. We support this organization and we work for the chief. We do everything that we can for veterans just like you-all do in the VFW. And that's why we stand under your motto also: "No one does more for veterans than the Veterans of Foreign Wars," because we are also part of that motto.

Now, folks, I had this whole line of stuff that I was going to say when I got up here. And, you know, that was last night before I went to bed. I went to sleep, and this morning I can't remember anything.

(Laughter)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: But, folks, seriously, we at the Military Order of the Cootie are very proud to be part of the VFW. And just so you know, you are here at National Convention. That tells me that you are active in your posts.

And, therefore -- with your permission, Chief -- I invite you-all to become Cooties if you are not. See me afterwards, and we'll get you an application. It's cheap. It doesn't cost very much. We have a lot of fun. That's our second objective, by the way. We only have two.

Oh, my goodness, I shook my head too much, didn't I? I'm excited up here talking, man. What can I say? But I'll give the dollar to the Supreme Hospital Chairman.

But, really, consider becoming Cooties because just like the VFW, we also need membership. And when I come and I report to the chief how much hospital work we have done, then the chief can go on to Congress.

And it is my sincere hope that every congressman, every senator, or any national government official be embarrassed by our numbers of what we do for veterans. Because they need to understand this country needs to take care of our veterans. And that's my goal.

(Applause)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for allowing me to come to your convention and address you. And I wish you the best in everything that you do, every endeavor that you take on, whether it be raising funds for your post, raising funds to have a

homecoming for a veteran returning from a combat zone. Because as a Vietnam veteran, I too have pledged to never let them go unwelcomed.

And we need to do that, folks. We need to do that. We need to make sure that our veterans feel at home when they get there. And we need to be more than just a bar where we can go and have a drink and shoot the breeze. We need to be a veteran that stands and listens to our veterans when they get home. Because they have needs, even though they don't understand they have needs yet. We need to take care of them.

22 veterans a day is unacceptable. And I know that I'm probably preaching to the choir. But, folks, that's something that's very near and dear to my heart. I just lost a dear, close friend to this very thing. And -- and it just makes me feel so humiliated that I didn't know he was in trouble.

I'm asking you folks to pay attention. I'm asking you to stop and visit a veteran. I don't care if he's sick or not. If you see him on the street, if he's hanging his head, he's feeling low, say hi. Shake his hand. Say, "Bud, how are you doing today? What can I do for you? Because I'm here for you. Nobody else today. Just for you."

You might save a life that day. Please be diligent in your endeavors to help veterans. You never know when we could get that number down to 21, and then 20, and then 19, and so on, all the way down till we hit zero lives lost because of veteran suicide.

(Applause)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: Thank you very much. I -- my wife asked me this morning, she says, "Honey, do you have your speech wrote?"

And I said, "Are you nuts? I've never written a speech in my life."

She says, "I know, but this is important."

I said, "I know." And that's why I stand before you and pour my heart out. Because, folks, this is what's on my heart. I'm -- I'm not an elegant speaker, as you-all already know. But the one thing I am is truthful. I will tell you nothing but what is on my mind and on my heart. And I -- I hope that you appreciate that and take that home with you.

The Military Order of the Cooties welcomes you to your convention that's almost over. But, you know, that's okay. We do everything backwards anyway.

(Laughter)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: So welcome to convention. I hope that you enjoy the rest of your convention. And I have one more thing to do. I've kind of put it off on purpose because, you know, I'm going to ask the chief to do something that's really silly. But I'm sure he'll agree.

Chief, if you would, please come up here with me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: No.

(Laughter)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: You see, I have here the Cootie hat for my friend, Chief Keith Harman, who is also a Cootie. And it says "2017-2018 VFW Commander-in-Chief."

And, sir, if you would allow me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Sure.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Dan.

(Boo)

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: You're welcome, sir.

I -- I ask, Chief, that you wear this until I'm done speaking. Okay?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: All right. Absolutely.

SUPREME COMMANDER KRAMER: Okay. Thank you.

And with that, ladies and gentlemen, I bid you adieu. Have a good convention and have a safe trip home. And God bless each and every one of you.

(Boo and applause)

INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF  
BY ADJUTANT GENERAL BRIAN DUFFY

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: It's now my honor to introduce the Past Commander-in-Chiefs that we have with us up here. Starting -- I'm going to start over here on my left, Allen "Gunner" Kent.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: John Hamilton.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: John Stroud.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: George Cramer.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Glen Gardner.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: John Furgess.

(Applause)



ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Richard Eubank.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Jim Mueller.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And Tom Pouliot.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Tom Tradewell.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Ed Banas.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: John Moon.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: John Gwizdak.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Larry Rivers.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Jim Nier.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: John Smart.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And Bob Wallace.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Paul Spera.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: And myself, Brian Duffy.  
(Applause)

#### NOMINEES FOR NATIONAL HOME BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I'll now read the nominations for the National Home Board of Trustees. There are three nominations for District 7 for the 2018-2024 term, representing Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin:

Cindy Peto has been a VFW National Life member since April, 1990. She is endorsed by the VFW Department of Michigan Auxiliary.

Anabelle Ferguson has been a VFW National Home Life member since May of 1986, and she is endorsed by the VFW Department of Michigan Auxiliary.

Lloyd Putman II has been a VFW National Home Life member since November, 1992, and he is endorsed by the VFW Department of Michigan.

There are two nominations for District 11 for 2018-2024, representing Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Pacific Areas, Utah, and Wyoming.

Kim Sloan has been a VFW National Home Life member since April of 1998, and she is endorsed by the VFW Department of Arizona Auxiliary.

And Arlene Birkle has been a VFW National Home Life member since 2005, and she is endorsed by the VFW Department of Wyoming Auxiliary.

PRESENTATION OF LEGION OF HONOR BRONZE MEDALLION AWARD  
FROM CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KEITH  
HARMAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: At this time, we'll have a presentation by Past National Chaplain Peter Hook to the Commander-in-Chief.

PAST NATIONAL CHAPLAIN HOOK: The Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is pleased to present the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion to Keith E. Harman in recognition of your exceptional lifetime of service to all people, especially veterans. This award is given in honor of the four chaplains and their selfless, heroic acts aboard the U.S.A.T. Dorchester on February 3rd, 1943.

Chief Harman, your leadership, your numerous acts of volunteerism and selfless service have been a model and inspiration for those of us in this great organization.

Congratulations, Chief.  
(Applause)

PRESENTATION OF 2017-2018 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS' GIFT TO  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN BY ASHLEY LITTLE,  
PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER OF ARKANSAS

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I now call on representatives from the 2017-2018 Department Commanders to gather behind me here on the stage for a special presentation. Past Department of Arkansas Commander Ashley Little is leading that representation.

COMRADE LITTLE: Chief, on behalf of the 2017-2018 Gunner team, I would like to inform you that we have made a donation of nearly \$5,000 to the

National Home. And, therefore, in your honor for your commitment to the Gunner team and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, there will be a flagstone placed in the Tribute Park at the National Home. On behalf of our Gunner team, we thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

(Applause)

COMRADE LITTLE: Those gunners that didn't make it up, would you please stand and be recognized.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Bob, could we get you to come up on the -- could we get the photographer to come up on the -- on the stage, please.

Appreciate your indulgence, but I think it's important they get a proper picture with a good back drop.

Is Jim Chancellor in the building? If so, would you please come forward, sir.

Let's give this class of commanders another last round of applause.

(Applause)

PRESENTATION TO SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF B.J. LAWRENCE  
FROM JIM CHANCELLOR, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF AMERICAN VETERANS  
COLLECTION INCORPORATED

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: As a door gunner during Vietnam, his experience helped establish our next guest's belief that all veterans are only separated by time and location in which they served, and otherwise we are all the same.

Jim Chancellor, President and Chief Executive Officer of American Veterans Collection, Incorporated, has designed a unique collection of military service rings, which communicate a familiarity with other combat veterans on sight. With a mantra of "I know, I understand, and I care," the rings represent the camaraderie of an elite group of individuals with a shared experience.

Here with us today, please join me in welcoming Mr. Jim Chancellor as he presents a special ring to the VFW's National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, B.J. Lawrence.

Jim?

(Applause)

COMRADE CHANCELLOR: Good morning, comrades.

(Good morning)

COMRADE CHANCELLOR: I'd like to bring you greetings from VFW Post 802 in the great state of Indiana. And I'd also like to thank you for allowing me to spend a few minutes with you this morning.

When I began to prepare for today, I asked what the overall theme was for the convention, and I was told it was going to be the mental health of our heroes. The mental health of the people that were willing to fight and perhaps die for our freedoms and our liberties that we have.

And I was overjoyed. I was absolutely thrilled because there's no better organization -- no better organization to lead our young veterans, and even the old dogs like me that might struggle, there's no better organization on the planet than the Veterans of Foreign Wars. And I am so excited that they will -- they will lead the charge against some mental health issues that our veterans return to.

Now, if I may, I'd like to share with you just a couple things about the mental health issues that -- that plague our young veterans and older soldiers as well. I want to talk briefly about PTSD and the moral injuries of war.

Comrades, I want you to know that PTSD is not a mental disorder. That's a stigma that's been with our young veterans, and it's very hard to overcome. PTSD is an anxiety disorder. It's not what's wrong with you. It's -- it's something that happened to you.

PTSD is caused by trauma and fear. And there's not a veteran or a hero in this room that doesn't understand what the trauma and fear of war is, for we all have lived that.

Moral injuries, on the other hand, is -- is somewhat different. Moral injuries are injuries to the soul. Injuries that you know that hurt you deep, that you know that you did wrong. We're a God-fearing country. And in war, when you're pressed into a situation and you have to make that decision, and you know it's wrong, it will haunt you for years and years, perhaps the rest of your life.

Let me give you a brief example of my experiences in Vietnam. As a door gunner, with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company, we were flying over a -- in a no- -- in a free fire zone, where you did not have to call back if you received fire.

We flew over a small little hooch, and we started to receive fire from the hooch. We banked really hard, and I returned fire with my M60. I immediately realized that my -- the tracers from my M60 would light the hooches on fire. So that's what I did. I lit it up, lit everything up with my tracers, and did as much damage and carnage as I could on the ground.

When I got back that night, I sat down with the old dogs, and I told them that story. And I expected some "attaboys," and "Good job, Jim," and I got none. There was dead silence for a minute or two. And then one of them said, "Sit down, Chancellor. Let me tell you what you really did."

And he began to tell me how the VC would -- would go into a village, and maybe there'd be only six or seven of them, and they'd have weapons so they could do whatever they wanted. Because the -- the village itself was -- the hooches in the village -- the people there were just peace-seeking families.

So they would wait for a helicopter to come by, like mine, and they would shoot at it, and then they would leave the village.

And so when he -- when he told me what I did, he said, "When you banked hard and you guys called the guns in," he said, "what you did was you destroyed their village and the moms and the fathers and the peace-loving farmers that were there.

Now, did I -- did I fight the VC? Did I kill the bad guys? Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Moral injuries to the soul, a lifetime experience that will stay with you forever.

Now, I challenge each one of you and I -- and I give you a call to action just to make a commitment to go home to your hometown and do one thing. I don't care how big it is, how small it is, what it takes; if it takes the whole post or it takes you as an individual. Pledge to do something with our mental issues, our mental health.

As everyone in this room already knows, 20 people that were willing to fight and die for our freedom are taking their own lives every day. Collectively, together, we can begin to change that. And I beg you to start carrying that torch. Don't wait for someone else.  
(Applause)

COMRADE CHANCELLOR: Now, for the reason I'm here today. It's been a great privilege and honor to represent the American Veterans Collection at the National Convention for some time now.

The rings are worn and endorsed by the late great General Westmoreland, and our friend of all wars, Bob Hope actually requested one of the rings. The rings carry a lifetime warranty and are worn by Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Samuel Davis.

And today we add another hero: Vincent "B.J." Lawrence. When reading his bio, I didn't even know where to start.

Our commander served in the Army -- served with the Army in Korea and earned the Korean Defense Service Medal. His leadership skills carried him through the position of Post Commander, District Commander, and Department Commander of New Mexico.

His recruiting skills also served him well by earning a coveted designation of the VFW Triple Crown Winner.

Commander Lawrence attended New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy, New Mexico Firefighters Academy, and the United States Drug and Narcotics Enforcement School.

He served as a police officer, as a firefighter, and as an undercover agent. He is also a Life member of the VFW National Home for Children and the Military Order of the Cooties.

It is with my great pleasure and great -- I am honored to present the ring to our incoming National Commander, Vincent "B.J." Lawrence.  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Jim, I just want to say I appreciate the ring. But more importantly, sir, I want to thank you for your service. You are a true American hero, and it's an honor to be on this stage with you today. Thank you, sir.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY INTRODUCES A MOTION THAT PROCEEDINGS  
BE SUBMITTED TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief Harman, I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 119th National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House for printing as a House document according to Public Law 620 of the 90th Congress, approved October 2nd, 1968, and entitled as the Title 44 United States Code, Section 1332.

And I call upon the Assistant Adjutant General for a second.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Kevin Jones, delegate, VFW Post 7356, Parkville, Missouri, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: A motion has been made and seconded to send the records to the - the documents of this convention to the Congressional -- make it part of the Congressional record. All in favor, signify by aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
The ayes have it. The motion carried.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: We have one item of business, but we're going to press on, Chief, and we will come back as soon as we catch that. Chief?

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS NOMINATIONS FOR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We will get into -- start into the elections.

Are there any nominations for Commander-in-Chief for Veterans of Foreign Wars?

And for the purpose of nomination, Tom Pouliot, Past Commander-in-Chief, Post 1116, Montana.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Did you ask anybody on the floor that's doing nominations to come forward?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

And anyone that's going to make nominations, would you please come forward and ...

Bring the family up too?

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Chief, I apologize. At this time, too, the family members of those officers that will be brought on, you can make your way comfortably up to the seating area.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

National Officers, National Council members, past Commanders-in-Chief, Department Officers, new All Americans, my fellow comrades, I have the distinct pleasure and honor to stand before this delegation of our great organization and place a nomination: The name of Vincent "B.J." Lawrence for the office of Commander-in-Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the ensuing year.

With unanimous endorsement of the Western Conference, his Department of New Mexico, his wife Mary, we brought to you and promised a sincere and energetic leader for the VFW. And in B.J. Lawrence, we have delivered.

Over these last two years as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, you have seen him and gotten to know him. He has shown his knowledge. You have witnessed firsthand his dedication and his love of the VFW.

These years in the chairs he has earned the respect of comrades throughout our organization because you find that he seeks out your knowledge, your input, and he will use your information to make our VFW a better organization as we move forward.

His love of the VFW has caused him to give much of his time to aid and assist veterans and their families. He works hard at it. He sets the bar for what it is to be a hard working VFW member. Look at his successes. They speak for themselves. He has earned All-American Post, All-American District, All-American Department Commander Awards, a Triple Crown recipient.

Yet B.J. doesn't credit these successes to himself alone. He's a team player. He credits his team. At every stage, he puts together a team, sets goals for themselves and himself. And working together, they reach those goals. This is leadership.

B.J. will be the same proven leader for our organization when he's Commander-in-Chief. He is a national recruiter, and he has distinguished himself by signing up 100 or more members in one year; a century recruiter on more than one occasion. He has the heart and passion for the VFW to work recruiting tables and bring eligibles into our organization.

In all likelihood, when he visited into your state, he signed up a couple of new members for your department before he left. He's been Western Conference Chairman, a National Council Member, the vice chair of the National Legislative Committee, member of the Committee on Appeals. B.J. has acquired the knowledge and experience that will aid and assist him as serving as our Commander-in-Chief.

He has demonstrated that he's not afraid to challenge any issue that he feels is not in the best interest of the VFW. His proactive approach to problem solving leads to quicker, more focused solutions. Where others only see difficulties, he sees possibilities. And B.J., as Commander-in-Chief, sees great possibilities in our future.

It is without reservation and with great pride that I place a nomination for a man most qualified to be our next Commander-in-Chief of the VFW, Vincent "B.J." Lawrence.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I have a second by Ed Banas, Past Commander-in-Chief, VFW Post 10004 of Connecticut.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BANAS: Thank you, Chief. Thank you.

Good morning, comrades, to the 119th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. I'm Ed Banas, Senior, Past Commander-in-Chief, and a Life member of VFW Post 10004 in the Department of Connecticut, and a registered delegate to this convention.

My purpose here is to second the nomination of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Vincent "B.J." Lawrence for the highest office that can be obtained in our organization. That is the office of Commander-in-Chief for the soon to be ensuing membership year 2018-2019.

B.J. knows that a dream does not become reality through magic, that it takes sweat, determination, and hard work.

An Army veteran serving in Korea, I assure you he will project the proper image of the office and the organization while traveling throughout the United States and with our missions overseas. He understands that his mission is for the good and the betterment of the whole, meaning all of you, and every member of the VFW and every active duty service member, their families.

And, Comrade Lawrence, I wish you well, and ask each of you to support him in his quest to do the people's work. I'm proud to second the nomination of Vincent "B.J." Lawrence for the office of our Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Vincent "B.J." Lawrence, do you accept the nomination?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Most definitely.



(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any other nominations?  
Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations?  
Hearing no other nominations, I declare the nominations closed.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chief?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yes.

I'm sorry. Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE HAGEN: Howard Hagen, delegate, Post 1622, Past State  
Commander, Department of California.

I make a motion to close nominations for the high office of Commander-in-  
Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

COMRADE HAGEN: And that the Adjutant cast one ballot.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

COMRADE HAGEN: You're welcome.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do we have a second? Microphone  
No. 3.

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: Maher, 7356, Parkville,  
Missouri. I second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

We have a motion and a second to close the nominations. All in favor,  
signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. Nominations are closed.

Adjutant General?

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief, Brian Duffy,  
Adjutant General.

Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one  
unanimous ballot for Vincent "B.J." Lawrence for Commander-in-Chief of  
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2018-2019 year.  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Comrades, I'm going  
to reserve for my acceptance speech. But I got to tell you, thank you for the  
support. I love you all.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Comrades, you may recall a few years ago  
we changed the structure of the individual ceremonial parades. And this year,  
we will have the same procedure.

Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief will maintain the traditional parade following the presentation and placement of their caps, pins, and badges.

The Quartermaster General, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General, Surgeon General will share one collective ceremonial parade at the conclusion of the presentation and placement of cap and pin and badge on the Surgeon General and his remarks.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Right here, please.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it's an honor for your National Sergeants to escort you around the hall in celebration of your election, sir. Mr. Maestro, the United States Army.

(Cheering and applause)

(Whereupon, a ceremonial parade was held.)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Comrades, before we return the microphone, the item of business that I referenced earlier, if you would, having no further responsibility, I would bring -- the responsibility of committees, I would ask Commander-in-Chief Harman to please come back up and we will dismiss the committee.

Chief?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Having no further business and responsibilities, it is now my pleasure to dismiss the Committee on General Resolutions.

As always, a job well done by your chairman, John Gwizdak; Vice Chairmen John Stroud and Tom Tradewell; and the good members of the committee. And my thanks to all the chairmen, vice chairmen, and to all and each of the members of the committee for your time and dedicated efforts.

Comrades, I present to you the Commander-in-Chief-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vincent "B.J." Lawrence.

(Standing ovation)

#### REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT B.J. LAWRENCE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Again, as I mentioned earlier, Comrades, I'm going to reserve all my comments for my acceptance speech.

Again, I will tell you it's certainly been an honor to serve with Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman. I've asked him to stand here with me because, Keith, I want to personally thank you for all your guidance, your hard work, your endeavors, and your teamwork with this team over the past year. You are certainly a Commander-in-Chief to be respected, and I will always hold that true to my heart. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, B.J.  
(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now open the nominations for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Is there any nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

For the purpose of nominations, Ed Banas, Past Commander-in-Chief, seconded by Hal Burke – Harold Burke, and Eugene Ratigliano.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Just recognize me.  
(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: How about Paul Spera.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: That's okay.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'm sorry.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: That's okay, Chief. No problem. That's all right. I've been forgotten before.

Good morning, comrades.  
(Good morning)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: A year ago I came before the National Convention on behalf of the Department of New York and the Eastern States Conference to present to our organization an individual who I believed, in my heart, in my VFW heart, would make an outstanding Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and eventually an outstanding leader of this organization.

This past year has only increased exponentially my feelings for William "Doc" Schmitz. Many of you have had the opportunity to meet with him in your department, perhaps at the Washington conference, or maybe here at the convention for the very first time, and you have found that there are many adjectives that will describe his personality. He's warm, open, gregarious.

He is an individual who believes in our organization, who believes in the traditions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. He has dedicated his career in our organization to following the tenants of our founders and all of those who have gone before us.

He knows that without the Veterans of Foreign Wars many things would not have been and will not be in the future accomplished. He has dedicated himself to making sure that those accomplishments continue.

As a corpsman attached to the United States Marines, he had one goal in mind, and that was to take care of his Marines. He knew why he was there, and he knew what he had to do to accomplish his mission.

He has brought that same feeling and that same understanding to his position as Junior Vice Commander in-Chief, and we will see him bring that

same feeling forward as the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. He is dedicated to taking care of his troops.

And so it is with pride and it is an honor on behalf of the Department of New York, on behalf of the Eastern States Conference to place into nomination the name of William "Doc" Schmitz for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year. Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE BURKE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Harold Burke, delegate, VFW Post 1895.

I rise to say it's very difficult to follow Paul Spera and one of his fine speeches. Paul said everything there is to say about Doc, except that I've known Doc for many, many years. Doc is a very dedicated individual. I remember he started on this long journey many years ago to get to where he is.

I know that he's done a fine job as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief supporting you and the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I know he will continue to support the Commander-in-Chief next year, along with the Junior Vice coming in.

So it's with great pleasure and pride that on behalf of the Department of New York, all of its members, the Eastern States Conference, and myself to place -- second the nomination for William "Doc" Schmitz for the high office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER RATIGLIANO: Commander-in-Chief, Gene Ratigliano, delegate, VFW Post 420, Saratoga Springs, New York, Department of New York.

I make a motion that the nominations be closed for the high office of National Senior Vice Commander, and request that the Adjutant General cast one unanimous ballot for "Doc" Schmitz for the high office of National Senior Vice Commander.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.  
Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE TODARO: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tom Todaro, Post 53, Department of New York, delegate, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.  
I guess I should ask, William "Doc" Schmitz, will you accept the nomination?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SCHMITZ: Sir, yes, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief? Any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

I'm going to ask for a motion to close the nominations, then.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have it. Okay. I'm sorry.

Do you want to do your job?

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: No, that's fine.

(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: All in favor of closing the nominations, signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

I guess the ayes have it. Nominations are closed.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for William J. "Doc" Schmitz for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2018-2019 year.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it is an honor for the National Sergeants to escort you around this hall.

Mr. Maestro, United States Navy.

(Cheering and applause)

(Whereupon, a ceremonial parade was held.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrades, you've elected William J. "Doc" Schmitz as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Doc, would you like to say a word?

(Applause)

REMARKS BY SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT  
WILLIAM "DOC" SCHMITZ

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SCHMITZ: I made a few notes here. And I know I'm going to forget somebody, and I truly apologize for that. My voice is coming back. Thank you, God.

It's a humbling moment for me, and I'm real excited about walking with you to victory. And we've had a great year this year, and we're going to have some really great years coming up.

I'd like to thank my post, 524, District 5, the Department of New York, and Commander Ratigliano, Eastern States Conference. Yeah.

Past Chiefs Ed Banas, Cliff Olson, Bob Wallace, John Biedrzycki, George Lisicki, and especially Past Chief Spera, who's one of the best mentors you can ever get, and I can't wait to see him in blue jeans.

(Laughter)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SCHMITZ: I'll make it some sort of a rule sometime.

My family, Bruce Tucker, Phil Turner, Mick Lavour, especially Bobby Barnhart, Hal Burke, true friends. VFW staff and the Sergeant-at-Arms. Kevin Jones for giving me candid advice sometimes, like, "Come here a minute, Stupid. I've got something to tell you." But he always did it in private, and I have no problem with that.

Knowledge is a powerful tool. If anybody in the VFW or the auxiliary tell you to keep your nose out of the respective business, that's all the more reason you should stick your nose in there. And I promise to you I will.  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SCHMITZ: I'd like to -- I'd like to personally thank -- where's Chief Harman? Where'd you go -- Chief Harman and B.J., and even Hal, who's not even in there yet. We've had many communications, many, many, challenges, and many positive moments.

And I truly, truly appreciate the support that's been given to me by everybody. It's an amazing thing. And all the stuff that happens here and all the stuff that happens in our -- our national organization can be very, very difficult. And it take takes a lot of people and a lot of talking to figure out what to do, when to do it, and how to pull it off.

My thanks to each and every one of you. You are the VFW. Thank you very much.  
(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now open the nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Are there any nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, elected and appointed officers of this wonderful organization, it is my privilege to stand before you today. And if you don't know me, my name is

John Gwizdak, Past Commander-in-Chief, delegate from Post 5080, Lake City, Georgia.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: There's a common saying that leaders are like eagles. You find them one at a time because they do not flock.

