

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 122ND 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 122ND NATIONAL CONVENTION OF  
THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HELD IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI: JULY 31-AUGUST 3, 2021,  
PURSUANT TO 44 U.S.C. 1332; (PUBLIC LAW 90-620 (AS AMENDED  
BY PUBLIC LAW 105-225, SEC. 3); (112 STAT. 1498)



SEPTEMBER 2, 2022.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and  
ordered to be printed

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

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

**LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI  
MAY, 2022

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 122<sup>nd</sup> National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, held in Kansas City, Missouri July 31-August 3, 2021, which is submitted for printing as a House document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Jones', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kevin Jones  
Adjutant General



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

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

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

\* indicates deceased

## **American Veterans of Foreign Service**

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

American Veterans of Foreign Service  
(Eastern Branch)

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

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

## **Army of the Philippines**

1900-1901	Gen. Francis V. Greene * ..... Elected at Denver, Colorado.
1901-1902	Gen. Irving Hale * ..... Elected at Salt Lake City, Utah.

1902-1903	Gen. Irvin Hale * .....	Elected at Council Bluffs, Iowa.
1903-1904	Gen. Charles King * .....	Elected at St. Paul, Minnesota.
1904-1905	Gen. Wilder S. Metcalf * .....	Elected at St. Louis, Missouri.
1905-1906	Col. Alfred S. Frost * .....	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1906-1907	Gen. Arthur MacArthur * .....	Elected at Des Moines, Iowa.
1907-1908	Capt. H.A. Crow * .....	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
1908-1909	Maj. P.J.H. Farrell * .....	Elected at Galesburg, Illinois.
1909-1910	Col. Charles L. Jewett * .....	Elected at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1910-1911	A. H. Anderson * .....	Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1911-1912	F. Warner Karling * .....	Elected at Detroit, Michigan.
1912-1913F	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 Wasylik* ..... Elected at Minneapolis, Minnesota.
1978-1979	Eric Sandstrom* .....Elected at Dallas, Texas.
1979-1980	Howard E. Vander Clute Jr.* ..Elected at New Orleans, Louisiana.
1980-1981	T. C. Selman* .....Elected at Chicago, Illinois.
1980-1981	Arthur Fellwock* ..... Succeeded T.C. Selman, 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.
2019-2020	William “Doc” Schmitz .....	Elected at Orlando, Florida.
2020-2021	Harold “Hal” Roesch, II.....	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri.
2021-2022	Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic.....	Elected at Kansas City, Missouri

### **VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS 2020-2021**

Commander-in-Chief.....	Harold “Hal” Roesch, II
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.....	Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief .....	Timothy Borland
Judge Advocate General .....	Bobby J. Cox
Surgeon General .....	Renee Simpson
National Chaplain.....	Joseph J. Gallick
National Chief of Staff.....	Rosalyn Cox
Inspector General .....	Richard Bell

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Department of Europe	Norberto Millet, Jr.
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Department of Kansas  
Department of Kentucky  
Department of Louisiana  
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Department of Maryland  
Department of Massachusetts  
Department of Michigan  
Department of Minnesota  
Department of Mississippi  
Department of Missouri  
Department of Montana  
Department of Nebraska  
Department of Nevada  
Department of New Hampshire  
Department of New Jersey  
Department of New Mexico  
Department of New York  
Department of North Carolina  
Department of North Dakota  
Department of Ohio  
Department of Oklahoma  
Department of Oregon  
Department of Pacific Areas  
Department of Pennsylvania  
Department of Rhode Island  
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Department of South Dakota  
Department of Tennessee  
Department of Texas  
Department of Utah  
Department of Vermont  
Department of Virginia  
Department of Washington  
Department of West Virginia  
Department of Wisconsin  
Department of Wyoming  
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Norbert Enos  
Rockey Davis  
Philip Maughan  
Johnny Capps  
Carol Whitmore  
Patrick Briggs  
Robert Hendrickson  
Gerald Dugas  
David Williams  
R. Brian Sturgis  
Robert Graser  
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Thomas Hanson  
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Gerald Peterson  
Paul Lloyd  
William Thomson  
Lenwood Hampton  
Robert Barnhart  
Gregory Stafford  
William Tuff  
Christopher Haynes  
Robert Clark  
John Wrinkle  
Peter Callaghan  
Robert Eiler  
Guyde Lombardi  
Augustus Singleton  
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Henry Hooper, II  
Daniel West  
Dennis Parizek  
Allston Gilmond  
Thomas Gimble  
Frederick Green  
Todd Kingsbury  
Gundel Metz  
Rodney Birkle  
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Kathleen Carlson	160 MD
Marco De La Rosa	660 GA
Mark Herron	5789 MO
Alfred Simmons	8509 MD
Clinton Slack	475 DE
Edward Smith	2863 DE
Mary Spencer	56 KS
Brian Willette	3104 MA

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Sherrod N Conyers .....	2681 GA
James Galen .....	6802 TX
Garold Gamble .....	345 MI
Lora Land .....	9191 TX
George Lott .....	10152 NJ
Keith Mac Donald.....	5867 CA
Brian Willette .....	3104 MA





Harold "Hal" Roesch, II  
Commander-in-Chief  
2020-2021



Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic  
Commander-in-Chief  
2021-2022

## VFW NATIONAL OFFICERS 2021-2022

Commander-in-Chief..... Matthew “Fritz” Mihelcic  
Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief..... Timothy Borland  
Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief ..... Duane Sarmiento  
Judge Advocate General ..... Ronald “Ron” Rusakiewicz  
Surgeon General ..... Dennis Guthrie  
National Chaplain..... Harold Sayles  
National Chief of Staff..... Matthew Claussen  
Inspector General ..... Paul Lloyd

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Associate Director, Administrative Operations ..... Zach Schwenk  
Director, Member Service Center..... David Prohaska  
Director, Membership..... Rick Butler  
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Chief Information Officer, IT ..... Jason Hailey  
Assistant Director, IT ..... Geremie Berkley  
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Director, Communications & Public Affairs ..... Randi Law  
Director, Development ..... Kelly Jones  
Director, General Services ..... Alisa Neilon  
Director, Human Resources ..... Sari Maple  
Director, Meetings & Events/Exhibits..... Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM  
Director, Properties-KC ..... D’Marillio Holland  
Director, VFW Store ..... Hank Ellis

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Director, National Legislative Service .....	Patrick Murray
Deputy Director, National Legislative Service.....	Tammy Barlet
Associate Director, National Legislative Service .....	Emily DeVito
Associate Director, National Legislative Service .....	Brittany Dymond
Associate Director, National Legislative Service .....	Kristina Keenan
Associate Director, National Legislative Service .....	Katherine Cassell
Director, National Security & Foreign Affairs.....	Vacant
Director, National Veterans Service.....	Ryan Gallucci
Deputy Director, National Veterans Service .....	Michael Figlioli
Deputy Director, National Veterans Service .....	Gregg Orto
Associate Director, Service Office-DC .....	Keith Garrison
Associate Director, Service Office- KC.....	Ron Cherry
Assistant Director, NVS Field Operations.....	Daniel Fletcher
Associate Director, Field Operations .....	Christopher Guthrie
Assistant Director, Veterans Health Policy .....	James Moss
Assistant Director, Compensation & Pension Policy.....	Brad Hazell
Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance .....	Christopher Macinkowicz
Manager, Board of Veterans Appeals .....	Jeffrey Wishneski
Manager, Properties-DC .....	Kenneth Eads
Manager, Administration & Support Operations.....	Theresa Aldana

#### **REGIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS, 2021-2022**

Department of Alabama	George Jones
Department of Alaska	Johnathon Hackett
Department of Arizona	Lewis Wood
Department of Arkansas	Ashley Little
Department of California	Dale Smith
Department of Colorado	David Stone
Department of Connecticut	David Greene
Department of Delaware	John Mitchell
Department of Europe	Peter Mascetti
Department of Florida	W. Benny Bachand
Department of Georgia	Alfred Lipphardt
Department of Hawaii	Norbert Enos
Department of Idaho	Rockey Davis
Department of Illinois	Philip Maughan
Department of Indiana	Johnny Capps
Department of Iowa	Carol Whitmore
Department of Kansas	Patrick Briggs
Department of Kentucky	Robert Hendrickson
Department of Louisiana	Gerald Dugas
Department of Maine	Steven SanPedro

Department of Maryland	Denise Perry
Department of Massachusetts	Eric Segundo
Department of Michigan	Gerald Gorski
Department of Minnesota	Thomas Hanson
Department of Mississippi	Steven Organ
Department of Missouri	Jessie Jones
Department of Montana	Jack Hawley
Department of Nebraska	Larry Gerlt
Department of Nevada	Gerald Peterson
Department of New Hampshire	Joe Clark
Department of New Jersey	William Thomson
Department of New Mexico	Lenwood Hampton
Department of New York	Eugene Ratigliano
Department of North Carolina	Gregory Stafford
Department of North Dakota	William Tuff
Department of Ohio	Christopher Haynes
Department of Oklahoma	Curtis Watts
Department of Oregon	John Wrinkle
Department of Pacific Areas	Peter Callaghan
Department of Pennsylvania	Glenn Umberger
Department of Rhode Island	Eric Dukat
Department of South Carolina	Augustus Singleton
Department of South Dakota	Rick Williamson
Department of Tennessee	Henry Hooper, II
Department of Texas	Daniel West
Department of Utah	Dennis Parizek
Department of Vermont	Charles Magnant
Department of Virginia	Thomas Gimble
Department of Washington	Frederick Green
Department of West Virginia	Todd Kingsbury
Department of Wisconsin	Gundel Metz
Department of Wyoming	Rodney Birkle
Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief	Harold Roesch

## NATIONAL HONOR GUARD

	POST
Ronald Servary, Captain	521 MD
Jay Cabacar	5471 DC
Kathleen Carlson	160 MD
Marco De La Rosa	660 GA
Mark Herron	5789 MO
Alfred Simmons	8509 MD
Clinton Slack	475 DE

Edward Smith	2863 DE
Mary Spencer	56 KS
Brian Willette	3104 MA

**NATIONAL ASSISTANT SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS**

Joy Ausman	10043 ID
Sherrod N Conyers	2681 GA
James Galen	6802 TX
Garold Gamble	345 MI
Lora Land	9191 TX
George Lott	10152 NJ
Keith Mac Donald	5867 CA
Brian Willette	3104 MA

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 122<sup>ND</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WWARS OF THE UNITED STATES  
KANSAS CITY, MO, JULY 31-AUGUST 3, 2021

BUSINESS SESSION  
MONDAY, AUGUST 2, 2021

(The Business Session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the 108th National Convention of the VFW Auxiliary, held in the Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri, was called to order on Monday, August 2, 2021, at 8:00 a.m., by Adjutant General Kevin Jones.)

INTRODUCTORY CALL TO ORDER  
ADJUTANT GENERAL KEVIN JONES

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'm Kevin Jones, Adjutant General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Welcome to Kansas City, Missouri, and welcome to the 122nd VFW National Convention.

As we get started this morning, please draw your attention to the large screens to the sides of the stage as this year's convention sponsors are displayed. We thank all of them for their support, both of our convention and of our programs.

Special attention goes to USAA, Phillips, Humana, Burger King, Sport Clips, and Twisted X. And I'd like to extend a special thanks to CaptionCall via Sorenson Interpreting Services as a provider of this year's closed captioning. Please give all of our supporters a big round of applause.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: I do have one brief announcement. Please take notice that a little later in this morning's program we will make an announcement calling for the 2019-2020 All-American department commanders to assemble at the side of the stage to be recognized.

At this time, any post or district commander who obtain All-American status -- again, this is for the 2019-2020 membership year -- is welcome to join alongside their respective department commander to be recognized collectively as a group on stage.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Ladies and gentlemen, to get things under way this morning I'm pleased to introduce a gentleman who served our great country for 40 years. He's an Air Force veteran with service at the post, district, department, and national levels of our great organization.

Hal Roesch II was installed as the 121<sup>st</sup> VFW National Commander on July 24, 2020, at the National Headquarters right here in Kansas City, Missouri. He is a 20-year Air Force retiree serving from 1982 to 2002 with combat service in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and overseas service as part of Southern Watch.

Commander-in-Chief Roesch joined the VFW back in 1991 at VFW Post 3034 in Sumter, South Carolina, and became a post commander at VFW Post 4542 in Spring Lake, North Carolina. He now maintains his Gold Legacy Life Membership at VFW Post 3219 in Phoebus, Virginia.

Since joining our organization, he has remained committed to selflessly serving his brothers and sisters in arms and their communities; a commitment that despite great challenges served to propel the organization forward over the last year. A true leader. Please welcome VFW National Commander Hal Roesch.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Good morning.  
(Good morning)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you all for joining us here at this business-only session at the convention here in Kansas City to conduct the important work of our organization and reinforce our commitment to America's veterans, service members, and their families.

While abbreviated in format this year, I sincerely hope that you enjoy your time here and leave with an even greater sense of pride belonging to such a great organization.

Also, a special shout-out to all those around the world watching us via the Internet.

#### ADVANCEMENT OF COLORS VFW HONOR GUARD

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Now, please rise as we officially open the convention with the advancing of the colors.

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

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Comrade National Chaplain, the opening prayer.

#### INVOCATION BY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JOSEPH GALLICK

(Whereupon, National Chaplain Gallick gave the Opening Prayer.)



## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND NATIONAL ANTHEM

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was performed, followed by Posting the Colors and the National Anthem.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that completes the opening ceremony for the 122nd Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you, sir

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: National Sergeants, right face, forward march.

## PRESENTATION OF THE OFFICIAL CONVENTION BADGE, BELL, AND GAVEL TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF BY NATIONAL SERGEANT

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: At this time, I'd like to present the Bell and Gavel to the Commander-in-Chief.

## VIDEO PRESENTATION

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Now, please dim the lights for a special presentation of our year.

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

## REMARKS - COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Now, you know, if that doesn't get your blood pumping with pride in this organization, I don't know what will.

What a year we have had. Ladies and gentlemen, words simply cannot express how glad I am to be here with all of you today to kick off our 122nd National Convention right here online and in person. We are back!  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: While the collective "we" is back and the world continues to slowly return to normal, the truth is the VFW and Auxiliary members never went anywhere. We never quit doing what we do best: Serving others no matter what it takes.

I must take a moment to recognize the post, district, and department commanders here today because each of you raised your hand and took an oath of obligation to lead this organization in the midst of the pandemic.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: You did an unbelievable job, and we

thank you.

Also, a bit shout-out to our National Council of Administration for adapting to the challenges and completing the business of the VFW in ways never done before. None of us could have anticipated the huge challenges that we faced over the last year and a half. Heck, I'm not even sure we could have anticipated tremendous success in which we met and overcome these challenges, but we did.

We knew that we had posts that were not going to make it without some assistance. The VFW Foundation, along with the VFW Headquarters, provided post pandemic grants to the tune of \$1 million, and we didn't turn down one grant request.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: In many ways, America's veterans, service members, their families, and our communities are depending upon the vital support of the VFW more now than ever, and you continue to rise to the occasion in every echelon. Your selflessness, strength, tenacity, resolve were absolutely remarkable. And that, combined with your ability to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions, was nothing short of amazing.

They say, "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going." That's exactly what you did. When our disabled veterans assembly centers were shut down due to COVID, putting a halt to the production of our ever-important Buddy Poppies, posts all across this great country stepped up in a big way.

VFW and Auxiliaries, Cooties, VFW Riders, local communities stepped up by assembling those much-needed Buddy Poppies. Through your efforts, we assembled nearly 10 million poppies.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: This was just the beginning. I'm pleased to report that for this past year -- a COVID year, a year of the lockdown -- the VFW again stepped up by working in our local communities, opening your posts for blood drives, food banks, and vaccination centers.

When others hunkered down to wait it out, you rolled up your sleeves and wherever there was a need, you answered the call. You donated over \$34 million and 5 million selfless hours of good, hard service to others. Proving, once again, that your VFW posts are, in fact, the pillars of our communities.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Across this nation and around the world, you banded together to identify the emergent and growing needs within your communities and delivered on those needs, overcoming obstacles all along the way.

When the elderly and at-risk residents of your communities were threatened with a lack of basic necessities, you said, "Not on our watch." You mobilized members to deliver much-needed food, water, supplies to ensure

residents did not go without basic necessities.

And when local first responders were faced with a lack of protective gear needed to continue the work and to do that work safely, you said, "Not on our watch." You mobilized to sew hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of masks to ensure safety and well-being of others.

When the schools transitioned to virtual learning, the children of our nation who so strongly rely on sponsored meals at their school were suddenly faced with the possibility of hunger. You said, "Not on our watch," mobilizing to prepare and deliver meals to our nation's youth to ensure they would not go hungry.

And when your fellow veterans were threatened with adverse psychological effects brought on by quarantine and isolation, you said, "Hell no! Not on our watch." You mobilized to do safety buddy checks, virtual hangouts to ensure the mental well-being of your brothers and sisters in arms.

COVID has left its mark on all of us. And, heartbreakingly, it claimed the lives of many of our friends, family members, comrades, and colleagues. Please know that our thoughts and prayers continue to be with each of you who have suffered great loss over these many months. And the entire VFW family stands with you, shares in your grief, and wishes you continued healing and comfort.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the invaluable professionals that are the VFW Headquarters and Washington office staff.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: They displayed great strength in adapting to a forward-thinking approach to operations, assuring that the VFW programs and services continued uninterrupted.

Adjutant General Kevin Jones, Quartermaster General Debra Anderson, and Executive Director B.J. Lawrence successfully navigated uncharted territories, working diligently to ensure the operational guidance, and they were able to adapt as needed to continue our mission.

This resulted in many virtual VFW firsts to include the election of officers, the Legislative Conference, National Council meetings, National Veterans Service training, and a spectacular VOD Parade of Winners, just to name a few.

Our National Veterans Service representatives never faltered despite the lack of face-to-face opportunities to hone their skills and meet with veterans seeking assistance. Moving to a virtual environment, they continued their virtual work on behalf of America's veterans and continued to uphold their title as the best in the business.

Despite a global pandemic, they forged ahead and recouped more than 9.7 billion -- that's right, B, billion -- \$9.7 billion in VA disability compensation benefits last year alone.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Our national legislative team, despite many restrictions on the Hill, continued successfully to influence and lobby our nation's lawmakers to pass important legislation resulting in victories, like expanding coverage to veterans exposed to Agent Orange, extending VA employment programs to veterans of all generations, providing relief to student veterans, expanding programs aimed at curbing veterans homelessness and suicide.

And now their muscle is behind passing a comprehensive package aimed at unprecedented access to care and compensation for all veterans exposed to toxic substances. In fact, I implore you to join us in this effort.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Right now I need you-all -- every one of you -- to pull out your smartphones. Please point them -- your cameras -- towards the screens. Hopefully there will be a QR code that will be displayed. This will take you to our action alert where you can let Congress know of your support of this vital legislation.

And for those that have downloaded the VFW Events app, you just received a push notification containing the same code. If you do not receive the QR code and have not downloaded the app, please visit [VFW.org/cost](https://www.vfw.org/cost) and take action. That's [VFW.org/cost](https://www.vfw.org/cost), c-o-s-t.

Please take action. Do it now or do it later, but please, please do it today. Our veterans have waited long enough. You have waited long enough for this comprehensive package.

Ladies and gentlemen, throughout a crippling global pandemic, the VFW's mission never slowed or ceased. And we again proved that no one does more for veterans.

Comrades, I stand before you humbled. And I can honestly tell you that in my 30 years of being a member of the VFW, I have never been more proud to serve alongside you and say, "We are the VFW."  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Of course, we couldn't do all that we've done without the help of a few good friends. I'd like to recognize Sport Clips haircuts. Their continued commitment to student veterans through their support of VFW's "Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship" provides scholarships totaling over \$9 million since we started.

I'd like to recognize Jesse James Dupree and the Burger King franchisees who do their support of Unmet Needs Program continues to make certain that veterans have roofs over their head and food on the table, with grants totaling over \$12 million.

And to Prasad Reddy and his team at Twisted X, thank you for helping ensure success of America's youth through your commitment to the youth

scholarship program.

I also want to recognize and thank my leadership team. Senior Vice Commander Fritz Mihelcic and Junior Vice Commander Tim Borland and my Auxiliary counterpart, Sandi Onstwedder, it has been an honor and pleasure to serve alongside both of you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Lastly but most importantly, I want to thank my beautiful bride, Beth. Thank you for your support. Always and forever, I love you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm truly humbled to have served as your Commander-in-Chief for this past year. I've said it before and I'll say it again any time I get a chance: Never have I been more proud to serve alongside such an extraordinary group of people.

This last year is one we'll never forget for a number of reasons. But most especially because we experienced the strength of the VFW, the strength of you. You are the VFW, and there's not a greater group of selfless individuals in the world.

Again, thank you for all you have done, for what you continue to do, and for all that you will do for veterans.

Now, let's have a great convention.  
(Standing ovation)

#### PRESENTATION OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO MAJ. JOE DAVIS (RETIRED)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I'm pleased to present our first guest today with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation in recognition of his years of dedicated service to the VFW.

Enlisting in the Air Force in March of 1976, Joseph E. Davis reached the rank of staff sergeant when selected to attend the Air Force Officers Training School.

24 years later, Joe would retire in the rank of major with an overseas deployment history that includes assignments with the U.S. Central Command in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from '90 to '91; the First Marines Expeditionary Force in Operation Restore Hope, Somalia, '92-'93; and with U.S. European Command in Operation Support Hope in Rwanda, Zaire, and Uganda in 1994.

Joe is a three-time Chief of Public Affairs Service with the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, Luke Air Force Base, and Hickam Air Force Base. He was the acting Chief of Media for Headquarters Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base. And prior to his military retirement, he was the Deputy Chief of Public Affairs for the operational arm of what is now the Defense POW-MIA

Accounting Agency.

Joe brought with him a wealth of knowledge and experience in the realm of public affairs when he joined the staff of the VFW Washington office as its Director of Communications and Public Affairs in April 2004, where his duties included serving as national spokesman for the organization on issues ranging from national security and foreign affairs to the proper care and treatment of veterans, service members, and their families.

Joe retired from the VFW in 2019 and remains a VFW Life Member of VFW Post 3391 in America Samoa.

Please join me in honoring Joe Davis with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Distinguished Service Medal and Citation awarded to Joseph E. Davis in sincere appreciation and spirited recognition of his 15 years of dedicated and unwavering service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. A true communicator, armed with a sincere passion for serving his fellow veterans.

He served to develop and amplify the VFW message, educating the masses on important veterans issues and, in turn, garnering the needed – the support needed for initiatives leading to a better quality of life for every American veteran.