The opportunity of the Southern Conference is that we have found an eagle, and that eagle is Hal Roesch, a retired master sergeant from the Air Force, a Desert Storm veteran, electronic specialist, who, after joining a number of posts, ended up in Virginia.

He has served his post, the district, and department with distinction by earning the Triple Crown that we so cherish in our organization.

He is a financial adviser. And I can share this with you also: He has the sense to be a financial adviser. But as the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, we don't make long nominations because we've still got two more years to go and we don't want to run out of things to say.

(Laughter)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GWIZDAK: So when you talk about leadership, you talk about followership. And followership cannot be dictated. Hal Roesch is the kind of person that will magnetically bring to him those who can follow and those who can lead.

So it is my distinct pleasure, on behalf of the Southern Conference, to place in nomination the name of Hal Roesch from Virginia for our next Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. My name is John Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief, Post 1503, Dale City VFW, the largest VFW in our organization.

Comrades, I stand before you. I want to reflect back just a few years. 38 years ago, I was a young Vietnam veteran state commander, standing in a hall like we are today. In that hall -- a makeup of roughly 90 percent of the veterans in that hall were World War II veterans and Korean War veterans.

On that day, the VFW made history. It nominated and elected its first Vietnam veteran, Billy Ray Cameron from North Carolina.

(Cheering and applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SMART: That was indeed a change of our organization. On that day, the torch was passed to a new generation of veterans. And since that day, some 26 Past Commanders-in-Chief have been Vietnam veterans, and I think most of them are on that stage here today.

And I know, Keith, you'll be looking forward to joining that group next year.

But as we go forward, we need to remember that we need to find leaders who are willing to give it all. And I can't think of any individual in this room that I am more proud of and have the greatest respect for, for his dedication, his hard work, and what he does for the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all veterans of this country.

I stand before you today, and I ask for your support for a highly dedicated and highly qualified comrade, and we should endorse this individual to the position of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

At this time, I am indeed honored, once again, to second the nomination of a friend, a comrade, and a dedicated supporter of this great organization, Hal Roesch.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any other nominations?  
Are there any other nominations? I guess -- is Hal here?

(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Hal, will you accept the nomination?

COMRADE ROESCH: Absolutely.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE WISEMAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Ken Wiseman, delegate, Post 1503, Dale City, Virginia, and Commander of the state of Virginia.

It is with great pride that I move that the nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief be closed and that the Adjutant General be empowered to cast one unanimous ballot for my friend and mentor, Hal Roesch.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do we have a second?  
Microphone No. 2.

COMRADE RASKIN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Rick Raskin, Post 7589, Manassas, Virginia, delegate, Senior Vice Commander, Department of Virginia.

Hal, yes, we can, and I do move that -- I second the motion that nominations be closed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.



We have a motion and a second to close the nominations. All in favor, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
The ayes have it. The motion ...  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrade Adjutant, do your duty, please.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for my friend, Harold "Hal" J. Roesch, Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2018-2019 year.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Junior Vice Commander-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it's an honor and a privilege for the sergeants to escort you around this hall.

Mr. Maestro, a song that brings a little tear to my eye, the United States Air Force.

(Cheering and applause)

(Whereupon, a ceremonial parade was held.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrades, you have elected Harold "Hal" Roesch as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Hal, would you like to make a comment?

REMARKS BY JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT  
HAROLD "HAL" J. ROESCH

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT ROESCH: Woo, what a rush. You know, when you do an eight-year marathon, it kind of takes your breath away. You know, I don't have a lot to say, just some things. And those that I miss, I apologize.

You know, first of all, I want to thank my mother who raised me to be very patriotic, which is kind of a lost art today.

Second, is my loving wife, Beth. Her support and, more -- more importantly, her approval for me to take this endeavor.

I had a traveling team with me through my campaign, and I'd just like to name them off. John Gwizdak and Christine, John Smart and Mary, Dan Boyer and Janette, Tom Gimble and Betty, Kim DeShano and Suzy.

And I included the wives because, once again, they had to approve them to hit the road in support of me. The spouses tend to get neglected in this organization. And any time you get a chance, thank them for the support they give their spouses.

Southern Conference, thank you for sticking with me and the undying support the second time around.

Department of Virginia –  
(Cheering)

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT ROESCH:-- for always being with me every step of the way. If I got a little down, you said, "Pick your ass up and get going." I appreciate that.

Post 3219, which is my post, when I first thought of the idea of running, they said, "You should have done that years ago. That's what we've been waiting for."

Brian Duffy, my friend. The first time we met was on the campaign trail the last time, and we were in Austin, Texas, I believe. And we were sitting in the hallway, and it was him and me and Carl and Kim. And somebody said, "I'm hungry," and we said, "Let's go to lunch."

And everybody went, "What the heck are you guys doing? You guys are running against each other and you're going to lunch."

And Brian says, "We're not running against each other. We're running for a position." And he's been my friend ever since. And I appreciate that, Brian.

(Applause)

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT ROESCH:Now, for the new team: B.J., Doc, and myself, I just have one thing to say about that. We stayed in constant contact with each other, even though I wasn't in the chair yet. We sing off the same sheet of music, and we're in perfect tune with each other.

And with that, I'm done. Thank you very much for your support. God bless you all. God bless the VFW. And God bless the United States of America.

Thank you.  
(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now open the nominations for the office of Quartermaster General. Is there any nominations for Quartermaster General?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER:Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

I'm Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, delegate, Post 8919, Texas.

Comrades, this morning I have the high honor and distinct privilege to place a nomination for the position of Quartermaster General, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the name of a comrade currently serving in the position.

Comrade Debra Anderson was elected to her position in July, 2016, at the National Convention in Charlotte, and reelected in July of 2017 at the National Convention in New Orleans.

As the Quartermaster General, she is responsible for the areas of finance, insurance, properties, and emblem and supply.

She has served with distinction and has exhibited the confidence and expertise necessary to accomplish the myriad of duties of the Quartermaster General and deserves to be reelected. Most importantly, she has earned the respect and the trust of her fellow employees and the general membership.

Debra attended the University of Missouri-Columbia on an ROTC scholarship. She was an Army ROTC cadet battalion commander, and graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in economics in 1980. In November of 2017, Debra was inducted into the ROTC Hall of Fame at the University of Missouri.

Upon graduation, she was commissioned as an AG Human Resources Second Lieutenant. Her military assignments included Nuremberg/Furth, Germany; Fort Ben Harrison, Indiana; Fort Riley, Kansas; Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and Fort McPherson, Georgia. She served as a maintenance company commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, and is a Garrison Inspector General.

She earned her eligibility for the VFW during Desert Storm/Desert Shield, having been deployed with the 1st Infantry Division to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait in 1990.

She is a graduate of the Army's Combined Armed Services and Staff School and the Command and General Staff College. While on active duty, she earned a Master's of Science Degree in Systems Management from the University of Southern California.

Her awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, four Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, the Southeast Asia Service Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal, and Parachutist Badge.

She left the Army as a major in 1993 and held a variety of business positions from 1993 to 2007. She joined VFW Post 7356 in Parkville, Missouri, in 2006, where she is a Gold Legacy Life member and a Life member of the VFW Auxiliary. She was an All-American Post Commander there in 2010. She is a board member of the VFW National Home for Children.

I think that we would all agree that we continue to face many challenges in the VFW. It is imperative that we continue to have a quartermaster general that takes on those challenges, turns them into

opportunities, and makes sure that, as an organization, we continue on a progressive path in our future. We have that person in Debra Anderson.

Her passion for the organization, her vision for the future, her personal attributes of loyalty and impeccable integrity, along with her professional on-the-job expertise and exceptional public speaking ability continue to make her uniquely qualified for this position.

On a personal level, as the Commander-in-Chief's Budget Chairman for 2016-2017, I had the honor of working very closely with Debra and her staff during the budget approval process. The necessary meetings and presentations always reflected her attention to detail, her knowledge of sound fiscal responsibility, and were indicative of her outstanding organizational skills.

Also, Debra has been commissioned to be a member of the World War I Centennial Commission, which is a reflection of how she and the VFW are viewed by others in the veterans community.

Comrades, it is with much personal pride that I proudly place a nomination in the name of Comrade Debra Anderson, Post 7356, Parkville, Missouri, for the position of Quartermaster General, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, for VFW year 2018-2019.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Good morning, VFW comrades and guests. Jim Mueller, Past Commander-in-Chief, delegate, Post 5077, Missouri.

I am pleased and honored to second the nomination of Debra Anderson, an individual who has served not only her country in Southeast Asia in the United States Army, but has served this great organization of ours, the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the past 11 years.

Debra has a strong work ethic, is honest and trustworthy. I trust Debra to guide this great organization of ours to the best of her ability.

It is with honor and my pleasure that I second the nomination of Debra Anderson for the high office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the ensuing year, 2018-2019.

Thank you.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have the name of Debra Anderson placed in nomination for Quartermaster General.

Debra, would you accept that nomination?

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL ANDERSON: Yes, sir. Absolutely.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No. 3.

PAST QUARTERMASTER GENERAL MAHER: Maher, delegate, Post 7356, Parkville, Missouri.

I move that the nominations be closed, and that the adjutant be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for Debra Anderson as Quartermaster General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Microphone No. 3.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, Larry Rivers, delegate, 1736, second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

We have a motion and second to close the nomination for Quartermaster General. All in favor, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The nomination's closed.

Adjutant General?

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Debra Anderson, Quartermaster General for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, for the 2018-2019 year.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrades, you've elected Debra Anderson as Quartermaster General.

Debra, would you like to say a few words?

#### REMARKS BY QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT DEBRA ANDERSON

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL ANDERSON: Thank you so much for this high honor. I truly appreciate your support as we move forward. I will -- I promise I will strive to fulfill the responsibilities of the Quartermaster General with integrity and to the best of my ability, to protect and safeguard our valuable assets in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and to support the leadership team as we strive to move this organization forward.

I'd like to particularly recognize the VFW -- the staff in Kansas City, the staff in Washington, DC, and our BDD staff around the country. They work hard every day to support this organization, and they do an amazing job.

I'm looking forward to working with the new leadership team. I appreciate the outgoing leadership team. They've all done a tremendous job.

I'd like to thank my husband, Steve Bourque, for his unwavering support, and for putting up with my crazy schedule.

And, most importantly, I want to thank you, our VFW comrades. You continue to inspire me. Your hard work, your generosity, your ability and dedication to taking care of veterans is -- is truly amazing.

Thank you, once again, for this high honor. I look forward to serving another year as your Quartermaster General. Thank you.  
(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now open the nominations for the office of chaplain. Are there any nominations for chaplain?

COMRADE SORENSEN: Commander-in-Chief, comrades of this 119th convention and delegates, I am Bruce Sorensen, delegate from Post 7534, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

I come before you today with -- very proud to be able to nominate and bring you good news and tidings of great joy so that you can know that our Veterans of Foreign Wars organization will move forward in the future with some great spiritual leadership.

Our candidate for nomination, Charlene Cobb, earned the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal serving on the U.S.S. Nimitz in the Persian Gulf during Operation Southern Watch in 1996. She served 21 years in the United States Navy, retiring as chief petty officer.

She graduated with a Master of Divinity Degree from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in 2012. She was ordained in 2014.

She currently serves as Big Ten Chaplain, worked with the chaplain of the state honor guard to perform state memorial services. She has conducted chaplain workshops. She serves as an interim pastor, and she has officiated at weddings and funerals.

Her VFW experience is as follows: She's a Life member. She joined in March of 1997, and she now holds a Gold Legacy Life membership. She's a Life member of the VFW Auxiliary, joining under her father's service in World War II. She's also a Life member of the Military Order of the Cootie.

She's held numerous positions at the post and district levels. She was chaplain of the Department of Wisconsin for numerous years, and she has held the National Chaplain position in the past. The last ten years she served as a county veterans service office for Sheboygan County in the state of Wisconsin.

She's a Life member of the American Legion, Fleet Reserve Association, AMVETS, and an annual member of the Military Women Across the Nation.

It's with great privilege that I present to you our nominee for the high office of National Chaplain for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 2018-2019, Charlene Cobb.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I have a second by John Schultz.

COMRADE SCHULTZ: My name is John Schultz. I'm a past state commander from the Department of Wisconsin.

It's my honor and pleasure to second the nomination for Charlene Cobb for our National Chaplain. She's dedicated to the VFW and our veterans, as she not only serves as the chaplain but also one of our county veterans service officers.

She's performed wedding ceremonies for a few of our department officers as well. She performed one for my wife and I and blessed both of us. We're still together. If it worked for us, think what she can do for you.

Thank you.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Charlene, will you accept the nomination?

COMRADE COBB: Yes, sir, absolutely.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Are there any other nominations?

Chair recognizes Microphone No. 1.

(Background discussion)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Okay. Can I get a motion to close the nominations?

COMRADE JOHNS: Commander-in-Chief, Jason Johns, Oregon-Brooklyn Post 10272, Wisconsin, delegate, Junior Vice Commander.

I make a motion to direct the Adjutant General to close the nomination to cast one unanimous ballot for Charlene Cobb for National Chaplain.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Second?

Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE LYNCH: Comrade Commander, Don Lynch, 6498, state Junior -- Senior Vice Commander from Wisconsin.

I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have a motion and a second to close the nominations for National Chaplain. All in favor, signify by saying aye. (Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The motion's closed.

Comrade Adjutant General, do your duty, please.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot Charlene K. Cobb for Chaplain of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2018-2019 year.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrades, you've elected Charlene Cobb as Chaplain.

Charlene, would you like to say a few words? Or I'll let you put your cap on first.

#### REMARKS BY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT CHARLENE K. COBB

CHAPLAIN-ELECT COBB: Good morning, comrades.  
(Morning)

CHAPLAIN-ELECT COBB: I just want to say thank you so much. This is an extreme honor and a privilege to be able to serve our great organization. I love every one of you and will spend this year on my knees praying that we will have a fabulous year as we work together on all the programs that we have for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. And thank you so much for allowing me this opportunity to serve you in this capacity.

Thank you.  
(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now open the nominations for the office of Judge Advocate General.

Are there any nominations for Judge Advocate General?  
Comrade Larry Rivers.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. My name is Larry Rivers. I'm a delegate from VFW Post 1736 in Alexandria, Louisiana.

I am pleased to have the opportunity this morning to nominate Daniel J. Nail for the office of Judge Advocate General.

Dan is a member of VFW Post 5097 Thibodaux Memorial Post in the Department of Louisiana, and has served two years as Post Commander, where he was an All-American. District level, he served as a district commander from 2007 through 2009.

On the department level, Dan has served as both the department inspector and the department judge advocate. And he has been Louisiana's state judge advocate from 2010 through the present time.

Dan earned his eligibility in the VFW through his service in Korea, through the United States Army, where he served in the rank of captain. And he is both a certified state and national recruiter.

Dan graduated from LSU Law school in 1973, and has practiced law in Louisiana for the past 45 years.



Dan's wife, Linda, serves as the National Council Member for the VFW Auxiliary in our great state of Louisiana. Dan has four children, and they have five grandchildren.

Dan is no stranger to this office, having served us as our national judge advocate for the term 2014-2015. He served us well during that time in office.

And I am honored again to nominate Daniel J. Nail from the Department of Louisiana to serve as Judge Advocate General for the term 2018-2019.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Do we have a second for that nomination?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE BATULIS: Commander-in-Chief, delegates, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, it gives me great pleasure to second the motion for Dan Nail as Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America.

And due to the -- the great nomination of Larry Rivers, and it's very hard to follow a second, put my five-minute speech away in brevity for the convention, and I'd like to continue that as second the motion for Dan Nail

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

COMRADE BATULIS: -- for Judge Advocate General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

(Background discussion)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Oh, I'm sorry. State your name for the record, please.

COMRADE BATULIS: I'm sorry, Commander-in-Chief. Bryan Batulis, delegate of Louisiana, from the post of 5735 in Louisiana in Slidell.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

The name of Daniel Nail has been placed in nomination for Judge Advocate General.

Daniel, would you accept the nomination?

COMRADE NAIL: I do accept.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Are there any other nominations? Any other nominations?

Microphone No. 3.

COMRADE WEST: Commander-in-Chief, Matt West, Post 3619, delegate, state commander.

I move that we close nominations for Judge Advocate General, and ask the Adjutant cast one unanimous ballot for Dan Nail for the Judge Advocate General position 2018-2019 year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

Do we have a second?

COMRADE LOVERGNE: Comrade Commander, Bobby Lovergne, Junior Vice Commander, state of Louisiana, delegate, Post 3750.

I second the nomination to close the nominations for Judge Advocate General.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

We have a motion and a second to close the nominations for Judge Advocate General. All in favor, signify by saying aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The motion has been -- for nomination's is closed.

Do your duty, Brian.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot, Daniel J. Nail for Judge Advocate General, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, for the 2018-2019 year.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrades, you have elected Daniel J. Neil -- Nail as Judge Advocate General.

Daniel, would you like to say a few words?

#### REMARKS BY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT DANIEL J. NAIL

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT NAIL: I would. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, comrades, ladies and gentlemen, for giving me the honor of serving you once again as your National Judge Advocate General.

I especially want to thank Larry Rivers, our Past National Commander, for nominating me to the position. And I thank my close friend, Bryan Batulis, our Louisiana State Surgeon, for seconding the motion.

I will accept the office with a desire to serve veterans in gratitude for your efforts.

I would be remiss if I failed to thank my family for their unfailing support. I look to my wife; Linda, my daughter -- excuse me. Linda, my wife Linda; and my daughter, Shannon; and my beautiful granddaughter, Caitlin Foret.

Thank you all so much.

(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR SURGEON GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now open the nominations for the office of Surgeon General.

Are there any nominations for Surgeon General?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and comrades, for the record, my name is Paul Spera. I am a delegate from North End Post 144 in Boston, Massachusetts, and a Past Commander-in-Chief of this great organization.

I am actually pinch-hitting for another Past Commander-in-Chief, John Biedrzycki. He is very sorry that he couldn't be here to perform this duty. Right now he is down at the Ladies Auxiliary meeting waiting -- (Oooh)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Oh, God, shoot me. And I'm usually pretty good at that. Oh, well.

He's down at the Auxiliary meeting, waiting to install the new National President. And I have been asked by the candidate to take his place. I am going to present and place into nomination the name of an individual who brings a sterling record of achievement and service to our organization.

She joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars under her own -- her service in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. She was working in the 12th Evacuation Hospital. She served her post as a post commander. She served her district as a district commander. And she served the Department of Pennsylvania as a department commander.

But what else she brings to this is she has served as the department surgeon for seven years in the Department of Pennsylvania. She served on the Veterans Service Health and Behavioral Service Committee. She currently serves as the chairperson of the Health Care Awards Committee in the Department of Pennsylvania. She has numerous awards, both military and in our organization.

I have known this lady for a number of years. I have been impressed by the ability she shows, the compassion that she shows, her interest and her ability to address those issues that face our veterans in their health care.

So it is with great pride on behalf of the Department of Pennsylvania and the Eastern States Conference to place into nomination the name of Ruth Fairchild for the office of Surgeon General for the ensuing year. (Applause)

COMRADE EILER: Bob Eiler, delegate, Post 7842, Linesville, Pennsylvania.

It's a proud moment I stand in front of my comrades here to place a nomination, Ruth Fairchild. I'll tell you a couple short stories about Ruth.

I accompanied Ruth on many visits to the VA Hospitals in Pennsylvania, and we have five. And she is not afraid to ask tough questions of the directors of those hospitals. And they could not baffle her with BS because she wanted the answers to her questions. And she has served Pennsylvania with distinction.

You know, it's a funny story. I've known Ruth for years and years. She's like my daughter. At one district meeting, I stood up and nominated Ruth for the junior vice commander of the district. And I heard, "But she's a girl."

Well, that girl, our comrade, has served, with distinction, Pennsylvania. And she will serve this Nation. I am very proud to place a nomination, Ruth Fairchild, for the Surgeon General for the year 2018-'19. Thank you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We have the name of Ruth Fairchild placed in nomination for Surgeon General.

Ruth, will you accept that nomination?

COMRADE FAIRCHILD: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Chair recognizes Microphone No.3.

COMRADE HANZES: Commander-in-Chief, my name is Thomas Hanzes, a delegate from Transfer Post 7599.

I stand here today before you to make a motion to close the nominations for Surgeon General, and for the Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for my mentor and friend, Ruth Fairchild.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Comrade.

Second?

COMRADE GETZ: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, John Getz, delegate, Post 3376, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

We have a motion and second to close the nominations. All in favor, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The nominations are closed.

Adjutant General?

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief, Brian Duffy, Adjutant General.

Pursuant to the power and authority vested in me, I cast one unanimous ballot for Ruth A. Fairchild for Surgeon General of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2018-2019 year.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Comrades, you've elected Ruth A. Fairchild as Surgeon General.

Ruth, would you like to say a few words?

REMARKS BY SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT RUTH A. FAIRCHILD

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT FAIRCHILD: I thought it was intimidating being up in front of the state. Wow.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your support. I want to thank my family that traveled here. The great Department of Pennsylvania and the Eastern States Conference for all their mentorship and support. Thank you very much.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: National Sergeant, will you line all the newly-elected officers up.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: National Officers-elect to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, it's an honor for the National Sergeants to escort you around the hall.

Mr. Maestro, the Army, the Navy -- well, play 'em all.  
(Whereupon, a ceremonial parade was held.)

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY-ELECTED COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I will now call upon the Adjutant General to announce the newly elected National Council of Administration members.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: All newly-elected Council members, will you please rise.

The Commander-in-Chief-elect will now present caps and badges to the newly-elected Council members. They are, my left to right: George Jones, Alabama; Ashley A. Little, Arkansas; Benny Bachand, Florida; Alfred J. "Al" Lipphardt, Georgia; Robert Hendrickson, Kentucky; and Gerald Dugas, Louisiana; Greg Stafford, North Carolina.

The next one will be Oklahoma, alphabetical by state. Robert A. Clark, Oklahoma;

Comrade from Mississippi, forgive me. You weren't on the list, and the name is not listed.

COMRADE ORGAN: Steve Organ.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Steve Organ. Thank you.

Moving on to South Carolina, Augustus Singleton; Henry Hooper, Tennessee; Daniel West, Texas; Thomas Gimble, Virginia; and Todd Kingsbury, West Virginia.  
(Applause)

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS OF APPOINTMENTS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Let me call on -- please call on Commander-in-Chief-elect B.J. Lawrence for his announcements of appointment -- appointed officers for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: As Commander-in-Chief-elect, my appointments for the term for which I am elected are as follows:

As Adjutant General, from the great state of Missouri, Kevin Jones.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: I now call on our newly -- Adjutant General Kevin Jones for his thank-you and remarks.

Kevin?  
(Placement of cap and badge.)  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Thank you, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, for this appointment. And I also want to thank my wife and family for their continued support and understanding.

I'm excited about the opportunity to continue to work with the extremely-talented staff of VFW employees that we have to meet the needs of all veterans and their families.

Comrades, I promise to be firm but fair, and also forgiving if needed. We have an excellent opportunity to ride the momentum from this year. And, folks, we will make it happen. Thank you, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: And this coming year's Chief of Staff hails from the great state of Washington: Jerry Herker.  
(Applause)  
(Placement of cap and badge.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Chief of Staff Jerry Herker, would you like to make some comments?

CHIEF OF STAFF HERKER: First of off, B.J., I'd like to thank you for this appointment. It's a great honor.

And, team, let's make it happen!  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Inspector General:Charley Shoemaker of Kansas.  
(Applause)  
(Placement of cap and badge.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Comments and thank-yous, Charley?

INSPECTOR GENERAL SHOEMAKER: I think it's already been said: Let's go to work!

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: And our Sergeant-at-Arms, again returning for duty: Bryan O'Brien of Florida.

(Applause)

(Placement of cap and badge.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: I just want to briefly say that I have, for the last 14 years now, led the greatest group of men and women who are devoted to this great organization. Without them, I cannot be me. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

#### PRESENTATION OF PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAPEL PIN AND GOLD LIFE MEMBER CARD TO KEITH HARMAN

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: I now will call on the spouse, Mary Lou Harman, of our Commander-in-Chief, Keith Harman, for a presentation, along with our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief and Junior Vice Commander-in Chief for some very special presentations, Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Commander-in-Chief Harman's team presented him this morning with a bronze VFW hat, his original Commander-in-Chief hat that we had bronzed and placed on a wooden pedestal.

He's also being presented with a Legacy Gold Life membership to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'm glad I don't have to try to wear that hat.

(Laughter)

#### INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: We will now proceed with the installation of officers.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the installing officer to a position on my right.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your installing officer.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I guess you just take over, don't you?

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: I guess I do.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Fire me.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: You stand here.

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 HARMAN: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Have the books of the Adjutant General and the Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: He does.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Are the funds in the hand of the Quartermaster General ready to be turned over to her successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Have you the charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Temporarily.  
(Laughter)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: You will now surrender the gavel to me.

Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman, you have now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief. It was that quick.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: That's right.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: 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 Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be installed.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Past Commander-in-Chief.