His steadfast commitment to the values and mission of the VFW has left an indelible mark on the organization and has justly earned him our deepest respect and appreciation.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 2nd day of August 2021. Signed by Hal Roesch, Commander-in-Chief, Kevin Jones, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS- MAJ. JOE DAVIS (RETIRED)

MAJOR DAVIS (retired): Aloha.  
Where's Hawaii Department?  
(Cheers)

MAJOR DAVIS (retired): Hey, George. Hi Bev.  
Comrades, I'm truly humbled. You know those 15 years were fantastic. I never thought it – if you listen to my bio a little bit you know, my 1990s was filled with a lot of humanitarian assignments. You know, Desert Shield/Storm wasn't a humanitarian assignment, obviously. And Somalia -- Somalia 1 was a humanitarian assignment. Then I did Rwanda month after the genocide. I did work for the POW-MIA Agency. That was a humanitarian assignment.

When I retired from the military in 2000, I went to work for Goodwill Industries, helping people to get trained, get jobs. And then coming to work for the VFW was an easy transition.

And I want to thank Bob Wallace, Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace -- wherever he is, if he's in the hall -- for hiring me.

I want to thank Hal Roesch. He's been a great chief. Sorry I couldn't see you through the year, but retiring is not a bad thing. Retiring -- retiring is not a bad thing. And, actually, this is the first time I've worn a suit since October of 2019, and a tie definitely. And I shaved this morning too. A lot of you can't say you shaved this morning.

But I want to dovetail on what the Commander-in-Chief said about the professional staff that we have in Kansas City and in Washington. They're incredible. They are absolutely hard-core professionals. They know what they're doing. And I hope you can learn from them.

And I just want you also to know that the success of this organization depends on you folks. It depends on volunteers. 100 percent success of this organization depends on volunteers. And as a communicator, I want you to know that we know that.

You know, my job is to sell you. And whatever you do out there, let us know. Because we have -- well, my replacement's replacement, Rob Couture in the Washington office now, is doing a bang-up job. But he's a new guy.

And for the National Council, I hope you keep -- keep him on, you know. It's one of those things -- I told him to buy you all beers, that way you hire him -- you know, appoint him for another year. He doesn't know that he's on a year contract. I didn't know that my first convention either. And then somebody -- my first chief was Ed Banas. Good man. Good man. He told me about the internal politics of the VFW. Boy, was he right. Boy, was he right.

But along with the professional staffs we have in Washington and in Kansas City, we also have a cadre of contractors that we hire year after year after year. And, you know, look at the video; we got Videoworks here, Val and her crew. We got the -- we got the sound and the lights, you know. We got Big John. We got Michael. We got Vito who's hanging with some restaurant or association this year.

We got transportation. We got Vicki in the -- she might be in the back around here somewhere.

And, you know, Bob Knudsen (ph), our staff photographer. He's from the DC area, but he travels because what he provides is quality, quality, quality performance and service. And that's why we keep bringing him back.

I've had enough time on this microphone. I just want to thank everybody in the Washington office. I can't name you all, but you-all -- I really miss you guys. I don't miss DC at all, especially over the last year and a half. I don't miss DC one bit. But I just wanted to thank you for everything. You guys are true comrades. And I've been blessed to be able to work for the greatest combat veterans organization in the country. Thank you.

(Applause)

## INTRODUCTION OF THE VFW NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN REPRESENTATIVES

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHEIEF MIHELCIC: Since 1925, the VFW National Home for Children in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, has remained a prominent representation of the very best the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliary has to offer. There is no better example of how our organization works together to support America's military families than by the services offered by the National Home.

Joining us this morning are three exceptional individuals: National Board – National Home Board President, Sissy Borel; Executive Director, Fred Puffenberger; and most importantly, our 2021 Buddy Poppy Child, Aurora Larson, who resides in North Carolina House --  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHEIEF MIHELCIC: -- with her mom, dad, and three siblings.

Aurora's favorite subjects in school are math and science. She recently completed first grade and enjoys playing volleyball, soccer, and tennis. She also loves to ride her bike around the neighborhood, fishing at Lake Romania, and helping to take care of her dog, Sarge. She wants to be a surgeon when she grows up so she can help save people's lives. Aurora is quite an extraordinary young lady.  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHEIEF MIHELCIC: In keeping with our great time-honored VFW tradition, our Buddy Poppy Child will now mingle among the generous -- generous -- VFW and Auxiliary members here today and pass the hat on behalf of the National Home. So please give what you are able to this ever-impactful organization. Your donation to such a worthy cause will further illuminate Aurora's Day.  
(Applause)

## REMARKS BY VFW'S NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN BOARD PRESIDENT SISSY BOREL

MS. BOREL: Wow, this is a nice-looking crowd.  
All right. Thank you so much for having us this morning. It's a pleasure to be here with you. I believe that Aurora is -- just visit with you just one minute. She just wanted to say hello. So, I will let her do that so that then she can pass through the crowd while we go ahead and speak, and that way we won't take up much time.



REMARKS BY 2021 VFW NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY CHILD AURORA LARSON

MISS LARSON: My name is Aurora. I am 7 years old. I live in the North Carolina House at the VFW National Home for Children. I live with my mom, Ashley, and my dad, Ben. My dad works for the Army, and my mom goes to nursing school. I also have three siblings, a sister and two brothers. I have a dog named Sergeant, but I call him Sarge.

I go to school in Danville and just finished first grade. I have two best friends, Jenna and Marlow. My favorite subjects in school are math and science. I want to be a surgeon when I grow up. I want to be a surgeon because I want to help save people's life.

My dad is a captain in the Army. He is my hero. He helps protect our country and people. He is brave so that everyone can have freedom. My dad is a military police officer.

I want to be Buddy Poppy girl so I can thank everyone in the military for making America safe and so I can make a difference like my dad. United we stand. Respect, honor, freedom. Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

MS. BOREL: I believe we may be looking at the future of the Auxiliary.

Today I think most of you know who I am. My name is Sissy Borel, Past National President for the Auxiliary. But today my job is I am President of the Board of Trustees for the VFW National Home for Children. This is a very important job to me because I have been passionate about the Home ever since I went to it the first time in my junior vice year.

If you have the opportunity, please go and see what you do at the National Home. And I want you to understand that it is you that owns that home. It's an ownership that we should take big pride in and the support that we give it. So it's very important that you understand it is your home.

Today I just want to talk to you a little bit about being old. Does anybody know anything about that, besides me?

Okay, then. I guess I'm wrong.

Well, you know, sometimes everyone thinks that when you're old, you're of no use. You've lost your -- you've lost your shine. You've lost everything.

I want to tell you that today I'm here to tell you that the National Home for Children is 96 years old. Now, that's pretty old.  
(Applause)

MS. BOREL: But I want you to know we have not lost our shine. We have not lost our -- our desire to do what we were set out to do, and that is to take care of our veterans and their families.

So, yes, the buildings, they may be old but they don't look old. We have updated those buildings every year. If you have a home there, if you

sponsor one of the 42 homes there, you've got to be proud because these are no longer wood-framed homes. These are brick homes that we are having our residents live in.

We have gone through, and we have updated pipes. We have updated restrooms. We have updated anything that we possibly could up until this point.

Now, I understand that today, probably our biggest need is going to be a snowplow. And I know it's kind of hard to think about a snowplow in this weather, but, you know, in a few months, a snowplow will be needed. So that's something you just might want to put in the back of your mind.

We have introduced new technology to the Home. We've updated the phone system so that now we are -- we are on the cutting edge of anything new going on.

We offer our residents the best in counseling, education, recreational, and enrichment opportunities. We also offer community resources and free housing and day care. That's a lot.

All this is possible only because of you, only because of the support that you and donors give through wills, trusts, Homefront Heroes, and gifts.

I want to talk about Homefront Heroes one second. I call that my "hamburger program." And what I thought about is this: That in my own circumstances -- and I'm not saying any of you might need to lose a little weight -- but if each one of us could give up one hamburger and french fries a month and send that money to the National Home for Children, what a difference you would make in yourself and in the Home. So just think about that one.

I want to talk about our staff. Our staff is second to none. We have people who've been with us over 25 years, and that's not just one. That's several. So that tells me that these people are devoted and committed to what they do there at the Home.

To sum up the Home, I just have to tell you, I think that I would be remiss if I told you that we -- we have -- over the 96 years, we have helped thousands of veterans and their families.

You know, in 2012, we reverted from just taking children in to now taking families. That was a big step for us. But it's one that we felt was very important because to heal -- to heal a family, you gotta work with the family.

Not just one, not just the other, but the whole group as a group. And we're -- we think that we're making the difference.

We have been able to help through the helpline, residential stays, scholarships, and even burial at the end of life.

I am here to thank you for your previous help and support, but to ask you for continued support. And my prayer is that the Home will continue for another 96 years. And I probably won't be here at that party, but I want you to know that our Home -- your Home -- is one of the best things that we are doing. And I appreciate everything that each one of you do to make that happen and make it a support.

Okay. A few years back, a couple – we had an executive director that decided she needed to retire. Go figure. After 30 years of working there, she decided she needed to go home.

Well, you know, the -- the search went on looking for the right person to put in as executive director of our Home. And as we looked, we looked, of course, for education; we looked for all those things that you should look for. But the last thing that we looked for was a heart. The servant's heart. And I believe that we found that in the person that we hired

And so at this time, I would like to introduce you to Fred Puffenberger, the Executive Director for VFW National Home for Children.  
(Applause)

REMARKS BY VFW'S NATIONAL HOME FOR CHILDREN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRED PUFFENBERGER

MR. PUFFENBERGER: I'm going to start out this presentation with a little video about what we're able to do because you let us be able to do it with your prayers, your spirit, and, of course, your donations. So if we can run the video and I'll have a few words after that. Thank you.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

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

MR> PUFFENBERGER: You know, when you speak, it's always – you know. It's one of those things, who do you follow. Now, having Madam President Borel, following her is daunting enough. She's charismatic, very caring heart, wonderful woman.

And then the Buddy Poppy was before that. A princess, she's just -- just the best.

And then I follow this. So I'm going to let you down a little bit because I'm not those three people, but I'm going to do my best here to give you an update.

On behalf of the resident staff and the Board of Trustees of the VFW National Home for Children, I want to thank you, and we all appreciate what you've done for the first 96 years of our existence. We're excited and we -- we're adding things on a regular basis. So 96 years from now, I do plan to be back to speak to you to let you know how it -- how it went.

So there are members of our Board of Trustees here from the VFW I'd like to recognize.

Keith Jackson, Art Scheuneman, Mark Winn, Jerry Blake, and Steve Van Bergen. These are just a part of the trustees that helped guide a ship through the darkness of the last year. So give them a round of applause, please.  
(Applause)

MR. PUFFENBERGER: You know, I'm very -- I'm very fortunate. Sissy made reference to some of -- some of our employees. And literally if you're ever at our Home -- and I hope you are -- and if you're not, we're gonna get you there -- we have Glenda who's been at the front desk 50-some-odd years, and she's a spry and -- enviably spry at that point.

I'd also like to thank the staff that came with us this week: Sue Albertson, Megan Mitchell, Jerry Martinez, Chris Alice, and Brian Lorenze (ph). They're at the booth. If you haven't been to the booth, please, please show up there, if you will.

You know, it's been a rough year for all of us. We had to cancel all of our events last year as all you did as well. But I want to let you know that the balance of this year, every event -- our State Days, our Life Membership Meeting, Fall Festival, and Santa Coming to Town -- are all on schedule, and they will be held at the campus as well as the Junior Vice Orientation next May. So look forward to those things, please.

As I mentioned and as was mentioned earlier, we have been around 96 years. The journey is not done, and it won't be done. But we need people to take the journey with us.

So here is -- here is a little teaser 'cause I want you-all involved. For the 2021-2022 board year, the National Home has two districts that are up for trustee election for the VFW National Home.

This year we have District 3, which is comprised of Life Members of the National Homes from the states of Delaware and Pennsylvania. And District 4, comprised of Life Members from the states of Maryland, Ohio, and West Virginia.

In District 3, we have two candidates running: Peter Walter from the VFW Department of Pennsylvania and Jodie Hollinger from the VFW Department of Pennsylvania Auxiliary.

In District 4, we have one candidate: Sandi Kriebel, Past National President and member of the VFW Department of Maryland Auxiliary.

Ballots for these positions -- for Life Members -- you need to be a Life Member to vote -- who reside in either District 3 or 4 will be mailed the week of August 16th, which is two weeks from today.

Ballots are due back in our office by 10:00 Eastern Standard Time on September 21st. Ballot counting will be on September 22nd, and all interested parties/applicants will be notified on voting results on that day by Board President Sissy Borel.

Now, here's where it gets great. This is where you can help me, as well as there. For the 2022-2028 election cycle, which is next year, we are looking for candidates for District 6, which is comprised of Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee; and District 10, which is made up from the states of Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Those will be opportunities for you to -- to help us. If you want to stay for 96 years, we can work that out for you. But usually it's a six-year term.

If you want more information, we have some information at our booth that we can hand out and give to you, and it'll be on our website later this month when we launch a new website, which we're very pleased to say. It's very exciting.

It will allow potential residents -- veterans and their families -- to go through the residency -- the residential qualification policy and be able to apply for residency online. And that will be the first time that we've done that.

We expect it to just reach people that we've never been able to reach before. So please be aware of that, and that will come out later this month.

So in closing, I just want to say it's -- Sissy had mentioned this -- it's only through you -- (unintelligible) -- it's only through you that we can do what we do. And I know this firsthand -- and you do as well -- as long as there are people that will sacrifice their freedoms for ours and the freedoms of their families, to take them away from their families, there will be a need for the VFW National Home. Thank you.  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: Director Puffenberger just gave me a gift for Hal, but since he's not here ...  
(Laughter)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: I'll make sure he gets it. I promise. Of course, I've also said, "Trust me. I'm a lawyer" a few times too.  
(Laughter)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: As our Miss Aurora walks around, I do urge you-all to dig deep and support our National Home.

One quick order of business. Before we move on, I would ask that at this time all of the 2019 and 2020 All-American Department Commanders begin to assemble at the side of the stage. Any post or district commander who attained All-American status -- and, again, this is for 2019-2020 membership year -- you're welcome to join alongside your respective department commander at this time. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, our friends at Humana are no strangers to helping veterans. Whether it is fighting food insecurity to help ensure veteran and military families have access to healthy foods or advocating for increased and expanded access to the highest quality of health care available from coast to coast, over the years they have shown time and time again their commitment to veterans and their families.

So when you have a person who has paired an impressive 30-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserves -- Marines --  
(Shouting)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: -- with 20 years of

hospital administration and managed care experience, it should come as no surprise that both he and the organization he works for have become passionate and dedicated allies to the VFW and our mission.

As Humana's Director -- Director of Veteran Channel, Ed Sandrick has been a driving force behind Humana's collaboration with the VFW, in addition to their partnering efforts with other national veterans service organizations.

Responsible for leading a team that is focused on developing and implementing veteran outreach programs at the state and local level, every day Ed works to find ways to improve every facet of veterans' lives.

And now, if you'll turn your attention to the screens on either side of the stage, it gives me great pleasure to show you a special message from Humana's Director of Veteran Channel and VFW Life Member, Retired Colonel Ed Sandrick.

(Applause)

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION

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

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: How about a big round of applause for Humana, one of --  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: -- one of our wonderful partners.

Our next guest represents an organization whose decades of dedication toward helping people live healthier, happier lives has made them an ideal fit as a premier sponsor of this year's National Convention.

Philips Healthcare has been working closely with the VFW and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs the last couple of years through Project ATLAS, a partnership which aims to provide equipment for telehealth solutions to veterans who live in rural areas.

To explain more by way of a video message, the senior vice president of Philips North America, Jeff DiLullo, a West Point graduate with 30 years of highly successful leadership.

Jeff has served as an infantry officer of the United States Army. He is one of nearly 1,000 veterans who are still serving their country and their fellow veterans through their work at Philips Healthcare.

Please direct your attention to the big screens ...

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you. And the Auxiliary sends their greetings.

RECOGNITION OF 2019-2020 ALL-AMERICAN DEPARTMENT  
COMMANDERS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: When I hear the words "All-American," I think of resolute dedication, everyone who goes that extra mile for their fellow veterans and who embodies the principles and tenets that the VFW was founded upon nearly 122 years ago.

Every commander being honored with this highest distinction of All-American is a culmination of years of hard work and the start of a proud and lasting legacy.

We were unable to properly recognize the 2019-2020 commanders who obtained All-American status. So today it brings me great pride to recognize this group, which includes 33 department commanders, 56 district commanders, and 251 post commanders.

As we announce the 2019-2020 All-American Department Commanders, they will be joined on stage with their 2019-2020 district and post commanders who also achieved All-American status.

It brings me great pride to present the 2019-2020 All American Awards.

Alaska, David A. Lemelin  
Arizona, Tom A. Judd  
Arkansas, William W. Beams, Jr.  
Colorado, David L. Stone  
Delaware, Marc A. Garduno, Sr.  
Georgia, Jeff Carroll  
Virginia, Richard A. Raskin  
Hawaii, Ronald Lockwood  
Kentucky, Bruce E. Unland  
Maryland, Thomas C. Williams  
Mississippi, Stephan P. Trochessett  
New Jersey, Barbara Hagemann  
New Mexico, Richard W. Nutt  
New York, Thomas Todaro  
Oklahoma, Darrell Mabry  
Ohio, Daniel P. Faulkner  
South Carolina, Robert Holsclaw  
South Dakota, Sean D. Johnson  
Utah, Gerald J. Root  
Vermont, Donald L McCormick, Jr.  
West Virginia, Vernon Anderson  
Wisconsin, Donald J. Lynch.

## 2020-2021 ALL-AMERICANS (ALL LEVELS)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: From the Department of Alabama, Danny Sample, Post 12185.

From the Department of Alabama, Allen Bowser, All-American Department Commander.

From the Department of Arizona, Hugh Byrne, Post 1677.

From the Department of Arizona, Derrick Tolesby, Post 3713.

From the Department of Arizona, Lewis Wood, Post 9400.

All-American Department Commander from the Department of Arizona, Jeffrey Eiler.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American Post 1342, Commander Charles Kinler.

From Department of Arkansas, All-American Post Commander, Post 2256, Stephen Davis.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American Post Commander, 4548, Michael Ritchey.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American Post Commander, 7769, Rodney Wood.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American Post Commander, 2952, Wade Farrington.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American District Commander, District No. 1, Jerry Tobey.

The Department of Arkansas, All-American District and Post Commander, District 6 and Post 4764, David S. Bramlett.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American District Commander, District 7, Adam Strange.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American District Commander, District 13, Terry Callahan.

From the Department of Arkansas, All-American Department Commander, Donald Barnes.

From the Department of California, All-American Post Commander, 1622, Douglas Perkins.

From the Department of California, All-American Post Commander, 2323, Bradley Klimovich.

From the Department of California, All-American Post Commander, 1956, Michael Cano.

From the Department of California, All-American District Commander, District No. 1, Paula Janssen.

From the Department of Colorado, All-American Post Commander, Post No 1, John Keane.

From the Department of Connecticut, All-American Post Commander, 12150, Charles Pickett.

Thank you very much.

From the Department of Delaware, All-American Post Commander,



3792, Phillip Smith.

From the Department of Delaware, All-American Department Commander, Thomas DiOrrio.

From the Department of Europe, All-American Post Commander, 10692, James Winslow.

From the Department of Europe, All-American Post Commander, 12139, John Casey.

From the Department of Europe, All-American District Commander, District No. 1, John Leffler.

From the Department of Florida, All-American Post Commander, 10178, Danny Fuson.

From the Department of Florida, All-American Post Commander, 12 -- excuse me -- 2391, Robert Daugherty.

From the Department of Florida, All-American Post Commander, 3270, Richard Possert.

From the Department of Florida, All-American Post Commander, Post 3282, Chris Gates.

From the Department of Florida, All-American Post Commander, 4643, Jeanne Vogt.

From the Department of Florida, All-American District Commander, District No. 11, Charles Norris.

From the Department of Florida, All-American District Commander, District 13, Randolph Cash.

From the Department of Florida, All-American District Commander, District 21, Wayne Tuttle.

All-American -- excuse me -- Department of Florida, All-American District Commander, District 6, James Durnal.

From the Department of Florida, All-American Department Commander, Glen Tilley. From the Department of Georgia,

All-American Post Commander, 5897, James Bright. From the Department of Georgia,

All-American Post Commander, 7402, Richard Attaway.

From the Department of Georgia, All-American District and Post Commander, District 4 and Post 6445, Arnold L. Gonzales.

From the Department of Hawaii, All-American Department Commander, Ronald Lockwood.

from the Department of Hawaii, All-American Post Commander, 3830, Benedict Fuata.

From the Department of Illinois, All-American Post Commander 1337, Les Durov.

From the Department of Illinois, All-American Post Commander, 5346, Seth Floyd.

From the Department of Illinois All-American District Commander, District 14, Stephen Eller.

From the Department of Illinois, All-American District Commander,

District 19, Brett Nila.

From the Department of Indiana, All-American Post Commander, 1282, Rebecca Murphy.

Department of Indiana All-American Post Commander, 2457, Richard Lineberry.

From the Department of Indiana, All-American Post Commander, 10003, Joel Watson.

From the Department of Iowa, All-American Post Commander, Post 941, Vance Arnold.

From the Department of Kansas, All-American Post Commander, Post 6324, Douglas Northcutt.

From the Department of Kentucky, All-American Post Commander, 5908, William Thomason.

From the Department of Kentucky, All-American Post Commander, 6291, David Wilson.

From the Department of Kentucky, All-American Post Commander, Post 10281, Tommy Eiland.

From the Department of Kentucky, All-American Post and District Commander, District 1 and Post 12197, Stephen M. Penney.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Post Commander, Post 3619, Joshua Morgan.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Post Commander, Post 3665, James Prestenback.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Post Commander, Post 5951, Federico Arends III.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Post Commander, 8720, Paul Hamburger.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Post Commander, 8971, Donald Reber.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Post Commander, 12182, Robert Boudreaux.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Post Commander, 4317, Phillip Lawrence.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American District Commander, District No. 2, Elvin Bass.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American District and Post Commander, District No. 5, Post 9854, Debbie R. Mcelhannon.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American District Commander, District No. 11, Paula Freeman.

From the Department of Louisiana, All-American Department Commander, Robert Lovergne.

From the Department of Maine, All-American Post Commander, 9934, James Bachelder.

From the Department of Maine, All-American Department Commander, Michael Davis.

From the Department of Maryland, All-American Post Commander, 5246, Ronald James.

From the Department of Maryland, All-American Post Commander, 9376, Michael Eason.

From the Department of Maryland, All-American Post Commander, Post 467, Thomas Williams.

From the Department of Maryland, All-American District Commander, District No. 1, James Holland.

From the Department of Massachusetts, All-American Post Commander, Post 12158, Robert Santiago.

From the Department of Massachusetts, All-American Post Commander, 6538, Natalie Call.

From the Department of Minnesota, All-American Post Commander, Post 8731, Todd Roberts.

From the Department of Minnesota, All-American District Commander, District No. 6, Jonathan Durst.

From the Department of Mississippi, All-American District and Post Commander, District No. 9, Post 4877, Terry B. Tolar.

From the Department of Mississippi, All-American Department Commander, Thomas Rollins.

From the Department of Montana, All-American Post Commander, 5652, David Oberwegner.

From the Department of Montana, All-American Post Commander, Post 10010, Jeffrey Schepp.

From the Department of Montana, All-American District Commander, District No. 2, Jack Hawley.

From the Department of Nebraska, All-American Post Commander, 2503, George Williams.

From the Department of Nevada, All-American Post Commander, 12198, Luke Bialczak.

From the Department of New Jersey, All-American Post Commander, 1429, Leonard Henning.

From the Department of North Carolina, All-American Post Commander, 2771, Tab Brown.

From the Department of North Carolina, All-American Post Commander, Post 4542, Elvis Cook.

From the Department of North Carolina, All-American Post and District Commander, Post 9983 and District 5, Anna Cummings.

From the Department of North Carolina, All-American District Commander, District No. 8, Joshua Holt.

From the Department of North Carolina, All-American Department Commander, Victor Letourneaut.

From the Department of Ohio, All-American Post Commander, 1148, Nicholas Zeedyk.

From the Department of Ohio, All-American Post Commander, 6273,

Michael Baird.

From the Department of Ohio, All-American District Commander, District No. 4, Justin Keeley.

From the Department of Oklahoma, Post 1193, All-American Commander, Daryl Mabry.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American Post Commander, Post 4884, Robert Carter.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American Post Commander, 8384, Harold Lasiter.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American Post Commander, 8706, Tony McGrew.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American Post Commander, Post 577, Dan Fuller.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American Post Commander, 4876, Lawrence Hurd.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American District Commander, District No. 1, Matthew Ward.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American District Commander, District No. 4, James Patterson.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American District Commander, District No. 3, Dannie Bates.

From the Department of Oklahoma, who was unable to attend today due to a serious illness, All-American Post Commander, 3085, James Hanson.

From the Department of Oklahoma, All-American Department Commander, Michael Merit.

From the Department of Oregon, All-American Department Commander, George Carroll.

From the Department of Pennsylvania, All-American Post Commander, 3258, John Otte.

From the Department of South Carolina, All-American Post Commander Post, 4262, Theonis Brown.

From the Department of South Carolina, All-American Post Commander, 6740, Ginger Graham.

From the Department of South Carolina, All-American Post Commander, Post 10420, Todd Haviland.

From the Department of South Carolina, All-American District Commander, District 1, Janet Chisholm-Richard.

From the Department of South Carolina, All-American Department Commander, Edwin Tufts.

From the Department of Tennessee, All-American Post Commander, Post 4973, Daniel Walcott.

From the Department of Tennessee, All-American Post Commander, 5066, Robert Hunt.

From the Department of Tennessee, All-American Post Commander, Post 5146, Terry Huskey.

From the Department of Tennessee, All-American Post Commander, Post 10904, Kimberly King.

From the Department of Tennessee, All-American District Commander, District No. 5, Hundley Ford.

From the Department of Tennessee, All-American Department Commander, Richard Lee.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, 1406, Reggie Williams.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Dennis Kretzschmar.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Post 2410, Narciso Villela.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Post 3966, Jessie Rodriguez.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Post 8273, Shenna Lawless.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Post 8541, William Smith.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Post 9170, Luis Polido.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Post 9174, Juan Martinez.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post Commander, Post 12041, Larry Sanders.

From the Department of Texas, All-American District Commander, District No. 1, Katie Bailio.

From the Department of Texas, All-American District Commander, District No 5, Gregory Brannan.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Post and District Commander, Post 688 and District 13, Andrew Camplen.

From the Department of Texas, All-American Department Commander, Richard Shawver.

All right.

From the Department of Utah, All-American Post Commander, Post 409, Delynn Zaharas.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American Post Commander, 637, Dennis Kennedy.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American Post Commander, Post 1115, Sandra Jean Terry Coble.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American Post Commander, Post 1503, Thomas Levitt.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American Post Commander, Post 3103, Todd Taylor.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American Post Commander, Post 9274, Jeffrey Campbell.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American Post Commander, 9808, Daniel Winkler.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American District Commander, District No. 8, Charles Bush.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American District Commander, District No. 9, Daniel Boyer.

From the Department of Virginia, All-American Department Commander, Eric Mallett.

From the Department of Washington, All-American Post Commander, Post 1263, Joshua Schreck

From the Department of Washington, All-American Post Commander, Post 7511, Terry Stinson.

From the Department of Washington, All-American Post Commander, Post 2224, Stephen Woodward.

From the Department of Washington, All-American Post and District Commander, Post 5580 and District No. 3, Frank M. Persa IV.

From the Department of Washington, All-American District Commander, District No. 11, Anthony Whetstone.

From the Department of Washington, All-American Department Commander, Tracy Williams.

From the Department of West Virginia, All-American District Commander, District No. 5, Kelly Goddard.

From the Department of West Virginia, All-American Department Commander, Dave Moske.

And from the Department of Wisconsin, All-American Post Commander, Post 1163, Tyrone Letto.

## 2020-2021 ALL-AMERICAN COMMANDERS AWARDS/TRIPLE CROWN WINNERS

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELIC: When a commander achieves All-American at the post, district, and department level, they are recognized with the coveted VFW Triple Crown Award.

It gives me great pride to recognize the 2021 VFW Triple Crown winners who are here behind me.  
(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELIC: It gives me great pride to now announce these Triple Crown Award winners.

From the Department of Arkansas, Donald Barnes, David Bramlett, and Terry Callahan.  
(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELIC: From the Department of Delaware, William Rickards.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Europe, John Leffler.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Georgia, Richard Attaway.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Louisiana, Elvin Bass.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Mississippi, Thomas Rollins.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Nevada, Gilbert Hernandez.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Oregon, George Carroll.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Pacific Areas, Kenneth Stein and Rhett Webber.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: From the Department of Virginia, Daniel Boyer.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: And from the Department of West, by God, Virginia, Melvin Goddard and David Moske.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELCIC: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating them for attaining such a momentous record of achievement. Congratulations.

(Cheering and applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELIC: Work hard, ladies and gentlemen. You too could be up here among the best of the best. Let's give them another round of applause.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Next I'd like to recognize the best of the best, our top-tier departments that finished with the highest percentage of membership in each of their conferences. Those departments are Montana from the Western Conference, Indiana from the Big Ten Conference.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Delaware from the Eastern Conference.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: And from the Southern Conference, the Department of Arkansas.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Ladies and gentlemen, let's give these departments a big round of applause as their leaders join us up here on stage to accept the streamers in honor of the hard work and dedication of their departments.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Now it's time for the award that we've been waiting on, bragging rights. Just like the Stanley Cup, the VFW Commander's Cup embodies all that the VFW stands for. It not only sets its holders apart as the conference with the highest percent of membership at the end of the membership year, but it entitles them with official bragging rights as the best of the best for the entire next year.

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2021 Conference Membership Trophy to the Southern Conference.  
(Cheering and applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, Southern Conference, this is the second year in a row, and this is -- this is a big year. And I thank you for everything you've done for -- for the VFW and for our membership. Keep it going. Thank you.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Your Legacy Life Membership not only offers expanded and exclusive benefits but also helps to ensure the VFW's vital work continues to aid veterans today and well into the future.

Today I'm pleased to recognize eight VFW posts that have earned the



prestigious Legacy Society Post Proclamation in recognition of having reached the benchmark of at least 25 Legacy Life Members.

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand as your post is recognized.

Coweta County Post 2667, in Newnan, Georgia, with 25 Legacy Life Members.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Jefferson County Memorial Post 3522 in Charlestown, West Virginia, with 25 Legacy Life Members.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Freedom Post 7692 in Appleton, Wisconsin, with 25 Legacy Life Members

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Spring Branch Post 8790 in Houston, Texas, with 25 Legacy Life Members.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Mediterranean Post 8862 in Vicenza, Italy, with 25 Legacy Life Members.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Matthew R. Hennigan Post 12101 in Henderson, Nevada, with 25 Legacy Life Members.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Airport City Post 10454 in Grapevine, Texas, with 50 Legacy Life Members.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: And with an impressive 100 Legacy Life Members, the James B. Sprague Memorial Post 8541 in San Antonio, Texas.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Congratulations on a job well done.

For those Legacy Members that – posts that we just recognized, please stop by the Life Membership booth to get your proclamation.

## VIDEO POTUS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: In July of 1917, former President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, joined the VFW. This was one of the first significant ringing endorsements of our young organization, solidifying our

legacy and elevating our relevance to our nation's highest office.

Throughout the years, presidents have participated in milestone events in the VFW history. Here are just a few.

In 1923, President Warren G. Harding publicly received the first official Buddy Poppy at Yankees Stadium.

In 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed our Congressional Charter of Incorporation.

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman, a VFW member, helped celebrate our 50th anniversary by appearing at our Golden Jubilee.

In 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, also a VFW member, dedicated the VFW Memorial building in Washington, DC.

Along with these incredible moments in our history, U.S. presidents have addressed audiences of VFW members at our national conventions over the decades. They understand the significance of this organization, not only as one of the most powerful constituencies in the country, but also as an institution of service and patriotism to our nation.

Now, it's a great honor that I present to you a special message from our -- for our 122<sup>nd</sup> National Convention, from a man who serves our nation honorably as a senator from the first state of Delaware for 36 years and now as our country's 47th -- or as our country's 47th vice president, a Blue Star parent of an Iraq war veteran and an adamant supporter of our service members, veterans, and their families.

Comrades, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, here he is, the 46th President of the United States, Joe Biden.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: At this time, we'll get ready to go into our recess, but I have a couple quick announcements to get out.

First, as soon as we get into this afternoon's recess, I need all of the department quartermasters and adjutants to please assemble over here to come on stage to do a photo and a check presentation.

Also, I was asked, as we all know -- or most of us know, Tim Peters was raffling off a 1952 Army Jeep. And the winner is Jonathan Smith from Billings, Montana. And Mr. Smith took the \$15,000 cash prize instead of the Jeep.

Mr. Peters would like to congratulate Mr. Smith and everybody who purchased tickets in supporting him.

Again, adjutants and quartermasters, we will get your picture.

And I know there were some departments that wanted group All-Americans. If you will assemble as a group and then come up, we will go ahead and allow you to get some pictures in.

At this time, I will recess until 1:30 p.m.

(A lunch recess was taken.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: All right. We will now call to order

our afternoon business session.

## REPORT ON CONVENTION CREDENTIALS - BETTY GRIPP

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now request that Betty Gripp give us the initial credentials report. Betty?

COMRADE GRIPP: Good afternoon, Commander-in-Chief, Councilmembers, and Delegates.

The opening credential report for the 122nd National Convention at the close of business 4:00 p.m. yesterday, August 1st, 2021. The total delegates registering their credentials are: Delegates registered, 6,595 strength. Department

Commanders, 48; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 14; total National Officers, 33. Grand total delegate strength: 6,690.

That's my report, sir.  
(Cheering and applause)

## REPORT ON CONVENTION RULES - CHAIRMAN KEITH E. HARMON, PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We'll now have a word from the Committee on Convention Rules, Chairman Keith Harman.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. The Committee on Convention Rules met Sunday, August 1st, 2021, and I would like to thank the members of the staff for their assistance.

Please refer to your Schedule of Resolutions book on pages 50 and 51 where you will find the proposed rules for this convention.

During our deliberation, one change was made. Rule 7 -- Rule No. 7 was amended to allow for consideration of a resolution submitted by the Commander-in-Chief. With that I will submit -- I would -- the committee has agreed on the following recommendations, which I submit for your consideration.

No. 1: That in accordance and conjunction with the National By-Laws and Manual of Procedure with -- and with the exception noted here, the current edition of the Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall be recognized as parliamentary authority for this convention.

2: That when a registered delegate desires to make a motion or address the convention, the delegate shall rise, address the Chair as Commander-in-Chief, and after being recognized, shall state their name, post number, and department before proceeding.

No. 3: The registrated [sic] delegates shall be permitted to speak but twice on any one subject or any pending resolutions for a period not to exceed five minutes each, except by consideration of two-thirds of the voting strength of the convention present and voting to -- well, I lost my place. How about that.

Provided that the chairman of the convention committees may speak as frequently as necessary in connection with reports of their committees.

In the event of a controversy, the presiding officer shall not entertain any motion and will curtail or further debate without affording the maker of the motion or debate without the motion or -- member or the delegation present expressively proposed by the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

No. 9: Only delegates to this convention may speak and deliberate -- debate, make motions, and vote during convention proceedings.

No. 10: Delegates shall vote on -- 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 Credentials Registration booth the previous day and as reported to the National Convention. The department commanders will receive, prior to the beginning of each business session, a list of posts that have properly registered delegates. Only delegates representing those posts listed on the report will be 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.

13: Registered delegates of the convention may arrive at a vote in any manner but shall announce it in terms of full units and not in terms of a fraction -- fraction or part of a vote.

14: Reconsideration of a motion or resolution upon which final decision has been made shall not be allowed after the meeting in which it was acted upon has been recessed, unless the body is notified of such contemplated action prior to the close of that meeting.

15: When the report of the department commander's delegation is not acceptable to all registered delegates of the delegation and a roll of the department registered delegates is remanded by the registered delegates of said department, the Adjutant General shall poll the registered delegates without discussion or question.

16: In accordance with Section 621 of the National By-Laws, voting shall be acclamation as defined within Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, except a roll call may be demanded by the -- by ten registered delegates representing posts in ten separate departments or by order of the Commander-in-Chief.

17: Nominating speeches for the National Officers shall be limited to five minutes each. The time allocated to encompass all seconding speeches shall be limited to four minutes total. Nominations and elections of National Officers will be held according to the Congressional Charter By-Laws Section 617 of the National Manual of Procedure.

18: Registered delegates/persons recognized by the Chair shall be entitled to a respectful hearing, and the Chair shall have the opportunity -- or

the authority to clear the gallery or floor or have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort from the floor any person or persons who may create any disturbance which interferes with the orderly procedure of this -- of the convention.

19: The Commander-in-Chief may, as -- as may be necessary and appropriate to -- informing the membership of the activities of this convention, authorize that all or 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 voting is necessary for suspension of the rules of this convention.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that these rules be adopted for the convention at this time.  
(Inaudible discussion.)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: No. 4. -- I'm sorry -- all resolutions ordered by individual registered delegates must bear the endorsement of the department adjutant or, if absent, the department adjutant. All -- all resolutions must be submitted to the office of the Adjutant General for numbering and referral to the committee no later than 4:00 p.m., Monday, August 2nd, 2021, and must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the resolution was not presented to the department convention for consideration. All --

No. 5: All resolutions offered on the floor at the convention will initially be in writing and shall automatically, 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 committee, 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 be automatically rejected unless a motion is made and seconded that it will be approved, in which case it will be brought up for debate and convention action.

No. 7: The convention will not consider any resolution dealing with the expenditure or appropriation of organizational funds.

No. 8: The convention will not consider any resolution endorsing legislation sponsored by any other veterans organization or requesting us to join with any other organization in sponsoring legislation expressly proposed by the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Again, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I move that these rules be adopted for this convention at this time.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Okay. We have a motion from committee that they be accepted as read to you. Is there any discussion? Is

there any discussion?

Being no further discussion, delegate -- registered delegates, please signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed, nay.

The ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Commander-in-Chief, additionally, Robert's Rules of Order call for the adoption of a convention agenda. Therefore, I move that the convention agenda that's currently displayed on the VFW Convention app and is -- from time to time may be adjusted by the Commander-in-Chief be adopted as the official agenda of the 126th -- or 122nd National Commander -- Convention. I'm sorry.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We have a motion from committee. Any discussion? If anybody has any discussion, please come up to one of the three microphones and be recognized. Any discussion?

Being no further discussion, all those in favor, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

The ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HARMAN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. That concludes my report. And thank you for the opportunity to serve on this committee.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BY-LAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL - CHAIRMAN GLEN M. GARDNER, PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: At this time, I'll have a report of Committee of National By-Laws, Manual of Procedures and Rituals, Chairman Glen Gardner.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

The Committee on National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual met Sunday, August the 1st, 2021. I would like to introduce the vice chairman of the committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Allen "Gunner" Kent from the Grand Canyon State of Arizona.

I would also have all the members of the committee stand to be recognized at this time. All members of the By-Law Committee, please stand.

Give them a round of applause for the great work they did yesterday.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: I would also like to thank

Jonathan of the headquarters staff for all his help and hard work, not only during this meeting but throughout the year as we've talked about the By-Laws and brought these recommendations to the floor at this time.

Comrades, the proposed amendments are in the booklets you received in your registration packet. Please refer to your booklet as I read the proposed amendments the committee recommended for adoption.

First, I will read the committee's recommendation for approval, then I will initiate a motion to adopt those proposed amendments. If a delegate wishes to set aside a proposed amendment for discussion, they will approach one of the microphones, state their name, post number, department, and ask that the amendment be set aside.

After set-asides have been identified, we will vote on the motion to adopt the other proposed amendments the committee recommended for adoption. Then we will discuss the set-asides.

After we complete the proposed amendments the committee recommended for adoption, I will read the proposed amendments the committee rejected.

Unless these proposed amendments are adopted through a motion, duly seconded and passed with an affirmative majority vote, they will die based on recommendations of the committee.

Commander-in-Chief, the committee recommends for approval the following proposed By-Law amendments: B3, B5, B7, B9, B12, B13, B14, B15, B16, B17, B18, B19, and B20.

Commander-in-Chief, I move that these proposed By-Law amendments be adopted by these delegates.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Okay. We have a -- recognize Microphone 1.

COMRADE ARCHER: Comrade commander-in-Chief, Tony Archer, Post 101, Colorado, requests that B3 be set aside.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Bear with us. He's getting the microphones lined up here.

Okay. We had a motion from committee that gave you a list of the ones approved, with B3 being set aside. Is there any other discussion? Any other discussion?

Being no more discussion, all those in favor, signal by aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?  
Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: B3 has been set aside. And I will read to you the rec- -- the comments from the staff.

B3, recommended by the National By-Laws Study Group, proposed by the Commander-in-Chief: Article 1, Members; Section 101, Eligibility. Amend Section 101, Eligibility, National By-Laws, by replacing the first paragraph with the following: "Any individual is eligible for membership in the corporation

only if the individual is serving or has served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States."

This change is consistent with our Congressional Charter as well as the eligibility requirements for every branch of the military. No branch of the military requires citizenship in order to serve, and our Congressional Charter does not require citizenship in order to continue to serve the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Chair recognizes Microphone 1.

COMRADE ARCHER: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tony Archer, Post 101, Colorado.

I have served with plenty of these individuals overseas that are not citizens or nationals in our country, and they do a wonderful job. However, in our National Charter, we are supposed to give true faith and allegiance to the flag, to the Constitution, and to our government.

When someone is not a citizen or a national of this country, how can they have undivided loyalty to our government if they are a citizen of another government? And that is -- that is why I think this should be -- should not be adopted.

If this is literally to expand to increase our opportunity for membership, I think we should focus that area on the three and a half million post-9/11 veterans that we have to bring into this organization for membership. Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you.

Chair recognizes Microphone 3.

COMRADE BRANDT: Comrade Brandt, Post 404, Department of Arizona.

I also served with some of those individuals, and a lot of people were not afforded the opportunity to do what they needed to for their citizenship. And this is the first step in getting some of them their VA benefits that they earned. We should absolutely pass this and stand behind our brothers and sisters in arms. Thank you, Commander.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Chair recognizes Microphone 2.

COMRADE ZIMMERMAN: Commander-in-Chief, this is Monte Zimmerman, VFW Post 7589, (unintelligible) Virginia.

You may know my son is a naturalized U.S. citizen, entered the military as a noncitizen, approved citizenship through service in the military. During the COVID administration, citizenship was delayed for several thousand people who are green card holders who are legally serving in the U.S. military, allegiance to the United States, and said they'd do their best to serve.

I'm absolutely in support of this resolution, sir.



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Recognize Microphone 1.  
COMRADE DAVIS: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Bill Davis, Post 12002, Department of Georgia.

Comrades, in the Member's Obligation, among other things, it has the following text, "I will bear true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America, and I will always be loyal thereto. And I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter, By-Laws and Ritual of this order."

It goes on and on. And at the end, it says -- and I think this is critical -- "All this I promise and pledge upon the honor of a true comrade and a citizen or a national of our great republic." Thank you, Comrade Commander-in-Chief. I urge passage of this amendment.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Microphone 3.  
COMRADE PERSA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Frank Persa, 5580 out of Washington.

I'm -- over the last 20-some-odd years I served, I've had many foreign national soldiers that joined the United States military, that went with me to Iraq and Afghanistan, that wore the flag of our country on their shoulder, that were put in harm's way just the same as the rest of us.

They should absolutely be afforded the opportunity to join this great, great organization.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Microphone 2.  
COMRADE AGUINAGA: Commander, Richard J. Aguinaga of Rhine Post 2729, Chicago, Illinois.

I too am in favor of allowing noncitizens to become a member of our VFW. It is without a doubt to World War II prior that members of other countries served in our army, hoping to obtain citizenship but were denied. Some have even been repatriated to their country of origin.

I think it'd be a tragedy not to allow them to join our great organization. Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Microphone 1.  
COMRADE BACHELDER: Chief, James Bachelder, VFW Post 9935, Sanford, Maine, Vietnam veteran.

All of the Canadians that came down to go to Vietnam were made -- it was illegal for them to serve in Vietnam. They became felons. And when they came back from Vietnam, they had to hide in their country.

And when amnesty was given to all of the draft dodgers, Ted Kennedy went up and convinced the -- the country of Canada to drop all charges against those Vietnam veterans. And many of them I know that I've talked with would like to be members of this organization, but they don't want to give up their citizenship.

And when they were in the military, they swore to defend and protect the Constitution of the United States. The original report that came out on this said that we would align our membership with the eligibility to become an Armed Forces member.

So we're not saying that they're not going to defend the Constitution. They already swore to do that before they became a veteran.

Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Do we have anybody that's in line that wants to speak against this? 'cause I got a feeling we can go on in support pretty much all day.

Microphone 3.

COMRADE BEAMS: Comrade Commander, Will Beams, delegate from Arkansas. I call for the question.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I have a call for the question. Do I have a second?

Microphone 1.

COMRADE SMITH: Dale Smith, California. Post 3783. I second that motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We've got a motion and a second to call for the question. Two-thirds vote. All those in favor, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

The ayes have it.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Now we will call for the question.

All those in favor of passage of B3, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

Ayes have it.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you, Comrades.

Now we'll read the proposed Congressional Charter and By-Law amendments the committee rejected, which will die unless a motion is made for adoption.

Commander-in-Chief, the committee rejected the following proposed By-Law amendments: C1, B1, B3, B4, B6, B8, B10, B11, B21. Are there any motions to adopt any of these proposed amendments?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Recognize Microphone 1.

COMRADE GARDUNO: Comrade Commander, Mark Garduno, Post 3238, Delaware.