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief: William J. "Doc" Schmitz

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief: Harold "Hal" J. Roesch

Adjutant General: Kevin Jones

Quartermaster General: Debra Anderson

Chaplain: Charlene K. Cobb

Judge Advocate General: Daniel J. Nail



Surgeon General: Ruth A. Fairchild  
Chief of Staff: Jerry W. Herker  
Inspector General: Charley Shoemaker  
Sergeant-at-Arms: Bryan O'Brien

#### NEWLY-ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: The newly-elected Council members:

George Jones, Alabama

Ashley A. Little, Arkansas

Benny Bachand, Florida

Alfred J. "Al" Lipphardt, Georgia

Robert Hendrickson, Kentucky

Gerald Dugas, Louisiana

Steve Organ, Mississippi

Greg A. Stafford, North Carolina

Robert A. Clark, Oklahoma

Augustus Singleton, South Carolina

Daniel West, Texas

Henry Hooper III, Tennessee

Thomas Gimble, Virginia

Todd Kingsbury, West Virginia

Commander-in-Chief: Vincent "B.J." Lawrence.

(Cheering and applause)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Comrade, O'Brien?

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Are the Officers-elect in the proper position for installation?

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Past Commander-in-Chief.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: You may take your place.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: National Officers-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I will administer to you the officers' obligation.

You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left, and repeat after me.

All rise.

(Whereupon, the Officers' Obligation was administered at this time.)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: As you were.

Chaplain?

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Almighty God, our guide and our divine protector, give Thy blessings upon these, our comrades, who now become fellow officers.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, who are there ever-present amongst us. Grant wisdom unto them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor Thee, our glorious country, and to better our organization.

May Thy strength sustain them. May Thy power preserve them. And may Thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.

(Amen)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: As you were.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations.

(Applause)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor to which your comrades have elected you.

Learn well the responsibilities entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake. The By-Laws and Ritual of our organization prescribe in detail the duties of your respective offices. By virtue of the confidence placed in you, through your election or appointment, we assume that you will acquaint yourself thoroughly with your duties.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-elect Vincent "B.J." Lawrence, 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 of your efforts and accomplishments bring credit to your administration and to our organization.

Comrade Vincent "B.J." Lawrence, are you willing and ready to assume your solemn obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with your left, give your name as I touch your hand, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, Installing Officer Pouliot administered the obligation to Commander-in-Chief-Elect Lawrence at this time.)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: As you were.  
(Applause)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I will now place in your possession our Charter. I also present you with this -- with this gavel. It is a gift from your friend Jim Malott in Post 12119, Las Vegas.  
(Applause)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: This 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.

(Whereupon, pledge of sincere allegiance to Commander-in-Chief Lawrence was administered at this time.)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: As you were. 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 in this organization in working order for the ensuing year.  
(Applause)

INSTALLING OFFICER POULIOT: Congratulations, B.J.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT VINCENT "B.J." LAWRENCE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Wow. You know, when I came in as Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, my remarks, once timed, were approximately 35 seconds. I made sure I told you I wanted to thank you for your support. I made sure I told you I loved you. And I made sure I told you I looked forward to serving you as a leader of our great organization.

Again, when I came in as Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, my acceptance speech lasted one minute, ten seconds. Because I, again, wanted to simply tell you thank you for your support; I looked forward to serving as your Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief; and I looked forward to taking the next step as a leader of our great organization.

As I look around the room today, I see many faces of friends, comrades. But most importantly, I see the backbone of our organization. I see

the workers, the leaders of today and of tomorrow. And I see those of you who will continue making the difference in the lives of veterans throughout our country, our military, and their families.

Comrades, it is no better joy, no better honor, and I am humbled to stand before you. After a long journey of service, I stand before you humbled to be able to say that I am your Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. And together we will "Make it Happen!"

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Comrades, we have a lot of work to do in the upcoming year. For those of you who noticed, I will tell you that was our Adjutant General handing me this -- my speech, and I told him, "Take it back."

(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: The teleprompters are off. I've been B.J. to you for over 20 years in this organization, and I'm not going to change now. I'm going to talk to you from the heart.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: In this coming year, comrades, I'm going to ask that we put an emphasis -- we put an emphasis on our grassroots level, which begins at the post.

For far too long, we, as an organization, have been sweeping in the direction of taking our posts and our post members for granted. That changes, and that changes today.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: We're going to put a revitalized emphasis on post development, on post revitalization. We're going to continue to work together to build our organization. The time for talk and saying we must recruit and rebuild is over. The time for action starts today.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Our posts remain vital to our communities. Your presence throughout the communities are what has made us what we are since 1899. We must continue to seek a missing presence in those cities, those towns, those communities that don't have a VFW post.

I can tell you your leadership at the department level, already this year, is focused on going in that direction. We, today, have 12 departments in the process of starting and chartering 18 new posts throughout the country.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: I can tell you today that I've been contacted by a dozen state commanders who have told me stories of posts that were ready to be shut down. And they've already been successful to go in and revitalize those posts, to bring in new leadership, and to make them an important part of that community to continue serving our veterans, our military, and their families.

We're going to continue to ramp up our emphasis on those issues as they pertain to the repatriation of our missing in action. Comrades, as an organization, we must and we will make it a top priority to continue our legacy and our creed and our word that no one -- no one will be left behind.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: We need to continue putting pressure on our elected officials. We need to let them know that it is important to continue funding, that it is important to engage in talks, that it is important to those families of our missing comrades.

If we are not their voice, if we do not demand that we ramp up the continued efforts to bring them home, comrades, who will?

There is no better veterans service organization in the world and no better veterans service organization that can work together to make that happen.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: I want to take a moment to thank a few special people.

First and foremost, I want to thank all of you in the room for getting me where I am today. You have continued to show support, guidance, mentorship, and friendship to make me who I am today.

I also want to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, one, for your continued friendship and mentorship; for your nomination today; and for the installation of our newly-elected and appointed National Officers.

Tom, thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: I also want to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas for the second. Ed has stood by me for several years. He's a past commander-in-chief that didn't hesitate to give me his guidance, his experiences. And he, as all of our past commanders-in-chiefs, only wanted one thing in return, and that is for our great organization to thrive and be successful.

And for that, Past Commander-in-Chief Banas, thank you very much.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: I want to thank my wife, Mary; my daughters, Tianna and Kaidyn; also, my two sons who couldn't be here with me today to share in this special moment; my Marine veteran, Frederick Lawrence, who is a Life member of my post; and my Army veteran son, Christopher, who is also a Life member of my post. I wish you were here, but I love you all.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: I want to thank my home post, Alamogordo Post 7686. I want to thank District 3, the Department of New Mexico, and the Western Conference, who from day one has believed in me, has supported me, and has helped carry me throughout my VFW career. And for that I will always be grateful to all of you in the Department of New Mexico. I salute you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: As I said, we have a lot of work ahead of us the next year, but we're going to get it done. We have a great team in Chief of Staff, Jerry Herker; Inspector General, Charley Shoemaker; our Adjutant General, Kevin Jones; our Quartermaster General, Debra Anderson; Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Hal Roesch; and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Doc Schmitz; and all of your new "Make it Happen" team.

I guarantee you, comrades, we will give 110 percent to serve in this organization. We will work together as a team. We will make this great organization even better and bigger, and that will start immediately.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT LAWRENCE: Comrades, I want to close with this: Your leaders sitting in front of you today have an opportunity and a privilege to wear our titles, but we are your voice. We serve you and our organization. We are one voice, one team, and one VFW.

We will work together to get the job done. And together, I promise you -- I promise you, as a team communicating and working only -- listen to what I said -- only in the best interests of our veterans, our military, and their families. We will "Make it Happen." We will be successful. And we will grow our great organization for years to come.

I love each and every one of you. Thank you and God bless you.  
(Standing ovation)

ADJUTANT GENERAL DUFFY: Before closing, a few announcements.  
As you make your way out of the hall area, be sure to pick up your tickets for the Commander-in Chief/National President Reception this evening.  
I also would like to call the convention chairman, Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller, for a few comments from him. Chief?

REMARKS BY THE 119TH NATIONAL CONVENTION CHAIRMAN  
PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF JIM MUELLER

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Comrades, first of all, to Past Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman, I want to thank you for asking me to serve as your chairman for this convention. It's been a distinct honor and pleasure to do that, to be here for that.

Also, to Vanessa Kane, to the Kansas City and Washington staff for all their support in what they have done to make this a great convention. I think we've had some great motivational speakers. The entertainment has been outstanding.

I want to thank my home state, Department of Missouri, for the continued support, for all the volunteers and chairmen for what you've done. I can't thank you enough for your unwavering support.

It was great to see Larry LeFebvre. I think he did an outstanding job at the Memorial Service. I just want to share a little short story with that.

Sunday morning, I came out of Catholic mass, and I was coming up the elevator into the room here, and the church choir was practicing.

There was a lady on the elevator with me, and she said, "The singing is beautiful. I feel like I'm going to heaven." And I got a little nervous. I said, "I don't think I'm ready yet."

(Laughter)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MUELLER: Everyone have a safe trip home. God bless. And thank you for being here this week.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: At this time, we'll entertain a motion to adjourn the convention.

COMRADE LeFEBVRE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Yes.

COMRADE LeFEBVRE: Commander-in-Chief, Larry LeFebvre, delegate, Post 552, Lincoln Park, Michigan.

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 119th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

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

Second?

COMRADE PROHASKA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, David Prohaska, delegate, Post 4434, Michigan, second.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

There being no further business to come before this convention, and the officers having been duly installed -- we've already done that.  
(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: I'm getting pretty good at that, you know.

And you have a motion before you and it's seconded to close. All in favor, signify by saying aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Opposed, nay.  
I believe the ayes have it.

#### CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Sergeant-at-Arms, will you prepare for the closing ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief.

#### PREPARE AND RETIRE THE COLORS

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: National Sergeants, attention.

Captain of the VFW National Honor Guard, advance and retire the flag of the United States of America.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Aye aye, sir.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Sir.

#### CLOSING PRAYER - NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JAMES GRAY

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Comrade National Chaplain, for the closing prayer.

Parade rest. Uncover.

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Dear Heavenly Father, the time has come to conclude our sessions. And we thank You for Your blessings and for guiding us. We pray that we have pleased You.

And as we leave this place, may You continue to make us instruments of Your peace and love. And bless those who serve and have served to protect freedom and the freedom of this great country.

And as we leave this place, may we be true to You, our country, those who serve, those who have served, and their widows and orphans. In Your name we pray. Amen.  
(Amen)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS O'BRIEN: Cover.



Comrade Commander-in-Chief, the close of the 119th National Convention has been completed, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you.

This afternoon's Council of Administration meeting will begin at 12:15 in Room 3501.

Also, don't forget to pick up your tickets on the way out for the afternoon reception.

The 119th Convention is closed. We are adjourned.  
(Whereupon, the Convention was duly adjourned at 11:47 a.m.)

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE  
& RITUAL,  
119<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION, JULY 21 – 25, 2018  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BY-LAWS**

**B-1**

Proposed by Department of New Hampshire

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

**Sec. 104 – Member Dues.**

Amend Sec. 104 - Member Dues., National By-Laws, by adding the following as a second paragraph:

“Annual dues shall be paid on an annual basis to coincide with the VFW administrative year. The administrative year is from 1 July – 30 June of a given 12-month period. If a member joins in any month throughout the year, that comrade’s annual dues will be prorated starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the following month through the end date of 30 June of that administrative year. All annual members dues expire on 30 June of the administrative year and the next year’s dues are due on 1 July marking the beginning of the following administrative year.”

**B-2**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE II – POSTS**

**Sec. 202 – By-Laws.**

Amend Sec. 202 - By-Laws., National By-Laws, by replacing the entire section with the following:

“Posts may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting, adopt By-Laws provided each member has been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request has been provided a copy of the proposed By-Laws. By-Laws approved by a Post shall be forwarded as provided in the Manual of Procedure prior to becoming effective.

**Amendments.** Unless otherwise provided in the Post By-Laws, the Post By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting provided each member has been notified at least twenty (20) days in advance and, upon request has been provided a copy of the proposed amendments.”

**B-3**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE II – POSTS**

**Sec. 203 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.**

Amend Sec. 203 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees., National By-Laws, by replacing the verbiage under “**Electronic Attendance.**”, with the following:

“**Electronic Attendance.** Provided that the Post has adopted additional procedures pertaining to conduct of its meetings, members may be allowed to participate in meetings using technology that allows all participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.”

**B-4**

Proposed by Department of Texas

**ARTICLE II - POSTS**

**Sec. 215 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 215 - Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, by replacing the third paragraph with the following:

“Any officer or committee member who is on anniversary dues must submit to the Post Quartermaster dues in an amount to cover the term of their office for the appropriate administrative year.”

**B-5**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE II – POSTS**

## **Sec. 215 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 215 - Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, by replacing “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed” where it appears.

In the last paragraph, remove the comma (“,”) after “membership” and add “or committee membership” after “any office”.

### **B-6**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

### **Sec. 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National By-Laws, by replacing the entire section with the following:

- “(a) The Post shall elect the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Chaplain and three Trustees.
- (b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant and Service Officer.
- (c) The Post may elect or the Post Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Officer of the Day and/or Guard if required by Post By-Laws.
- (d) The Post Commander may appoint such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Post or as may be required by Post By-Laws.”

### **B-7**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **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 replacing the section title and the entire section with the following:

**“Sec. 220 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.**

**Vacancies.** All vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the Post shall be filled in accordance with Section 220 of the Manual of Procedure at the next regular meeting of the Post or special meeting as prescribed in Section 203 of the Manual of Procedure.

**Removal.** Elected officers or elected committee members may be removed for just cause by the Post or the Department Commander as prescribed in Section 220 of the Manual of Procedure.

Any elected Post officer or committee member removed by reason of failure to pay current dues or under the provisions of this section shall not be eligible to serve in any Post office or committee in the same administrative year in which the officer or committee member is removed.”

**B-8**

Proposed by Department of Tennessee

**ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 401 – Formation, Institution and Chartering.**

Amend Sec. 401 - Formation, Institution and Chartering., National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, second sentence, by replacing “ten (10)” with “five (5)” and “750” with “175”.

**B-9**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 403 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.**

Amend Sec. 403 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees., National By-Laws, by replacing the verbiage under “**Electronic Attendance.**” with the following:

**“Electronic Attendance.** Provided that the District has adopted additional procedures pertaining to conduct of its meetings, members may be allowed to participate in meetings using technology that allows all participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.”

**B-10**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 404 – Governing Body; Composition.**

Amend Sec. 404 - Governing Body; Composition., National By-Laws, under no. 4, first paragraph, by replacing “elective” with “elected”.

**B-11**

Proposed by Department of Texas

**ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 415 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 415 - Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, by replacing the third paragraph with the following:

“Any officer or committee member who is on anniversary dues must remit to the District Quartermaster dues in an amount to cover the term of their office for the appropriate administrative year.”

**B-12**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 415 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 415 - Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, first sentence, by removing the first comma (“,”) and adding “that” after “provided”. Replace “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed”.

In the last paragraph, add “or committee membership” before “during the period of suspension.”

### **B-13**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

##### **Sec. 416 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National By-Laws, by replacing the entire section with the following:

“(a) The elected officers of each District shall consist of a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Chaplain, and three (3) Trustees.

(b) The Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Service Officer and Inspector.

(c) The District may elect or the District Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff or Officer of the Day if required by the District By-Laws.

(d) The District Commander may appoint such other chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the District or as may be required by District By-Laws.”

### **B-14**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

##### **Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations., National By-Laws, by replacing “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed”.

### **B-15**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

##### **Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.**

Amend Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members., National By-Laws, in the section title and throughout the entire section, by replacing “elective” with “elected”.

Under “**Vacancies.**”, replace “stated meeting of the District” with “regular” and remove “called for such purposes”.

**B-16**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 421 - Voting.**

Amend Sec. 421 - Voting., National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, by adding “as” before “defined in Section 404”.

In the second paragraph, first sentence, add “and voting” after “each delegate present”.

**B-17**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 504 – Governing Body; Composition.**

Amend Sec. 504 - Governing Body; Composition. National By-Laws, under no. 2, by replacing “elective” with “elected”.

**B-18**

Proposed by Department of Texas

**ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 515 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 515 - Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, by replacing the second paragraph with the following:

“Any officer or committee member who is on anniversary dues must remit to the Department Quartermaster dues in an amount to cover the term of their office for the appropriate administrative year.”



## **B-19**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

#### **Sec. 515 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 515 - Eligibility to Office, National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, first sentence, by replacing “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed”.

In the second paragraph, add “or committee membership” before “during that administrative year.”

In the third paragraph, add “or committee membership” before “during the period of suspension.”

## **B-20**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **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, by replacing the entire section with the following:

- “(a) The elected officers of each Department shall be a Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster and Chaplain.
- (b) The Department Commander shall appoint an Adjutant, Inspector and Service Officer.
- (c) The Department may elect or the Department Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Chief of Staff or Officer of the Day if so required by Department By-Laws.
- (d) The Department Commander may appoint such chairmen and committees as deemed necessary to conduct the affairs of the Department or as may be required by Department By-Laws.

(e) With respect to salaried officers, the appointment shall be made subject to the confirmation of a majority vote of the Department Council of Administration.”

**B-21**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 518 - Officers: Duties and Obligations., National By-Laws, by replacing “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed”.

**B-22**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.**

Amend Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers., National By-Laws, in the section title and under “**Vacancies.**”, replace “elective” with “elected”.

Under “**Vacancies.**”, add “the Department Council of Administration by” before “nominating and electing”. Replace “stated meeting of the Department” with “regular” and remove “called for such purposes”.

**B-23**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 521 – Voting.**

Amend Sec. 521 - Voting., National By-Laws, in the fourth sentence, by adding “and voting” after “each delegate present”.

**B-24**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

##### **Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Sec. 522 - Council of Administration - Composition, Powers and Duties., National By-Laws, by replacing the verbiage under “(a) **Composition.**” with the following:

“(a) **Composition.** The Council of Administration of a Department shall consist of the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Adjutant, Quartermaster, Chaplain and District Commanders. In the absence of a District Commander the District Senior Vice Commander and in the absence of the District Senior Vice Commander, the District Junior Vice Commander may function as a member of the Council of Administration. The immediate Past Department Commander shall also be a member of the Department Council of Administration. If provided in Department By-Laws, the Judge Advocate, Chief of Staff, Inspector or Surgeon may be members of the Department Council of Administration. In the Departments of Alaska, Hawaii and Europe, the Commanders of all Posts in good standing shall be voting members of the Department Council of Administration. Other Departments having a membership of 9,500 or less may adopt By-Laws to include all Post Commanders as voting members of the Department Council of Administration. Also the four (4) immediate Past Department Commanders may be voting members of the Council of Administration, on the condition that the By-Laws adopted by the Department Convention so provide.”

#### **B-25**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

##### **Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Sec. 522 - Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties., National By-Laws, under “(g) **Special Meetings.**”, in the second paragraph, second sentence, by removing the “s” in “meetings”, shown twice.

Under “(j) **Voting.**”, in the first sentence, add “and voting” before “at a meeting”. In the second sentence, replace “stated” with “regular”.

**B-26**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VI - NATIONAL**

**Sec. 603 – Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.**

Amend Sec. 603 - Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees., National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, first sentence, by replacing “stated” with “regular”.

**B-27**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VI - NATIONAL**

**Sec. 604 – Governing Body; Composition.**

Amend Sec. 604 - Governing Body; Composition., National By-Laws, under no. 1, by replacing “elective” with “elected”.

**B-28**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

**Sec. 615 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 615 - Eligibility to Office., National By-Laws, by replacing “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed” throughout the section.

**B-29**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

**Sec. 616 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 616 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National By-Laws, under (a), by replacing “elective” with “elected”.

**B-30**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

**Sec. 616 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 616 - Elected and Appointed Officers: Chairmen and Committees., National By-Laws, by replacing (b) and adding (c) with the following:

“(b) The Commander-in-Chief shall appoint an Adjutant General, who shall be a full-time salaried officer of the organization, subject to the approval of the majority of the members of the National Council of Administration.

(c) The Commander-in-Chief shall also appoint a Chief of Staff, Inspector General, and Sergeant-at-Arms and other such officers and committee chairmen as may be necessary.”

**B-31**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

**Sec. 617 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.**

Amend Sec. 617 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., National By-Laws, by replacing “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointing” throughout the section.

**B-32**

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, under (a), by replacing (6) with the following:

“(6) Upon entering into office, appoint other such officers, Aides-de-Camp, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for in Section 616.”

Under (a)(12), replace “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed”.

Add the following after (a)(14):

“(15) Be an ex-officio member of all committees.”

Under (d)(15), in the fourth sentence, replace “stated” with “regular”.

Under (a)(14), (b), (c), (d)(16) and (f)(11), remove the last sentence “Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.”

### **B-33**

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, in the section title, by replacing “Elective” with “Elected” and adding “and Salaried Officers” at the end of the section title.

Under “**Vacancies.**”, replace “elective” with “elected”.

Under “**Removal.**”, second paragraph, remove “the concurrence of” and add “a” before “two-thirds” and “vote” after “two-thirds”. Add “or appointed salaried officer” after “National officer” and “without just cause” after “who fails”. Remove all verbiage after “Section 618”.

### **B-34**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

##### **Sec. 621 – Voting.**

Amend Sec. 621 - Voting., National By-Laws, by removing “, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition” in the last sentence.

#### **B-35**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 622 – National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Sec. 622 - National Council of Administration - Composition, Powers and Duties., National By-Laws, under (a), by replacing “elective” with “elected”.

Under (b)(12), in the first sentence, add “and voting” after “present”. In the last sentence, replace “stated” with “regular” where it appears.

#### **B-36**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 623 – National Council of Administration, Department Members – Election, Vacancies and Removal.**

Amend Sec. 623 - National Council of Administration, Department Members - Election, Vacancies and Removal., National By-Laws, under “**Election:**”, by adding “or until their successor is elected” at the end of the first sentence.

Replace the entire verbiage under “**Removal:**” with the following:

“**Removal:** The Department Commander will, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the Department Council of Administration, request that the Commander-in-Chief remove the Department’s elected National Council of Administration member who fails to fulfill the duties of office as required by Section 622, provided that such member has been given seven (7) days written notice that removal will be requested, including the reasons for removal, and

the member is provided an opportunity to be heard by the Department Council at a regular meeting or special meeting called for that purpose, prior to such request being made by the Commander-in-Chief.

The Commander-in-Chief will, with a two-thirds vote of the National Council of Administration, remove an elected National Council of Administration Department Member for failure to perform the duties as outlined in Section 622 of the National By-Laws.

Any National Council of Administration Department member removed 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 member is removed."

### **B-37**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

### **Sec. 709 – Control of Units.**

Amend Sec. 709 - Control of Units., National By-Laws, by replacing the fourth paragraph with the following and adding a new fifth paragraph:

"No Post, County Council, District or Department and no activity, clubroom or holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or on behalf of any Post, County Council, District or Department may own any property jointly or in common with any individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation or other business or charitable entity, except that property may be held jointly or in common a post or unit of a congressionally chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for the prominent display of the names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and is not contrary to any provision of law or these By-Laws.

No Post, County Council, District or Department or activity, clubroom, holding company or unit sponsored, conducted or operated by, for or in its behalf, may participate in any arrangement whereby its funds are expended on property held by another entity for the joint use of such Post, County Council, District or Department and other individuals, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations or other business or charitable entities, including veterans organizations, except that such arrangement may be made with a post or unit



of a congressional chartered veterans organization, provided the arrangement allows for the prominent display of the names, trademarks, or service marks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States nor is contrary to any provision of law or these By-Laws.”

**B-38**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

**Sec. 717 – Dues Reserve.**

Amend Sec. 717 - Dues Reserve., National By-Laws, by removing the entire section.

**B-39**

Proposed by Department of Pacific Areas

**ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

**Sec. 719 – Past Officers.**

Amend Sec. 719 - Past Officers., National By-Laws, in the first paragraph, under (1), by replacing “to the end of” with “more than half of their”.

**B-40**

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 adding the following at the end of the section:

““Alternative Titles” When necessary or appropriate in the conduct of business with persons or entities not familiar with the Veterans of Foreign Wars or when necessary to comply with legal requirements, the following examples of alternative titles may be used (in conjunction with official titles).

Commander – President, Chief Executive, Executive Director

Adjutant – Secretary, Chief Administrative Officer

Quartermaster – Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer

Council Member – Board Member, Director”

**B-41**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE XII – MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE**

**Sec. 1202 – Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 1202 - Eligibility., National By-Laws, under (3), by adding “and voting” after “members present”.

**B-42**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE XIII – MEN’S AUXILIARY**

Amend ARTICLE XIII - MEN’S AUXILIARY, National By-Laws, by removing the entire Article.

**B-43**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS**

**Sec. 1401 – Amendments.**

Amend Sec. 1401 - Amendments., National By-Laws, by replacing the entire section with the following:

“**By-Laws:** Any member in good standing, a Post, a District, or a Department, may propose an amendment to the National By-Laws; provided, however, before consideration at the National Convention, the proposed amendment must be approved by a Department Convention. Immediately following a Department Convention, the proposed amendments must be forwarded to National Headquarters.

A national officer may propose an amendment to the National By-Laws and forward the proposed amendment to the Adjutant General.

All proposed amendments will be available to each Post by the Adjutant General at least fifteen (15) days before the assembling of the National Convention.