Just a point of order, you said "B3," not B2. I think we were supposed to say B2.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Yeah, B2 --

COMRADE GARDUNO: Okay. Thank you.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: -- if I said B3. Yeah, B1, B2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 21.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Microphone 3.

COMRADE OLDHAM: Christine Oldham, Post 4548 delegate. I make a motion that we pass them all in block form.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: No, we do not need a motion. If there's not a motion to approve, then they'll automatically die.

COMRADE OLDHAM: I'll withdraw my motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I see nobody at any of the microphones; therefore, they die.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Yeah. Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

I will now read the proposed amendments to the Manual of Procedure the committee recommended for adoption. Commander-in-Chief, these proposed amendments are M2, M3, M8, and M9.

Commander-in-Chief, in keeping with the rules of the convention, I move these proposed amendments are adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Any requests for any set-asides? I see nobody at the mics.

All those in favor, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you.

Now we'll read the proposed Manual of Procedure amendments the committee rejected, which will die unless a motion is made for adoption.

Commander-in-Chief, the committee rejected the following proposed Manual of Procedure amendments: M1, M4, M5, M6, M7, M10.

Are there any motions to adopt these proposed amendments?

Hearing and seeing none, they die.

I will now read the proposed amendments to the Ritual the committee recommended for adoption.

Commander-in-Chief, these proposed amendments are R1, R2, R3, and R4. Commander-in-Chief, in keeping with the rules of the convention, I move these proposed amendments are adopted.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We have a motion that these be adopted. Any request for any set-asides?

Seeing nobody coming to the mics, all those in favor signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GARDNER: Thank you.

The committee rejected no proposed Ritual amendments.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes my report and the work of this committee. On behalf of myself, Vice Chairman Kent, and all the members of our committee, we thank you for your confidence placed in us to administer this committee.

Thank you to all the committee members for their hard work and members of the staff for their assistance.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Glen, I will now dismiss your committee. Thank you.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION - CHAIRMAN JOHN E. MOON, PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We'll hear the report on Committee on Finance and Internal Organization, John Moon.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: John Moon, Post 2873, Grover Hill, Ohio, Past Commander-in-Chief.

Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much.

Comrades, I am pleased to report that the Committee on Finance and Internal Organization met Sunday afternoon and discussed the items before the committee. The proposed resolutions were distributed to each department and posted online.

These resolutions are contained in the booklet that you received at registration, plus each member of the committee reviewed or received an additional booklet at our meeting.

Commander-in-Chief, the committee recommends the approval of the following proposed resolution: Resolution 201, the VFW's Commitment to

Diversity. Accordingly, Commander-in-Chief, I move adoption of this proposed resolution.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Committee recommends approval of 201. I see nobody coming to the mics.

All those in favor, signal by aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Reviewed by the committee and recommended for disapproval is Resolution No. 202.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I see nobody coming to the mics. 202 will die.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MOON: Commander-in-Chief, this concludes my report and committee. Thank you very much for the appointments. We appreciate it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you. Chief, I will release the Committee on Finance.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS - CHAIRMAN WILLIAM A. THIEN, PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We will now have the report on Committee on General Resolutions, William A. Thien.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THIEN: The 122<sup>nd</sup> National Convention Committee Report on General Resolutions, the 300 Series, submitted by myself, Past Commander-in-Chief John F. Gwizdak, and Past Commander-in-Chief Thomas A. Pouliot.

Will my committee members please stand? General Resolution Committee members. Let's give them a hand. We had a lively discussion. Take my word for it.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THIEN: Commander Roesch, I report to you the convention Committee on the General Resolutions convened at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, August the 1st, 2021. Roll call was taken, preliminary matters were discussed.

The committee carefully deliberated each of the four resolutions that it was assigned.

Commander-in-Chief, I'd like to report the committee rejected all 300 Series resolutions. And I will now read those resolution numbers and titles for the record.

301, National Flag to Honor and Remember Those Who Dies While Serving in America's Military.

302, Support the United States Post Office.

303, Submarine Warfare Insignia.

304, Native American Veterans, Incorporated, Congressional Charter

I wish to express my appreciation again to the members of the committee and the lively discussions, and to our headquarters facilitator, Dave Prohaska.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for this very important appointment. And this concludes our report.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Committee recommended rejection of all the 300 Series.

Seeing nobody coming to the mic, they will die.

Bill, you'll have to keep your committee together until tomorrow.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS - CHAIRMAN LARRY W. RIVERS, PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We'll have our report on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Chairman Larry Rivers.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief.

The Security and Foreign Affairs Committee met yesterday here in the convention center, beginning at 2:00 p.m. We had a great meeting, very engaged committee, and I'm pleased to offer the report.

Would the members of the Security and Foreign Affairs Committee and the POW-MIA Subcommittee please stand and be recognized for your hard work.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you very much.

Chief, I'm pleased to have a chance to chair this committee, and I'd like to introduce the vice chairman of the committee, Past Commander-in-Chief Bob Wallace.

And this committee also has a subcommittee on POW-MIA, and we have a chairman of that subcommittee, and that was Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier and the vice chairman was Past Commander-in-Chief Paul Spera.

My comrades, we had some 20 resolutions to consider. In keeping with procedures adopted by the convention, I will read the title of those that we recommend for approval.

The committee recommends approval of Resolution No. 401, Oppose TRICARE Fee Changes.

No. 402, Keep Defense Budget Relevant.

Resolution 404, Link Military Pay Increases to Private Sector Increases.

Resolution 407, Provide Full Concurrent Receipt of Military Retirement Pay and VA Disability Compensation.

Resolution No. 408, Support the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Resolution No. 409, Support the Republic of Korea

Resolution No. 410, Support the State of Israel.

Resolution No. 413, Recognition of Afghan and Iraq Combat Translators.

Resolution No. 414, Naming of the U.S. Navy Vessel U.S.S. Telesforo Trinidad.

Resolution No. 420, Gold Medal for Dust-Off Crews of the Vietnam War.

In keeping with the committee's recommendation, I move adoption of those resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We have a committee recommendation for approval of the ones read.

Any requests for set-asides?

Seeing nobody coming to the mic, all those in favor, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Thank you, Chief.

We also had three resolutions we amended and recommended for approval as amended. And I will now read those resolutions and the title.

The committee recommends approval of these resolutions as amended:

405, Sexual Assault Incident Reporting and Treatment.

406, Ensure DOD Compliance with TAP Mandate.

Resolution No. 416, Wartime Allies Burial Rights.

I move adoption of those resolutions as amended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Committee recommends approval as amended. Any request for set-asides?

Seeing nobody headed to the mic, all those in favor, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Commander-in-Chief, the committee recommended rejection and rejected the following resolutions:

Resolution No. 403, Preserve The All-Volunteer Force.

Resolution 415, Combat Heroes Deserve Combat Decorations.

Resolution No. 417, Support the Awarding of the Medal of Honor for E. Royce Williams.

Resolution No. 418, Support Naming United States Combat Ship in Honor of Fireman Second Class Telefonso Trinidad, a Recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

And Resolution No. 419, Naming a United States Navy Combat Ship.

Resolutions 418 and 419 were rejected in favor of Resolution 414, which the committee has now approved. And the other three resolutions were

actually tabled and not rejected, but it has the same effect.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: The committee has recommended rejection. Seeing nobody coming to the mic, they will die.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: I thank you, Chief.

#### REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW-MIA - CHAIRMAN

JAMES E. NIER, PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: I'd now like to call on the chairman of the POW-MIA Subcommittee for his report, Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Larry.

Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier, delegate, Post 8919, Texas, vice chairman of the committee's been introduced, Paul Spera, of the POW-MIA Subcommittee.

The subcommittee on POW-MIA met on Sunday immediately following the meeting of the full committee. There were two resolutions assigned to the subcommittee. I will now read the resolution numbers and the titles that the committee recommends for approval as amended: 411, Protect POW-MIA Full Accounting Mission Funding; and 412, Call for More Unilateral POW-MIA Actions by Vietnam.

The subcommittee recommended approval of 411 and 412, and the full committee approved the resolutions.

I therefore move for the adoption of Resolutions 411 and 412.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: The committee recommends approval. Any request for set-aside?

Seeing nobody heading to the mic, all those in favor, signal by aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed?

It passes.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: This concludes the report of the subcommittee on POW-MIA. I thank the committee for their deliberations, and I thank you, Commander-in-Chief, for the appointment.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RIVERS: Again, I would like to thank the members of this committee for their hard work and dedication. And the committee also asked me if I would make one comment.

We had a couple of resolutions that we rejected because we didn't understand them. And they had been submitted by departments, and there was nobody attending the committee from that department to explain those resolutions to us.

So several of the committee members came to me after the committee and asked that I would please ask all of the delegates here if your state submits a resolution to the Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, please have a representative there to help us when we do the debate.



Commander-in-Chief, thank you very much for appointing this committee. They did a good job. I hope you appreciate their hard effort and work, and I know that you do. And this concludes the report of the Security and Foreign Affairs Committee.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Chairman Rivers, I release the National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee.  
Chairman Nier, I also release the Subcommittee POW-MIA.

#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS – CHAIRMAN BRIAN DUFFY, PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: At this time, we'll have report of Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions, Chairman Brian Duffy.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DUFFY: Comrades, Commander Roesch, I report that your convention Committee on Veterans Service Resolutions convened at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, August 1st, 2021. Roll call was taken, and preliminary matters were discussed.

The committee was divided into three subcommittees to carefully deliberate the 42 resolutions that were assigned. The subcommittees were established with Subcommittee 1 dealing with health; the Subcommittee 2 dealing with benefits; and Subcommittee 3, economic opportunities and other matters.

Would all the committee members of the Veterans Service Committee please stand to be recognized.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DUFFY: Thank you, Comrades, for your dedication to the committee.

And before I proceed with the report, I wish to also express my appreciation to Vice Chairman Past Commander in-Chief Tommy Tradewell and also to Past Commander-in-Chief Ed Banas for their contributions to the committee.

I'd be remiss if I didn't also thank the staffs of both Kansas City and DC for their assistance.

Commander, I will begin the committee report by presenting those resolutions that the committee recommends to be approved as written, and then proceed to report those resolutions that were recommended approved as amended, and finishing up with those resolutions that were recommended rejected.

If for any reason delegates of this convention would like a resolution set aside for further discussion, as has been done in previous committees, please indicate so and we will set them aside.

I will now proceed in accordance with the convention rules by reading the resolution numbers and the titles that the committee recommends for

approval as written.

- Resolution No. 601, Adequate Department of Veterans Affairs Budget.
- 602, VA Pharmaceutical Copayments.
- 603, VA Medicare and TRICARE Reimbursement.
- 604, Nursing Home Eligibility.
- 606, PTSD and Mental Health Care.
- 608, Expand VA Caregiver Benefits.
- 609, Sustainable Community Care Options for Veterans.
- 610, Research on Medical Cannabis Treatments.
- 611, COVID-19 Lessons Learned.
- 613, Extending Gulf War Presumptions in Healthcare Beyond 2021 and to Afghanistan Theater Veterans.
- 614, Extend Service Connection Presumption to Blast Survivors.
- 615, Tinnitus and Hearing Loss Presumptive Service Connection.
- 616, VA Claims Workload.
- 618, Toxic Exposure.
- 619, Digital Claims Process.
- 620, Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance.
- 621, VA Automotive Allowance.
- 622, Domiciliary Programs and Temporary Total Ratings.
- 623, Improve Education Benefits for Survivors.
- 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, Processing a Foreign Military Program Claims.
- 631, Access to Veteran Health Identification Cards.
- 632, Consider to Amend Bill S2320, Remembering America's Forgotten Veterans Cemetery Act of 2012 to add the former United States Military Camp John Hay Cemetery 1 and 2 in Baguio City, Philippines, as one of the U.S. Military Cemeteries under the American Battle Monument Commission.
- 634, Support The Transferability of Education Benefits for Veterans Who Served Post-9/11 but Who Separated Before 8/1/2009.
- 636, Support Funding and Expansion of Vet Centers, Mobile Vet Centers, and Vet Center Outstations.
- 637, Support Suicide Prevention by Using Department of Health and Human Services and Expanding Veterans Affairs Services.
- 641, Expansion of Veterans Affairs Technologies for Continuous Buddy Checks.

Commander-in-Chief, I move to accept the committee's recommendation to approve these resolutions.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Committee has recommended approval. Do I hear any set-asides?

Seeing nobody coming to the mic, all those in favor, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed, nay.

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DUFFY: Thank you, Chief

I will now read the resolution numbers and titles that the committee recommends for approval as amended.

Resolution 605, Traumatic Brain Injury Health Care.

607, VA Health Care for Women Veterans.

612, Consider Treatment for a Presumptive Service-Connected Condition As a Claim for VA Compensation.

And 639, Support the Translation of Veterans Affairs Literature to Improve Minority Veterans Utilization Rate.

Before I make the motion, as there was only four involved, let me tell you what the recommended amendments were.

Resolution 605, in the last, "Be it further resolved," added "and other related injuries" after the word "falls."

In 607, the amendment, the first "Be it resolved," take out "veterans have" after "to ensure."

612, to the title, "or a service-connected condition that has increased severity" after "service-connected condition" and add that same to the first "be it resolved" after "presumptively" -- "presumptively service-connected."

639, the title "Deleted Literature to Improve Minority Veterans Utilization Rate," and replace it with literature -- or replace "Literature" with "Information."

Commander-in-Chief, I move to accept the committee's recommendations to approve these resolutions as amended.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Committee recommends approval as amended. Any requests for set-asides?

Seeing nobody coming to the mics, all those in favor, signal by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed, nay.

Ayes have it.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DUFFY: Thank you, Chief.

Commander-in-Chief, I will now read the resolution numbers and the titles that the committee recommended for rejection. These will die unless set aside.

Resolution 629, Department of Veterans Affairs Leadership Integrity. The rationale was that it's already required by law.

633, Green Star Flag for Veterans Suicide. It was rejected because it -- it conflicted with our convention rules in regard to outside NGO.

635, Support The Expansion of the Stellate Ganglion Block Research and Implementation to Treat PTSD, and it was rejected in lieu of Resolution 606, which was approved.

Supporting Funding for Visits to National Cemeteries was rejected because the program parameters were too broad.

640, Support Initiative to Decrease Homelessness by Matching Homeless Veterans with Veteran Empty-Nesters. It was rejected because of the legality involved.

642, Support Passage of Commitment to Veterans Support and Outreach Act, and that was rejected because it conflicted with the VFW's Standing Service Officer program.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Committee gave you a list of the recommendations -- I'm sorry -- objections -- rejections.

Seeing nobody coming to the mics, they will die.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DUFFY: Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch, this concludes the committee's report on the Veterans Service Resolutions. And once again, my thanks for the appointment to this committee and the good steerage of Past Commander-in-Chief Tommy Tradewell and Ed Banas. Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Committee of Veterans Service Resolutions, I will now release you.

That had to have been about the quickest we have ever done.  
(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I don't know whether you-all ate too much at lunch --  
(Laughter)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: -- or whether it was the rock-and-roll in the beginning and then you guys had to eat lunch for two hours and now you-all are quiet. But it's probably more of a testament to everybody taking time to look at what was being recommended and doing some discussion and by -- no doubt -- the great work of the staff and the committees that went over these and sorted those out. So, my hat's off to the staff and all the committees.

#### CLOSING CEREMONY

CLOSING PRAYER - NATIONAL CHAPLAIN  
FATHER JOSEPH GALLICK

SALUTE TO THE COLORS - COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Sergeant-at-Arms.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Commander-in-Chief.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Will you please perform the closing

ceremonies for today's business session.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Yes, Comrade Commander.

Comrades, all rise.

National Chaplain, Father Gallick.

(Whereupon National Chaplain Joseph Gallick gave the Closing Prayer and the Salute to the Colors was performed.)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that closes -- concludes the closing ceremonies of the first day of the 122nd VFW Convention.

#### ADJOURNMENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms.

We will adjourn until 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

BUSINESS SESSION  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021

(The Business Session of the 122nd 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 Hal Roesch presiding.)

CALL TO ORDER

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Good morning, everyone.  
(Good morning)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now reconvene the 122nd VFW National Convention.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please conduct the opening ceremonies.

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

SALUTE TO COLORS

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Comrades, all rise.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, facing the flag or our nation, please join me in the opening salute to our colors.

(Whereupon, Salute to the Colors was given at this time.)

OPENING PRAYER –  
NATIONAL CHAPLAIN JOSEPH GALLICK

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Comrade National Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GALLICK: Let us pray.

(Whereupon, the Opening prayer was given by National Chaplain Gallick.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, attention.

Comrades, facing the flag of our nation, please join me our Pledge of Allegiance.

Present Arms.

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

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, 122nd Convention has been reconvened.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you, Sergeant.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: National sergeants, right face.  
Forward march.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Just a quick reminder, we are still under a mask mandate here in Kansas City; so please remember that today.

#### REPORT ON CONVENTION CREDENTIALS – BETTY GRIPP

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: At this time, I'd like to call on Betty Gripp for the final report on the credentials committee.

COMRADE GRIPP: Good morning, Commander-in-Chief, Councilmembers, and Delegates.

The credential report for the 122nd National Convention at the close of business, 4:00 p.m. yesterday, August 2nd, 2021, the total delegates registering their credentials are: Delegate strength, 6,785; Department Commanders, 52; total Past Commanders-in-Chief, 17; total National Officers, 61. Grand total delegate strength, 6,880. Total registered for the 122nd National Convention, 1,282.

Sir, it's been a pleasure and an honor to serve you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you, Betty. As usual, tremendous work.

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION - TAIWANESE MINISTER FENG SHIH-KUAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Since 1979 America has enjoyed a robust, unofficial relationship with the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan. Signed by then President Jimmy Carter, the Taiwan -- Taiwan Relations Act continues to allow the United States and the Republic of China on Taiwan to maintain the exchange of ideas and commerce, as well as shores up the U.S. commitment to assisting Taiwan to maintain its identity and ability to defend itself.

This people-to-people relationship is reflected throughout both societies in all aspects of life, from sister cities, to student exchanges, to industry partnerships, and even the two nations' like commitment to care for their veterans.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is proud of its special relationship with the Taiwan's Veterans Affairs Council. A bond that coincides with our longstanding national resolution supporting the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Now, with a special message for our 122<sup>nd</sup> National Convention, is a man who has served in defense of his country for almost 60 years. He has served as a fighter pilot, a commanding general, a chairman leading a defense industry company, a former minister of national defense, and most recently, the director of the Institute for National Defense Security Research.

Ladies and gentlemen, here is the minister of Taiwan's Veterans Affairs Council, Mr. Feng Shih-Kuan.  
(Applause)

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

PRESENTATION OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION TO  
PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BOB WALLACE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I now have the distinct honor and privilege to present our first award of the day, the 2020 Distinguished Service Metal and Citation to a man for many of you needs no introduction.

However, to truly get an appreciation for why he is receiving this award, we have to recall who he is, what he accomplished in his many years of service to our great organization.

A native of northern New Jersey and the son of a VFW Post Commander, Robert E. "Bob" Wallace entered the United States Marine Corps on April 12th, 1967, and served with the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines -- 1st Marine Division in Vietnam from 1967 to June of '68, obtaining the rank of lance corporal.

He is a veteran of the Battle of Hue during the 1968 Tet Offensive and received three Purple Heart metals for wounds sustained during combat. Wallace joined the VFW while in Vietnam.

In 1979, Wallace was a recipient of the VFW's Young Veteran of the Year Award from both the national organization and the VFW Department of New Jersey.

Wallace was the first Vietnam veteran, as well as the youngest veteran, to command the Department of New Jersey from 1980 to 1981.

He has served on a variety of state and national VFW committees to include Legislative, Security, Budget and Finance. He also served on the National Council of Administration.

From August 1991 to August 1992, Wallace served as the VFW Commander-in-Chief. During his term of office, he focused on quality VA care for veterans and worked to the fullest possible accounting of American prisoners of war and missing in action from the Vietnam War.

During his tenure, he traveled to Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia to meet with the Southeast Asian leaders and to the Russian Federation to help resolve POW and MIA issues.

Wallace joined the VFW staff in 1996 as Deputy Executive Director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars' Washington, DC, office, managing the day-to-day operations of the VFW activities in our nation's capital.

In 2021, Wallace was appointed to the position of Executive Director, and in 2016 was duly appointed Adjutant General.

Wallace's direct oversight of the VFW National Legislative Service



resulted in the advancement of every piece of quality-of-life legislation signed into law at the end of the 20th century as well as into the 21st.

Wallace retired from the VFW in 2019. He continues to support the VFW as a Life Member of VFW Post 9503 in Bayville, New Jersey, and resides in Alexandria, Virginia, with his wife, Dr. Katherine Wallace.

Now, it is with great pride and honor that I present the 2020 Distinguished Service Medal and Citation to Vietnam veteran, Purple Heart recipient, VFW leader, mentor, and now two-time Distinguished Service Medal recipient.

Please help me welcome back to the stage a living legend and personal friend, Bob Wallace.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Distinguished Service Medal, Robert E. "Bob" Wallace, Adjutant General and Executive Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, in lasting appreciation and spirited recognition of his 23 years of exceptional and unwavering service and dedication to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and to the members of this great organization as Adjutant General of the VFW and Executive Director of the VFW Washington office.

His loyalty and commitment to America's veterans, service members, and their families, along with the dedication with which he fulfilled his duties, has left a legacy that will soon not be forgotten and have earned him the utmost appreciation 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 3rd day of August, 2021.

Signed Hal Roesch, Commander-in-Chief; Kevin Jones, Adjutant General.  
(Standing ovation)

REMARKS - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND PAST EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF WASHINGTON, DC, OFFICE ROBERT E. "BOB" WALLACE

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: Thank you very much, Commander-in-Chief and Comrades. I sincerely appreciate the honor, but I've got to accept it on behalf of all the people that made my tenure in DC and my tenure, for a brief period, in Kansas City a success: The staff in DC and KC's office.

Every day they go to work, and one of them satisfies a veteran's need, makes a difference in a veteran's life. It makes that veteran feel like it's Veterans Day, whether it's someone answering the phone with courtesy, whether it's someone getting an Unmet Need grant, whether it's a service officer who tells -- tells the veteran that their claim was approved.

Or if it's a service officer who tells the claimant that his claim wasn't

approved because of this, this, and this. They tell him the truth. It makes a difference in people's lives.

I also want to acknowledge my wife, who's back home in DC, who is working at the -- works at the VA and she's working on the pandemic; so she isn't able to be with me. But she's always supported me in my endeavors with the VFW.

I only know of two people that have served as commander-in-chief, adjutant general, and executive director: Larry Rivers and myself. Each job carries different responsibilities. Each job has different challenges.

Commander-in-Chief, everybody's with you. You're moving forward and so forth. The "Meet the Challenge" year was a very successful year for the VFW. We had a legislative success. We've also had the largest membership the Veterans of Foreign Wars has ever had. And I wish that record was broken. I really wish that record was broken. But it was the 37th year of consecutive growth.