Amendments require a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting at the National Convention.

All amendments adopted at any National Convention according to the provisions of this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after the final adjournment of the National Convention at which they were adopted, unless specifically stated otherwise in the amendment.

The Adjutant General shall be authorized to correct article and section designations, punctuation and cross references and to make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the intent of the National Convention in connection with these By-Laws.

**Manual of Procedure and Ritual:** Amendments to the Manual of Procedure and Ritual will be in accordance with Section 1401 of the Manual of Procedure.”

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE**

### **M-1**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

#### **Sec. 203 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.**

Amend Sec. 203 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Quorum; Authorized Attendees, Manual of Procedure, in the first and third paragraph, add “and voting” after “members present”.

In the third paragraph, second sentence, replace “their” with “the” and add “of the Commander” after “opinion”.

### **M-2**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

### **Sec. 205 – Change of Location, Meeting Place, Day or Time.**

Amend Sec. 205 - Change of Location, Meeting Place, Day or Time., Manual of Procedure, in the first and third paragraph, by adding “and voting” after “members present”.

#### **M-3**

Proposed by Department of Massachusetts

## **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

### **Sec. 208 – Change of Name.**

Amend Sec. 208 - Change of Name., Manual of Procedure, by adding the following as the last paragraph:

“In special circumstances the requirements above may be waived at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief with a written recommendation by the Department Commander of the Post seeking a waiver. All waiver requests must be accompanied by a written explanation of the special circumstances. The Commander-in-Chief will grant or deny a waiver on a case by case basis. All decisions of the Commander-in-Chief are final.”

#### **M-4**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

### **Sec. 208 – Change of Name.**

Amend Sec. 208 - Change of Name., Manual of Procedure, in the first paragraph, first sentence, by adding “and voting” after “members present”.

#### **M-5**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

### **Sec. 209 – Consolidation of Posts.**

Amend Sec. 209 - Consolidation of Posts., Manual of Procedure, under no. 1, by replacing “stated meeting” with “regular or special meeting”.

Under no. 4, replace “stated Post meeting” with “regular or special meeting of the respective Posts.”

Under no. 6, last sentence, replace “at the stated meeting” with “and voting”.

#### **M-6**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

##### **Sec. 210 – Surrender of Charter.**

Amend Sec. 210 - Surrender of Charter., Manual of Procedure, in the first sentence, by adding “following” before “procedures” and removing “herein set forth as follows”.

Under no. 1 and no. 2, replace “stated meeting” with “regular or special meeting”.

#### **M-7**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

##### **Sec. 214 – Solicitation of Funds.**

Amend Sec. 214 - Solicitation of Funds., Manual of Procedure, in the first paragraph, last sentence, by replacing “the foregoing” with “applicable law and Article VIII of the National By-Laws.”

In the second paragraph, add the following as a second sentence:

“A Post may solicit funds or donations utilizing web-based communities provided that the activity is not repetitive or ongoing and otherwise in keeping with applicable state and local charitable solicitation law.”

## **M-8**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

#### **Sec. 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., Manual of Procedure, by removing the entire first paragraph.

## **M-9**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

#### **Sec. 218 – Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(1)(e), by replacing with the following:

“e. Upon entering into office, appoint all other officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.”

Add the following as “m.”:

“m. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.”

Remove the last sentence “Failure without just cause to perform these duties may result in removal from office.”

## **M-10**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **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 renaming the section title and replacing the entire section with the following:

**"Sec. 220 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.**

**Vacancies.** In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander or Commander-elect, the Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of such office and the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, 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 may, without undue delay, 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 may, without undue delay, 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 at the next regular or special meeting.

Should a 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.

Should the vacancy occur in any other elected Post office or committee, the Post shall at the next regular or special meeting nominate and elect a member to that position.

**Removal – Post.** A Post may, upon motion duly passed at any meeting, propose the removal of an officer or committee member at the next regular or special meeting. The member holding such office or committee membership shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address, stating the reasons for the proposed action. A copy of the notice shall be provided to the Department Commander at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

The Post, at the next regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote

of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any an elected officer or elected chairman or committee member who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings or who has
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office specified in Section 218 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

**Removal – Department.** The Department Commander may, with respect to any Post within their Department, remove any Post officer for cause who fails to fulfill their duties of office as required by Section 218.

**Notification of Removal.** All removals require written notification. The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order and detail specifically in what manner the elected officer or elected committee member failed to perform their duties. The notification must advise the member of their right to appeal this action under Section 109 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or registered mail to the removed officer or committee member’s last known address.”

#### **M-11**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE II - POSTS**

#### **Sec. 222 – Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.**

Amend Sec. 222 - Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the entire section with the following:

“Delegates and alternates for the District Convention and Meetings, Department and National Conventions shall be elected at a regular meeting in April. Delegate strength will be based on members in good standing as of March 31<sup>st</sup>.

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.”

**M-12**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 403 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.**

Amend Sec. 403 - Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the verbiage under “**Special Meeting.**”, with the following:

“**Special Meeting.** The District Commander shall call a special meeting: (a) upon the signed written request of a majority of the Posts (b) upon the vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a regular meeting (c) whenever the District Commander determines it may be necessary for the welfare of the District.”

The District Adjutant shall give notice, in writing, of the time and place of any special meeting and of the business to be transacted, such notice to be given in such manner as to reasonably reach each Post Commander, District officer and Department Commander at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the time set for the meeting.

No business shall be transacted at any special meeting except that for which the meeting is called.”

**M-13**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 414 – Solicitation of Funds.**

Amend Sec. 414 - Solicitation of Funds., Manual of Procedure, in the first paragraph, last sentence by replacing “the foregoing” with “applicable law and Article VIII of the”.

In the second paragraph, add “, and otherwise in keeping with applicable state and local charitable solicitation law.” at the end of the last sentence.

**M-14**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 416 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., Manual of Procedure, by removing the entire first paragraph.

**M-15**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 418 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the verbiage under (a)(1)(f) with the following:

“f. Appoint officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.”

**M-16**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 418 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(1) by adding the following as “n.”:

“n. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.”

Under (a)(6)(b), replace “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed”.

#### **M-17**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IV - DISTRICTS**

##### **Sec. 420 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members.**

Amend Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the section title and the entire section with the following:

##### **“Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.**

Districts may fill any vacancy in their offices at any regular or special meeting.

**Vacancies.** In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander or Commander-elect, the Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of such office and the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, 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 may, without undue delay, 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 may, without undue delay, succeed to the title of Commander at the next regular or special meeting.

Should a vacancy occur in the office of District Quartermaster, the District Commander may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster to carry out the duties incident to that office. The appointment shall be valid only until the next

regular or special meeting and shall be null and void upon the election of a District Quartermaster.

The District, at the next regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any an elected officer or elected committee member who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings.
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office specified in Section 418 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

**Removal. – District.** A District may, upon motion duly passed at any meeting, propose the removal of an elected officer or committee member at the next regular or special meeting. The member holding such office *or* committee membership shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting by certified or registered mail addressed to the member’s last known address stating the reasons for the proposed action. A copy of the notice shall be provided to the Department Commander at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

**Removal – Department.** The Department Commander may, with respect to any District in the Department and with concurrence of a majority vote of the Department Council of Administration, remove any elected District officer for cause who fails to fulfill their duties of office as required by Section 418.

**Notification of Removal.** All removals require written notification. The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order and detail specifically in what manner the elected officer or elected committee member failed to perform their duties. The notification must advise the member of their right to appeal this action under Section 109 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or register mail to the removed officer or committee member’s last known address.”

## **M-18**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS**

### **Sec. 509 – Consolidation of Departments.**

Amend Sec. 509 - Consolidation of Departments., Manual of Procedure, under no. 4., by adding “and voting” after “delegates present”.

### **M-19**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS**

##### **Sec. 514 – Solicitation of Funds.**

Amend Sec. 514 - Solicitation of Funds., Manual of Procedure, in the first paragraph, last sentence, by replacing “the foregoing” with “applicable law and Article VIII of the”.

In the second paragraph, add “, and otherwise in keeping with applicable state and local charitable solicitation law.” at the end of the last sentence.

### **M-20**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **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, in the first paragraph, by removing the first three sentences.

In the fourth sentence, replace “these” with “appointed”.

### **M-21**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS**

##### **Sec. 517 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.**

Amend Sec. 517 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., Manual of Procedure under “**Order of nominations and elections.**”, in the first sentence, by adding “and, if election is required by Department By-Laws the” after “Chaplain”.

In the second sentence, replace “elective” with “elected”.

#### **M-22**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS**

##### **Sec. 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 518 - Officers: Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the verbiage under (a)(1)(e) with the following:

“e. Appoint officers, committee chairmen and committees not otherwise provided for. The Commander may remove such appointed officers, committee chairmen and committees at their pleasure.”

#### **M-23**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS**

##### **Sec. 518 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 518 - Officers: Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(1), by adding the following as “l.”:

“l. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.”

Under (a)(4), remove the following verbiage under f. “Maintain a dues reserve fund as prescribed in Section 717 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.”

Renumber the remaining sub-sections.

#### **M-24**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE V - DEPARTMENTS**

##### **Sec. 520 – Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.**

Amend Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elective Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the section title and the entire section with the following:

**“Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.**

Departments may fill any vacancy in their offices at any regular or special meeting.

**Vacancies.** In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander or Commander-elect, the Senior Vice Commander or Senior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, succeed to the title and duties of such office and the Junior Vice Commander or Junior Vice Commander-elect may, without undue delay, 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 may, without undue delay, 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 may, without undue delay, succeed to the title of Commander at the next regular or special meeting.

Should a vacancy occur in the office of Department Quartermaster, the Department Commander may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster to carry out the duties incident to that office. The appointment will be null and void upon the election of a Department Quartermaster as described below. All other vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the Department, including the office of Junior Vice Commander, will be filled by the Department Council of Administration in the following manner:

1. In the event that a regular meeting is scheduled within thirty (30) days of the date the office is vacated, an election will be held to fill such office at that regular meeting. In the event that no regular meeting is scheduled within thirty (30) days of the date the office is vacated, the Department Commander may call a special meeting of the Department Council of Administration pursuant to Section 522 By-Laws. Election to office at either a regular or special meeting shall be by majority vote of all votes cast. If there be no election on the first ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the lowest number of

votes shall be dropped and so on in successive ballots until an election is made.

2. In lieu of calling a special meeting, the Department Commander may notify all members of the Council that the vacancy exists and names of nominees are being accepted. Fifteen (15) days thereafter, the Department Commander shall advise the Council of the names of comrades presented for the same. Members of the Council may vote to fill such vacancy by written ballot, submitting as directed by the Department Commander by mail and forward to the Department Adjutant. These ballots shall be tallied at a time specified by the Commander by tellers appointed by the Commander in the presence of such Department officers as the Department Commander may designate. The comrade receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared duly elected to the office designated, with results of election being posted in the minutes of the next Council meeting.

**Removal.** The Department Commander may propose the removal of an elected officer, elected committee member or appointed salaried officer.

The Department Council of Administration may propose the removal of an elected officer, elected committee member or appointed salaried officer upon written request signed by a majority of its members. The member holding such office or committee membership shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting to remove said officer by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's last known address stating the reasons for the proposed action. A copy of the notice shall be provided to the Commander-in-Chief at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

The Department Council of Administration, at a regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any an elected officer or elected chairman or committee member who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings.
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office specified in Section 518 of the By-Laws and Manual of Procedure.

**Notification of Removal.** All removals require written notification. The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order and detail specifically in what manner the elected officer or elected committee member failed to perform



their duties. The notification must advise the member of their right to appeal this action under Section 109 of the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or register mail to the removed officer or committee member’s last known address.”

**M-25**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group  
Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE VI - NATIONAL**

**Sec. 617 – Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office.**

Amend Sec. 617 - Nomination, Election, Installation and Term of Office., Manual of Procedure, under “**Order of nominations and elections.**”, in the second sentence, by replacing “elective” with “elected”.

**M-26**

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., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the section title and the entire section with the following:

**“Sec. 620 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.**

**Vacancies:** In the event of a vacancy in the office of Commander-in-Chief, the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall at once succeed to the title and duties of the office, and the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall become the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief shall at once succeed to the title and duties of that office.  
Should the vacancy occur in the office of the Quartermaster General, the

Assistant Quartermaster General will carry out the duties of the Quartermaster General until such time as an election is held. In the event no Assistant Quartermaster General has been appointed the Commander-in-Chief may appoint a Pro Tempore Quartermaster General to carry out the duties until such time an election is held.

All other vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the National Convention shall be filled by the National Council of Administration. The Commander-in-Chief shall duly notify all members of the Council that the vacancy exists and fifteen (15) days thereafter shall advise them of the names of comrades presented for the same. Members of the council may vote to fill such vacancy by using sealed envelopes marked "ballot," enclosed in an envelope, and forwarded directly to the Adjutant General. These ballots shall be opened at a time specified by the Commander-in-Chief by tellers appointed by the Commander-in-Chief in the presence of such officers of the National Convention as the Commander-in-Chief may designate. The comrade receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared duly elected to the office designated.

**Removal:** The Commander-in-Chief retains authority to remove officers, committee chairmen and committees appointed by the Commander-in-Chief at any time provided, however, that salaried officers appointed by the Commander-in-Chief may only be removed by the Commander-in-Chief as provided herein.

The Commander-in-Chief may propose the removal of any elected National officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer. The National Council of Administration may propose the removal any elected National officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer upon written request signed by a majority of its members.

The National Council of Administration, at the next regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any elected officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings.
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office as specified in Section 618 of the By-laws and Manual of Procedure.

The elected National officer, elected National committee member, or appointed salaried officer holding such office and the National Council of Administration shall be notified at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting to remove said officer by certified or registered mail addressed to the member's

last known address stating the reason for the proposed action.

**Notification of Removal.** The notification shall be in the form of a Special Order, detailing specifically in what manner the elected officer, elected committee member or appointed salaried officer failed to perform their duties. The Special Order shall be delivered personally or by certified or registered mail at the removed member's last known address."

#### **M-27**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

##### **Sec. 717 – Dues Reserve.**

Amend Sec. 717 - Dues Reserve., Manual of Procedure, by removing the entire section.

#### **M-28**

Proposed by Department of Pacific Areas

#### **ARTICLE VIII – UNIFORMS, BADGES, ETC.**

##### **Sec. 803 – Manufacture and Use of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia and Uniforms.**

Amend Sec. 803 - Manufacture and Use of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia and Uniforms., Manual of Procedure, under "**Cap.**", by adding the following sentence at the end of the last paragraph:

"In lieu of the Regulation Cap, entitled members may wear VFW caps awarded for distinctive accomplishments such as the All-State Team or All-American Team caps."

#### **M-29**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE X – RULES OF ORDER**

##### **Sec. 1001 – Rules of Order Governing All Meetings.**

Amend Sec. 1001 - Rules of Order Governing All Meetings., Manual of Procedure, in the first paragraph, second sentence, by adding "or Convention

Rules” after “these Rules”; adding “the current” before “Robert’s Rules of Order” and remove “11<sup>th</sup> Edition” after “Newly Revised”.

Under no. 2 (b), remove “and seconder”.

Under no. 3, in the first sentence, replace “two amendments” with “one primary and one secondary amendment”. Remove the last sentence.

Under no. 9 (g), replace “call the previous questions” with “close debate and vote”. Remove I.

Under no. 10, in the second sentence, replace “closed” with “close”.

Under no. 12, in the first sentence, replace “the Adjutant to count the vote, which shall” with “the vote be” and remove “and report the result to the presiding officer”.

Under no. 14 Privileged Motions (1.), replace “reconvene” with “adjourn”.

Under no. 14 Privileged Motions (5.), add “for” after “call”.

Under no. 14 Subsidiary Motions (2.), replace “call the previous question” with “close debate and vote”.

Under no. 17, in the fourth sentence, remove “equal division or”.

Under no. 20, remove the last sentence.

Under no. 21, in the third paragraph, second sentence, replace “only under “New Business,” with “at that time”.

Under no. 24, replace “A member” with “Members”, “his” with “their” and “he does” with “they do”.

### **M-30**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE X – RULES OF ORDER**

### **Sec. 1001 – Rules of Order Governing All Meetings.**

Amend Sec. 1001 - Rules of Order Governing All Meetings., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the verbiage under no. 25 with the following:

“25. The dispensation and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of smoking/vaping products in VFW meeting rooms during VFW meetings are prohibited.”

#### **M-31**

Proposed by Department of Colorado

## **ARTICLE X – RULES OF ORDER**

### **Sec. 1004 – Order of Business-Posts.**

Amend Sec. 1004 - Order of Business-Posts., Manual of Procedure, under (b), by adding the following as a new nos. 2, 3 and 15 and renumbering appropriately:

- “2. Prayer for the Opening of an Informal Meeting
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance
- 15. Prayer at the Closing of an Informal Meeting”

#### **M-32**

Proposed by Department of South Dakota

## **ARTICLE X – RULES OF ORDER**

### **Sec. 1004 – Order of Business-Posts.**

Amend Sec. 1004 - Order of Business-Posts., Manual of Procedure, under (b), by adding as the following as a new nos. 3, 4, 5, 16 and 17 and renumbering appropriately:

- “3. Salute the Colors
- 4. Prayer at the Opening of an Informal Meeting
- 5. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America
- 16. Prayer at the Closing of an Informal Meeting
- 17. Salute the Colors”

**M-33**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE XI – AUXILIARY**

**Sec. 1101 – Organization, Disbandment, and Transition of Auxiliaries.**

Amend Sec. 1101 - Organization, Disbandment, and Transition of Auxiliaries., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(4) and (d)(3), in the first sentences, by adding “and voting” after “present”.

**M-34**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE XII – MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE**

**Sec. 1201 – Formation.**

Amend Sec. 1201 - Formation., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(1) and (b)(3)(4), by adding “and voting” after “present”.

Under (c), in the parentheses, replace “elective” with “elected” and “appointive” with “appointed”.

**M-35**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE XIII – MEN’S AUXILIARY**

Amend Article XIII - Men’s Auxiliary, Manual of Procedure by removing the entire Article.

**M-36**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**

**Sec. 1401 – Amendments.**

Amend Sec. 1401 - Amendments., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the entire section with the following:

**“Manual of Procedure and Ritual:** The Manual of Procedure and Ritual may be amended by the Council of Administration by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular meeting as prescribed in Section 622 of the By-Laws.

The Manual of Procedure and Ritual may be amended by the National Convention by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting provided that such amendments have been forwarded, through channels; have been properly approved; and, have been proposed by a Post, a District, a Department, or recommended by a National officer. All proposed amendments will be available to Posts by the Adjutant General at least fifteen (15) days before the assembling of the National Convention for those amendments being proposed for consideration at the Convention.

The Adjutant General shall be authorized to correct article and section designations, punctuation and cross references and to make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the intent of the National Convention in connection with the Manual of Procedure and Ritual.”

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL**

### **R-1 (Page 19)**

Proposed by Department of Colorado

#### **RITUAL**

#### **ORDER OF BUSINESS – Contemporary (Post)**

Amend Chapter Title **ORDER OF BUSINESS – Contemporary (Post)**, Ritual, by adding the following as new nos. 2, 3 and 15 and renumbering appropriately:

- “2. Prayer for the Opening of an Informal Meeting
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance
- 15. Prayer at the Closing of an Informal Meeting”

### **R-2 (Page 19)**

Proposed by Department of South Dakota

#### **RITUAL**

#### **ORDER OF BUSINESS – Contemporary (Post)**

Amend Chapter Title **ORDER OF BUSINESS – Contemporary (Post)**, Ritual, by adding the following as new nos. 3, 4, 5, 16 and 17 and renumbering appropriately:

- “3. Salute the Colors
- 4. Prayer at the Opening of an Informal Meeting
- 5. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America
- 16. Prayer at the Closing of an Informal Meeting
- 17. Salute the Colors”

**R-3 (Page 24, 35, 47)**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**RITUAL**

**MEMBER’S OBLIGATION**

Amend Chapter Title **Member’s Obligation**, Ritual, in the first paragraph, by placing “[ ]” around “Almighty God and” to read as “[Almighty God and]”.

**R-4 (Page 24, 35, 47)**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**RITUAL**

**MEMBER’S OBLIGATION**

Amend Chapter Title **Member’s Obligation**, Ritual, by adding the following as a fourth paragraph:

“I pledge to treat everyone, be they a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Auxiliary member or guest with respect and dignity and in a nondiscriminatory manner.”

**R-5 (Page 89)**

Recommended by National By-Laws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**RITUAL**



## **FUNERAL CEREMONIES**

Amend Chapter Title **Funeral Ceremonies**, Ritual, in the fifth paragraph, by removing the first sentence.

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL  
ORGANIZATION AT THE 119<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

Resolution No. 201 (Submitted by Department of Massachusetts)

ADJUST ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES TO ALIGN WITH THE FISCAL YEAR WITH  
QUARTERLY PRORATING OF ANNUAL DUES DURING NEW MEMBERS' FIRST  
YEAR

WHEREAS, the current membership system is highly unpopular; and

WHEREAS, we are asking posts to collect dues from members well  
before such members are do for renewal to meet contest deadlines; now,  
therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States  
that the dues year would run from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the new members would pay a  
prorated cost of dues on a quarterly basis for the first year. If a member joins  
from July 1<sup>st</sup> until September 30<sup>th</sup> National would receive (100%) of annual  
dues. From October 1<sup>st</sup> until December 31<sup>st</sup> National would receive (75%) of  
annual dues. From January 1<sup>st</sup> until March 30<sup>th</sup> National would receive (50%) of  
annual dues. From April 1<sup>st</sup> until June 30 National would receive (25%) of  
annual dues. After June 30<sup>th</sup> the new members' dues would be on the same  
schedule as the rest of the membership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, monies rebated back to the departments  
would also be prorated per Section 606 of the National By-Laws. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 202 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)

**SUBSCRIPTION DUES**

WHEREAS, Posts, Districts and Departments of the VFW have and  
currently rely on the VFW Membership Reporting System to verify Member  
dues records. These records have become excessively difficult to maintain due  
to the initiation of the Dues process referred to as "Subscription Dues". The  
process does provide 365 days of membership for a "continuous" paying  
member, but also changes the member's dues expiration date one year from  
payment; and

WHEREAS, the changing of “continuous” member’s dues expiration date on an individual basis has created problems across Posts, Districts and Departments. Membership Programs which use a percentage of “Paid” vs “Unpaid” members for awards and goals has become impossible to track and confirm; and

WHEREAS, Section 105 of the 2017 Congressional Charter By-Laws states a member whose dues has been paid before their anniversary date, is a “member in good standing”. Even though their dues have been paid, they can be listed as an “unpaid” member and the Membership Reporting System deducts that member from the list used to report percentage of paid members. Therefore, making the total members in good standing total not accurate for the current membership year; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the National membership reporting system discontinue the process referred to as “subscription dues” and return to the year-end membership expiration date practice used before the change. This would allow the Posts, Districts and Departments to continue to track membership based on a one date expiration program. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 203 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

RECOGNIZE SUBMARINE CREW MEMBERS WHO DEPLOYED ON SPECIAL  
OPERATIONS AS ELIGIBLE MEMBERS OF THE VFW

WHEREAS, submarines are part of the “silent service” and due to the classified operations the contributions of primarily fast attack submarines were not publicized; and

WHEREAS, Submariners on ballistic missile submarines earn the SSBN Deterrent Patrol insignia, qualifying them for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and

WHEREAS, Submariners on fast attack submarines are, at times, tasked to perform special operations missions in hostile waters under conditions similar to and of equal importance as the Ballistic Missile Submariners; 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 crewmembers of fast attack submarines involved in special operations in foreign or hostile waters. (Approved)

Resolution No. 204 (Submitted by Department of New York)

#### VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the VFW Voice of Democracy program was established in 1947; and

WHEREAS, the Voice of Democracy audio-essay program provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves regarding a democratic or patriotic-themed recorded essay; and

WHEREAS, each year, nearly forty thousand (40,000) 9-12 grade students from across the country enter to win their share of two million one hundred thousand Dollars (\$2.1) million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program; and

WHEREAS, the national first-place winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college, or vocational/technical school of their choice; and

WHEREAS, the winner from each VFW Department (state) wins a minimum scholarship of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, the Voice of Democracy Program as it is currently established is one of the premier youth programs of the VFW; and

WHEREAS, this program offers the students from across the Nation an opportunity to visit the Nation's Capital and view the many historical sites; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the Voice of Democracy program shall continue as it has been established and intended, to include an all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C. for all the States with winning Students entries and a Department funded trip to Freedom Hill. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 205 (Submitted by Department of New York)

RECOGNITION OF VFW MEMBERS WHO ARE ON ACTIVE DUTY AND ARE KILLED  
IN ACTION

WHEREAS, in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Congressional Charter the purposes of the corporation are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and education and are to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead; and

WHEREAS, an additional purpose of this organization as defined in the Congressional Charter is to assist the surviving spouses and children of our deceased comrades; and

WHEREAS, there are members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who are still on active military duty who serve and are killed in action in service to our country; and

WHEREAS, there is at the present time no official method or certificate to recognize such sacrifice of our active duty members; and

WHEREAS, there is no instrument for us to use to offer solace to the surviving spouses and children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States at both the National level and the department level, devise an award or citation or other method of honoring any active duty VFW members who are killed in action while serving our nation. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 206 (Submitted by Department of Louisiana)

ABOLISH FEDERAL UNRELATED BUSINESS TAXES ON VETERAN SUPPORT  
ORGANIZATIONS

WHEREAS, Veteran support organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are chartered by the Congress of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are granted 501-3C status for the operation of Posts that conduct fund raising for charitable veteran causes and patriotic education of the public and young students; and

WHEREAS, Posts conduct charitable gaming such as bingo and pull tabs to conduct fund raising for veteran benefit programs; and

WHEREAS, Posts are federally tax exempt for the first \$50,000 from revenue collected for the operation of bingo as a charitable business related activity to raise funds for veterans programs; and

WHEREAS, Posts are not federally tax exempt from revenue collected for charitable games of pull tabs, which frequently makes up the losses of conducting the bingo operation; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has been conducting seven year audits on veteran support organizations that operate charitable gaming and pull tab operations and is taxing these organizations causing many of these Posts to close which leaves a void in raising funds to support our veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service office for the unrelated business interest tax experts say they are not trained nor do they have the knowledge to provide training to the veteran organizations in completing the required tax forms such as the 990 and the 990T; and

WHEREAS, Posts are unfairly being taxed during this governments administration on funds received during charitable gaming operations such as pull tabs that are used to raise funds to accomplish its veteran oriented charitable mission; and

WHEREAS, Posts are being audited for seven back years which strains the ability of the Post to pay for tax attorneys to represent them during the audit which have lasted over a year in some cases; and

WHEREAS, Posts are disbanding with members not interested in belonging to a veterans organization that has financial problems from this unfair tax levied on the Post all at once from an audit going back to seven years;

WHEREAS, Post funds collected from donations, bingo and pull tab operations are expressly used in veterans programs for patriotic education to young students, aiding the elderly and supporting disabled and needy veterans; and

WHEREAS, some Post funds collected from bingo and pull tab operations are used to administer and operate these charitable games; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, be tasked by the National Commander and the Council of Administration to advise Congress to abolish the Federal unrelated business interest tax in recognition that funds from bingo and pull tab operations are used expressly for veteran support, patriotic education to young students,

charitable events, aiding the elderly, supporting disabled and needy veterans and for administering the operating of these charitable gaming operations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, advise Congress to abolish the unfair unrelated business interest tax for veterans support organizations that are chartered by Congress.  
(Rejected)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON  
GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AT THE 119<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

Resolution No. 301 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)

**BELLS OF BALANGIGA**

WHEREAS, the year 2018 is the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the notorious Bataan Death March where American and Philippine men-at-arms who fought and bled together saw more than 500 Americans and over 5,000 Filipinos comrades die together; and

WHEREAS, for over 100 years the Philippines has been America's strongest friend in Asia and a staunch ally in World War Two, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, over the past few decades, the United States Naval Academy, the Virginia Military Institute, Harvard University, many American cities, among others, have returned religious bells which were removed during periods of conflict and brought to the United States to churches and temples in Japan, Russia, and Germany from which they came; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the United States Military Academy at West Point returned to the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bauang, La Union an 800-pound Bell taken in 1901 from the Philippines which it held on display for over 100 years because it was the "right and honorable thing to do"; and

WHEREAS, it was not unusual during the Philippine-American War (1899 – 1902) for soldiers to bring home souvenirs and artifacts from Catholic Churches in the Philippines such as bells, and other relics in violation of the U.S. Army's General Order 100 which implemented the Lieber or Lincoln's Code protecting private property; and

WHEREAS, General Order 100 placed in effect by General Arthur McArthur during the Philippine American War prohibited the taking of personal property and defined the property of churches as personal property; and

WHEREAS, the Iwo Jima Association of America encourages the return to Japanese families of personal property brought to the U.S. during World War Two as a gesture of reconciliation and friendship; and

WHEREAS, in 1904 the U.S. Army 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment brought to Fort D. A. Russell (today Warren Air Force Base) in Cheyenne, Wyoming from a Quartermaster salvage yard on the Philippine island of Leyte, two 600-pound bells which had originally hung in the belfry of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in the small town of Balangiga on the island of Samar; and

WHEREAS, for several years it was incorrectly believed that these Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir, taken from the church in the town of Balangiga, Samar had been used during the Philippine American War as a signal of a surprise attack on American soldiers garrisoned in that town; and

WHEREAS, these two 600-pound bells ultimately became known through pejorative writing and distorted history as the “Bells of Balangiga” and a source of misunderstanding and rancor between friends and allies; and

WHEREAS, the Philippines is predominately a Catholic nation where church bells are a very important element in the lives of Filipinos as well as reflective of their national patrimony representing the very fabric of its cultural heritage and history - - the return of the bells would be “the right thing to do” and result in national jubilation; and

WHEREAS, our history and common bond was also forged in the Philippines and on August first, 1914, the “Army of the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico” became the “Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States”; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Pacific Areas, in recognition of the 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bataan Death March and the historic military ties and camaraderie between Americans and Filipinos, and given that accurate information on the history of the two bells now exists, urge the President of the United States in collaboration with the Congress of the United States, take action to return the two Catholic Church Bells now on display on F. E. Warren Air Force Base (formerly Fort D. A. Russell) in Cheyenne,



Wyoming to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in the town of Balangiga, Province of Eastern Samar, Republic of the Philippines. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Nevada)

EXPAND THE DATES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY  
MEDAL

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense recognized service of the United States Armed Forces personnel in the Republic of Vietnam from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965, by awarding personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 11231 establishes the Vietnam Service Medal as recognition of service in the Republic or contiguous airspace or contiguous waters from 3 July 1965 to 28 March 1973; and

WHEREAS, service in the Republic of Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind during 29 to 30 April 1975, was recognized by awarding eligible personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Armed Forces personnel originally receiving the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in the Republic of Vietnam during either from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965 or 29 to 30 April 1975, are now qualified to receive the Vietnam Service Medal in lieu of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, after the Paris Peace Accords were signed 27 January 1973 and the last combat troops were withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam on 29 March 1973 there were members of United States Armed Forces remaining in Thailand and on ships in the coastal waters of Viet Nam in support of the South Vietnamese Army from 29 March 1973 until Operation Frequent Wind thus placing United States personnel in harm's way, but not recognized by a campaign or service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, petition Congress to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for those that served in Thailand and on the ships in the coastal waters of Viet Nam from 29 March 1973 to 30 April 1975 in support of the South Vietnamese Army. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Nevada)

## EXPAND THE DATES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense recognized service of the United States Armed Forces personnel in the Republic of Vietnam from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965, by awarding personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 11231 establishes the Vietnam Service Medal as recognition of service in the Republic or contiguous airspace or contiguous waters from 3 July 1965 to 28 March 1973; and

WHEREAS, service in the Republic of Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind during 29 to 30 April 1975, was recognized by awarding eligible personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Armed Forces personnel originally receiving the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in the Republic of Vietnam during either from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965 or 29 to 30 April 1975, are now qualified to receive the Vietnam Service Medal in lieu of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, after the Paris Peace Accords were signed 27 January 1973 and the last combat troops were withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam on 29 March 1973 there were members of United States Armed Forces remaining in Thailand and on ships in the Viet Nam coastal waters in support of the South Vietnamese Army from 29 March 1973 until Operation Frequent Wind thus placing United States personnel in harm's way, but not recognized by a campaign or service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, petition Congress to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Vietnam Service Medal for those that served in Thailand and on the ships in the coastal waters of Viet Nam from 29 March 1973 to 30 April 1975 in support of the Vietnamese Army. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 304 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

## RECOGNIZING THE END OF HOSTILITIES IN KOREA AND KOREAN REMEMBRANCE DAY

WHEREAS, the United Nations Command (UNC), the Korean People's Army (KPA), and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) signed an Armistice Agreement at 0800 hours on 27 July 1953, to "insure a complete

cessation of hostilities and of all acts of armed force in Korea, until a final peaceful settlement is achieved”; and

WHEREAS, 54,236 American servicemen lost lives, 103,284 were wounded in action and another 7,747 remain unaccounted for listed as Missing In Action (MIA); and

WHEREAS, 65 years after the signing of the Armistice Agreement, remains divided. South Korea is a democratic nation while North Korea is a dictator lead communist nation; and

WHEREAS, American families still bear the pain and suffering from the loss of their loved ones and the US Military service members both male and female that have yet to be accounted for and those MIAs that have left their families still needing closure on their loss; and

WHEREAS, to recognize the United States Military who paid the ultimate sacrifice to their country and to those who were wounded and those that still remain as Missing In Action; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States request that the Sixty-fifth Anniversary of the End of Hostilities in Korea be marked by the flag of our nation (the Stars and Stripes) being flown at Half Staff at every VFW Post across the globe on July 27, 2018 and each subsequent year thereafter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States urge Congress to designate July 27 as Korean Remembrance Day and direct that the American Flag be flown at Half Staff on all Federal Buildings, State and Municipal facilities throughout the United States, its territories and possessions. (Approved)

Resolution No. 305 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)

#### AFGHAN AND IRAQI WARTIME ALLIES HONORARY VETERAN STATUS

WHEREAS, Afghan and Iraqi wartime allies were bridges to the Afghan and Iraqi people during our missions in those countries; and

WHEREAS mission success was directly dependent on close working relations between local nationals and U.S. agents in country; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies often served consecutive tours with several different units to provide continuity; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies' lives were threatened for working with the Americans; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies saved countless American lives and directly contributed to every level of tactical, operational, and strategic success during the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients go through the strictest vetting and approval process of any category of person coming to the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the title of honorary veteran will allow Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa recipients similar dignity, respect and honor shown to U.S. veterans; and

WHEREAS, the title of honorary veteran will not entitle them to any U.S. Code Title 38, Veterans Affairs, or other monetary benefits, and thus will have no effect on the federal budget; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, urges the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to honor the contributions of Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients who stood shoulder to shoulder with, assisted and protected U.S. military service members, U.S. diplomats and government agents, NGOs and media organizations during U.S. involvement in those countries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars extends its gratitude, on behalf of the American people, to Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients, who served as wartime allies, for their sacrifice, bravery, and commitment to the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars supports legislation that confers upon them the status of an honorary veteran of the United States Armed Forces without Department of Veterans of Affairs benefits attached to this title, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars applauds private sector companies and charities who want to include these heroes in their programming. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 306 (Submitted by Department of New Mexico)

#### NAMING A NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE, THE USS LOS ALAMOS

WHEREAS, the Mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is to foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts, to serve our veterans, the military and our communities and to advocate on behalf of all veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is a voluntary service organization comprised of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who served the U.S. in wars, campaigns and expeditions on foreign soil or hostile waters; and

WHEREAS, a citizen-based initiative is requesting that the United States Secretary of the Navy name a future nuclear-powered submarine the USS Los Alamos; and

WHEREAS, it is acutely apropos that the Secretary of the Navy should consider this request given the unique, varied and continuing contributions of the residents of New Mexico to the security of this nation and the stability of the world military since 1943; and

WHEREAS, the residents of Los Alamos and New Mexico have provided the scientific, engineering, logistical and technical expertise that has driven Los Alamos National Laboratory since its inception; and

WHEREAS, not only did the early work of Los Alamos contribute to the abrupt conclusion of the bloodiest war in the history of the world, it provided the kernel of knowledge from which the nuclear Navy became possible; and

WHEREAS, naming a nuclear-powered submarine the USS Los Alamos is a fitting tribute to the men and women who served during the Manhattan project in World War II and to all who have offered service in the nation's interest since the war; and

WHEREAS, many key participants of the Manhattan project and subsequent programs were and are members and veterans of the United States military, including the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, the Los Alamos County Council has endorsed the naming of

a future United States Navy nuclear powered submarine the USS Los Alamos;  
and

WHEREAS, both the House and the Senate of the New Mexico State Legislature have unanimously endorsed the naming of a future United States nuclear-powered submarine the USS Los Alamos; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and entire New Mexico delegation to the United States Congress have unanimously endorsed the naming of a future United States nuclear-powered submarine the USS Los Alamos; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States unanimously passed S. CON RES.10, which is a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name the next nuclear-powered submarine of the United States Navy the USS Los Alamos; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Los Alamos National Laboratory will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary as well as a very productive relationship with the United States Navy for all of those seventy-five years; and

WHEREAS, the Department of New Mexico fully endorses this resolution, by a unanimous vote at the 84th Department Convention held on June 2, 2018; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the initiative to name a future United States Navy nuclear-powered submarine the USS Los Alamos is hereby enthusiastically endorsed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the United States Secretary of the Navy. (Approved)

Resolution No. 307 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

## EQUALITY FOR VETERANS' SPOUSES AND FAMILY MEMBERS IN OUR DIVERSE SOCIETY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) exists as a national association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen served this Nation in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters, and its Auxiliary exists as a national association of eligible members whose eligibility is determined within the confines this federal charter; and

WHEREAS, the eligibility to both the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Auxiliary is not based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other basis of discrimination prohibited by law; and

WHEREAS, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom remains a purpose within the Congressional Charter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and an object of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary; and

WHEREAS, at the 24<sup>th</sup> National Encampment in 1923 delegates voted to amend the VFW's new member initiation ceremony to assure new members that the member obligation shall not "conflict with [a member's] religious or political belief, [their] freedom of civilian pursuits or obligations to [their] family" as the VFW Ritual states; and

WHEREAS, the Pentagon reports twenty-one percent of Active Duty service members identify as Agnostic, Atheist, or an unknown or unclassified religion; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the VFW mandate the VFW Auxiliary remove "profess a belief in God" as a requisite for membership from Section 101 – Eligibility of the VFW Auxiliary By-Laws. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 308 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### SUPPORT FOR WWI CENTENNIAL COMMISSION INITIATIVES

WHEREAS, delegates at the 118<sup>th</sup> National Convention passed Resolution No. 301 to support the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission in its mission to honor, educate, and commemorate the Great War; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission has cited that Congress has authorized a systematic review into African Americans, and those of other minorities, worthy of the Medal of Honor in WWII, but no such review has occurred for those who served in WWI; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission has also cited that although in 1978 Congress subsequently approved military veteran status and honorable discharges to the American female switchboard operators from the Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators Unit in WWI, these women's service has still not been recognized with a service medal; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission has requested the VFW's support in their respective initiatives to honor minority and female service members of WWI; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission's efforts to authorize a systematic review of the valor medals awarded to African American service members, and those of other minorities, who were potentially denied medals due to racial bias; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the U.S. WWI Centennial Commission's efforts in seeking the Congressional Gold Medal be awarded to the American female switchboard operators in WWI from the Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators unit known as the "Hello Girls." (Approved as Amended)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL  
SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE 119<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

Resolution No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

**END SEQUESTRATION**

WHEREAS, sequestration is the result of a failed budget agreement from the Budget Control Act of 2011, which raised the federal debt ceiling on an agreement to offset the increase with a corresponding decrease in federal discretionary spending over a 10-year period. A bipartisan Congressional committee was created to identify which federal accounts to reduce, and as a penalty, an automatic 10 percent across-the-board sequester would kick in should the committee fail to reach an agreement, which it did; and

WHEREAS, sequestration began in the second half of FY 2013, and its impact on the military — which accounts for half of the government's total discretionary budget — was immediate. In order to meet mandatory spending cuts without impacting combat operations in Afghanistan, the four services had to slash training, as well as furlough its civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, occurring simultaneously was a planned \$487 billion reduction in Pentagon spending over a 10-year period; and

WHEREAS, three Bipartisan Budget Agreements have since been signed to temporarily suspend the sequester; and



WHEREAS, meanwhile, the world has become far more dangerous and unpredictable in the seven years since sequestration was created; and

WHEREAS, the cuts have not only reduced and degraded quality of life programs for military personnel and their families, but have negatively impacted readiness and modernization programs, to the point of jeopardizing the military's ability to respond when and where needed. Sequestration also impacts other federal agencies, most notably the Department of Homeland Security and its many subsidiary units, plus sequester limits budgets requests and subsequent appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, sequestration cripples the government's ability to operate effectively, to secure our country and her citizens, and it threatens to dismantle every quality of life program the VFW has helped to create for veterans, service members and their families everywhere; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we demand that the United States Congress eliminate sequestration.  
(Approved)

Resolution No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### OPPOSE TRICARE FEE CHANGES

WHEREAS, the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act made significant changes to the TRICARE military health benefit program by eliminating Tricare Standard and Extra, creating the new TRICARE Select Plan, adding enrollment fees for individuals joining the service after Jan.1, 2018 and for military retirees starting in 2021; and

WHEREAS, the changes mandated by the NDAA were further compounded by a change in costs instituted by the Defense Health Agency for both the new Select and the Prime plans. The changes included a complete change in the cost-share methodology for the new Tricare Select plan, which changed the beneficiary costs from a percentage of individual-services-used to an averaged, flat-rate co-payment and increased Tricare Prime fees; and

WHEREAS, the FY18 NDAA added additional costs by raising mail order and retail pharmacy fees for all Tricare beneficiaries, including Tricare For Life members. The additional costs included raising the costs of a 90-day mail order supply of generic medications from a \$0 co-pay to a \$7 per prescription co-pay,

adding significant out-of-pocket costs to beneficiaries on maintenance medications for chronic conditions; and

WHEREAS, the FY18 NDAA also allowed the Secretary of Defense to enter into a contract with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to administer a replacement program for the Tricare Retiree Dental Program starting Jan. 1, 2019. While the new plan will provide Tricare beneficiaries with additional dental insurance carriers and plan options and will also include the addition of vision coverage for retirees and Active Duty Service Member Families, the increased options will likely come with increased costs and reduced availability of providers; and

WHEREAS, military health coverage is expensive, yet so is the upfront personal investment someone makes to voluntarily commit to a full military career. Any real or perceived erosion of benefits for career-minded personnel will undermine long-term retention; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all Tricare fee increases as well as any additional fee increases or major modifications to the earned benefit of military healthcare. DOD should reform its healthcare programs by eliminating institutional inefficiencies before promising military retirees that better service will ensue after their participation fees are increased. (Approved)

Resolution No. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### KEEP DEFENSE BUDGET RELEVANT

WHEREAS, America's Number #1 priority is to defend herself and her citizens, yet continued efforts jeopardize the Defense Department's ability to properly train, equip and field a military that can defeat all enemies, as well as protect vital U.S. interests around the globe; and

WHEREAS, the fact the U.S. spends more on defense than the next 8 or 10 countries combined is a false narrative. With the exception of China and Russia, all the other countries are focused on homeland and/or shared theater defense alliances, whereas the U.S. has a worldwide commitment to project power, reliability and leadership; and

WHEREAS, defense spending for fiscal year 2017 was approximately 15 percent of the total federal budget — the lowest since before World War II and just 3.1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) — but accounts for nearly half of all discretionary spending, which makes DOD a consistent target for

lawmakers trying to reduce overall federal spending, at the risk of making America less safe; and

WHEREAS, the military shrinks in terms of installations, manpower and material at the end of every war, but bringing the troops home has yet to make the world any less dangerous, our enemies any more predictable, or reduce the world's reliance on the United States to lead every contingency or humanitarian operation. Nor has our nation's war against international terrorism ended; and

WHEREAS, it is crucial that any proposed reduction not jeopardize America's security or break faith with those who serve or have served her in uniform. A nation that cherishes its freedom and supports the troops can afford to do both; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to end sequestration and to provide the necessary funding equal to not less than 5 percent of GDP for the readiness, training, modernization, healthcare, and quality of life initiatives for the armed forces of today and tomorrow. (Approved)

Resolution No. 404 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### PRESERVE THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

WHEREAS, America's All-Volunteer Force engaged in a 15-year, two-front war, that nobody prior to 9/11 would have thought possible without reinstating the draft. It has done so despite multiple combat tours and significant military recruiting and retention challenges, and it continues to operate in an extremely dangerous and unpredictable world; and

WHEREAS, the troops are concerned. They are concerned that elected and appointed officials don't understand what it's like to serve in an All-Volunteer Force that has been tasked to do so much for so long. The troops are concerned whether there will be a place for them should they want to make the military a career. They are concerned about quality of life programs, their families, and the future of the GI Bill and its transferability provision. And their leaders are very concerned about potential burnout in a military that is continually tasked to do more with less human and fiscal resources; and

WHEREAS, worldwide commitments and challenges have increased, to include keeping approximately 15,000 American troops in Afghanistan, conducting thousands of airstrikes against radical forces aligned with the

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, increasing rotations to Eastern Europe, heightened engagement in Africa, and redeploying almost 9,000 service members back into Iraq; and

WHEREAS, substandard training levels, pilot and maintenance shortages, outdated equipment, the inability to fund new programs, the use of authorities to activate Reserve component members without providing traditional benefits, and cuts to morale and welfare programs are the direct result of a military struggling to survive a budget crisis that will only continue to grow the longer Congress is unable to end the sequester and provide a stable, consistent defense budget. The cumulative impact of lower pay and a higher operations tempo has a direct influence on morale, which in combination with a better civilian economy, has impacted both recruiting and retention, and threatens the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will redouble our efforts to work with Congress and the Administration to preserve the All-Volunteer Force, to end the sequester, and to help bring some permanent financial stability to a military that will continue to operate in a very dangerous and unpredictable world. (Approved)

Resolution No. 405 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### LINK MILITARY PAY INCREASES TO PRIVATE-SECTOR INCREASES

WHEREAS, military pay raises are linked by law to the increase in private-sector wages, as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI). The Administration's military pay raise request, however, can be more or less than the ECI, with Congress having the final approval; and

WHEREAS, Congress erased the double-digit pay gap of the 1990s by directing military pay raises from fiscal years 2000-2006 to be a half-percent above private-sector wage increases, and raises from FY 2007-forward to match the ECI, although more could be authorized; and

WHEREAS, the 1.7 percent military pay raise for FY 2013 matched the ECI, but the Department of Defense — in its continuing campaign to slow the growth of military compensation due to budget constraints and the sequester — recommended that future pay increases be limited; and

WHEREAS, over the objections of the VFW but with the approval of Congress, the "slow the growth" initiative resulted in military pay raises of 1

percent in FY 2014 and 2015, and 1.3 percent in FY 2016, with the cumulative result being less than the ECI; and

WHEREAS, the 2.1 percent raise in FY 2017 and 2.4 percent raise in FY18 were improvements and the proposed FY 2019 2.6 percent pay raise would be the largest pay raise in nine years; and

WHEREAS, changes to military pay and benefits is the top concern of military service members and their families. Continued efforts to slow the growth of military compensation, combined with a better civilian job market, and a sustained intense operational tempo have already impacted recruiting and retention, which jeopardizes the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense is already facing a shortage in key fields, such as pilots and maintenance personnel, and must develop competitive pay and benefit scales to recruit emerging talent in high-tech fields, such as cyber; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to maintain military base pay comparability with private-sector wages by ensuring annual military pay raise percentages match or exceed annual ECI increases. (Approved)

Resolution No. 406 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### INCREASE AND EXTEND TSP MATCH

WHEREAS, the new military retirement system will benefit all for their service, not just the 17 percent of service members who currently stay 20 years or longer. This recruiting initiative is needed to attract new generations of qualified service members who might otherwise not consider military service because it provides no match to portable 401k-style plans that virtually all civilian employers offer; and

WHEREAS, beginning in January 1, 2018, the government began automatically contributing 1 percent of base pay to a new service member's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) account beginning the third month of service, then up to 4 percent more through a government match beginning in Year 3 through 26 years of service, for a total of 5 percent. However, the Military Compensation and Military Retirement Commission recommended a total government contribution of 6 percent — the 1 percent automatic and up to a 5-percent match — without the arbitrary 26-year sunset clause; and

WHEREAS, the Pentagon's FY 2017 budget submission proposed increasing the government's contribution to the full 6 percent, and carry the match through retirement, but would delay starting the match until Year 5; and

WHEREAS, those serving prior to January 1, 2018 with less than 12 years' service will have a one-time opportunity in 2018 to opt into the new system or remain in the legacy system, based on their own individual circumstances; and

WHEREAS, for those who join after January 1, 2018, and who stay the requisite 20 years, the new retirement program will reduce future retiree pay from 50 to 40 percent of base pay, but overall net worth could be considerably higher due to a one-time, mid-career continuation bonus, and compound interest on increased TSP accounts, which can be rolled over into other investment plans and bequeathed entirely to heirs, whereas just a maximum 55 percent of retiree pay can go to surviving spouses; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will work with Congress to increase the government's TSP contribution to a total of 6 percent beginning in Year 3 of service, and extend the match throughout an individual's military career. (Approved)

Resolution No. 407 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT INCIDENT REPORTING AND TREATMENT

WHEREAS, the Defense Department's annual report on Sexual Assault in the Military Services indicated that 6,172 service members reported being sexually assaulted in fiscal year 2016. The Department of Veterans Affairs also reports that 25 percent of female veterans and one percent of male veterans respond "yes," that they experienced a Military Sexual Trauma (MST), defined as sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment experienced during military service, when screened by their VA provider; and