When I went in as adjutant general for the year, I had a couple of priorities. Number one, I wanted the staff in Kansas City and the staff in Washington to understand what each other did. So people from Kansas City flew to DC, people from DC flew to Kansas City and went through a couple days of briefings.

I felt that they needed to better understand what part of the puzzle they all played, what things they did that made a difference for veterans. The front lines, the people that are out there and the service officers that are in the field or on bases, legislative, what are they doing?

The reason the VFW exists is because of veterans service and legislation. Let them know that. But there's a lot of support functions here in Kansas City people had to understand and know and put a face to people. I think that program was a success.

The second thing I wanted to do is to just take a deep dive and look at the Membership Department. What should we change? What shouldn't we change? Should we use more of the Kansas City staff and more of the different directors into the process to give advice and counsel? And they did that. They looked at that.

And the third thing was we had to revitalize our foundation. Our foundation wasn't moving in the right direction: So we hired a consultant to find someone for us, and we hired Rich Potter.

The bottom line is when a consultant hired us, I said, "Well, tomorrow we're going to get millions of dollars."

He said, "No. It's going to take five years or plus. Add the pandemic in there, we're probably now at seven years before we start seeing any."

"But as you look at the board, every year it gets longer and longer. More people are donating and doing the right thing. So it's working. The Foundation's working."

But then comes the toughest job in the VFW, the executive director of the Washington office. It is, without a doubt, the toughest job in the VFW in

my opinion.

Not because you have to balance the politics. Not because they're democrats, republicans. Not because you deal with the 535 smartest human beings in the world. None of that. It's because every decision, when the executive director goes in those rooms and they close the door and he says or she says "yes" to impacts the lives of a veteran, service member, or their family.

So if you're going to compromise and you're going to support something, you gotta understand what you're going to do, and you gotta understand the issue, and you gotta understand the impact on the veteran, that individual. That's where the staff comes into play.

The staff is so good -- the Washington staff -- they prep you. They prepped me on every part of what was going on. I didn't know the deep -- deepest dive, but I knew enough to be dangerous and the staff did that.

Many meetings you can have a staff member in, but when the tough decisions are being made, they don't invite them in. So -- so they got to get you prepared, and they gotta do that. And they did it, and they continue to do it.

They're professionals. They go to work every day to make a difference for veterans. They believe every day is Veterans Day, and there's no question about it.

The toughest issue that I confronted is POW-MIA. Can't push a button to get action for it, to go against the -- to write to the communist country of -- whether it be Russia, China, or Vietnam, 'cause they don't care. They don't care.

So constant visits made a difference, but I think what we -- I know what we tried to do is we tried to work with veterans. And veteran to veteran. Many of you remember we had a number of Russians that came to our conventions for a couple of years. They were Afghan veterans. They were the bastard children of Russia.

They were looking for help, and they were looking for advice, and they were looking for counsel. We provided that to them. We got them to go to the VA and get tours. We explained to them what the VFW did. We explained to them how our system works. They have no safety net.

In return, they help our people with leads that they get from their members and from what they -- from people that they know on what could be missing Americans. So it's positive.

We did the same thing in Vietnam trying to work with them. We had Vietnamese here and in other countries. That was the toughest -- toughest part because I knew -- I got to know a lot of the families.

And what can you do? I can't say, "I'm going to activate the VFW Action Corps." I can just say, "The VFW's going back to Vietnam to impress upon the Vietnamese that we've got to make a difference."

My fellow New Jerseyan, Frank Sinatra, sings a song "My Way." And he says, "Regrets? I have a few, but then again too few to mention."

My biggest regret is that more of you and more of our members on all levels don't truly understand what the VFW actually does. They don't truly understand the different issues and the way that this organization helps human beings, veterans, service members, and their families.

They don't understand what the Washington office does and what the service officers do in the field. They don't understand legislation totally. I know it's not sexy. But I just wish -- my biggest regret is that the videos we produce and the speeches we give, that more people don't understand what this great organization does.

Every day is Veterans Day in our VFW because no one does more for veterans. Thank you and God bless you.  
(Standing ovation)

#### VIDEO PRESENTATION - KELLY McKEAGUE - DPAA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: For almost 50 years the United States Department of Defense has dedicated time, personnel, and resources to the sole mission of accounting for those Americans listed as prisoners of war or missing in action. That began with the Central Identification Laboratory in Thailand, established to coordinate the recovery of American POWs and MIAs in southeast Asia, morphed into the Joint Task Force with detachments, laboratories, liaison offices, and other subordinate units given the responsibility of accounting for those missing from all past wars and conflicts.

Today the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency established in 2015, carries on that mission around the world. Devoted to the insurmountable task of accounting for some 83,000 missing Americans.

Just this year DPAA accounted for 87 American service members lost in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. This was the result of countless hours spent and -- and the tireless efforts of the more than 700 defense department uniform and civilian personnel that make up the world-class workhorse of this organization.

Through a partnership that has lasted for decades, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is honored to -- honored to work alongside of this great agency in helping to fulfill our nation's promise to bring all of America's missing service members home.

Now, with a special message for the 122<sup>nd</sup> National Convention is the man who has been the leader in this organization's effort for more than ten years, Director of the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency, United States Air Force, Retired, Major Kelly McKeague.

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

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: For those that regularly attend the National Convention, the next presentation will certainly come as no surprise. For 54 consecutive years, the members of the Department of Arizona

have come together as a team to increase VFW membership throughout the Grand Canyon state. What this department has accomplished is truly remarkable. I commend each and every member of the Department of Arizona for their years of devotion and tireless efforts that have gone into reaching this momentum achievement yet again.

Now, in honor of their hard work and dedication, I would like to call on the Arizona Department Commander, Tom Judd for the year 2020, Jeff Eiler for 2021, to accept their respective Consecutive Years of Membership Growth Citations.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Certificate of commendation awarded to Department of Arizona in recognition of the remarkable achievement of 53 consecutive years of membership sustained by 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 3rd day of August, 2021. Signed by William Doc Schmitz, 2019-2020 Commander-in-Chief, and Kevin Jones, Adjutant General.

(Applause)

COMRADE JUDD: I would just like to say thank you Arizona. You guys got it down. Yes, I was number 53. That wasn't me. That was my members and our auxiliary. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Certificate of Commendation awarded to Department of Arizona in recognition of the remarkable achievement of 54 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 this 3rd day of August, 2021. Signed by Hal Roesch Commander-in-Chief, Kevin Jones, Adjutant General.

(Applause)

COMRADE EILER: Comrades, I am the custodian of this award. That's it. This is a small portion of our team. We have 23,000 members -- over 23,000 members that did the work. I'm just the custodian. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

RING PRESENTATION TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH  
AND SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FRITZ MIHELICIC  
FROM JIM CHANCELLOR

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: His experiences as a door gunner during Vietnam helped establish our next guest's belief that all veterans are only separated by time and location served, that otherwise we're all the same.

Jim Chancellor, President, Chief Executive Officer of American Veterans Collection, Incorporated, has designed a unique collection of military service rings, which communicate a familiarity with our combat veterans on sight, with a mantra "I know, I understand, and I care," the rings represent the camaraderie of an elite group of individuals with shared experiences.

Here with us today, please join me in welcoming Mr. Jim Chancellor as he presents special rings to National Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch and Senior Vice Commander Fritz Mihelcic.

(Applause)

MR. CHANCELLOR: Good morning, Comrades. Thank you very much for allowing me a few minutes of your time this morning. Yes, I'm here again, and I'm presenting the rings from the American Veterans Collection, but I want to talk a little bit more about this ring than I have before.

This year is a little different. We're going to be presenting two different rings. One to Commander Roesch and the other to the incoming commander, Mr. Mihelcic. Boy, that name's going to get me. I'm going to say it a couple more times, but it's going to get me.

For those of you that aren't familiar with the ring, let me explain to you the meaning and the purpose of these rings. First, I want to talk to you about the quality of the ring. The ring is solid gold 11 pennyweight and carries a lifetime warranty.

It's hard to find a ring on the market that carries a lifetime warranty, and I would challenge people to do that. The -- the quality of these rings are undisputable.

The mantra of the rings are like no other ones also. "I know, I understand, and I care. I know about war because I've been there. I understand what you might be going through because I've traveled some of the same roads that you have, and I care about you."

The rings are worn internationally and have been endorsed by many that realize the healing powers of these rings. Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Sammy L. Davis says, "It's been a link between myself and other veterans who might not have made themselves known to me if they had not seen the ring."

When I see the ring on the hand of another, it's like an unspoken introduction, and I know I can approach him without reservation. It has been responsible -- responsible for initiating many wonderful friendships or assisting me in keeping the lines of communication open between myself and other

veterans. And more than once, we're finding veterans who need assistance for one reason or another.

One night at a sports banquet, I was with my wife, Regina, and her son Bobby, and there was four or five couples sitting at a table. And one young man said, "Sir, where did you serve in Vietnam?"

And we carried on a little small talk, and I told him I was in the central islands. And when the banquet was over, I asked him, I said, "How did you know that I served in Vietnam?"

He said, "Your ring, sir." He said, "I bought my dad a ring just like that about 10 years ago, and he's never taken it off."

The Vietnam Veterans ring was designed in 1982. And in the early years, it wasn't just Sammy that -- that realized the power of the ring. It was endorsed by General Westmoreland, and it was actually requested by -- by the late, great Bob Hope.

Then came other wars and conflicts, more tales of courage and love of country. Our fight for freedom became more complicated and global. But with every commitment America made came consequences to our heroes. Alcohol and drug abuse, suicides, PTSD, and divorce rates told the true story of the war.

I believe that all wartime veterans are the same. It doesn't matter where or when you served this great country, our sacrifices and love of country are all the same. So one day I asked myself, I said, "Jim, if you really believe that, why is there only a ring for the Vietnam veteran?"

Thus, the American Veterans collection was born. We now offer rings for World War II veterans, Korean veterans, and a new ring that's going to be presented today, the Patriot Ring, for people that are fighting and dying to keep us free.

The Patriot Ring is -- is because the war is global and we couldn't designate certain countries, the -- the Patriot Ring is an oval with a star in the middle and a cubic zirconia in the middle of the star, indicating that you served overseas.

In Chicago we presented a Patriot Ring to Toby Keith, who has done so much for all of our veterans. And I am honored to present two of these Patriot Rings today for those that lead by example and will run towards the fight instead of away from it every time our rights are challenged.

I only tell you about these rings again because several years ago, while at our National Convention, someone walked up to me and said, "Hey, Chancellor, you still giving those rings away?"

And I said, "Yeah, yeah, I am." And that saddened me because I knew right then I didn't realize the understanding in the meaning of the rings. These rings aren't for you or you or even you. These rings are for us. These rings are to be

worn silently to communicate with fellow veterans on sight. The wearer of the ring asks for nothing, but silently makes himself available to any struggling veteran who might need a minute of your time or comforting conversation

about the difficult road that some of us travel and some of us still travel.

Remember, this is about us. If there is one veteran struggling here at home about the whys and the why nots of the war, if there's one veteran still fighting that war near home, then we all should fight. It should be our fight.

We need to reach out to them. We need to listen to them, and we need to guide them. We need to let them know that they're not alone and that this great organization will continue to fight for them.

For those of you who choose to wear the ring from this collection, I ask you to wear it with -- silently with American pride, honor, and integrity. Let it be your torch in the darkness for all to see. Let it be a symbol of the guts and the moxie of the warriors that have fought before you, the people that you have trusted with your life from all wars. Wear it with every tear that has fallen and every unanswered prayer of war.

Now for the presentation of the ring. Let me begin with Commander Roesch.

Commander is a 20-year retiree from the United States Air Force. He earned his VFW eligibility during his combat service in Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield and overseas service as part of the Southern Watch.

He is the recipient of two Air Force Commendation Medals, two Air Force Achievement Medals, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southeast Asia Medal with three campaign stars, and numerous other awards and decorations.

Commander Roesch joined this great organization in 1991 at the VFW Post 3034 in Summit, South Carolina. And he has been serving selflessly for years and years.

Now, with these rings being presented to these two people, I want you to think about the -- how they got here and what they did to get here. They -- the picnics and the meetings and the hot dogs and -- and everything they've done to go up the chairs is represented here tonight -- today.

Commander Mihelcic served in the United States Air Force with the National Guard from 1989 to 1991 -- '99 with the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing.

Activated for federal, he served in Desert Shield and Desert Storm from 1990 to 1991 as a security policeman. In recognition of the service, he received the Air Force Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with a "V" device, Southwest Asia Medal -- Service Medal with two devices, and the Kuwait Liberation Medals from both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Additionally, he has also received numerous state and federal decorations.

Commander Fritz joined the VFW in 1991, and he too continuously serves. Fritz and his wife, Megan, reside in Columbia, Illinois, along with his service dog, Mama Cass. That's a great name, isn't it? Mama Cass?

Ladies and gentlemen, it's with great honor and I am humbly -- I am humbled today to present these two rings to the leaders of the greatest



organization -- the greatest veterans organization on the planet, our VFW. So please welcome our commanders.  
(Applause)

## INTRODUCTION OF SUPREME COMMANDER, MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: A trip to almost any VA Hospital will reveal the important work of the Military Order of the Cootie. 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 Cootie last July. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie of the United States, Dr. Darin Combs, a true friend of the VFW and of mine from the great state of Arizona.  
(Boo)

## REMARKS BY SUPREME COMMANDER DARIN COMBS

SUPREME COMMANDER COMBS: Good morning, Comrades, Cooties, cuties, and crummies. I am Darin Combs. I'm the proud Gold Legacy Life Member of Post 9400, Department of Arizona, and Pup Tent 11, the Grand of Arizona.

I had the distinct honor to serve as the Supreme Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie this past year.

On behalf of the nearly 12,000 members of the Military Order of the Cootie and our Auxiliary, I want to start off by congratulating Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch for such an amazing year of hard work and collaboration. Your amazing support throughout the year has been absolutely wonderful.

With your help, the Military Order had not one but two articles published in the VFW Magazine this year. This means a lot to us. We receive great benefits from the exposure.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the Military Order of the Cooties, the boos that you heard resoundingly just now are actually words of praise in Cootie talk. We often do things backwards, and we do it with humor and -- and fun.

While hospitals and homes recovery are often solemn venues for quiet worry and deep concern for the residents, the Cooties love to bring a little excitement into the lives of our hospitalized veterans. We love to swarm our VAs and state homes for veterans with fun and frolic and activities sure to bring a smile.

For over 100 years, the Cooties have been adamant to "Keep 'em smiling in beds of white," our organization's motto. Members of the Military

Order of the Cootie and our Auxiliary have been found refurbishing wheelchairs, distributing them to fellow veterans for free; making quilts, donating them to the needy veterans; and hosting game days for shut-in veterans.

We may be found in hospitals, providing freerides so they don't have to hike to their appointments from their distant parking areas.

We may be found hosting barbecues, special luncheons, and providing laughter-filled activities for veterans. Caring for hospital veterans is our specialty.

In 1923, Cootie -- Cooties presented the concept of creating a special home now called the VFW National Home for Children. Even today, we are very engaged with the National Home by hosting the annual Christmas party and many other events like Halloween and Easter activities.

This year the Military Order of the Cootie President -- Auxiliary President Jennifer Winn and I conducted a special project for the reception of - reception area of the childcare and early education center was completely remodeled. The team did an outstanding job, and now our Home's parents have a very nice area, within the center, to pick up and drop off their children each day.

This past year the Cooties conducted almost 11,000 visits to over 70,400 veterans, consisting of almost 82,000 hours and 700,000 miles traveled.

Cooties gave gifts totaling over \$408,000. The dollar value Cooties contributed to our collective cause of taking care of veterans was over 110 percent of our efforts last year. And the total dollar value of our VA Hospital credits was over \$3.6 million.

Currently, about 1 percent of the VFW members are Cooties. The mail MOC membership grew this year by an increase of 105 percent from last year. This is the greatest percentage increase in a single year for as far back as we have records. With respect to the VFW membership this year, 30 of the top 50 VFW recruiters are Cooties.

This next year our Senior Vice Commander, Olin Parks, who plans next year to come up with more and -- more programs to recruit VFW members with specific and personal programs focusing on recruiting VFW members. That is where we get our source of our members in the Military Order of the Cootie.

Comrades and friends, the barriers put before us over the last year did not hinder our work in the Military Order of the Cootie. We, like everyone else, experienced lockdowns, being shut out from hospitals, and sadly lost some very dear friends and comrades. We decided at the beginning of the year that whatever barrier brought before us, we were going to go over it, under it, through it, whatever it took to carry out our duties to our veterans.

While many were throwing up their hands, using COVID as a reason not to carry out our mission, the Cooties put our hands to work. We got on the phone, sent out cards, emails, set up special arrangements outside the care facilities to hold the events outdoors. We were successful this year because

the innovative Cooties wanted to break through the barrier placed in front of us.

I want to thank our MOC Auxiliary President Jennifer Winn for such a great partnership this year. The work we were able to do together will have long-lasting impact upon many veterans and their lives.

I also want to thank, once again, my friend and our Commander-in-Chief for the outstanding work we have done together this year and the hours of collaborative effort for our veterans. I'm confident that the Military Order of the Cootie will keep playing a vital role within our great organization, with special efforts in our organization's hospital work and National Home.

Congratulations in advance, Senior Vice Commander Fritz, and best of luck this year. I want to affirm to you that you have the undying support of the Military Order of the Cootie.

Chief, thanks again. And as we say in the Cooties, congratulations on a lousy year.

Yesterday, as you-all may have heard, our National Home present and they had a need. And although they're not able to be here with us at this time, I would like to see if you'd like to see some Cooties in action. So if you would accept, on behalf of the National Home, a check for \$43,000 to cover the snowplow requested by our National Home.

(Standing ovation and boos)

SUPREME COMMANDER COMBS: Thank you all, and we'll see you at our convention over in Kansas.

#### INTRODUCTION OF PRASAD REDDY, FOUNDER/PRESIDENT/CEO OF TWISTED X BOOTS

(VIDEO PRESENTATION)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Over three decades ago, a gentleman named Prasad Reddy was celebrated by VFW members with well wishes, smiles, and a copy of the U.S. Constitution when he completed his naturalization ceremony. He pledged that one day he would return this kindness and the support he got.

He has proven to be a great man of his word. Now, as president and CEO of Twisted X, Prasad Reddy has gone above and beyond to satisfy that pledge made many years ago.

In 2015, Prasad and Twisted X teamed up with the VFW in an effort to support our country's brave service members, veterans, and their families. And today our partnership continues to flourish.

Last year, Twisted X signed on as the title sponsor of our Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen program to make sure -- certain that we can continue in the tradition of fostering patriotism among America's youth and actively investing in our future leaders.

Please join me in welcoming, by video message, a man of true generosity and esteemed character, the founder/president/CEO of Twisted X, Mr. Prasad Reddy.

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

PRESENTATION OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AND CITATION  
TO PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF/EXECUTIVVE DIRECTOR WASHINGTON  
OFFICE  
VINCNET "B.J." LAWRENCE

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I am honored to present our next guest with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation in recognition of his years of dedication to service of the VFW.

Vincent "B.J." Lawrence served in the United States Army from 1983 to 1986, earning his VFW eligibility in South Korea as an air defense artilleryman and earning the defense – Korean Defense Service Medal.

B.J. joined the VFW in 2000 at Post 7686 in Alamogordo, New Mexico, and immediately began dedicating his efforts towards moving the organization forward into the new millennium and beyond.

B.J. served America's veterans for nearly two decades in multiple leadership roles before being elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on July 25th, 2018, at the 119th VFW National Convention here in Kansas City. And today he continues to serve as Executive Director of the VFW Washington office, where he leads the VFW fight for veterans on Capitol Hill.

Please join me in honoring B.J. Lawrence with the Distinguished Service Medal and Citation.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Distinguished Service Medal and Citation awarded to B.J. Lawrence in sincere appreciation and spirited recognition of his more than 20 years of dedicated service to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

His selflessness and passion for serving others, combined with his abilities as a highly effective and dynamic leader, have justly earned him the respect of his peers and that of the veterans, service members, and military families he has served throughout his many leadership roles within the VFW, to include his time in the office as Commander-in-Chief and as Executive Director of the VFW Washington office.

His steadfast commitment to the values and mission of the VFW has made an indelible mark on the organization and earned him our deepest respect and appreciation.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the official seal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States this 3rd day of

August, 2021. Signed by Hal Roesch, Commander-in-Chief, and Kevin Jones, Adjutant General.  
(Applause)

REMARKS - PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF THE WASHINGTON OFFICE VINCENT "B.J." LAWRENCE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAWRENCE: Wow. Thank you.

You know, the last time I stood before this podium, the teleprompter went out on me; so I decided not to write a speech for this. And being humbled and honored to be the recipient of this recognition, a speech wouldn't be fitting, because in my mind the only fitting thing is to talk to you from my heart.

I mentioned I'm honored and humbled for the recognition. But, quite frankly, I'm fortunate because I've realized how to be honored and humbled each and every day that I'm a member of our great organization. I'm awarded every day that I look out into our ranks and see the good things that our members do in their communities and continue to do to serve our nation's veterans, their families, and our military.

If you truly look at the good, how can it not touch your heart and humble you? That's what each and every one of you do.

I've said it many times during my 20 years in this organization. I'm grateful. I'm grateful that I had good mentors that instilled the ideas and the principles of our organization into everything I do.

I'm grateful that I had members take the time and lift me up when I got discouraged, to give me a positive word when I was down, to show me the way when I lost my path. Because, Comrades, without that, I wouldn't be standing here before you today.

All of you, each and every one of you makes differences in people's lives. Let's continue to hold true to the values of our veterans service and what it means to those out in the field. Let's hold true to being the greatest veterans service organization in the world.

Let's hold true to working in our communities, to continuing to be a voice in legislation, to protect and demand the entitlements and benefits of those that have served.

Comrades, again, I couldn't be any more proud to talk to you when we're at our events, to walk with you side by side, for your friendships, for your trust, the trust and honor you've shown in me when you elected me as your Commander-in-Chief. That to me will always be the greatest honor in my life.

I love each and every one of you. God bless each and every one of you, your families. And may God continue to bless our great United States of America. Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERGEANTS-AT-ARMS BY  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH AND BRIAN WILLETTE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: National Sergeants, right face.  
Parade.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Ladies and gentlemen, standing behind me are the elite, our VFW National Sergeants-at-Arms.

I want to express my appreciation to this group of individuals we see at our National Convention and Washington conference. They are the first ones in the hall and among the last to leave, working 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. I am sure that everyone recognizes what an outstanding job they do for the VFW. It is now my privilege to introduce the Acting Sergeant-at-Arms.

Brian Willette has been a member of the Sergeant-at-Arms since 2017. He is a Gold Legacy Member of Post 3104 in South Hadley, Massachusetts, a five time All-American Post Commander, Past All-American District Commander, and Past Department Judge Advocate, and currently serves as a Department Sergeant-at-Arms.