WHEREAS, it is widely held that a far greater number of sexual assault survivors do not come forward while on active duty due to embarrassment, lack of command action when they do file reports, or for fear of personal and/or professional reprisal, to include real or perceived "red flags" in their military personnel folders; and

WHEREAS, DOD's "Zero Tolerance" campaign has made great strides to encourage prevention efforts and tighten field reporting and managerial

oversight, to include providing restricted and unrestricted options for reporting a sexual assault. DOD has begun keeping records that provide evidentiary support of the assault and its effects on service members, and has taken steps to improve the actions of first responders, as well as to provide confidential counseling and other specialized treatments. Yet many sexual assault survivors are not aware of such services, which could help alleviate mental health issues commonly associated with sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, although VA does not require MST victims to have first reported an incident or to have a VA disability rating before receiving treatment, more can still be done inside DOD with regards to prevention, treatment and reporting; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge DOD to continue strengthening its “Zero Tolerance” campaign, particularly in efforts of prevention, by encouraging all sexual assault and harassment survivors to report their attacks, to provide victims with proper medical and mental health care, and to aggressively investigate every reported incident and punish attackers as appropriate. (Approved)

Resolution No. 408 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP MANDATE

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members in order to ease the difficult transition from service into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, advice on available educational and healthcare programs, and other earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, a recent GAO report indicated the Department of Defense (DOD) reporting on TAP performance did not account for 48 percent of National Guard and Reserve members and 12 percent of active duty service members, significantly reducing the actual percentage of force participation from the publicly reported 94 percent to as low as 47 percent; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has implemented a new TAP curriculum for separating service members, but does not require them to participate in classroom instruction for the individual tracks for Career Vocational Training, Accessing Higher Education, or Entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, recent VFW survey data shows that over half of all veterans who receive assistance through our Benefits Delivery at Discharge program

reported that they did not have an opportunity to participate in any of the voluntary transition tracks; and

WHEREAS, former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel issued guidance to installation commanders to accommodate nationally-accredited Veterans' Service Organizations to provide pre-separation services to transitioning service members, but local transition program staff do not consistently afford VSOs with the opportunity to actively engage service members during scheduled TAP classes; and

WHEREAS, Department of Defense has worked with its partner agencies to make TAP resources available in public-facing environments; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Defense to include the additional curriculum tracks in its mandatory pre-separation classroom counseling, and to ensure nationally-accredited Veterans' Service Organizations are afforded consistent access to transitioning service members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we request Congress to require DOD and its partner agencies to periodically update their TAP information and procedures to maintain program relevancy, and to expand access to TAP resources for veterans after separating from the military. (Approved)

Resolution No. 409 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### ESTABLISH THE ARMED FORCES UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS, approximately 77 percent of the Active Duty force and 76 percent of the Reserve component have not obtained a bachelor's degree or higher; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship demonstrated the persistent problems in obtaining comparable compensation for veterans who enter the civilian workforce without easily-transferrable skills; and

WHEREAS, the American Council on Education recommends, but cannot require, equivalent college credit be awarded for military training. And where there is considerable discrepancy amongst institutions on the awarding of these credits to service members and veterans, with some schools awarding as little as 1 credit; and



WHEREAS, the lack of coordination between the existing military educational and training programs results in inconsistent awarding of credits, certificates, and licenses across the services, even among individuals in comparable career fields who complete the same training; and

WHEREAS, since 2009, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has spent more than \$55 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill funds alone for the educational needs of approximately 1.5 million Veterans and their dependents, and VA has requested an additional \$11 billion for education benefits for FY 19, demonstrating a clear need for education services; and

WHEREAS, since 1972, the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) has conferred college degrees accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to better prepare Airmen to compete in the civilian workforce; and

WHEREAS, the Air University Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative program, begun in 2007, partners CCAF with 59 universities, articulating the transferability of credits for persistence purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional Research Service showed that extending the CCAF model across all armed services could be a cost-effective method in improving the preparedness of today's military to enter the workforce; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish the Armed Forces University for the purpose of conferring accredited college degrees on military-trained personnel to improve preparedness for the civilian workforce. (Approved)

Resolution No. 410 ((Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### SUPPORT STABILITY AND RELIEF FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

WHEREAS, approximately half of the total force is married--with approximately 5.1% of active duty marriages being dual-military--and 41% have children; and

WHEREAS, family stability and resiliency is a key aspect of service member readiness and retention; and

WHEREAS, the operations tempo, compounded by the impacts of sequestration on everything from quality of life programs to permanent change

of station timelines, have created unsustainable stress levels for service members and their families; and

WHEREAS, persistent issues, such as military spouse employment challenges, gaps in support for relocating and transitioning service members with children in the Exceptional Family Member Program, and reliable childcare continue to degrade morale and retention; and

WHEREAS, military policies are often out-of-date and do not address the needs of the current force with regards to work-life balance; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Department of Defense and Congress to review and strengthen programs and policies that support military family readiness and meet our nation's obligations to those who serve and those who serve alongside them. (Approved)

Resolution No. 411 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

PROVIDE FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY  
AND VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act allowed for the gradual phase-in of full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for service-connected wounds, illnesses or injuries; and

WHEREAS, the 10-year phase-in period ended in 2014, which means military retirees with 20 or more years of service and 50 percent or higher VA disability ratings no longer have their military retirement pay offset by the amount of their VA disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, the law, however, did not provide the same equity to service-connected disabled military retirees with VA ratings of 40 percent or below, or to Chapter 61 retirees who were medically retired with less than 20 years, regardless of VA disability rating; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation for the full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of rating percentage. (Approved)

Resolution No. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

## REVISE UNFAVORABLE DISCHARGE REVIEW PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, approximately 30,000 veterans have been administratively discharged from the military for adjustment or personality disorders since September 11, 2001, and according to the Army Human Resources Command, the number of misconduct discharges continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, discharges under other-than-honorable conditions often disqualifies veterans from Department of Veterans Affairs health, compensation and education benefits, and could render them undesirable to potential employers; and

WHEREAS, many veterans who received unfavorable discharges could have been suffering from the effects of undiagnosed and untreated Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries and mental health conditions resulting from sexual trauma as the result of their military service; and

WHEREAS, a 2014 Department of Defense decision opened an avenue for Vietnam veterans and those from other wars, conflicts and eras to request upgrades to their other-than-honorable military discharge due to an extenuating factor not known at the time of their separation: PTSD. The decision is not a blanket approval for every upgrade request, but it does allow veterans who may have been diagnosed with PTSD years after separation to submit new evidence and hopefully correct a past injustice; and

WHEREAS, discharge review boards can now consider medical evidence from VA and civilian providers and are to review cases with liberal consideration of whether a veteran's mental health condition contributed to the circumstances resulting in the veterans' discharge; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish a process by which Military Department Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records will presume administrative irregularity and place the burden of proof on DOD to show that the discharge was just for those cases where the veteran claims service-related PTSD, TBI or sexual trauma as a mitigating factor in requesting an upgrade to his or her military discharge. (Approved)

Resolution No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

REPEAL SBP/DIC OFFSET

WHEREAS, surviving spouses of retired military members who die from service-connected wounds, illnesses or injuries are entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. However, if a military retiree was also enrolled in the Defense Department's Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP), the surviving spouse's SBP benefit would have a dollar-for-dollar offset by the amount of DIC benefits; and

WHEREAS, similar to life insurance, SBP is purchased by a military retiree and is intended to provide up to 55 percent of his/her retirement pay to a surviving spouse. DIC is a modest indemnity compensation benefit of \$1,283 per month that the VA pays to surviving spouses whose loved ones died from a service-connected wound, illness or injury. Despite the two payments being paid for two different reasons from two different federal departments, all monthly SBP retirement payments are first offset by the \$1,283 DIC payment; and

WHEREAS, with few exceptions, the surviving spouses of other federal program retirees have no offset penalty, whereas approximately 63,000 surviving military spouses are affected by this aptly termed "Widow's Tax." Congress recognized the offset as unfair and in the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) created a Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) to partially reduce some of the offset via a graduated monthly payment of up to \$310, but funding was only authorized through FY 2017. The FY 2018 NDAA made the SSIA permanent, but did so by raising co-pays for military healthcare beneficiary prescriptions and without resolving the complete offset issue; and

WHEREAS, military retiree SBP payments currently range between 2.5 and 6.5 percent of the selected base amount. A recommendation by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission would offer a new SBP program with substantially higher (11.25 percent) monthly premiums in order to receive full DIC without offset; and

WHEREAS, while the VFW concurs with the Commission's goal to eliminate the offset, we disagree with its funding method. The VFW's position is for the full repeal of the SBP-DIC offset, not to subsidize it out of the pockets of military retirees, who on the top end already sacrifice 6.5 percent of their monthly pay—for 360 consecutive months and reached the age of 70—just to ensure their surviving spouses will receive 55 percent of their retirement pay; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal the Survivor's Benefit Plan and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset. (Approved)

Resolution No. 414 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### PROVIDE EQUITY IN BENEFITS TO ALL RESERVE COMPONENT MEMBERS

WHEREAS, America's reliance on its Reserve Component (RC) has been unprecedented in our nation's history. According to the Defense Department, more than 900,000 RC members have served on active duty since 9/11, contributing a quarter of all ground forces deployed into Iraq and Afghanistan over the past 13 years, and half of all Air Force airlift, and with a third of them serving multiple tours; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense's new "total force" concept, relies on the intentional integration of RC forces across the full spectrum of conflict, including all current and future homeland defense, domestic disaster, and overseas steady state and contingency operations, as an operational reserve, as opposed to the traditional strategic reserve; and

WHEREAS, Reserve Component members have been and are currently being activated under authorities, such as 12304b and 12301h, which do not provide them with the benefits comparable to their active duty counterparts or other reserve members activated under different authorities, although they may be deployed to the same location, with the same mission; and

WHEREAS, eligibility for VA benefits is based on presenting proof of active military service in the form of a DD Form 214. According to Title 10, U.S. Code, a member of the Guard or Reserve can only receive a DD-214 if they serve 90 days of continuous active duty, although Service Secretaries have the authority to issue the forms for shorter time periods; and

WHEREAS, RC retirees are normally eligible to receive military retirement pay at age 60, but a 2008 National Defense Authorization Clause, lowered their retirement pay eligibility age by three months for every 90 days served on active duty in an eligible status after Jan. 29, 2008. And the FY 2015 NDAA amended the earlier language by including a carryover clause for RC members activated after Sept. 30, 2014. But the new law did not extend the carryover provision back to Jan. 29, 2008, or grandfather any early retirement credits back to 9/11; and

WHEREAS, there exist other significant discrepancies in the policies, available programs, and eligibility for benefits between the Active and Reserve Components; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to eliminate the discrepancies that discount the dedication and sacrifice of our Reserve Component members serving at home and abroad. (Approved)

Resolution No. 415 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

WHEREAS, the Republic of China on Taiwan is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and key link in the Western Pacific defense chain; 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 instead established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in an attempt to help maintain peace, security and stability in the Western Pacific. This loss of diplomatic status prevents the President of Taiwan from receiving the same respect and courtesies afforded other Heads of State who visit the U.S.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale of state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons and technology to maintain an adequate defense capability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to support the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations, and to provide the President of Taiwan the same respect and privileges due other visiting Heads of State. (Approved)

Resolution No. 416 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

## SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and a key link in the Northeast Asia defense chain. 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's immediate neighbor, however, continues to maintain an extremely large and forward-deployed military force capable of launching no-notice offensive operations against South Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea continues to escalate tensions in the region by test launching potentially nuclear-capable missiles, including a missile capable of reaching the United States, and conducting six underground nuclear explosions since 2006. It is a known exporter of ballistic missiles and its technology to countries unfriendly to the United States, most notably Iran, and it periodically deploys its armed forces along the demilitarized zone and the Joint Security Area in Panmunjom; and

WHEREAS, the continued unpredictability of North Korea makes the presence of U.S. ground and air forces inside South Korea even more critical as a deterrent to aggression; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Government to maintain a substantial military presence in the Republic of Korea, and to increase military aid and assistance through modern weaponry and technology to help promote peace and stability in the region. (Approved)

Resolution No. 417 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

## SUPPORT THE STATE OF ISRAEL

WHEREAS, the State of Israel is a historic, democratic ally of the United States of America, and a key link in the defense of democratic principles in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, Israel has been a beacon of stability and the foundation of Middle Eastern regional security for the past 60 years, despite the repeated targeting by hostile actors wishing to infringe upon its sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, peace between Israelis and Palestinians remains of strategic interest to the United States and other partners within the region; and

WHEREAS, Israel has been one of our nation's regional strongest partners in the ongoing fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Government to continue to support the State of Israel both diplomatically and militarily, and continue to work with them to ensure and promote regional stability in the Middle-East, and elsewhere.  
(Approved)

Resolution No. 418 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### PROTECT POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of 83,000 missing Americans that include approximately 73,000 from World War II, 7,700 from the Korean War, 1,600 from the Vietnam War, 126 from the Cold War, and 6 post-Vietnam that include Operations Eldorado Canyon (1), Desert Storm (2) and Iraqi Freedom (3); and

WHEREAS, public-private partnerships are expanding the overall mission's ability to be at more sites, including previously unreachable sites, as is increasing the number of DPAA field offices into areas closer to major battlefields; and

WHEREAS, DPAA has strong bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, which will be necessary should additional funding be required to support recovery operations in North Korea, which have been interrupted since 2005 due to U.S. safety and security concerns; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that DPAA remain fully funded. Recovering fallen Americans from long-ago battlefields is demanding and often dangerous work for investigation and recovery teams, but it is the most sacred of missions. It is our government's fulfillment of a soldier's pledge to never leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield, which is a promise that spans all generations; and

WHEREAS, without full and reliable funding, DPAA has been forced to postpone, restrict, or cancel recovery missions and delay recovery of difficult



sites in favor of more productive locations, such as mass burials or multi-crewman aircraft crashes, in order to meet their legally required number of annual recoveries. Full funding enables DPAA to efficiently plan, resource and accomplish its worldwide mission to recover, identify and return to their families all missing American service members from all wars and conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Congress has adopted nine Continuing Resolutions in the last ten years and caused three shutdowns since 2013, which hinder operational planning and slow recoveries; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to fully fund the requested amounts for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Full Accounting Mission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must pass advanced appropriations to prevent a slowdown in recoveries and allow for budget carry-over allowing DPAA to plan multi-year operations. (Approved)

Resolution No. 419 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### CALL FOR MORE UNILATERAL POW/MIA ACTIONS BY VIETNAM

WHEREAS, 2,583 Americans were listed as missing and unaccounted-for at the end of the Vietnam War. As of February 2018, the number of missing is nearing 1,600 due to a combination of increased U.S. Government emphasis, better research and identification technology, stronger diplomatic ties with host governments, and access to aircraft crash and ground battlefield sites; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam had a comprehensive wartime and post-war process to collect and retain information and remains, and, according to the National League of POW/MIA Families, this unilateral effort enabled the Vietnamese to locate and return remains to U.S. custody along with records that continue to offer significant potential; and

WHEREAS, onsite joint field operations are also achieving increased results. The process now includes both U.S.-led Joint Excavation Teams and Vietnamese-led Recovery Teams that are assisted by fewer Americans who are experts in their fields of forensic science, EOD and medical. This formula allows a greater number of teams to “increase the pace and scope of field operations,” as requested by Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, increased military-to-military relations is also benefiting the Full Accounting Mission. U.S. Navy assets are increasingly allowed to participate in underwater survey and recovery operations, which has long been advocated for by the VFW; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Vietnam to continue to expand the number and frequency of Vietnamese-led recovery operations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in this cooperative effort, that we urge Vietnam to continue to authorize its officials to locate and release immediately to the United States all records relating to Americans missing from the Vietnam War, and to urge the Vietnamese people to turn over the remains of Americans or information on American burial sites, as well as any reports of live American servicemen. (Approved)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON  
VETERANS SERVICE AT THE 119<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

Resolution No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

**ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET**

WHEREAS, there are about 20 million living veterans; and

WHEREAS, more than 3.3 million men and women have served in support of the Global War on Terrorism; and

WHEREAS, VA anticipates that enrollment in the Veterans Health Administration will grow to nearly 9.5 million veterans and more than 8.76 million of those veterans will be seen by VA for health care service; and

WHEREAS, veterans use VA for numerous other benefit programs including nearly 1 million veterans in education programs, over 132,000 veterans enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, nearly 3 million home loan participants, and over 6 million insurance policies worth more than \$1 trillion dollars; and

WHEREAS, the complexity of conditions that veterans which receive VA health for care will add demands to the system for years to come; and

WHEREAS, even though appropriations for VA continue to increase, they have not kept pace with demand and the rate of inflation; 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)

#### VA PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENTS

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 nonservice-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 change VA pharmaceutical co-payments, placing an undue hardship on many veterans; and

WHEREAS, the increase in costs of the benefit would likely place an undue burden on veterans, limit access to earned benefits, and serve to inequitably balance the federal budget on the backs of veterans; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceuticals are part of the VA's standard health benefits package and must be provided to all eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA is required by current law to charge veterans for life saving preventive medicines which are cost-free under private sector insurance and other public health care options; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose increases in VA pharmaceutical co-payments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must exempt preventive medicines from VA pharmaceutical co-payment requirements. (Approved)

Resolution No. 603 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

## COMPETITIVE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR VA AND DOD HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the reimbursement private sector health care providers receive from VA's CHAMPVA health care program is less than the reimbursements paid by private health insurance; and

WHEREAS, the reimbursement private sector health care providers receive from the Veteran Choice Program is tied by law to Medicare's allowable charges; and

WHEREAS, the reimbursement private sector health care providers receive from TRICARE is tied by law to Medicare's allowable charges; and

WHEREAS, private medical providers have elected not to participate in CHAMPVA, the Veterans Choice Program, and TRICARE networks because of the limited reimbursement rates; and

WHEREAS, 100 percent disabled veterans and retired military personnel rely on VA and DOD health care programs for their health care needs, and limited reimbursement rates prevent veterans and their dependents from accessing 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 authorizing reimbursement rates for VA and DOD health care programs and other programs, which provide medical care for retired and disabled veterans to be competitive with private health insurance. (Approved)

Resolution No. 604 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

### VA MEDICARE AND TRICARE REIMBURSEMENT

WHEREAS, the VFW views it as essential that the VA health care system provide qualifying veterans with timely and accessible care; and

WHEREAS, VA collects third party payment for treatment, but current law prevents VA from collecting from the Medicare Trust Fund and TRICARE in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, a large number of VA's patients are eligible for Medicare and TRICARE; and

WHEREAS, VA medical care collections are used to supplement the appropriations VA receives from Congress to deliver efficient and effective health care at a lower cost than private sector health care providers; and

WHEREAS, with the increased demand on its health care system, it is now absolutely essential that VA be authorized to collect federal dollars to supplement its annual appropriations to ensure adequate funding for the Veterans Health Administration; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support enactment into law of legislation authorizing VA to receive reimbursement for the cost of non-service connected care that is provided to veterans who are enrolled in Medicare or TRICARE. (Approved)

Resolution No. 605 (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. 606 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXTENDING GULF WAR PRESUMPTIONS AND HEALTH CARE  
BEYOND 2021 AND TO AFGHANISTAN THEATER VETERANS

WHEREAS, many service members have served and continue to serve in the Afghanistan theater of operations since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, these veterans have served under circumstances similar to those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and the first Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Afghanistan was not considered part of the Southwest Asia theater of operations during Operation Desert Storm and VA did not include Afghanistan in the Southwest Asia theater of operations after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, veterans of Afghanistan are suffering from similar undiagnosed conditions as those who have served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, the authority to extend presumptions to all Southwest Asia theater veterans is set to expire on December 31, 2021; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the VA to support research to verify whether service members who served in Afghanistan are subjected to the same environmental hazards as those who served in Iraq, 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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that while research is ongoing, allow veterans who served in the Afghanistan theater of operations access to the Gulf War Registry Health Exam; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must permanently extend presumptive disability compensation benefits for Gulf War veterans to ensure all service members who serve in Southwest Asia theater of military operations are afforded this protection. (Approved)

Resolution No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### NURSING HOME ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has

called upon Congress to enact legislation to regulate and expand eligibility for VA health care and provide all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care services which include nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, current VA regulations extend VA eligibility for nursing home care to those veterans who are service-connected at 70 percent or above or those seeking nursing home care for a service-connected disability; and

\*8WHEREAS, 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. 608 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, since 2000, 370,688 service members have sustained Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) including those who served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; 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 patients with mild TBI (mTBI) may have long-term health consequences; and

WHEREAS, veterans with severe TBI require a lifetime of intensive services to care for their injuries, yet many VA medical facilities are neither

properly staffed nor equipped to provide the necessary screening and comprehensive health care services veterans suffering from TBI require; 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 conditions associated with blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls are at risk for TBI; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve research pertaining to screening methods, diagnostic tools, and treatment of conditions associated with blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls are at risk for TBI to ensure veterans who have experienced a TBI receive effective health care. (Approved)

Resolution No. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### PTSD AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated that treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and providing Mental Health Care among returning war veterans is one of its highest priorities, and the VA operates a nationwide network of nearly 200 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 death by suicide among a host of other negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, a total of 405,915 Iraq, and Afghanistan Veterans were seen for potential PTSD at VA facilities following their return from these overseas deployments as of March 31, 2015; and

WHEREAS, VA expects an increase in PTSD conditions as Veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan after multiple tours of duty; and

WHEREAS, available research has not sufficiently evaluated the clinical effectiveness of treatment programs for veterans diagnosed with and/or suffering from the effects of traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, or other mental



health conditions, and adequate research into the brain's response to internal and external influences that could result in mental illness has yet to be undertaken; 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 continue to adequately staff VA mental health treatment and research programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to dedicate adequate resources to address the alarming rate at which Veterans commit suicide. (Approved)

Resolution No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### VA HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, more than 447,000 women veterans received VA health care in 2015, which is a 123 percent increase from 2013, and female veterans are higher users of primary and mental health services than their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, VA estimated that women veterans as a percentage of veterans using VA health care will continue to grow, making it essential that VA continue to staff and equip its medical facilities to meet their specific health care needs; and

WHEREAS, women veterans have reported that VA staff continue to confuse them for spouses or caregivers and even challenge their veteran status; and

WHEREAS, women veterans also reported concerns regarding the gender specific competencies of VA health care professionals; and

WHEREAS, VA reported in 2015 that 66 percent of women veterans are assigned to a Designated Women's Health Provider (DWHP), who have experience and training in women's health care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we acknowledge VA has improved the care and services it provides women veterans, but we urge VA to continue to monitor and enhance health care services available to women veterans at all VA medical facilities and expand its designated women's health program to mental health care to ensure veterans

have access to mental health care providers who understand women-specific mental health conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to improve outreach to older women veterans, allow women to choose the gender of their VA health care providers and properly train VA's workforce to treat women veterans with the respect and dignity they have earned and deserve. (Approved)

Resolution No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### EXPAND VA CAREGIVER BENEFITS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program provides a monthly stipend, respite care, mental and medical health care, and necessary training and certifications for caregivers of veterans who were severely injured on or after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, no such comprehensive program exists for the caregivers of veterans of other eras; and

WHEREAS, the VFW believes that severely disabled veterans of all conflicts have made incredible sacrifices, and all family members who care for them are equally deserving of our recognition and support; and

WHEREAS, it is arbitrary and unjust that veterans who were severely disabled prior to September 11, 2001 are ineligible for the Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense provides support to family caregivers of members of the armed forces who are catastrophically disabled through its Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL) program, which includes disability caused by illnesses in its eligibility criteria; and

WHEREAS, the VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program excludes veterans who require home caregiver services as a result of serious illnesses; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to expand eligibility for the VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program to include veterans of all eras; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to fully align the VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program with the DOD SCAADL program by including in its eligibility criteria veterans who require caregiver services as a result of serious illnesses incurred in the line of duty. (Approved)

Resolution No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY CARE OPTIONS FOR VETERANS

WHEREAS, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are generally satisfied with the health care they receive from VA and believe the VA health care system must be improved to ensure all veterans have timely access to high quality care; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has collected and evaluated direct feedback from veterans regarding their options, preferences and expectation when receiving health care; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has consistently worked with Congress and VA to improve the health care VA provides our nation's veterans through innovative VA and community care programs to ensure veterans have a seamless experience receiving health care from VA, whether it is at VA medical facilities or, when necessary, supplemented through private sector health care providers partnered with VA; and

WHEREAS, the veteran population is a shifting demographic with evolving health care needs, which necessitates that VA identify new and innovative ways to deliver timely access to high quality, comprehensive, and veteran-centric health care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the VFW, that Congress must provide VA with the appropriations and assets necessary to properly implement the VA MISSION Act, which consolidates all VA community care programs while also improving many VA programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA comply with federal prompt payment requirements and incentivize private sector health care providers to participate in its community care program, while ensuring veterans are not held financially liable for services furnished through such program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must remain the guarantor and coordinator of care for enrolled veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW oppose privatizing VA or eroding VA's ability to provide direct care to veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress and VA must furnish and conduct proper outreach to ensure veterans are fully aware of their health care options. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### IMPROVE VA & DOD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR HEPATITIS B

WHEREAS, most individuals with chronic Hepatitis B enjoy good health, are symptom free and may not know they have the silent disease; and

WHEREAS, in developed countries like the U.S. chronic Hepatitis B is a preventable, highly-treatable long-term illness where, since 2002, Hepatitis B vaccinations have been required for all incoming U.S. military personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health & Human Services, in 2011, released our nation's first-ever comprehensive Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Hepatitis B; and

WHEREAS, a 2014 study by the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease concluded that Hepatitis B infection was twice as common in the veteran population as in the general population, and that VA screening for the infection was "suboptimal"; and

WHEREAS, studies by VA and DOD concluded that Hepatitis B infection is more than twice as high for non-Hispanic African Americans, as well as more prevalent for LGBT veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has unjustly discharged or denied the reenlistment requests of military service members with Hepatitis B who are on stable treatment plans, do not exhibit symptoms and are fit for duty; and

WHEREAS, transparency and accessible documentation are among the best means to educate and prevent stigma and discrimination; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to take steps to improve Hepatitis B screening, follow-up testing and treatment among veterans born between 1945 and 1980; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to take steps to improve Hepatitis B screening, follow-up testing and treatment among minority veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense to codify policies for retention and discharge of military personnel with chronic Hepatitis B infection in order to educate and ensure Hepatitis B policies are documented, transparent, equitable, and updated as medical capabilities, technologies, evidence-based practices, and DOD policy considerations evolve. (Approved)

Resolution No. 614 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

EXTEND SERVICE CONNECTION PRESUMPTION  
TO BLAST SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, the Global War on Terrorism has exposed more than 330,000 service members to diagnosable blast injuries, with thousands more going undiagnosed and untreated; 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 (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 diagnosed at VA medical centers with conditions possibly related to blast exposures since the start of the Global War on Terrorism; 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 conditions associated with blast exposure. (Approved)

Resolution No. 615 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION

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, veterans, from earlier, were not afforded a comprehensive audiological examination upon entrance and discharge from the military services, but instead were subject to highly inaccurate test methods; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the second leading disability granted service connection by VA was for hearing loss or tinnitus; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) (now referred to as the National Academy of Sciences) 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; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress and 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)

## HEARING LOSS COMPENSATION

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, in the practice of granting disability compensation there is a long-standing precedent 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 acoustic 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. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

## VA CLAIMS WORKLOAD

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made significant progress in reducing the backlog of claims for compensation, pension, education benefits and appeals, yet submissions and appeals continues to grow; and

WHEREAS, nearly, twenty-five (25) percent of rating cases that have been pending for more than 125 days has remained constant for the last two years, more than 180,000 appeals are pending between the BVA and Regional Office and it still takes more than 1,700 days to receive a BVA decision after filing a substantive appeal; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to order redundant and often unnecessary examinations when the evidence of record is sufficient to make a determination, or claimants submit adequate medical records and doctors opinions; and

WHEREAS, Congress has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved its 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; and

WHEREAS, after dozens of Congressional hearings, numerous studies, changes of VA leadership, altered workflow, amended work processes, erratic IT development, as well as fruitless pilot programs and experimental initiatives, it is clear that there are no easy, simple or quick solutions that lead to the speedy reduction of the backlog; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress require VA to accept private medical evidence and opinions in lieu of VA examinations whenever they are sufficient for rating purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to advise that Congress exercise its oversight authority and provide the vital resources necessary to sustain a sufficient workforce capable of effectively managing the workload and provide quality and timely service to those claiming benefits or appealing decisions from VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress bolsters its oversight and funding of VA technology initiatives to ensure that they are constructive, relevant and effective in streamlining claims processing and improving quality of entitlement decisions. (Approved)

Resolution No. 618 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### IMPROVE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR SURVIVORS

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 increase annually, they fail to increase at the same rate as tuition; and



WHEREAS, according to the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, the average cost of attendance, including tuition, fees, and room and board, at a four-year public university is consistently more than twice the rate of reimbursement for DEA; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States worked with Congress to successfully expand the Gunnery Sgt. John David Fry Scholarship to offer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to eligible surviving children, and spouses; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently increased the monthly allowance for DEA while also decreasing the amount of months to utilize the benefit; 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 Congress to increase DEA benefits to reflect the rising cost of education, with future increases indexed to reflect the average cost of attendance as reported by the Department of Education. (Approved)

Resolution No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### BURIAL PLOT ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pays certain burial benefits at the death of a veteran who dies from a service connected disability. VA pays a different burial benefit and plot allowance on behalf of a wartime veteran who dies from a non-service connected condition; and

WHEREAS, the cost of funeral expenses in the private sector have increased nearly seven times over since 2001 and the current VA benefit is \$2,000 for a service connected death, and \$300 burial and \$749 plot allowance for a qualifying non-service connected death; well below the cost in the private sector; and

WHEREAS, Congress should provide the resources to meet the changing needs of burial benefits and bring burial allowances and plot

allowances to the same proportionate level they were when the benefits were joined in 1973; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress increase all burial benefits to what the Independent Budget recommends: the service connected burial benefit, non-service connected burial benefit and the plot allowance for those veterans who do not have access to a state or national veterans cemetery within 75 miles should not be less than \$6,160, \$1,918, and \$1,150 respectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the service connected burial benefit, non-service connected burial benefit and the plot allowance for those veterans who have access to a state or national veterans cemetery but chose burial in a private cemetery should be no less than \$2,793, \$854, and \$1,150 respectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress should provide the resources required to meet burial needs of all veterans who have served their country so honorably and faithfully. (Approved)

Resolution No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### TOXIC EXPOSURES

WHEREAS, veterans who served along the Korean demilitarized zone after the dates of presumptive exposure to Agent Orange suffer from conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure and are often denied service connection by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, those who served on bases in Thailand during the Vietnam War era who suffer from conditions associated with Agent Orange are arbitrarily and unjustly denied service connection; and

WHEREAS, veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffer from an array of conditions and diseases, collectively known as Gulf War illness, while the causes remain unexplained and VA ignores Congress and continues a burdensome claims process; and

WHEREAS, veterans of current conflicts were exposed to numerous environmental hazards, including open air burn pits and the anti-malaria drug mefloquine; and

WHEREAS, veterans stationed at Woomera Air Force Station in Maralinga, South Australia, were exposed to radiation during nuclear weapons testing during the 1950's and 1960's and subsequent closure and cleanup; and

WHEREAS, for decades, veterans and dependents stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama were exposed to Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB), and now suffer from associated conditions; and

WHEREAS, for decades, veterans and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune consumed contaminated water and now suffer from associated conditions. While VA acknowledged this fact, there are differences in what conditions are compensable and those which only receive reimbursement for medical care. Additionally, the requirement to be stationed on the base for 30 days is arbitrary and ignores thousands who graduated from training in less time; and

WHEREAS, the United States military has conducted testing, monitoring, and clean-up operations related to various chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons resulting in exposure; and

WHEREAS, military firefighters and fire truck mechanics were immersed in firefighting foam almost daily as a circumstance of military service. The foam has now been banned due to extreme diseases and illnesses from its exposure, yet the DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs said they have no plans to study the effects of the firefighting chemical on troops who may have used it; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to invest adequate resources to study, diagnose, and treat conditions and illnesses associated with toxic exposures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensures that the Department of Defense expedites declassification efforts, no later than fiscal year 2019, related to exposure events and that the Department of Veterans Affairs extends presumptive service connection to veterans suffering from conditions or illnesses found to be associated with exposure to toxic substances. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 621 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

DIGITAL CLAIMS PROCESS

WHEREAS, current regulations authorize veteran service organizations (VSOs) activities based on VA paper claims processes; and

WHEREAS, VA now processes compensation and pension claims in a digital environment; and

WHEREAS, VSOs have had to request VA's Office of General Counsel intervention in executing the same principal functions in a digital environment which VSOs previously performed with paper claims; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to update all regulations authorizing VSOs the same advocacy rights in the digital environment as were allowed in the paper-based claims process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary implement regulations mandating VA accept dates of claim actions when files are electronically transmitted to VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary implement regulations mandating VSOs are granted 48 hours to review rating decisions. During this review period, VA shall not finalize decisions without the VSO electronically certifying that a rating review has been conducted. (Approved)

Resolution No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE

WHEREAS, VA has established life insurance designed to support veterans whom might otherwise be uninsurable due to service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, by statute premium rates are based on the American Experience Table of Mortality which was created in the 1860s to set insurance rates accordingly with mortality rates at the time; and

WHEREAS, private health insurance companies more commonly use the Commissioners Standard Ordinary Table which has been adjusted for current mortality rates; and

WHEREAS, VA life insurance rates are now no longer competitive with private insurance company rates; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation authorizing VA to use the most commonly used life mortality table in order to make VA National Service Life Insurance competitive with private health insurance policies. (Approved)

Resolution No. 623 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### VA AUTOMOTIVE ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs will issue only one certificate of eligibility for financial assistance in the purchase of a new or used automobile or other conveyance; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs will provide or assist in providing eligible veterans with a second automobile or other conveyance when the first vehicle purchased with VA financial assistance is destroyed as a result of any natural catastrophe, the destruction was not the veterans fault or the veteran does not receive compensation for the loss from a property insurer; and

WHEREAS, current technology, design and safety advances have reached such a level that automobiles and conveyances are superior to every model produced in the last 50 years; and

WHEREAS, it is impractical to assume veterans who require such assistance would not benefit from better design and equipment changes to make it easier to accomplish daily tasks, attend medical or other appointments and experience an overall better quality of life; and

WHEREAS, veterans who require such assistance are unduly penalized by the narrow scope of this program by virtue of the nature of its being a "one time" benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to remove the unreasonable restrictions of a once in a lifetime grant; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs authorize veterans, or their duly authorized representatives who are already in receipt of the automotive allowance, those with applications pending, and any future qualified applicant be allowed to reapply for this essential benefit at the end of the sales or lease contract or every 5 years, whichever is greater, so as

to maintain a practical quality of life and benefit from current safety and technology standards. (Approved)

Resolution No. 624 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

#### HOMELESS VETERANS PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, homelessness among veterans has significantly decreased due to coordinated efforts across multiple agencies of government and the ambitious goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs to eliminate homelessness among veterans; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of female veterans experience homelessness, many of whom have dependents in their care; and

WHEREAS, local and state homeless veteran agencies and programs are federally funded by the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Grant and Per Diem program and the Department of Labor (DOL) Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

WHEREAS, programs such as VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and the joint Housing and Urban Development and VA's Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program are showing signs of success in reducing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the 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 to address veterans' homelessness by increasing the availability of affordable housing, expanding educational and employment opportunities and training and providing gender-specific services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA should periodically adjust Grant and Per Diem program rates for inflation to ensure sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA compensation and non-service connected pension should not be considered countable income by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in determining program eligibility. (Approved)

ENSURE VETERAN SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

WHEREAS, our nation has consistently supported the future success of our warfighters through robust veterans' education benefits, historically molding generations of proven leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has worked to secure and preserve quality education benefits for all generations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA enrolled nearly one million veterans across all G.I. Bill programs in the past academic year; and

WHEREAS, despite significant improvements to consumer resources for student veterans, inconsistent access to quality consumer information and financial hardships continue to drive perceptions in Washington that student-veterans are not succeeding in higher education; and

WHEREAS, many combat veterans do not fully qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit; and

WHEREAS, certain schools and programs seek to circumvent benefit guidelines in order to reap significant financial benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to ensure proper oversight of VA's educational benefit programs by developing quality metrics with which to demonstrate student veteran success in higher education, and close financial loopholes through which certain academic programs can exploit GI Bill reimbursement models; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensure veterans receive equitable access to benefits like in-state tuition and quality pre-enrollment educational information to ensure veterans are academically and financially prepared to succeed in higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States work to extend full GI Bill benefits for all combat veterans and preserve quality GI Bill benefits for all current conflict veterans and future

conflict veterans to ensure they have access to quality education assistance programs. (Approved)

Resolution No. 626 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the period of eligibility for VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits is 12 years from the date of separation from the military or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not understand their eligibility to VR&E services and the benefits of the program until later in life when they become so disabled that their disabilities create an employment barrier; and

WHEREAS, VR&E lacks quality performance measures that measure rehabilitation based on the long-term effects of disability and the likelihood that a disability may require further rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, VR&E 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 for life; 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 VA streamlines eligibility and entitlement to VR&E programs to provide more timely intervention and assistance to all disabled veterans. (Approved)

Resolution No. 627 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)



## SUPPORT VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes that it is in the best interest of our nation to have a strong and viable veterans employment and training system; and

WHEREAS, Congress has recognized that veterans of all eras, especially recently separated service members and veterans with service connected disabilities find it difficult to obtain meaningful employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, while there are certain employment and educational programs in place for veterans such programs must have a proactive, long-term career focus; and

WHEREAS, programs designed to encourage federal employment of veterans, assist veterans in finding employment in their communities, and encourage federal contractors to hire veterans demand reasonable funding and responsible oversight to ensure success; and

WHEREAS, state agencies who receive federal funding are not held to the same veteran hiring standards as the federal government; 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, such as the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program and other Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, 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 for life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to improve and enforce federal veteran-hiring mandates for contractors who do business with the federal government as outlined in Title 38 USC 4212; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that federal veteran hiring initiatives and programs must be held accountable for the effectiveness of the services provided and funding should be adjusted to reflect abilities in creating long-term meaningful careers for veterans, and state agencies that receive federal

funding must be held to the same standards and report to Congress on the success of veteran hiring initiatives. (Approved)

Resolution No. 628 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHEREAS, government reports consistently indicate that many federal agencies fail to reach their three-percent contracting goal for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans and disabled veterans lack access to the necessary capital to invest in small business opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has failed to deliver adequate tools to veterans, offering the opportunity to fulfill the three-percent federal contracting mandate; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration remains underfunded and understaffed to fulfill its mission of establishing and maintaining robust veterans' programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress expand entrepreneurial education and networking programs for veterans via veterans small business centers and other entrepreneurship programs funded through the Small Business Administration in order to help achieve the federal government's three-percent veterans contracting goal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress expand veteran's and disabled veteran's access to capital by expanding direct loan programs through the Small Business Administration in order to help achieve the federal government's three-percent veterans contracting goal; but such programs should never come at the expense of other earned veterans' benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress hold VA accountable for its duty to properly verify veteran entrepreneurs to help achieve the federal government's three-percent veterans contracting goal. (Approved)

Resolution No. 629 (Submitted by Department of California)

SUPPORT THE TRANSFER OF THE MARE ISLAND CEMETERY TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Mare Island Naval Cemetery, located in Vallejo, California, was established on February 12, 1856 and has been identified as the oldest military cemetery on the West Coast and the final resting place for more than 800 of our country's heroes, some who served as far back as the War of 1812; and

WHEREAS, three Medal of Honor recipients and Anna Arnold Key Turner, the daughter of Francis Scott Key, composer of "The Star-Spangled Banner" are among those buried at the Mare Island Naval Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vallejo, which inherited the cemetery when the base closed, has failed to properly care for the cemetery and does not have the funds to restore the cemetery or maintain it to an appropriate level, commensurate with its historical importance; and

WHEREAS, the VA's National Cemetery Administration's mission is to provide veterans with "final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our nation;" and

WHEREAS, S. 2881 and H.R. 5588 have been introduced in the 115th United States Congress by Senator Feinstein and Congressman Thompson, respectively, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement with the city of Vallejo, CA, for the transfer of Mare Island Naval Cemetery, to be maintained as a national shrine; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support transferring the control of the Mare Island Naval Cemetery in Vallejo, CA, to the Department of Veterans Affairs. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 630 (Submitted by Pacific Areas)

#### EQUITABLE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS

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, currently, Title 38 U.S. Code § 3532 and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations dictate that eligible dependents receiving training

in Philippines receive one half of the DEA rate. The Philippines is the only foreign country with a reduction in DEA benefits; and

WHEREAS, while veterans studying in the Philippines receive the full amount of the G.I. Bill, dependents who qualify for the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program and pursue a program of education at an institution in the Republic of Philippines, are penalized with a 50% reduction in benefits; and

WHEREAS, we believe this injustice to our Nation's veterans families living and studying in the Philippines and must be corrected; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend Title 38 U.S. Code § 3532, to allow dependents that attend institutions of higher learning in the Philippines, to receive the equitable education assistance rate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensure eligible dependents who are studying in the Philippines receive equitable treatment under the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 631 (Submitted by Department of Indiana)

#### MEDICAL CANNABIS LEGISLATION

WHEREAS, Indiana law currently prohibits the use of medical cannabis within the state; and,

WHEREAS, of the revised date of this Resolution, current on-line polls of our fellow Hoosier Veterans show that 86.4% are supportive of the medical use of cannabis to treat our veterans; and

WHEREAS, at the time of this Resolution the Congress has given consideration via the Veterans Equal Access Act, "To authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers to provide recommendations and opinions to veterans regarding participation in State marijuana programs;" and

WHEREAS, at the time of this Resolution the Congress is also given consideration via the Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act of 2017, "To limit the application of Federal laws to the distribution and consumption of marihuana, and for other purposes;" and

WHEREAS, many other states (30 and Washington D.C.) have independently moved toward cannabis reform for medical use and have been successful in delivering a safe treatment alternative to those military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury and other chronic physical and mental medical conditions in those states, to mention a few; and

WHEREAS, prescribed drugs such as opioids and benzodiazepines are reported to have high potential for adverse side effects and high potential for abuse and addiction, which could potentially lead to hospitalization or death by the patients who consume them; and

WHEREAS, we recognize veterans are at risk of opioid addiction and overdose; and that states that allow medical cannabis have had a significant decrease in both addiction rates as well as overdose deaths.

WHEREAS, cannabis reportedly has nowhere near the adverse side effects as compared to other drugs often prescribed to veteran patients with chronic illnesses or debilitating conditions; and

WHEREAS, the VFW at the 118th National Convention in July 2017 did within their proposed by laws pass #627 Medical Cannabis Treatment By Veterans Administration Practitioners; and

WHEREAS, VFW members of Post 2067 and the 5th District of Indiana did unanimously vote to move this Resolution forward; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, support and petition the Congress to enact legislation that would provide our veterans with legal, safe medical cannabis programs. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 632 (Submitted by Department of Illinois)

OPPOSING ANY AND ALL FUTURE EFFORTS TO PRIVATIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BEYOND THE CHOICE PROGRAM AND PRIVATELY-CONTRACTED COMPENSATION AND PENSION EXAMS

WHEREAS, only about 2 percent of the physicians and other health care providers in New York State are equipped to provide timely and quality care to veterans in the community, according to a new RAND Corporation study. If New York would not be able to handle an influx of veteran patients, it can be presumed that the rest of the nation's private providers would not be ready to take in veterans with their unique medical needs; and

WHEREAS, the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), an independent customer service survey, ranks the Department of Veterans (VA) customer satisfaction among Veteran patients among the best in the nation and equal to or better than ratings for private sector hospitals. The ACSI is the nation's only cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction, providing benchmarking between the public and private sectors. In short, veterans prefer VA care over the private sector; and

WHEREAS, the VA, being a large provider of care, has the size to bargain down costs. This is a benefit which cannot be overstated in terms of price of healthcare. The private sector has neither size nor the motivation to bargain down prices; and

WHEREAS, the VA is a point and location of solidarity amongst veterans. It is a vital piece of the veteran community infrastructure. It is more than a hospital. Indeed, it is a place where veterans volunteer, socialize, participate in community events, and receive first class healthcare. To privatize the VA would be to fracture the veteran community; and

WHEREAS, in the VA system, continuity of care is of utmost priority. The VA shares information nationwide and across specialties. For example, your cardiologist understands the course of treatment from your mental health provider. In the private sector, there is an ownership of care model that refuses to share information in the same way. Veterans value this universality in care which ensures better health outcomes over the profit-driven model; and

WHEREAS, Seventy percent of all private doctors receive all or part of their medical training at a VA facility; ergo, privatizing the VA would also harm private doctors; and

WHEREAS, HR 4243, a bill that would grant an unaccountable private board control of VA closings, is currently being considered in Congress. In the Senate, S.2193 grants the Secretary the power to privatize large swaths of the VA, to include 36 medical lines to the private sector and makes the Choice Program permanent. Potential candidates under consideration for the newly vacant Secretary of Veterans Affairs position have supported privatization and have financial ties to private interests that have long supported privatization of VA; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose any further privatization of the Department of Veterans Affairs beyond the current iteration of the Choice Program and privately-contacted Compensation and Pension exams. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 633 (Submitted by Department of West Virginia)

DISABLED VETERAN LEAVE

WHEREAS, of November 5, 2016 all new federal employees with a service connected disability rating of 30% or greater will receive 104 hours of "Disabled Veteran Leave" to attend appointments related to their disability; no such leave has been granted to Veterans who were employed before the date of November 5, 2016; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation and policy which would retro activate qualifying federal employees to receive "Disabled Veteran Leave".  
(Approved)

Resolution No. 634 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)

WARTIME VA BENEFITS FOR EARLY VIETNAM VETERANS

WHEREAS, section 101(29) of title 38, United States Code, officially recognizes the Vietnam era period of war as "beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam;" and

WHEREAS, the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG)-Vietnam was officially established on November 1, 1955 following the defeat of the French and the establishment of the 1954 Geneva accords; and

WHEREAS, between 5,000 and 10,000 United States (US) Military personnel were estimated to have served with MAAG-Vietnam and other US military groups in Vietnam between November 1, 1955 and February 27, 1961; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served in Vietnam from November 1, 1955 to February 27, 1961 are not considered wartime veterans and are considered ineligible for wartime VA benefits such as low-income wartime veterans pensions; and

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) was established per Executive Order 10977 dated December 4, 1961 for military campaigns that started on or after July 1, 1958. US Military personnel who served in Vietnam from July 1, 1958 to July 3, 1965 may receive either the

AFEM or the Vietnam Service Medal but not both. Veterans who served in Vietnam prior to July 1, 1958 are not eligible for any campaign medals; and

WHEREAS, at least twelve US military personnel were awarded the Purple Heart by being wounded in Vietnam prior to February 28, 1961; and ten US military personnel were killed in Vietnam between November 1, 1955 and February 27, 1961 and are listed on the Vietnam Wall; and

WHEREAS, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War; and such program declares November 1, 1955 to be the official start of the Vietnam War; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to change the present laws so that any US military personnel who served in Vietnam from November 1, 1955 to February 27, 1961 be eligible for all VA wartime benefits. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 635 (Submitted by Department of Wisconsin)

#### ADVANCING WISCONSIN'S "GREEN ALERT" TO ENTIRE NATION

WHEREAS, the VFW, Department of Wisconsin, worked diligently towards passage of SB 473 "Green Alert" in the 2017-19 Wisconsin State Legislative Session; and

WHEREAS, SB 473 is also known as the "Corey Adams Searchlight Act" in honor of VFW member Corey Adams; and

WHEREAS, SB 473 was drafted at the request of the Corey Adams family (his father Johnny being a VFW Life Member) to prevent future tragedies and loss of life by at-risk veterans; and

WHEREAS, the "Green Alert" legislation creates a statewide alert system similar to the "Amber Alert" and "Silver Alert" but for missing veterans who are at-risk due to a service related health condition; and

WHEREAS, SB 473 was signed into law by Governor Scott Walker on March 28, 2018 as "2017 ACT 175"; and

WHEREAS, ACT 175 will save veterans' lives; now, therefore



BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we recommend to all Departments to work in their respective state legislatures to pursue a “Green Alert” system. (Approved as Amended)

Resolution No. 636 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)

#### TOXIC EXPOSURES

WHEREAS, veterans who served in the territorial seas of Vietnam during the Vietnam War are arbitrarily and unjustly denied benefits for illnesses associated with Agent Orange exposure, to include veterans who served on ships presumed to be exposed to Agent Orange but whose service did not fall on the specific presumptive dates; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served along the Korean demilitarized zone before and after the April 1968 to August 1971 dates of presumptive exposure to Agent Orange suffer from conditions associated with Agent Orange exposure and are often denied service connection by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, those who served on bases in Thailand during the Vietnam War era who suffer from conditions associated with Agent Orange are arbitrarily and unjustly denied service connection; and

WHEREAS, veterans of the Persian Gulf War suffer from an array of conditions and diseases, collectively known as Gulf War illness, while the causes remain unexplained and VA ignores Congress and continues a burdensome claims process; and

WHEREAS, veterans of current conflicts were exposed to numerous environmental hazards, including open air burn pits and the anti-malaria drug mefloquine; and

WHEREAS, veterans stationed at Woomera Air Force Station in Maralinga, South Australia, were exposed to radiation during nuclear weapons testing during the 1950's and 1960's; and

WHEREAS, for decades, veterans and dependents stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama were exposed to Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB), and now suffer from associated conditions; and

WHEREAS, for decades, veterans and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune consumed contaminated water and now suffer from associated conditions. While VA acknowledged this fact, there are differences in what

conditions are compensable and those which only receive reimbursement for medical care. Additionally, the requirement to be stationed on the base for 30 days is arbitrary and ignores thousands who graduated from training in less time; and