Brian retired from the United States Army as a staff sergeant. He completed his basic infantry and airborne training in 1983 and 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.

I'll now call on acting National Sergeant-at-Arms, Brian Willette, to introduce our VFW National Sergeants-of-Arms.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Thank you, Chief.

Joy Ausman has been a member of the Sergeants-at-Arms team for 25 years and is a Gold Legacy Life Member of Gilbert, Minnesota, Post 4456. She's also a Life Member of the Cloquet, Minnesota, VFW Auxiliary Post 3979. Joy is a Past Post Commander, Past District Commander, and Past District Quartermaster.

She serves in -- she served in both the Marine Corps and the Army and earned her VFW eligibility in Desert Storm. She recently returned from a Peace Corps volunteer mission in Swaziland.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Next is Jim Galen who has been a member of the Sergeants-at-Arms for

20 years and is a Life Member of Post 6802 in Richmond, Michigan. He is a Past -- he is a Past All-State Post Commander, Past All-State Quartermaster. He served as Post Quartermaster for 19 years and as a Past District 5 Commander.

Jim retired after 30 years of service from General Motors.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: George Lott has been a member of the Sergeants-at-Arms team for 12 years. He is a Gold Legacy Life Member, Past Commander of the Lieutenant Robert A. Madden Post 10152 in Ogdensburg, New Jersey, and is a Past New Jersey District 21 Commander.

He's a United States Army combat veteran and was an Army drill sergeant who taught Basic Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, after returning from Vietnam.

George recently retired after 33 years as the Department of New Jersey's Sergeant-at-Arms. He was employed as a police officer in his hometown Ogdensburg for 34 years and retired as the Chief in 2008.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Next is Lora Land. Laura is a Gold Legacy Life Member of Post 9191 in Killeen, Texas. She has been a member of the Sergeants-at-Arms since November 2016 and is a Past All-State and Past All-American Post Commander.

In 2015, Lora was named the top commander in the state of Texas and is the first woman veteran to serve as District 14 Commander, where she received -- where she achieved All-State and All-American honors.

She served as the Women's Veterans Chair for the Department of Texas from 2016 to 2018 and served as the National Aide-De-Camp from 2017 to 2018.

Lora was a sergeant in the United States Army, where she was a motor transport operator. She earned her VFW eligibility in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm with the 24th Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Georgia, and the Republic of Korea.

Lora now devotes her time to her family and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Sherrod Nathan Conyers is a Native of Marietta, Georgia, and is a Gold Legacy Life Member of VFW Rainbow Post 2681. He currently serves as Georgia's District 1 Junior Vice Commander and has been a member of the Sergeants-at-Arms for five years.

Sherrod's military career began after becoming a Direct-Commissioned Second Lieutenant from Tuskegee University's ROTC program into the United States Army.

Sherrod earned his VFW eligibility with deployments to Jordan and Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom and to Iraq during Operation

Iraqi Freedom. During his four years of active duty, he was promoted to the rank of captain.

Sherrod is a Life Member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, a member of the 200 Corinthians Masonic Lodge and was commissioned an Honorable Kentucky Colonel.

He is currently an associate of Booz Allen Hamilton and serves as a full-time spouse and father.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: You know, the men and women here on stage work tirelessly behind the scenes, and we depend on them so much. Sometimes we forget to express our gratitude.

So at this time, I want to publicly say thank you to each of you for what you do for us each and every day. You-all do a superlative job and represent the organization well. I'm proud of the professional way in which you conduct yourselves, and I'm honored to have the opportunity to serve with you.

On behalf of the entire organization, again, thank you for your service.

Let's give them another round of applause, please.

(Standing ovation)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Now, I'd be remiss if I did not call attention to the fact that an unmistakable face is missing from our Sergeants-at-Arms team.

This past year we lost a friend and beloved comrade, Bryan P. O'Brien.

Like many of you, I knew Bryan to be a man of great character and integrity, traits that served him well as a member of the VFW Sergeants-at-Arms and as the National Sergeant-at-Arms for many years. Bryan was a Life Member of VFW Post 2550 in Dunedin, Florida, with an outstanding 44 years of membership to this organization.

Resolute in his efforts to maintain order and efficiency, his commitment led to the successful execution of his duties as Sergeant-at-Arms for an admirable 20 years, with 14 years served as Sergeant-at-Arms. Thus contributing greatly to the success of the VFW mission.

His outstanding leadership ability and the integrity with which he served have left an indelible mark on our organization, and his lasting legacy will not soon be forgotten.

Rest in peace, my friend.

Join me in a moment of silence in Bryan's honor.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was held.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you.

#### INTRODUCTION OF PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: At this time, it gives me great honor to introduce the Past Commander-in-Chiefs that are attending this convention. 1988-'89, Larry W. Rivers.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: 1989-'90, Walter G. Hogan.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '91-'92, Robert E. Wallace.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '94-'95, Allen "Gunner" Kent.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '95-'96, Paul A. Spera.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '96-'97, James E. Nier.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '97-'98, John E. Moon.  
(applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '98-'99, Thomas A. Pouliot  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: 2000-2001, John F. Gwizdak.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '03-'04, Edward S. Banas.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '05-'06, James Mueller.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '08-'09, Glen M. Gardner.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESH: '09-'10, Thomas J. Tradewell.  
(Applause)

COMMADER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '13-'14, William A. Thien.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN\_CHIEF ROESCH:' 16-'17, Brian J. Duffy.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '17-'18, Keith E. Harman.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: '18-'19, Vincent "B.J." Lawrence.  
(Applause)

PRESENTATION OF HUMANITARIAN AWARD FROM CHAPEL OF FOUR  
CHAPLAINS TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH  
BY PAST NATIONAL CHAPLAIN PETER HOOK

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: At this time, we will 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 Humanitarian Award to our Commander-in-Chief, Hal Roesch.

Hal, 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 Roesch, your leadership and your numerous acts of volunteerism and selfless service have been a model and inspiration to those of us in this great organization. And I'm honored to be here to present the Legion of Honor Humanitarian Award to you. Congratulations.  
(Applause)

PRESENTATION - 2020-2021 DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS GIFT  
TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAL ROESCH

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: At this time, I will call -- the 2020-2021 Department Commanders are now gathering here on stage for a special presentation. Past Department Commander of Louisiana Bobby Lovergne is their representative.

PAST NATIONAL DEPARTMENT COMMANDER LOVERGNE: As we all come up on stage, you know, all year the Chief has told us that we were wearing a badge of courage because we went through something that nobody else has done, take an oath as -- during the pandemic and with the shutdown for eight months, but we still have to do the job of VFW.

And he kept pushing that issue to us the whole year. And we did what we needed to do. We were successful. We fell a little bit short on 100 percent membership. But for us to get to 99.1 percent like we did was a hell of a job and a hell of an accomplishment and credit to you each of you out there for helping your departments and membership to do what we needed to do to keep the growth of the VFW.

While we were trying to pick a gift for the Chief, we asked Ms. Bell, "What should we get him?"

She said, "No eagles. Don't get him a shirt 'cause every time he brings a shirt home, he's got to throw another one away, and find something, you know, is really (inaudible)."

Well, Chief, we took upon ourselves, and we had a lifetime member of the VFW who started a company to help veterans deal with PTSD in a different type of form with woodworking and metal work as a different type of therapy. And that individual is Colonel Shane McGinty with MCG Metal and Honor Works [sic]. So me and him put our heads together, and we came up with this special thing, and he knows about one, but we have a couple other issues for him.

So, Chief, on behalf of the class of '20-'21, here is a table that never made it to Norfolk, Virginia.

Nobody in the class has seen this table until today.  
(Applause)

PAST NATIONAL DEPARTMENT COMMANDER LOVERGNE: All right, Chief. For something that you didn't know about, for those cold nights in Hampton, Virginia, with the snow, we had a special full team fire pit with a custom grill built for you, and we'll now ask the sergeants to bring that forward.  
(Applause)

PAST NATIONAL DEPARTMENT COMMANDER LOVERGNE: And for everyone who can't see on the burn pit, on one side on the bottom it has Hal's name. It has "2020-2021, Hal's Heroes." And part of our team from day one when we became juniors was Sandi; so we had National President Sandi Onstwedder's name on here to represent her since she was a part of our team.

But the last thing to hang on that patio of yours is a custom flag made by Shane and the veterans. And all of this is made by veterans for veterans to help them with PTSD. And this is for you to hang on your patio, Chief.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: This was the moment I was not looking forward to, yet I was. You know, I have been truly blessed with this group of individuals. As I said before, in the middle of the darkest time, they all raised their hand and said, "We'll lead this organization," and they rallied around me, and they made me look good.

It wasn't easy. They never faltered. They didn't complain. They did the mission of this organization taking care of our veterans and their families. And in the darkest of times, we were still able to have some fun, yet we always took the mission serious.

It's probably said every year, but I'll guarantee you this year, in my

book, this is the best group of department commanders that's ever been in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and they're called "Hal's Heroes" for a reason.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Chief, stay put. I call on now your Chief of Staff and your Inspector General for a presentation.

CHIEF OF STAFF COX: So I'm going to need about 20 people to carry my gifts out here because what Richard and I got has to surpass that.

I'm joking. This is a tough act to follow. That class is really good. They did a lot of hard work, and -- but it was all led by a superior commander-in-chief. I'll tell you, you know, this virus didn't slow him down one bit, and -- and he always kept us pumped up. And it was a pleasure and an honor for both Richard and I to serve with him on his line and with the other officers here. It's been an outstanding year.

And, Hal, we'd just like to present you with a small token of our appreciation.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Chief, we have one more gift. I would call on the Membership Department at this time for a presentation.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning.

Hal's Heroes, great job. That was amazing.

We typically wouldn't be up here presenting something to the commander-in-chief today. But typically every May the commander-in-chief hosts a Kansas City spree. And at that time, the cream of the crop, the best of the best, the division leaders get to come to Kansas City and spend the weekend with the commander-in-chief.

And at that time, the Membership Department would present a membership award in front of the best of the best at the time and spend a little bit of time that weekend. And we weren't able to do that this year.

So to keep it short and sweet, we'd like to thank you for your leadership this year, sir. Membership appreciates it, and we have a small token of our appreciation.  
(Applause)

#### PROCEEDINGS MOTION BY ADJUTANT GENERAL KEVIN JONES

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: I move that the proceedings of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 122<sup>nd</sup> National Convention be submitted to the Speaker of the House for printing as a House document in accordance with Public Law 620 of the 90th Congress, approved October 2nd, 1968, and entitled as Title 44, United States Code, Section 1332.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MIHELIC: Fritz Mihelcic, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. I second that.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I have a motion and a second. Do we

have any discussion? Have any discussion?

Not hearing any discussion, signal all in favor by aye.

(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed.

The ayes have it.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Having no further responsibilities, it is now my pleasure to dismiss the Committee on General Resolutions.

As always, a job well done. Thank you, Chairman Thien, Vice Chairman Gwizdak, and the good members of your committee.

And my thanks to all the chairmen, vice chairmen and to all the members of each committee for your time and dedicated efforts.

Other than the nominations, elections and installation of officers, is there any business to come before this convention? Any business? Any other business?

Hearing none, I will call on the Adjutant General for any announcements that he may have.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: The Commander-in-Chief, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, and Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief will maintain the tradition -- traditional parade following the presentation and placement of their caps, pins, and badges.

The Quartermaster General, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General, and Surgeon General will share in one collective ceremonial parade at the conclusion of the presentation and placement of the cap, pin, and badge of the Surgeon General and his remarks.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: In accordance with our convention rules and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, if only one person is nominated, after that, in fact, no other members present wish to make nominations, I, acting as the Chair, will simply declare that nominee is elected; thus, effecting the election by unanimous consent or acclamation

## NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

### NOMINATIONS FOR COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We will now proceed with the nomination and elections of the 2021-2022 National Officers.

I will open the nominations for the office of Commander-in-Chief. Is there any nomination for Commander-in-Chief?

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

COMRADE VANCE: "Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. My name is Terry Vance, Past All-American State Commander, Past Illinois Adjutant Quartermaster, delegate to this convention.

"I'm pleased to place into nomination the name of Matthew "Fritz"

Mihelcic for the high position of VFW Commander-in-Chief for the year 2021-2022. He is now serving as a senior vice Commander-in-Chief for this great organization.

"Fritz previously served as an All-American State Commander for Illinois, many terms as a National Judge Advocate General, and the National Parliamentarian.

"I've known Fritz for over 20 years, and I've had the opportunity to see him grow personally and professionally. He has been instrumental in many programs within the great state of Illinois and been a significant player in furthering the principles and ideals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

"While serving as our Illinois State Commander, he founded the 'Illinois Veterans First' program, ensuring that all veterans in need were able to access the funds and services provided by our organization. That program continues to grow today.

"His background as an attorney provided much needed advice on many legal issues, not only at the state, but at the national level. His no-nonsense advice has proven to be an asset throughout our organization.

"He's a true champion for veterans around the world, their families, and communities. Comrades, the time is now for him to lead this great organization.

"Therefore, I place into nomination Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic for the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. "Thank you very much."  
(Applause)

COMRADE WELCH: Bob Welch, Commander, Department of Illinois.  
I'm not sure what else I could say that would cover anything on that. But I want to tell a personal experience with my good friend.

Many times throughout my VFW journey, I've come to him for advice and guidance. He never gave me his answer. He never gave me the answer he thought I needed to hear. He gave me the answer that would make me think. I'm not sure if that was the best idea, but he gave me the answer that would make me think and make my own decision.

That's what we need in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. We don't need folks to lead us by the hand. We need folks to tell us what we need to hear so we can think for ourselves.

It is my honor and my privilege to second the nomination to the high office of Commander-in-Chief, Fritz Mihelcic.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Are there any other nominations for Commander-in-Chief?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations for Commander-in-Chief closed. Seeing no further nominations, I declare Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic elected Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United

States for the year 2021-'22.  
(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Comrades, I present to you the Commander-in-Chief-elect for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the Commander-in-Chief-elect to the podium for the presentation of the Commander-in-Chief's cap, pin, and badge.

(Placement of cap and badge by Megan Mihelcic.)

(Applause)

REMARKS BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MATTHEW M. "FRITZ" MIHELICIC

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Commander-in-Chief-elect Mihelcic, would you like to say a few words?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELICIC: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Roesch.

I do have an opportunity to speak to you-all in a few minutes. So right now, it's just a matter of saying thank you to my wife, Megan, and my mother-in-law and father-in-law for making it here today; to Sebastian, Grunt, Sapphire, and all the other service dogs that Mama Cass has the privilege of meeting this week and as we've gone through our journey.

I thank you all for being here. It's a new dawn. But most of all, I want to thank you – each individual member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars -- for allowing me to serve you this year as your Commander-in-Chief. Thank you.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Maestro, strike up the Air Force song.  
(Whereupon, a ceremonial parade was held.)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Well, I must say that was interesting, if nothing else. You know, I think that I would respectfully ask that as we do the next parades for the Senior and Junior -- it's not an order, but it's a request -- that only the departments from the conference in which they're from march. Obviously this room is not conducive to have every department trying to march.  
(Applause)

NOMINATIONS FOR SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now open the nominations for the office of Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Is there any nomination for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Comrades, I respectfully

stand before you to offer the name of Timothy Borland for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief for the ensuing year.

Tim served our nation for 28 years and retired from the United States Army, last serving with the 101st Airborne Division --  
(Cheers)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: -- earning his VFW eligibility serving in Korea and Iraq. Among his numerous decorations, Tim earned the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and the Korea Defense Service Medal.

Tim became a Life Member of our organization in 2000. He is currently a Legacy Gold Life Member of VFW Post 9972 in Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Tim served in a myriad of positions over his 20-plus years in our organization, culminating as department commander, serving on our National Council of Administration, and earning the coveted title of Triple Crown Winner.

Tim has a passion for recruiting members into our organization. Tim has had the distinction of being a Century Recruiter for 18 consecutive years.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Tim received his Bachelor of Art and Master of Business Administration degrees from Touro University in Cypress, California. He's well-educated, well-known, has the VFW's mission in his heart. So I would ask that our organization supports Tim Borland as our next Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

Thank you.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Tom Pouliot, Delegate, Post 1116, Montana.

Thank you, Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, Delegates to the National Convention. I have the distinct pleasure and honor to stand before this delegation and second the nomination of Tim Borland for the office of Senior Vice.

Tim is a sincere and energetic leader for our VFW. This past year, as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, you have seen him and got to know him. You have witnessed firsthand his dedication to our organization. He has earned the respect of comrades throughout our organization because they found that he seeks out your knowledge, your input, and he will use that information to make the VFW a better organization as we move on this next year.

His love for the organization has caused him to give much of his time to the veterans and their families. He sets the bar for what it is to be a hard-working member of this organization. Look at his success as Triple Crown.

Tim doesn't credit these crowns to his success alone, though. He's a team player. He credits his team. At every stage, he puts together this team,



sets goals for them and himself. And working together, they reach these goals. This is leadership.

He's a National Recruiter, as has been mentioned, 18 years in a row. He has signed up 100 or more veterans. That shows that he has the heart and the passion for the VFW to work those recruiting tables. Many of you know that the work that goes into that.

And in all likelihood, when he visited you in your states, he probably signed up a couple of members for you before he left.

He's been a National Councilmember, served on numerous committees. This knowledge and experience will aid and assist him as serving as your Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Where others only see difficulties, he sees possibilities. And Tim, as our Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, sees great possibilities in our VFW future.

It is without reservation and with great pride that I second the nomination of a man most qualified to be our next Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Tim Borland. Thank you, Comrades.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Are there any other nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

Hearing none, I declare that the nominations for Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief closed.

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Timothy Borland selected Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2021-2022 years.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Comrades, I present to you the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Timothy Borland.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief-elect to the podium for the presentation of the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief cap, pin, and badge.

(Placement of cap and badge by Shannon Borland.)

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT TIM BORLAND

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT BORLAND: Thank you, Comrades. Please take your seats.

I'm going to keep this short and brief because I was told to keep it short and brief because I love this microphone. I don't know if any of you out there know, but I love karaoke. Whenever I visit the departments, I will sing. I will because I love all of you.

There's a few people I do want to thank, though, before I march around this floor, and those people are the Past Commander-in-Chiefs of this organization who have been an inspiration in my life and definitely a motivator for me to step up and fill these chairs and have an ultimate goal of almost 20 years to run for Commander-in-Chief of this great organization.

After 28 years in the Army and 20 years in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and filling every position I possibly could, I reached this goal. And I challenge all of you out there, any of you out there that are thinking about moving through the chairs, to do it. One day at a time. One position at a time.

Do the best you can when you do it. Keep that vision. Keep moving forward.

I want to thank my Senior Vice class of '21-'22 who -- we never got a chance to see each other in person this whole year until just recently. We've had three outstanding evenings together to make up some time for the days we've lost because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have an outstanding class. They fully understand that first we will support Fritz Mihelcic, our Commander-in-Chief, for his year without any question.

(Applause)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT BORLAND: Lastly, I want to thank my wife, Shannon. My beautiful wife, Shannon. I could tell you so many stories about her, but like I said, I'm going to keep this short. She is definitely my rock.

We both have sons that served in the Marine Corps. And just real quick, when we met almost ten years ago, come to find out both our sons were at Camp Pendleton, California, serving in the Marine Corps in the same unit.

And the very next day they met. They both had wives the same age. Both wives were in the same career field. And both our sons and those wives are still happily married, of course. They are out of the Marine Corps, and they only live 30 miles away. They're best of friends. We have a close family.

And next year I hope, if elected, you'll see my daughter who also served six years in the Air Force.

So I want to thank all of you right now. This is why we're here. I love the Veterans of Foreign Wars. And I got to get off this stage 'cause I can just keep on going.

Thank you so much for this. We will do great. We will have a good year. I'm looking forward to it. Thank you so much for your support. I salute you.

(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, it's a distinct honor to be your first escort and your first duty.

Maestro, strike up the Army song.  
(Cheering and applause)

(Whereupon, a ceremonial parade was held.)

SENIOR VICECOMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT BORLAND: I guess this is a surprise 'cause my class is going to salute me. So let's give them the honor, and I'm-- I'm definitely, definitely touched by this.

(Whereupon, a salute was performed.)

(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now open up the nominations for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief. Is there any nomination for the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WALLACE: Bob Wallace, Delegate, Post 9503, Bayville, New Jersey.

Commander-in-Chief Roesch, National Officers, my colleagues in the ranks, the Past Commanders-in-Chiefs, State Commanders and convention delegates and guests, I am pleased and honored to represent my garden state of New Jersey and the great Eastern States Conference in placing a nomination the name of our candidate for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief 2021-22, Duane Sarmiento.

Due to the virus the world continues to face, we are in unprecedented times. And during these times, we need leaders who can hit the ground running when elected to face these extraordinary challenges with knowledge and experience. Duane is such a leader.

A U.S. Navy veteran who earned his eligibility in the Veterans of Foreign Wars by his service in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He served on active duty from 1988 to 1997, and in the Naval Reserve from 2002 to 2006.

He is a 30-year Life Member of Anthony T. Calista VFW Post 5579, where he was an All-State Commander five times and currently serves as the Adjutant and Service Officer. He's a past District 13 Commander and is a District Service Officer. An All-American Department Commander in 2018-2019. He has led or served and continues to serve on numerous state committees.

Duane served as the VFW National Inspector General 2019-2020. And during that year, he visited a number of your departments. He's also served on a number of National Convention committees.

He is a retired police officer who fully understands the issues faced in local communities. And he recently retired from the position of Director of Veterans Affairs for Gloucester County, New Jersey, where he witnessed firsthand every day the challenges his fellow veterans face. Every day he went to work to assist his fellow veterans receive the benefits they have earned and are entitled to.

He served on the VA Advisory Committees for the Philadelphia and

Wilmington VA Medical Centers. He is a former school board member for Greenwich Township, New Jersey, School District, where he was involved in contract negotiations, budget for the teachers and other staff. And he was involved in confronting COVID-19 and how to deliver safe education to the students.

Duane is married to Ellen for 29 years. And they are the proud parents of three children, and they have one grandson.

His daughter Alexis is a registered nurse. His daughter Gabrielle is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, as is her husband, and both are Life Members of VFW Post 5579. And both are using the VFW Champion GI Bill of Rights for their education.

Duane's son, Michael, currently serves as a Navy Corpsman stationed at Marine Corps base Camp Lejeune Naval hospital. As Blue Star parents, Duane and Ellen fully understand what it means to have children serving in today's military. They understand the challenges service members and their families face.

Duane understands the community and the issues they confront through his work as a police officer and his service on the school board. He understands the VFW from the post level through the national level, and he understands the challenges the organization faces on all levels.

He understands the Department of Veterans Affairs and the challenges veterans face when assessing their earned benefits and entitlements.

Duane has met with and continues to meet with and educate members of his county, state, and congressional delegation on the needs of his fellow veterans. He understands veterans advocacy.