WHEREAS, the United States military has conducted testing, monitoring, and clean-up operations related to various chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons resulting in exposure; and

WHEREAS, military firefighters and fire truck mechanics were immersed in firefighting foam almost daily as a circumstance of military service. The foam has now been banned due to extreme diseases and illnesses from its exposure, yet the DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs said they have no plans to study the effects of the firefighting chemical on troops who may have used it; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to invest adequate resources to study, diagnose, and treat conditions and illnesses associated with toxic exposures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensures that the Department of Defense expedites declassification efforts related to exposure events and that the Department of Veterans Affairs extends presumptive service connection to veterans suffering from conditions or illnesses found to be associated with exposure to toxic substances. (Rejected)

Resolution No. 637 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)

## RESEARCH ON MEDICAL CANNABIS TREATMENTS

WHEREAS, over the past several years, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) have been thrust into the forefront of the medical community and general public in large part due to suicides and over medication of veterans; and

WHEREAS, medical cannabis is legal in 29 states and the District of Columbia, with more states pending legalization legislation; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs cannot legally prescribe cannabis products as long as the federal government continues to categorize it as a Schedule 1 drug; and

WHEREAS, states that have legalized medical cannabis have seen a 15-35 percent decrease in opioid overdose and abuse; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have recently introduced legislation which would allow VA doctors to discuss the use of medical cannabis with veteran patients to treat service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there is substantial evidence from a comprehensive study by the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academic Press that concludes cannabinoids are effective for treating chronic pain, chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting, sleep disturbances related to obstructive sleep apnea, multiple sclerosis spasticity symptoms, and fibromyalgia; and

WHEREAS, multiple states that have legalized marijuana have used state funding to research the effective use of medicinal marijuana for PTSD and other health care issues; and

WHEREAS, in April 2016, the Drug Enforcement Agency gave its approval to a study on the effect of medical marijuana on post-traumatic stress disorder, the first federally funded, randomized, controlled research in the U.S. for PTSD; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we support federally funded research of Medical Cannabis for veterans being treated by Department of Veterans Affairs. (Approved)

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

Chairman: Larry W. Rivers, Past Commander-in-Chief, Louisiana

Vice Chairman: Glen M. Gardner, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

(Room 3501GH, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	Troy Eck	10029
<b>Arizona</b>	Glenn Hohman	9972
<b>Arizona</b>	Allen Kent	9972
<b>California</b>	Dawn Napier	9561
<b>California</b>	Michael Seward	5059
<b>Colorado</b>	John Harry	1
<b>Colorado</b>	Kirk Rosa	12009
<b>Connecticut</b>	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
<b>Connecticut</b>	Gregory Smith	7788
<b>Delaware</b>	Mark Newman	3238
<b>Delaware</b>	Paul Phillips	2863
<b>Florida</b>	W Benny Bachand	4287
<b>Hawaii</b>	Leslie Carter	94
<b>Illinois</b>	Christopher Hatcher	2606
<b>Illinois</b>	Matthew Willis	6871
<b>Indiana</b>	Paul Glover	1114
<b>Indiana</b>	Cory Mahan	2714
<b>Kansas</b>	Bruce Fischbach	7397
<b>Kansas</b>	John Muckelbauer	3712
<b>Kentucky</b>	Brian Duffy	1170
<b>Maine</b>	Amy Meuchel	6859
<b>Maine</b>	David Sivret	9779
<b>Maryland</b>	D Harvey Cunningham	8185
<b>Maryland</b>	Bret Dodd	521
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Christopher Lizotte	6714
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Christine Tron	545
<b>Michigan</b>	Kevin Conklin	6248
<b>Michigan</b>	Ramiro Lopez	1136
<b>Michigan</b>	David Prohaska	4434
<b>Minnesota</b>	Gary Anderson	6587
<b>Minnesota</b>	Scott Bill	3915
<b>Minnesota</b>	Jarrold McReynolds	3915
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Johnathan Duncan	5789
<b>Missouri</b>	Deborah Halter	3500

<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Lawrence Maher	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Joseph Mohorc	3127
<b>Missouri</b>	Zach Schwenk	5606
<b>Montana</b>	James Layton	4067
<b>Nebraska</b>	James Lutz	759
<b>Nevada</b>	Gerald Franco	2350
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Susan Cuddy	8214
<b>New Jersey</b>	Chad Kent	5579
<b>New Jersey</b>	Jeffrey Walding	5579
<b>New Mexico</b>	Warren Booker	7686
<b>New Mexico</b>	Kathie Schiebel	401
<b>New York</b>	Barbara Bishop	8645
<b>New York</b>	Brenda Serena	7967
<b>Ohio</b>	Gerald Constable	3283
<b>Ohio</b>	Frederick Lavery	1060
<b>Ohio</b>	Gerald Ward	5713
<b>Ohio</b>	Colleen Wiley	3035
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Warren Maxson	8180
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Ruth Fairchild	315
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Glenn Umberger	7155
<b>South Dakota</b>	Darold Couch	3442
<b>South Dakota</b>	Cody Mangold	791
<b>South Dakota</b>	Kenneth Payne	6554
<b>Texas</b>	Glen Gardner	3359
<b>Texas</b>	Larry Levy	5873
<b>Utah</b>	Amber Torres	3586
<b>Vermont</b>	Allston Gilmond	782
<b>Vermont</b>	Jeffrey Young	798
<b>Virginia</b>	Kim DeShano	2216
<b>Washington</b>	Paul Herrera	2224
<b>Wisconsin</b>	John Walker	10533
<b>Wyoming</b>	Jayson Zimmerman	2673

#### **COMMITTEE ON FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION**

Chairman: Richard L. Eubank, Past Commander-in-Chief, Oregon

Vice Chairman: Edward S. Banas, Past Commander-in-Chief, Connecticut

(Room 3501ABCD, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
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<b>Alabama</b>	James Teal	6837
<b>Alaska</b>	Walter Watts	3629
<b>Arizona</b>	Michael Kemery	12043
<b>Arkansas</b>	Franklind Lee	1674
<b>California</b>	Lorenzo Jordan	3173
<b>California</b>	Everett Martin	1732
<b>California</b>	Daniel Schmaltz	9557
<b>Colorado</b>	Bruce Dolan	7945
<b>Connecticut</b>	Robert Bailey	10153
<b>Connecticut</b>	Stanley Borusiewicz	1946
<b>Delaware</b>	Leona Hill	6009
<b>Florida</b>	Michael Clinesmith	9226
<b>Georgia</b>	Jimmy Willis	6686
<b>Idaho</b>	Rick Johnson	4902
<b>Idaho</b>	George Stockton	2905
<b>Illinois</b>	George Cramer	3873
<b>Illinois</b>	Christopher Retzer	2859
<b>Illinois</b>	Gary Stork	2698
<b>Illinois</b>	Robert Welch	450
<b>Indiana</b>	Richard Leirer	10003
<b>Iowa</b>	Dennis Abel	1797
<b>Iowa</b>	Stuart Juarez	738
<b>Kansas</b>	Gerald Marvin	3147
<b>Kansas</b>	John Muckelbauer	3712
<b>Kentucky</b>	Melvin Reed	6182
<b>Louisiana</b>	Elvin Bass	3337
<b>Louisiana</b>	Fred Wesley	12065
<b>Maine</b>	David Williams	1641
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Edgar Docherty	1526
<b>Michigan</b>	Bruce Bridson	5680
<b>Michigan</b>	John Griffith	4093
<b>Minnesota</b>	Patrick Bohmer	246
<b>Minnesota</b>	James Hesselgrave	5518
<b>Minnesota</b>	John Lopez	1223
<b>Mississippi</b>	Danny Williams	3685
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Michael Fisk	4195
<b>Missouri</b>	Jessis Jones	2657
<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Joseph Mohorc	3127
<b>Montana</b>	John Harris	7621
<b>Montana</b>	Thomas Pouliot	1116
<b>Nebraska</b>	Dionne Gorji	10648

<b>Nebraska</b>	Dan Kramer	8258
<b>Nebraska</b>	Kenneth Yount	5820
<b>Nevada</b>	Michael Musgrove	2350
<b>New Jersey</b>	Rhonda Gipson	12165
<b>New Jersey</b>	Gary Stoop	5479
<b>New Mexico</b>	David Saum	8703
<b>New York</b>	Randy Staats	1314
<b>North Dakota</b>	Wayne Paulson	753
<b>North Dakota</b>	William Tuff	7564
<b>Ohio</b>	Ray Schafer	9571
<b>Oklahoma</b>	John Fischer	3608
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Michael Merit	2592
<b>Oregon</b>	Cheryl Campos	10626
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	William Bradford	2917
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Guyde Lombardi	2812
<b>South Dakota</b>	Jesse Coyle	4690
<b>South Dakota</b>	Barbara McKean	3298
<b>Utah</b>	Danny Zaharias	409
<b>Vermont</b>	John Boardman	6689
<b>Washington</b>	Sarahbeth Simonson	3617
<b>West Virginia</b>	John Newbrough	1212
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Leroy Jansky	1038
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Wilfred Johnson	10544
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Patrick Moran	2113

### **COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS**

Chairman: John F. Gwizdak, Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia

Vice Chairman: John W. Stroud, Past Commander-in-Chief, Nevada

Vice Chairman: Thomas J. Tradewell, Sr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Wisconsin

(Room 2505AB, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	Dennis Doherty	3016
<b>Alabama</b>	Doreen Kiewel	1762
<b>Alaska</b>	Betty Gail Keao	10252
<b>Alaska</b>	Todd Maynard	9365
<b>Arizona</b>	Joan McDermott	9401
<b>Arkansas</b>	Mary Erdman	10483
<b>Arkansas</b>	Robert Fureigh	9095
<b>California</b>	Buford Maples	5985
<b>Colorado</b>	Gregory Goettsch	2585

<b>Colorado</b>	Ronald Lattin	5061
<b>Connecticut</b>	Angela Hudson-Davis	10321
<b>Connecticut</b>	Alfred Meek	9929
<b>Deleware</b>	Gary Frederick	2863
<b>Delaware</b>	Arthur Levering	7234
<b>Florida</b>	Donald Bult	11406
<b>Florida</b>	Anthony Gardner	10140
<b>Georgia</b>	Patsey Nuzum	8385
<b>Hawaii</b>	Dean Anzai	10276
<b>Hawaii</b>	George Barlett	10154
<b>Hawaii</b>	Stanley Fernandez	10276
<b>Idaho</b>	Nathan Suekel	63
<b>Illinois</b>	Charles Ingle	2955
<b>Illinois</b>	Robert McLeod	5788
<b>Illinois</b>	Warren Stout	1308
<b>Indiana</b>	Carl Courtney	1587
<b>Indiana</b>	Troy King	2695
<b>Indiana</b>	Richard Lineberry	2457
<b>Iowa</b>	Paul Arnold	941
<b>Iowa</b>	Becky Dirks Haugsted	4077
<b>Iowa</b>	Scott McDonald	1623
<b>Iowa</b>	Bradley Whitmore	9127
<b>Kansas</b>	Charles Craven	1254
<b>Kansas</b>	Vance Hill	6957
<b>Kansas</b>	John Muckelbauer	3712
<b>Kentucky</b>	Rick Johnson	1834
<b>Kentucky</b>	Edwin Vincent	6937
<b>Louisiana</b>	Timothy Sloan	5951
<b>Maine</b>	Kevin Woodward	11553
<b>Maryland</b>	John Dallatezza	6658
<b>Maryland</b>	Douglas MacArthur	2678
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Christine Bassett	3236
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Douglas Wood	6539
<b>Michigan</b>	Gerald Gorski	2645
<b>Michigan</b>	Sherwood Pea	8236
<b>Michigan</b>	Jennifer Smith	701
<b>Michigan</b>	Robert Williams	1137
<b>Minnesota</b>	Richard Bugbee	1223
<b>Minnesota</b>	James McCloden	246
<b>Minnesota</b>	Steven Van Bergen	1296
<b>Mississippi</b>	John Floyd	9573
<b>Missouri</b>	Kenneth Allison	5468
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356



<b>Missouri</b>	Bernard Hill	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Troy Williams	1003
<b>Montana</b>	Jack Hawley	1087
<b>Nebraska</b>	Jerry Chlopek	3704
<b>Nebraska</b>	Sharon Cooper	2503
<b>Nebraska</b>	Ronald Sibal	10727
<b>Nevada</b>	Larry Hire	2350
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Travis Bill	9552
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Oliver Brooks	5245
<b>New Jersey</b>	Luddie Austin	12165
<b>New Jersey</b>	Robert Pinto	3020
<b>New Mexico</b>	Vernon Luce	3280
<b>New York</b>	Willaim Hughes	5350
<b>New York</b>	Harold Leavor	9487
<b>New York</b>	Daniel McMahon	9249
<b>North Carolina</b>	Russell Chambers	9010
<b>North Carolina</b>	Gene Kent	7034
<b>North Carolina</b>	Andrew Zinkievich	7383
<b>North Dakota</b>	John Hanson	1874
<b>Ohio</b>	Iris Foster-DeNieuwe	3764
<b>Ohio</b>	Christopher Haynes	7596
<b>Ohio</b>	Maurice Marks	3343
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Gary Miles	1201
<b>Oregon</b>	Bert Key	4273
<b>Oregon</b>	Dennis Pratt	3203
<b>Oregon</b>	Andrea Summerlin	3156
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Peter Callaghan	3457
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Brian Merenda	2917
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Peter Hook	6393
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	James Lewis	7599
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Glenn Owen	6284
<b>Rhode Island</b>	William Siano	8955
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Leo Swider	2929
<b>South Carolina</b>	Wilton Fowler	9273
<b>South Carolina</b>	Margo Sheridan	10804
<b>South Dakota</b>	Keith Blume	3442
<b>South Dakota</b>	Thomas Hafner	3298
<b>South Dakota</b>	Kenneth Moss	1273
<b>Tennessee</b>	Daniel Walcott	4973
<b>Texas</b>	Ben Lowrance	1475
<b>Texas</b>	Daniel West	3413
<b>Unaffiliated</b>	Valentin Aviles	12094

<b>Utah</b>	Warren Johnson	6395
<b>Virginia</b>	Geoffrey Lyster	9835
<b>Virginia</b>	John Smart	1503
<b>Virginia</b>	Mark Winn	392
<b>Washington</b>	Robert Hitchcock	4278
<b>West Virginia</b>	Jeffrey Elkins	6669
<b>West Virginia</b>	Kami Elliott	7048
<b>West Virginia</b>	Todd Kingsbury	3522
<b>Wisconsin</b>	John Giese	6375
<b>Wisconsin</b>	David Green	10818
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Gerald Parchem	987
<b>Wyoming</b>	Rodney Birkle	3558
<b>Wyoming</b>	Dennis Miller	7756
<b>Wyoming</b>	John Zorbas	2469

### **COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Chairman: James E. Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

Vice Chairman: Paul A. Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

(Room 2101, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

### **SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA**

Chairman: John Furgess, Past Commander-in-Chief, Tennessee

Vice Chairman: James R. Mueller, Past Commander-in-Chief, Missouri

(Room 2101, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	William Yudiskas	9785
<b>Arizona</b>	Timothy Borland	9972
<b>Arkansas</b>	Terry Callahan	9095
<b>Arkansas</b>	Rosalyn Cox	2413
<b>California</b>	Charles Anfuso	2111
<b>California</b>	Timothy Bryant	3000
<b>Delaware</b>	Christina Chidester	3238
<b>Europe</b>	Kristina Keenan	605
<b>Europe</b>	Jessie Williamson	3885
<b>Georgia</b>	James Gray	4706
<b>Georgia</b>	Alfred Lipphardt	12002
<b>Hawaii</b>	Joseph Davis	3391

<b>Idaho</b>	Robert Jones	3012
<b>Idaho</b>	Gordon Petrie	4900
<b>Illinois</b>	Maurice Bridges	4183
<b>Illinois</b>	Claud Smith	1239
<b>Indiana</b>	David Fradenburg	1108
<b>Indiana</b>	Carl Peaerson	1431
<b>Iowa</b>	Donald Fisher	6172
<b>Kansas</b>	Darrell Bencken	2981
<b>Kentucky</b>	Carl Kaelin	1170
<b>Kentucky</b>	Joe Schnitterbaum	8639
<b>Louisiana</b>	Roland Huson	3106
<b>Maine</b>	John Bouchard	9609
<b>Maryland</b>	Frank Bennett	1858
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Theodore Eaton	2104
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Robert Graser	1822
<b>Massachusetts</b>	George Murray	3236
<b>Michigan</b>	James Fernandez	3901
<b>Michigan</b>	Stacey Roberts	3701
<b>Mississippi</b>	Johnnie Richard	2539
<b>Mississippi</b>	Marjorie Wesley	4272
<b>Missouri</b>	Charles Barlar	3176
<b>Montana</b>	Charles Carroll	6774
<b>Nebraska</b>	Michael Dunn	5539
<b>Nebraska</b>	Richard Morrison	8334
<b>Nevada</b>	Donna Barnett	12156
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Glenn Della-Monica	5791
<b>New Jersey</b>	William Thomson	6192
<b>New York</b>	John Brunato	53
<b>New York</b>	Patrick Iuliucci	3350
<b>North Carolina</b>	Gregory Stafford	6060
<b>North Dakota</b>	James Hapala	7564
<b>Ohio</b>	James Dill	3538
<b>Ohio</b>	Larry Moore	3494
<b>Ohio</b>	Kari Pfeifer	2920
<b>Oregon</b>	Ronald Jagodnik	3973
<b>Rhode Island</b>	John Gallo	306
<b>South Carolina</b>	M H Gunter	8738
<b>South Carolina</b>	Augustus Singleton	4262
<b>South Carolina</b>	Johnny Wilson	4262
<b>South Dakota</b>	Russel Dramstad	1776
<b>Tennessee</b>	Bobby Johnson	5066
<b>Vermont</b>	Rene Rocheleau	778
<b>Virginia</b>	Thomas Gimble	1503

<b>Virginia</b>	Johnathon Towles	3150
<b>Washington</b>	Frederick Green	2669
<b>West Virginia</b>	Robert Caruthers	9926
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Phillip Allen	7308
<b>Wisconsin</b>	William Backes	8320
<b>Wisconsin</b>	John Schultz	10262

**NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS**

Chairman: John E. Hamilton, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida  
 Vice Chairman: John A. Biedrzycki, Past Commander-in-Chief, Pennsylvania  
  
 (Room 2215B, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

**SUBCOMMITTEE I – HEALTH**

Chairman: Raymond Denisewich, Rhode Island  
 Vice Chairman: Christine Frederick (Smith), Pennsylvania  
 Staff Advisors: James Moss, Assistant Director, Veterans Health Policy, NVS  
                             Kayda Keleher, Associate Director, NLS  
 (Room 2209, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

**SUBCOMMITTEE II – BENEFITS**

Chairman: Paul Pirlot, Michigan  
 Vice Chairman: Eric Drake, Ohio  
 Staff Advisors: Brad Hazell, Assistant Director, Compensation & Pension, NVS  
                             Carlos Fuentes Director, NLS  
 (Room 2215B, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

**SUBCOMMITTEE III – ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY/OTHER**

Chairman: Cynthia Archuleta, New Mexico  
 Vice Chairman: Jason Smith, Florida  
 Staff Advisors: Tony Lowe, Associate Director, Economic Opportunity &  
 Transition Policy, NVS  
                             Patrick Murray, Associate Director, NLS  
  
 (Room 2210, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	Martin Kiewel	1762

Alaska	Lisa Robinson	9365
Arizona	Roger Gowen	7968
Arizona	Larry Williams	3713
Arkansas	Jeffrey Todd Byrd	<b>2330</b>
Arkansas	Terry Thurman	8109
California	Terry Murphy	8063
California	Arthur Napiwocki	1614
Colorado	Alexandria Faulkner	501
Colorado	Terrance Jacobson	3471
Connecticut	Robert Priest	1265
Connecticut	Robert Tozzoli	9929
Delaware	Charles Burroughs	475
Europe	Lance Howard	10557
Europe	Mark Kistner	9342
Florida	Kenneth Corr	10097
Florida	Jason Smith	10094
Georgia	David Miles	7720
Georgia	Joel Willis	5290
Hawaii	Randall Mau	2875
Idaho	Deborah Harmon	735
Illinois	Derek Giffin	2378
Illinois	Timothy Juillett	7452
Indiana	Gregory Baker	6978
Indiana	Richard Faulk	2839
Indiana	Darrel Knight	972
Indiana	Russell Pryor	1120
Indiana	William Thien	3281
Iowa	Richard Davis	788
Iowa	Danny White	11517
Kansas	Bobby Cox	2715
Kansas	Michael Holland	1254
Kansas	David Kennedy	6957
Kansas	John Muckelbauer	3712
Kentucky	Gerald Kayrouz	1170
Kentucky	Claud Wyatt	5704
Louisiana	Gerald Dugas	3121
Louisiana	Alfred Leger	6720
Maine	Cornelius Ware	887
Maryland	Carlos Fuentes	5627
Maryland	Dawn Jirak	8810
Maryland	R Brian Sturgis	5118
Maryland	Arthur Westbrook	521
Massachusetts	Delray Dorsey	1399

<b>Massachusetts</b>	Michael Figlioli	2017
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Gamalier Rosa Flores	754
<b>Michigan</b>	Robert Lutz	1794
<b>Michigan</b>	William Ogden	6464
<b>Michigan</b>	Paul Pirlot	4230
<b>Minnesota</b>	Jon Gohn	6208
<b>Minnesota</b>	Leonard Gudmunson	5555
<b>Minnesota</b>	Randy Stafford	3839
<b>Mississippi</b>	Raybon Windham	9122
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Marilynn Archuleta	5178
<b>Missouri</b>	Dennis Flynn	2866
<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Adam St. Pierre	4238
<b>Montana</b>	Daniel Arnold	1087
<b>Nebraska</b>	Bernard Brosnihan	10727
<b>Nebraska</b>	Steven Calkin	1077
<b>Nebraska</b>	James Pierce	5547
<b>Nevada</b>	Denise Estes	10053
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Dana Hussey	1772
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Thomas St. Pierre	8497
<b>New Jersey</b>	Charles Gallagher	679
<b>New Jersey</b>	William Sampolski	3324
<b>New Mexico</b>	Cynthia Archuleta	5890
<b>New Mexico</b>	Rogelio Maldonado	4384
<b>New York</b>	John Bartow	8690
<b>New York</b>	Thomas Howard	8259
<b>New York</b>	Bruce Terwilliger	686
<b>North Carolina</b>	Kenneth Sellers	1920
<b>North Carolina</b>	Cleophus Summers	9010
<b>North Dakota</b>	Nicholas Jalbert	7564
<b>North Dakota</b>	James Markey	7564
<b>Ohio</b>	Eric Drake	2595
<b>Ohio</b>	Roger Frye	8487
<b>Ohio</b>	James Hordinski	9871
<b>Ohio</b>	Chuck Keller	3761
<b>Ohio</b>	James Myers	7647
<b>Ohio</b>	Ralph Reynolds	9289
<b>Oklahoma</b>	James Dockemeyer	1317
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Curtis Watts	4578
<b>Oregon</b>	Jason Carroll	3973
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Patrick Higgins	8180
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	John Brenner	2493

<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Christine Smith	1446
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Gary Smith	1446
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Raymond Denisewich	2812
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Stephen Stewart	916
<b>South Carolina</b>	Martin Snowden	6500
<b>South Dakota</b>	Timothy Brookes	1273
<b>South Dakota</b>	William Hoffman	3298
<b>South Dakota</b>	William Huffmon	1273
<b>Tennessee</b>	Kathy Freed	4730
<b>Tennessee</b>	Henry Hooper	11333
<b>Tennessee</b>	Darryl McPheron	9754
<b>Tennessee</b>	Reginald Sims	6496
<b>Texas</b>	Lee Rivas	12171
<b>Unaffiliated</b>	Jose Jimenez	12094
<b>Utah</b>	Wendy Griffin	3586
<b>Utah</b>	James Sheppard	7442
<b>Vermont</b>	Samuel Haskins	1034
<b>Virginia</b>	Ryan Gallucci	3150
<b>Virginia</b>	Tommy Hines	9954
<b>Virginia</b>	Bobbiejo Lazo	637
<b>Washington</b>	William Brown	2669
<b>Washington</b>	Joseph Jimenez	969
<b>West Virginia</b>	David Sisler	4442
<b>Wisconsin</b>	John Dahl	6498
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Randolph Strickland	7308
<b>Wyoming</b>	Cheryl Shannon	1881
<b>Wyoming</b>	Clarence Styvar	11453

### **COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS**

Chairman: Bertha Gripp, Post 10188, Arizona

Co-Chairman: Bernard K. Hill, Post 7356, Missouri

### **COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES**

Chairman: Walter G. Hogan, Past Commander-in-Chief, Wisconsin

Vice Chairman: Clifford G. Olson, Jr., Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Michigan</b>	David Prohaska	4434
<b>Missouri</b>	Johnathan Duncan	5789
<b>Missouri</b>	Zach Schwenk	5606