I truly believe the best years for our Veterans of Foreign Wars lie ahead as long as we elect the right leaders. Duane Sarmiento has the leadership qualities, the experience, and the knowledge to hit the ground running when elected and continue to move our organization forward.

He is the right leader for this time. He is the right person to meet the challenges of these uncommon times. He will -- and he will ensure that every day remains Veterans Day for the veterans of this nation.

On behalf of Commander Luddie Austin and my fellow VFW members from the Garden State and the officers and members of the Eastern States Conference, I am proud and honored to place a nomination in the name of Duane Sarmiento as the Eastern States Conference nominee for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief 2021-'22. And I humbly ask for your support. Thank you.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief and Comrades, Paul Spera, Delegate from North End Post 144 in Boston, Massachusetts.

I very proudly stand here this morning to second the nomination of

Duane Sarmiento for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.

We in the East have always prided ourself on the fact that when we look for a leader to enter the chairs of the national organization, we are always looking not just at all that Bob Wallace described as what Duane has done in the past, but we look forward to what he will do as Commander-in-Chief.

We look forward to putting someone in office that one day we will be proud to say he is one of the best Commanders-in-Chief we have ever had. I am certain that that choice that we are making today fits that criteria.

So on behalf of the Eastern States Conference, all of its posts, departments, members, I am very proud to second the nomination of Duane Sarmiento for the office of Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Are there any other nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief?

Hearing none, I declare that the nominations for Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief closed.

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Duane Sarmiento elected Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the year 2021-2022.

Comrades, I present to you the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-elect of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Duane Sarmiento.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief-elect to the podium for the presentation of the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief cap, pin, and badge.

(Applause)

(Placement of cap and badge by Megan Mihelcic.)

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ELECT DUANE SARMIENTO

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT SARMIENTO: Please be seated. I'll be brief, Comrades.

Thank you. I have a lot of thanks to give. I'd like to thank God for His divine providence for guiding me through my life and placing me here now.

I'd like to thank my wife of 29 years who stood behind me and when it was -- and I'm preaching to the choir -- when it was VFW time, she understood. And my family, my children are all adults, they're -- they're streaming. They're watching us live on VFW.org.

I want to thank them for all the times I may have missed because, as you know, sometimes family is first, but sometimes you have to make a decision when it's VFW time.

I'd like to thank my post, 5579, the Gibbstown Heroes.

I've gotta say through all our trials and tribulations, the craziness of all the years, I stand here before you. Thank you for all you've done. Thank VFW

District 13 and the Department of New Jersey for your support.

The great Eastern Conference, without you, I wouldn't be standing in front of you. And for all the members, all the guests in here, auxiliary, I look forward to serving as your Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief and being part of a great team with Senior Vice Tim Borland and the Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic.

I promise you this, Comrades: I will give every ounce of my fiber to this great organization that we love so much. Thank you. I look forward to working for you. You don't work for me. I work for you. Thank you so much. Have a great day, Comrades.  
(Applause)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Maestro, strike up the Navy hymn.  
(Whereupon, a ceremonial parade was held.)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now open the nomination for the office of Quartermaster General. Is there any nomination for Quartermaster General?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NIER: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Jim Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, delegates -- Delegate Post 8919, Texas.

Comrades, this morning I have the honor and 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 at subsequent conventions.

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 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 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 1st Armored Division and as a Garrison Inspector General.

She earned her eligibility for the VFW during Desert Storm/Desert Shield, having been deployed with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait in 1990.

She is a graduate of the Army's Combined Armed Services 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, the four Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, 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. She was an All-American Post Commander there in 2010. She is also a Life Member of the VFW Auxiliary and VFW National Home for Children, where she also serves on the board.

She currently serves as a commissioner on the World War I Centennial Commission representing the VFW.

I think that we would all agree, especially now, that we continue to face challenges in the VFW. It is imperative that we 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.

Comrades, we have that person in Debra Anderson. Her passion for the success of our organization, the vision for our 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.

During this past year, Debra was instrumental in the VFW response to the COVID pandemic. She was a key member of the leadership team that kept the National Headquarters operating smoothly and moving forward. The VFW continued its mission of serving veterans, military service members, and families because of measures put in place to facilitate employees working remotely and to safely keep our offices open for essential in-person functions.

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 2021-2022.

Thank you.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Kevin Jones, Adjutant General, Delegate,

7356, Missouri.

It gives me a great pleasure to second the nomination of Debra Anderson for the position of Quartermaster General.

I have worked closely with Debra over the past six years in the National Headquarters. It takes a unique set of skills to successfully do the job of Quartermaster General. First, it takes an ability to understand complex material such as financial reports and audits, legal documents, employee benefit plans, and other reports, and to take appropriate action based on these documents and their analyses.

Secondly, it takes the ability to work as part of a team, to respectfully disagree when needed, but to always be working towards a consensus solution that serves the organization. It takes people skills, public speaking skills, and organizational skills.

Debra has these skills. I believe we have a really strong leadership team at the National Headquarters. We collaborate well. We respect each other. And we get things done for the organization. Debra Anderson is a key member of that team. And it is an honor to second her nomination for the high office of Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the ensuing year 2021-2022.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Are there any other nominations for Quartermaster General?

Hearing none, I declare that the nominations for Quartermaster General be closed.

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Debra Anderson elected Quartermaster General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2021-2022 year.

Comrades, you have elected Debra Anderson as the Quartermaster General.

Debra, would you like to say a few words?

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We will have the presentation of cap and badge.

(Placement of cap and badge by Steve Bourque.)

#### REMARKS BY QUARTERMASTER GENERAL ELECT DEBRA ANDERSON

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL-ELECT ANDERSON: All right. Thank you, Comrades. Yes, please have a seat.

Thank you so very much for this great honor. I want to begin by thanking Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Nier and Adjutant General Kevin Jones for their kind words, for their continual support and advice, and for their friendship. It truly means a lot.



I want to thank my husband, Steve, for always being there, good times and bad times, providing the right support and advice and telling me things I needed to know that other people wouldn't tell me. He has been -- he has been my rock.

I want to commend Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch and his leadership team for a really outstanding year. This has really been something, and he has done an amazing job.

The National Headquarters staff -- your National Headquarters staff in Kansas City, Missouri, Washington, DC, and around the country do an amazing job. They always do an amazing job, but this year has been particularly challenging, and I just can't thank them enough for stepping up, for doing the important work of the VFW and making sure we continue to support you and to support veterans and family members.

And, of course, to my comrades, I love coming out to visit you. I love talking to you on the phone. I am inspired by the work that you do, by your generosity, and by your determination to make sure that we are there for America's veterans.

I'm looking forward to the coming year, working with Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic. I pledge to you that I will continue to do the work of the quartermaster general on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, to protect and safeguard our assets, our resources, to provide advice as part of the leadership team, and to make sure that we're continuing to move forward in the right direction.

Thank you once again for this great honor. It is truly a privilege. Thank you.  
(Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We will now have the nomination for the office of Chaplain. Is there any nomination for Chaplain?

COMRADE GIMBLE: Chief, National Officers, and fellow Comrades, distinguished guests, I'm Tom Gimble, National Councilmember from Virginia, Post 1503, Dale City.

It gives me great pleasure to nominate an outstanding fellow comrade from Virginia for the high office of National Chaplain for the year 2021-2022.

Harold Sayles is a man of high morals, stainless integrity, and boundless energy. Has a strong résumé in VFW service, community service, and education.

Let me briefly summarize the following: Dr. Harold Sayles holds a bachelor's degree from San Diego State University, a master's degree from Duke University, and a doctorate degree from American University.

Comrade Sayles is a VFW Life Member for 34 years and maintains his membership at Post 10654, Richmond, Virginia. He has and is still serving at post, district, and department levels. He has served as post commander

numerous times, post quartermaster, post chaplain, district commander, district chief of Staff, department parliamentarian, department chaplain, where he still serves.

Also, Grand MOC of Virginia chaplain, chaplain to the Petersburg, Virginia, jail. Comrade Sayles has been appointed by three different Virginia governors to serve on state boards.

I'm proud to have Harold Sayles as a longtime friend and comrade. As I said, he's a man of intense integrity, compassion, and energy.

He spends countless hours ministering to and assisting veterans. He also spends countless hours working with state officials on veterans issues.

He's a hardworking VFW member. And he also has served, like, 17 years in the United States Army, both as a reservist and active duty.

His awards -- he has numerous awards to include the CIB, Combat Infantry Badge, and he also has the Master Parachutist Badge, Bronze Star, several Meritorious Service Awards, several Army Achievement Awards.

And it gives me great pleasure to put forth his name as the next National Chaplain for 2021-2022. Harold Sayles is our -- I would like to have your support for his nomination. Thank you.

(Applause)

COMRADE SCHUPSKA: Butch Schupska, Delegate, VFW Post 3160 in Ocean View.

God told me to make this short; so I make a second to make Harold Sayles National Chaplain, '21-'22.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Are there any other nominations for Chaplain?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations for Chaplain closed.

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Dr. Harold Sayles elected Chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2021-2022 years.

We'll now present him with his cap and badge.

(Placement of cap and badge by Butch Schupska.)

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT HAROLD SAYLES

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN-ELECT SAYLES: Commander-in-Chief told me to be sincere, be brief, and be seated. So what I'm going to say is I want to thank the Department of Virginia for their support.

I want to thank Tom Gimble who's been a confidant for the years. I want to thank the Southern Conference. I want to thank my family. And I'm sorry my wife couldn't be here today, but she's a physician running a COVID clinic this week. And I want to, most importantly, thank God. Because without

him, I wouldn't be here today.

And I just want to say God bless America and God continue to bless the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Thank you.

(Applause)

## NOMINATIONS FOR JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now open the nomination for the office of Judge Advocate General. Is there any nominations for Judge Advocate General?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SPERA: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, National Officers, delegates to this convention, I am Paul Spera. I am a delegate from North End Post 144 in Boston, Massachusetts.

This moment in time at this podium is more than just a VFW event for me. The individual I am about to nominate for Judge Advocate General has been a very close, very personal friend of mine for more than 40 years. We have gone through a lot. And I have grown in the VFW as he has.

He has been an All-American Department Commander. He served two five-year terms on the previous By-Laws Review Committee. He has been the Adjutant Quartermaster of the Department of Connecticut for many years. There are many other things that he has done, far too numerous to mention.

What I can say is that he epitomizes what we need in our organization: To watch over the By-Laws and Ritual; to make recommendations; to support good ones; and, if necessary, oppose those that are not so good.

The one thing that I do like the most is the fact that when I was up here to second the nomination of Duane Sarmiento, I said, "He is the future of the Veterans of Foreign Wars."

For this nomination, I will tell you that this individual is the past and the future. And the importance of that is that as we make changes in our organization going forward, he can be a voice for the traditions of our organization.

Because while you're making those changes, they must, must coincide with our traditions and the mission that we have done for more than 100 years. He will be that voice. He will be a strong proponent, as he always has been, for the future of our organization.

So I am very pleased, very proud to place into nomination the name of an individual who I believe will do a fantastic job as the Judge Advocate General. From the great state of Connecticut, I place into nomination the name of Ronald Roscoe Rusakiewicz.

(Applause)

COMRADE BARNHART: Commander-in-Chief, Officers, Delegates to this convention, Bob Barnhart, Delegate, Post 686, is here to second the nomination of a good friend, Ron Rusakiewicz, for the National Judge Advocate

position.

I've known Ron for many years, and he will step forward and do the right thing as he represents Connecticut all these years as the Adjutant Quartermaster. Thank you.

COMRADE DiFEDERICO: I'm Richard DiFederico, Oakville Post 7330 in Oakville, Connecticut.

I've been coming to these conventions for a long time, and Ronnie has never missed a By-Law Committee meeting. I don't think he missed too many Appeals Committee. When I was on the Appeals Committee, he made -- he was there for every one.

He's been a good mentor, and he will help and do the right thing all the time.

His loyalty to the VFW will always be there. I second that nomination for Ron Rusakiewicz.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Any other nominations for Judge Advocate General?

Hearing none, I declare the nominations for Judge Advocate General closed.

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Ronald Rusakiewicz elected Judge Advocate General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2021-2022 year.

Comrades, you have elected Ronald Rusakiewicz as the Judge Advocate General. We'll now have the placing of the cap and badge.

(Applause)

(Placement of cap and badge by Barbara Rusakiewicz.)

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY NATIONAL JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT RONALD RUSAKIEWICZ

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL-ELECT RUSAKIEWICZ: Thank you very, very much.

I -- I want to thank Paul Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, for that great nomination. In fact, he did so well, I can't wait to hear what I'm going to say.

I also want to thank the seconders, Richard DiFederico and, of course, good friend also, Bob Barnhart. But most of all, I want to thank each and every one of you. You who elected me and are giving me the great honor and opportunity to serve as your Judge Advocate General in the Fritz Mihelcic administration.

I, like all of you, only hope that we can defeat this pandemic and that we can meet like we used to meet without masks on, without fear of concurring some type of a disease, and we can get back to the way the Veterans of Foreign Wars was; that our people won't feel slighted by going to a

meeting or an event that we have, and that we can continue on and get back to the camaraderie and great friendship that we've all shared over these years and continued on through the years without fear of getting sick.

So thank you very much again for what you did for me. But thank you most of all to each and every one of you who every single day work for our valued veterans, their families, and your communities. Thank you very much. (Applause)

#### NOMINATIONS FOR SURGEON GENERAL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now open the nomination for the office of Surgeon General. Is there any nomination for Surgeon General?

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF POULIOT: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief. Tom Pouliot, Delegate, Post 1116, Montana.

I rise at this time to nominate a friend and a comrade, Dennis Guthrie of Oregon, to the office of National Surgeon General for the ensuing year.

After high school, Dennis enlisted in the Army. He graduated Airborne Training and completed Special Forces Medical Training. He volunteered for Vietnam in 1969. Dennis served as head field medic for the 1st Cav Division -- anybody out there? No? -- and later volunteered to fly medevac.

While serving Vietnam, Dennis was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with "V" device, two Flight Medals, and the Combat Medic Badge.

After service, Dennis was a volunteer fireman and served as an EMT. For nearly 40 years, Dennis has been a member of Redmond VFW Post 4108 where he is a Gold Legacy Life Member. He earned All-American status as Post Commander. His post has been recognized nationally three times as the VFW Outstanding Community Service Post in Oregon.

Dennis was department commander of Oregon in 2000 and 2001 and is also a past Grand Commander of Oregon's MOC.

Dennis was elected District 17 National Councilmember, representing three states in 2005 and 2000- -- through 2007. And he served as our National Surgeon General in 2009 and '10. He is a member of the 1st Cav Division, Vietnam Veterans Association, the American Legion and more.

Dennis married his high school sweetheart, Dianne. They have two children. Both have served in the Air Force. His son, Ben, followed in his footsteps and has served as a medic.

Comrades, Dennis has served our organization long and faithfully, and he will continue to do so as our Surgeon General. It is my personal honor to nominate Dennis to the office of Surgeon General for the ensuing year. Thank you. (Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KENT: I'm Gunner Kent, Delegate, Post 9972, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

When you follow a lawyer, you don't have to say too much. So it does me a great deal of pleasure to second the nomination of Dennis Guthrie for the high office of Surgeon General. Thank you very much.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Are there any other nominations for Surgeon General?

Hearing none, I declare that the nominations for Surgeon General closed.

Seeing no further nominations, I declare Dennis Guthrie elected Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for the 2021-2022 year. Comrades, you have elected Dennis Guthrie as Surgeon General. We will now have the presentation of the cap and badge.

(Applause)

(Placement of cap and badge by Diane Guthrie.)

(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY NATIONAL SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT DENNIS GUTHRIE

SURGEON GENERAL-ELECT GUTHRIE: Good morning, Comrades. I'd like to thank Past Commander-in-Chief Tom Pouliot, Gunner Kent for the nomination and second, and obviously my wife for allowing me to do this for the next year and taking all the time, the support from my department, Department of Oregon.

I'd like to thank the Western Conference for allowing me to represent them on the -- this year. And I want to thank all of you for all you do every day for our veterans.

I'd like to offer support for any of the surgeon generals for the departments out there. Anything I can do to help you.

Thank you kindly. Have a great year.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We will now have a collective ceremonial parade for the Quartermaster General, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General, and Surgeon General who will be escorted by the Sergeant-at-Arms. We have multiple conferences. I would ask that the department of the elected officer please march so that we don't have the same traffic jam we had earlier.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Maestro, strike up the Amy song.  
(Whereupon a ceremonial parade was held.)

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS AND PRESENTATION OF CAPS AND BADGES BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MATTHEW M. "FRITZ" MIHELIC

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I will now call upon the Adjutant

General to announce the newly-elected National Council of Administration members.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: All newly-elected Councilmembers, will you please rise. The Commander-in-Chief-elect will now present caps and badges to the newly-elected councilmembers.

They are David Greene, Connecticut.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: John Mitchell, Delaware.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Pete Mascetti, Europe.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Steven J. San Pedro, Maine.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Denise Perry, Maryland.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Eric Segundo, Massachusetts.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Joe Clark, New Hampshire.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: William F. Thompson, New Jersey.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Gene Ratigliano, New York.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Glenn Umberger, Junior, Pennsylvania.  
(Applause)

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Charles Magnant, Vermont.  
(Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENTS BY  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MATTHEW M. "FRITZ" MIHELIC

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: At this time, I'd like to call on Commander-in-Chief-elect Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic for his announcement of appointed officers for the ensuing year.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: My appointments for the

term for which I am elected are: As Adjutant General, Kevin Jones of Missouri.  
(Applause)  
(Placement of cap and badge by Kelly Jones.)

#### REMARKS BY ADJUTANT GENERAL KEVIN JONES

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: Commander-in-Chief-elect Fritz, thank you for having the confidence in me. Again, I'm humbled by this opportunity.

Both the Kansas City and Washington offices, we will do everything that we can and will do everything to make sure you have the necessary tools to be successful. I'm excited about this opportunity and look forward to working going forward, Chief. Thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: As Chief of Staff, Matthew Claussen, Illinois.  
(Applause)  
(Placement of cap and badge by Tammy Claussen.)

#### REMARKS BY CHIEF OF STAFF MATTHEW CLAUSSEN

CHIEF OF STAFF CLAUSSEN: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief for the high honor.

I look forward to next year -- or this year, I should say. And I'm looking forward to just an outstanding year from all our departments to make sure that our organization continues to move forward.

Commander-in-Chief, thank you.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: Inspector General, Paul Lloyd of New Hampshire.  
(Applause)  
(Placement of cap and badge by Theresa Lloyd.)

#### REMARKS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL PAUL LLOYD

INSPECTOR GENERAL LLOYD: Thank you, Chief, for the tweak.  
Commander-in-Chief Fritz, thank you for the appointment. I look forward to a very successful year.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: And last, Sergeant-at-Arms, Brian Willette of Massachusetts.  
(Cheering and applause)



(Placement of cap and badge by Gina Willette.)  
(Applause)

#### REMARKS BY SERGEANT-AT-ARMS BRIAN WILLETTE

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: This one's for Bryan.  
(Applause)

#### INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: We will now proceed with the installation of officers.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the installing officer to the position on my right.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Commander-in-Chief, Past Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien, the installing officer for this convention.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: 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 the officers of the ensuing year been duly elected?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Have the books of the Adjutant General and Quartermaster General been examined and approved by the National Council of Administration?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: They have.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Does the Adjutant General have on file proof of eligibility for all officers to be installed during this installation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: They do.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Are the funds in the hands of the Quartermaster General and ready to be turned over to her successor when duly installed?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: They are.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Have you the charter in your possession?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: I do.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: You will now surrender the gavel to me. Commander-in-Chief Hal J. "Hal" Roesch II, you've now been relieved of your duties as Commander-in-Chief of this organization. It is proper to remind you in order -- as Past Commander-in-Chief, it will be your duty and privilege to counsel an otherwise successor through your experiences that you have gained during your term of your office. You will now station yourself right where you're at.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now present the officers-elect at the altar as the Assistant Adjutant General reads the list of officers to be installed.

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Timothy Borland.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, Duane Sarmiento.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Adjutant General, Kevin Jones.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Quartermaster General, Debra Anderson.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Chaplain, Dr. Harold Sayles.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Judge Advocate General, Ronald Rusakiewicz.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Surgeon General, Dennis Guthrie.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Chief of Staff, Matthew Claussen.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Inspector General, Paul Lloyd.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Sergeant-at-Arms, Brian Willette.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: And our newly-elected Councilmembers: David Greene of Connecticut.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: John G. Mitchell, Delaware.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Peter J. Mascetti, Europe.

(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Steven J. San Pedro, Maine.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Denise Perry, Maryland.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Eric Segundo,  
Massachusetts.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Joe Clark, New Hampshire.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: William F. Thompson, New  
Jersey.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Gene Ratigliano, New York.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: Glenn R. Umberger, Junior,  
from Pennsylvania.  
(Applause)

PAST COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LAWRENCE: And Charles A. Magnant,  
Vermont.  
(Applause)

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: National Officers-elect of the Veterans of  
Foreign Wars of the United States, I will now administer to you the Officers'  
obligation. You will raise your right hand, touch the flag of our country with  
your left hand, and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, the Officers' Obligation was administered at this time.)

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: As you were.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Parade rest.

Comrade Chaplain.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN SAYLES: Almighty God, our guide and divine  
protector, give Thy blessing upon these, our comrades, who now become  
fellow officers. We beseech Thee, O' Lord, who art ever-present amongst us.

Grant wisdom unto them so that in their deliberations they continue  
to favor Thee, our glorious country, and to better our organization.

May Thy strength sustain them. May Thy power preserve them. May

Thy hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties.  
Amen.  
(Amen)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Cover.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: As you were.

National Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now escort the officers to their respective stations.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Yes, sir, Past Commander-in-Chief, sir.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: You may be seated for now.

National Officers of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you now occupy the position of honor in which your comrades have elected you. Learn well the responsibilities that's entrusted to you so that you may intelligently discharge the duties you are to undertake.

The By-Laws and Rituals of this organization prescribe in detail the duties that -- the duties of your respective offices by virtue of the confidence placed in you through your election or appointment. We assume that you will acquaint yourselves thoroughly with your duties. You may be seated -- which they did.

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will escort the Commander-in-Chief-elect to the podium.

All rise, please.

Comrade Commander-in-Chief-elect, Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic, before administering you your obligation, it is proper to remind you of certain duties. You will be held personally responsible for this charter of this organization. And at the end of the term of your 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 or potential and actual comrades of this organization. You will strive for adoption of only those measures which will be beneficial.

You'll be required to devote all of your time to the many duties of your office. You're expected to make a special study of the Congressional Charter, the By-Laws and Rituals of this organization so that you may render firm and impartial decisions on important questions that may be referred to you.

As Commander-in-Chief, you will be regarded by your comrades and by the general public as typifying wise and vigorous leadership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. May all your efforts and accomplishments credit to you, your administration obligations.

Comrade Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic, are you ready and willing to serve?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: I am.

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Assume this solemn obligation?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: (Nods head.)

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Okay. You will raise your right hand and touch the flag of our country with your left. Give your name as I point.

(Whereupon, Installing Officer Thien administered the obligation to Matthew M. "Fritz" Mihelcic at this time.)

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Comrade, Commander-in-Chief, I now place in your possession our charter. I also present you with this gavel. It is the emblem of authority. You will use it firmly, but you will use it with discretion.

To all National Officers, please stand, stretch forth your right hand and repeat after me.

(Whereupon, pledge of sincere allegiance to Commander-in-Chief Mihelcic was administered at this time.)

INSTALLING OFFICER THIEN: Comrade commander-in-Chief, officers and delegates of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I now proclaim the National Officers duly installed and the organization in working condition for the ensuing year.

(Cheering and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: I now call on Commander-in-Chief Roesch to conduct the ceremonial presentation of lapel pins.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Will the Junior Vice and Senior Vice Commander-in-Chiefs please join us on stage.

ADJUTANT GENERAL JONES: For those that don't know, the Commander-in-Chief-elect has presented the Commander-in-Chief with a Gold Life Member card entitled, "To Harold 'Hal' Roesch II."

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure and a distinct honor to present to you the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Fritz Mihelcic.  
(Applause)

#### ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MATTHEW M. "FRITZ" MIHELIC

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: Thank you, Comrades. Thank you. I am truly humbled by this honor.

And I want to thank Terry and Bobby for the nomination, and my Chief, Bill Thien, 2013-2014, for installing me.

A special thanks to Illinois-owned Past Commander-in-Chief George Cramer who was not able to be with us today.

Comrades, Auxiliary members, family, friends, thank you for letting me share a few moments with you as I begin this great journey as your VFW Commander-in-Chief, as we shake off the past and we rise again to the challenge of this next year.

"The Time is Now." I chose that theme some time ago, but it was

purely prophetic. We have been living for almost two years in the grips of a modern dark age. We have not been able to get out into our communities. We have not been able to show the world who we are and what we are. We have lost posts, members, and prospective members.

But my friends, when it comes to reawakening and reawakening our spirits and beginning a renaissance within our beloved Veterans of Foreign Wars, I say the time is now.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: We need to pick up the torch today and shine our light brightly into every corner far and wide. Our mission is simple: Let everyone know the VFW is not dead. It is not dying. And after 122 years, we are just beginning to hit our stride.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: Yes, 122 years. The moniker of this year's group of state commanders is Class 122. I had to veto "Fritz's Fearless Followers."

I may wear the chief's hat, but I represent and I serve all of you. It's not about any individual. Rather, we decided to show our service and our commitment to the Veterans of Foreign Wars by describing who we are in the grand scheme of 122 years of service to America, our service to our service members, our veterans, and our families.

We are the commanders of Class 122. We will make a difference and we have all pledged to work together at all levels, once again, to show that service has not fallen away.

We are about service, my friends. And we all need to be pulling in the right direction. None of us here are for any individual glory, least of all me. I'm honored to lead the effort, but a leader is only as good as those who are willing to follow that leadership. I will give you all I have this year, and I will leave nothing on the table. I ask you to do the same.

My second ask is that all of you not despair over the past. Since the first coronavirus case reported in the U.S. back in January of 2020, it's been a rough 18 months. That much is true. The pandemic took its toll on our families, our friends, our communities, our livelihoods, and in some cases even our faith. Our country has suffered tremendously.

But we cannot wait until the Nation fully recovers before we begin to recover ourselves. When it comes to taking action in spite of circumstance, I say the time is now.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: I'm here to proclaim the past is over and the future is ours for the making. Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, we will soar to new heights in this coming year. There is an energy in the air, and I know you can all feel it. When we were marching, you-all felt it.

The fact that we're able to be here today in Kansas City proves it. Many posts around the world have used this strategic pause to refurbish their post homes. Others have used the time to reengage their membership by calling on current or lapsed members. The simple act of reaching out and offering a human touch has led to several departments reaching 100 percent and much more all in the time of COVID restrictions.

I even went to a VFW dinner banquet in Wisconsin recently, and they had 350 people in attendance, a gathering not possible just a few months ago.

If there are those that can do this in the "Dark Ages," during the plague of the modern era, think of what we can all do working together in this coming renaissance.

It's time to get reglued, get back to our core values, and service will be the watch word of the coming year. Yes, membership numbers are important. But we firmly believe that if we increase our service, we increase our community involvement, and we partner with other organizations, potential members will be knocking down our doors to join us.

When it comes to embracing this new generation of veterans and their desire for purpose, motivation, and leadership through action, I say the time is now.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: Today's warriors are not content with sitting in meetings or standing next to a bar complaining. They are doers. Give them something to do. Be an active part of your community. They will gladly come out to the local park and help clean it because it is a finite commitment, it has a clear goal, and it gives them an opportunity to take a selfie of themselves doing great things. Just like this. (Takes a picture)  
(Cheers and applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: It's as easy as that, my friends. This is going to be on Facebook in a few minutes. This is how we communicate. This is what we're going to do.

Just like any -- just like social media is truly a force multiplier for communication, the younger generation of veterans can be the force multiplier for our organization. So if you're out and about, hashtag "still serving" in your communities, wear your VFW logo ball caps and T-shirts.

Potential members will see the VFW presence. They will see its relevancy, and they will want to be part of it. They are our future, and we need to pass this on and pass the torch over to them and let them run with it.

I know there is a lot of attention on the current conflict veterans these days, and rightfully so. As we end our nearly 20-year war in Afghanistan, we owe -- we as a Nation owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the hundreds of thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen who have served over the years in the conflict, including 2,420 killed and almost 20,000

wounded. They sacrificed so much, and they successfully kept al-Qaeda from planning and executing another 9/11 attack on American soil.

To all our brothers and sisters in arms who served with honor, valor, distinction during Operations Enduring Freedom and Resolute Support, we say, "Thank you and welcome home."

Please join me in a show of appreciation for these brave men and women.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: But just as we honor veterans from our past 20 years, we must not -- we cannot forget all of the living veterans who brought us to this point in our history.

There are many eligible veterans still from World War II and forward who we need to recruit. Korea, Vietnam, the various pop-up conflicts, Desert Storm, Somalia, the Balkans.

The VFW is a big tent, and we welcome everyone. It matters not what war or conflict you were in, what branch or where you were deployed. If you served and you are eligible, we want you to be a part of us. Because everyone wants to be part of something bigger than themselves. The VFW offers you that.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: Why do we need to continue pushing membership? Well, because the average age of a VFW member is 69 years old, and we are teetering on falling below the 1 million member mark. If we go below that, Congress may decide to stop listening to us when it comes to veterans benefits and legislation.

We were founded on two things: Veterans benefits and legislation. And we cannot let a falling membership deprive all veterans of the powerful voice we have on Capitol Hill.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: When the VFW speaks, Congress listens, and it needs to stay that way. If we do not keep that loud voice, we will be lost in a sea of whispers along with many of the lesser-known veterans groups.

Class 122 has simply said, "Not on my watch." When it comes to strengthening our voice in the Nation's capitol, I say the time is now.

(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: We must continue to press Congress and the Administration on issues like toxic exposure, VA claims, transition assistance. We will leverage every testimony, every engagement, every phone call, and even you -- as members of our action corps -- to get our point across. We will not be ignored.



We need to take back the narrative about the veteran community. We need to declare that we, veterans, are patriotic beyond politics; that we are committed to our Constitution, and we are dedicated to democracy, and we are resolute in our love for our great republic.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: We promise you this: The Veterans of Foreign Wars will finish stronger at the end of this year, and we will ensure that Congress hears us roar.

Friends -- and I know this next point is going to hurt some of you, but I'm going to say it anyway -- we are no longer in the 20th century. Flip phones, modems, computers with five and a quarter inch floppy drives, those are in the museum of forgotten technology. We are firmly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

COVID, over the last 18 months, has shown us that we can actually have meetings and conduct business virtually. If only I had purchased stock in Zoom a year ago.

That said, the genie is out of the bottle, and it's not going back in. When it comes to embracing new and emergent technologies to carry our message and tell our story, I say the time is now.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: I said earlier that social media is a force multiplier, and I've said that twice now because it is the reality of the times in which we live. We need to do more to tell the world what we do, the VFW, on a daily basis. It's not bragging if it's the truth.

Email has been around for 30 years. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook have been around for 14 and 17 years respectfully. You might disagree, but I've seen too many faces buried in smartphones over the years. Everyone is looking at social media. We must get on that wagon, and we must get on it now. The time is now.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: Social media is also the cheapest way to get the word out. It's free. And I'm sure the adjutants and quartermasters will be happy to hear that.

If you don't know how to use it, if you're not comfortable with it yet, trust me, there are plenty of members and potential members at your post that are. Let them be your social media gurus. They will be posting about everything you're doing. Give them a task. They will do it.

And the beauty of social media is that you don't have to do all the work yourselves. Through our national accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, our website, even through our podcast, our communications teams in KC and DC, they put out a great deal of information daily. All you have to do is follow it, share it, and it will get out to everyone. It doesn't get any easier or cheaper.

To paraphrase Oscar Goldman, we have the technology. We can make our communications better than it was, stronger, better, faster. That's your \$6 million quote for the day.  
(Applause)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF-ELECT MIHELIC: For those of you who remember that reference.

In conclusion -- and that means, for those of you in the back, it's time to wake up -- the mission of Class 122 is simple: Show the world that we are alive and vibrant. Bring all of our posts into the 21st century by showcasing what we do and what we do well. Welcome all of those eligible members to be part of the greatest combat veterans organization the world has ever known.

Friends, the time is now. Let's get to it. Thank you.  
(Standing ovation)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you, Commander-in-Chief Fritz Mihelcic, for those great words. It has been an honor this past year to serve with you and to serve for you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: At this time, we will entertain a motion to adjourn the convention.

I will recognize Microphone No. 1.

COMRADE DUNCAN: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Johnathan Duncan, post delegate, 7397, Department of Kansas.

There being no further business to come before this convention and the officers have been duly elected and installed for the ensuing year, I move that the 122nd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States be closed sine die.

COMRADE CARROLL: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, Delegate Quentin Carroll, Post 7356, Department of Missouri, second the motion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you. You have before you a motion, properly seconded, to close the 122nd VFW National Convention.

Is there a question on the motion? Is there a question on the motion?

Is there a question on the motion?

Hearing none, all those in favor will please signify by the usual sign of aye.  
(Aye)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Opposed, no.  
The ayes have it and the motion carries.

#### CLOSING CEREMONIES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Sergeant-at-Arms, will you proceed with the closing ceremonies.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Yes, sir, Comrade Commander-in-Chief, sir.

National Chaplain, Father Joseph Gallick, will lead us in the final prayer.

#### CLOSING PRAYER - NATIONAL CHAPLAIN FATHER JOSEPH GALLICK

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: National Chaplain, Father Joseph Gallick, please give the final prayer.

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN GALLICK: Almighty God, as we come to the close of these meetings, we thank You that You were able to gather -- we were able to gather and conduct business in an orderly and representative manner. We once again realize the value of being a part of this great organization, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

We pledge to you -- each of you -- we pledge to each other our mutual support as we continue to interact with one another. May each person's lives be enriched by the spirit of true comradeship. Amen.  
(Amen)

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, attention.

Comrades, facing the flag of our nation, please join me in a final salute to our colors.

#### PREPARE AND RETIRE THE COLORS

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Captain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Honor Guard, advance and retrieve the colors on your command.

NATIONAL HONOR GUARD: On your command, sir.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILLETTE: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, that concludes the closing ceremonies for the 122nd Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: Thank you, sir.

This afternoon's Council of Administration meeting will begin exactly at 13:30 in Room 3501 E, F, G and H. 24

#### ADJOURNMENT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ROESCH: The 122nd National Convention is closed and we are adjourned sine die.

(Whereupon, the Convention was duly adjourned at 11:59 a.m.)

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL BYLAWS/MANUAL OF  
PROCEDURE AND RITUAL  
122ND NATIONAL CONVENTION  
JULY 31-AUGUST 3, 2021  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER**

**C-1**

Proposed by Department of Maine

**CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER**

**Sec. 230102 – Purposes.**

Amend Sec. 230102 – Purposes., Congressional Charter, in the first sentence, by removing “fraternal”.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BYLAWS**

**B-1**

Proposed by Department of Pacific Areas

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

**Sec. 101 – Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 101 – Eligibility. National Bylaws, by replacing (3) with the following and renumbering the existing verbiage in (3) as (4):

“(3) in Taiwan or in its territorial waters for not less than 30 consecutive days, for a total of 60 days, from 1951 to 1979; or”

**B-2**

Proposed by Department of Vermont

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

**Sec. 101 – Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 101 – Eligibility. National Bylaws, by adding the following as (4):

“(4) Foreign Duty Service on Foreign Soil, its Airspace, and Territorial Waters for not less than 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 non-consecutive days of duty after September 11, 2001 – Open”

**B-3**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

### **Sec. 101 – Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 101 – Eligibility., National Bylaws, by replacing the first paragraph with the following:

“An individual is eligible for membership in the corporation only if the individual is serving or has served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States:”

#### **B-4**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

### **Sec. 102 – Applications-Affiliation of New Members.**

Amend Sec. 102 – Applications-Affiliation of New Members., National Bylaws, under **Members-At-Large.**, at the end of the first sentence, by replacing “dues” with “or life member fees.” In the second sentence, add “at least” before \$45.00. Add the following sentence at the end of the paragraph: “Life member payouts shall be in accordance with Section 111.”

#### **B-5**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 Bylaws, under **Quorum.**, by removing “physically present” at the end of the sentence.

Under **Electronic Attendance.**, replace the paragraph with the following:

“Any of the above stated meetings may be conducted or attended electronically that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.”

#### **B-6**

Proposed by Department of New Jersey

## **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

### **Sec. 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees. National Bylaws, under (a), by replacing “and three Trustees” with “three Trustees, and two alternate Trustees.”

**B-7**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 Bylaws, under **Quorum.** by replacing (a) with the following paragraph and removing (b):

“The minimum number of delegates required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at District meetings and Conventions shall not be less than one (1) delegate each from fifty (50) percent of Posts in the District.”

Under **Electronic Attendance.**, replace the paragraph with the following:

“Members may be allowed to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.”

**B-8**

Proposed by Department of New Jersey

**ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

**Sec. 416 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 416 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees. National Bylaws, under (a), by replacing “and three (3) Trustees” with “three (3) Trustees, and two (2) alternate Trustees.”

**B-9**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 503 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees.**

Amend Sec. 503 – Regular, Special and Committee Meetings; Convention; Quorum; Authorized Attendees., National Bylaws, by adding the following paragraph at the end of the section:

“The Department Council of Administration or Department Convention may allow delegates to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.”

**B-10**

Proposed by Department of South Dakota

**ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties., National Bylaws, under (i) **Quorum.**, by replacing the paragraph with the following:

“**Quorum.** A majority of the members of the Council of Administration shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business unless the Department Bylaws may prescribe a different number of Council of Administration members required to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.”

**B-11**

Proposed by Department of Virginia

**ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

**Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Sec. 522 – Council of Administration – Composition, Powers and Duties., National Bylaws, under (a) **Composition.**, in the fourth sentence, by adding “Membership Committee Chair” after “Inspector”.

**B-12**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 Bylaws, by adding the following paragraph at the end of the section:

“The National Council of Administration or National Convention may allow delegates to participate in meetings using technology that allows participating members to communicate with each other simultaneously.”

**B-13**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 Bylaws, under **(d) Quartermaster General: (2)**, by replacing the paragraph with the following:

“Have charge of all employees of the Quartermaster General's staff for the Kansas City and Washington offices and supervise the Quartermaster General's operations at both offices.

Immediately upon entering into office, appoint Directors who shall be full-time salaried employees of the organization. The Quartermaster General may employ such other personnel as may be necessary or appropriate.”

**B-14**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 Bylaws, under **(d) Quartermaster General: (10)**, in the second paragraph, by replacing the first sentence with the following:

“Record keeping by electronic means may be used, provided a secure back-up system is in place.”

**B-15**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 Bylaws, under **(f) Adjutant General: (2)**, by replacing the paragraph with the following:

“Have charge of all employees of the Adjutant General's staff for the Kansas City and Washington offices and supervise the Adjutant General's



operations at both offices. Immediately upon entering office, appoint Directors who shall be full time salaried employees of the organization. The Adjutant General may employ such other personnel as may be necessary or appropriate to fulfill the duties.”

#### **B-16**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

##### **Sec. 619 – National Committees.**

Amend Sec. 619 – National Committees., National Bylaws, in the first paragraph, by removing “c. Trust Fund Committee” and the entire segment of **“(c) Trust Fund Committee.”**

#### **B-17**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 Bylaws, under **(b) Powers and Duties: (2) Budget;** in the first sentence, by removing “not less than thirty (30) days nor” and replace with “not”.

#### **B-18**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

##### **Sec. 711 – Buddy Poppy.**

Amend Sec. 711 – Buddy Poppy., National Bylaws, by replacing the second paragraph with the following:

“A grant in the amount of one and one-half cents of each poppy sold shall be payable to the VFW National Home for Children; any remaining net proceeds from the sales of Buddy Poppies after the costs of producing and distributing the poppies and the payment of the grant to the National Home for Children has been deducted, shall be allocated to the National Veterans Service Budget.”

#### **B-19**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

### **Sec. 714 – Control of Mailing Lists.**

Amend Sec. 714 – Control of Mailing Lists., National Bylaws, by replacing the second paragraph with the following:

“Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the VFW from soliciting or authorizing solicitation of its membership to benefit the purposes of the organization.”

## **B-20**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

## **ARTICLE IX – DISCIPLINE**

Amend Article IX, National Bylaws by replacing the entire section with the following:

### **“Sec. 901 - Discipline of Members.**

Except as otherwise provided in the Congressional Charter, these Bylaws and the Manual of Procedure, no member shall be subject to the penalties authorized in Section 907 unless such member has been advised in writing of the Charges and Specifications, including any Materials Relied Upon with respect to those Charges, and afforded the opportunity to request that such charges be heard and determined at a Disciplinary Hearing or otherwise resolved, as provided and prescribed in this Article.

### **Sec. 902 - Offenses.**

Members who have committed offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may be subject to Disciplinary Action and may be assessed the penalties provided in this Article. Offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States are:

1. Disloyalty to the United States of America.
2. Failure to fulfill the Member’s Obligation as stated in the VFW Ritual or the obligations taken upon installation to any office.
3. False representation or deliberate concealment concerning eligibility for membership or for any office, or knowingly acquiescing in or permitting ineligible persons to become members or officers.

4. Disobedience or disregard of the provisions of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, Ritual, or General Orders or any of the laws and usages of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or order of the Commander-in-Chief or the Bylaws or general orders of any Post, County Council, District or Department or the lawful orders of any Commander thereof.
5. Conviction of, or entering a guilty or no contest plea to, a felony, or to a misdemeanor or ordinance violation involving moral turpitude, in any court in the United States.
6. Conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline or conduct unbecoming a member in their relations to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or other members.
7. Divulging any of the private business of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or any Post, County Council, District or Department, without proper authority.
8. Preparing or signing any false record, return, order or other official document of or concerning the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or any Post, County Council, District or Department, knowing it to be false, or making any other false official statement.
9. Selling or otherwise disposing of money or property without proper authority or willfully or negligently damaging, destroying or losing any such money or property belonging to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, or to any Post, County Council, District, or Department.
10. Aiding, abetting, counseling, concealing, commanding, conspiring, soliciting, procuring or causing to be done any act which, if done, would be punishable under this Article.
11. Knowingly conveying or causing to be conveyed in any form false information concerning military records.
12. Knowingly providing false information or statements in connection with the initiation of charges against any member or with respect to Disciplinary Actions under this Article.

### **Sec. 903 - Procedure for Disciplinary Actions.**

#### **(a) Preliminary Requirements with Respect to the Initiation of Disciplinary Actions**

1. Disciplinary Actions may be initiated only when there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offense recognized in Section 902 of these Bylaws has been committed by the person charged and an incident report and other appropriate documentation demonstrating the commission of the offense has been submitted to the appropriate Post or Department Commander or Commander-in-Chief.
2. Prior to the initiation of a Disciplinary Action, a Post or Department or its respective Commander or the Commander-in-Chief, shall appoint an individual or committee to investigate alleged offenses and report the results of the investigation in writing.
3. No Disciplinary Action may be initiated with respect to the act or acts of a member that have been the subject of an ongoing or completed Disciplinary Action.

**(b) Authority to Initiate Disciplinary Action:**

1. A Post may, acting by two-thirds vote at a regular or special meeting, instruct the Post Commander to initiate an action with respect to a member of the Post.
2. A Department Commander may initiate an action with respect to any member within the Department.
3. The Department Council of Administration may, by two-thirds vote, instruct the Department Commander to initiate an action with respect to any member within the Department.
4. The Commander-in-Chief may initiate such action with respect to any member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
5. The National Council of Administration may, by two-thirds vote, instruct the Commander-in-Chief to initiate an action with respect to any member.
6. If the respective Commander fails or refuses to initiate a disciplinary action after being instructed to do so, another member may be designated to initiate the action.
7. If the Commander is the accused, the action must be initiated by higher authority. In the event the Commander-in-Chief is the accused, the National Council of Administration shall designate a member to initiate the disciplinary action.

**(c) Procedure for Initiating a Disciplinary Action:**

1. Disciplinary Actions must be initiated by the preparation and delivery of written Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon with respect to those Charges and Specifications to the accused member.
2. The Charges and Specifications shall be issued under and attached to

a Special Order of the Initiating Officer or designated initiating member. The Special Order shall make specific reference to the right to a Hearing or Summary Disposition and the rights of appeal afforded by these Bylaws. The Special Order shall also inform the accused concerning the manner in which copies of Article IX of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and the Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions may be obtained electronically.

3. Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon with respect to those Charges and Specifications shall be prepared and delivered in the manner described in Section 903 of the Manual of Procedure. Materials Relied Upon will include any incident report, the investigative report and documentary or other evidence demonstrating reasonable grounds that an offense has been committed.
4. The written Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon shall be delivered personally to the accused or delivered by registered or certified mail return receipt requested to the last known address of the accused member. A copy thereof must be forwarded to the next higher authority. Posts shall forward a copy to the Department Commander. If delivered to the accused in person, the member making such delivery shall sign and submit a report attesting to same. The Adjutant shall retain copies of any mail receipt or attestation of personal delivery.
5. Prescribed forms for the initiation and conduct of Disciplinary Actions under this Article shall be as described in the Manual of Procedure.
6. Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions. The Adjutant General shall prepare, and amend as necessary, a Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions. The Guide will supplement the Manual of Procedure and will provide explanation and direction concerning Disciplinary Action proceedings.
7. Upon mutual written consent of the initiating officer or designated initiating member and the accused, delivery of documents, including the initiating documents may be electronic.

**(d) Procedure if Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing is not Requested.** If the accused member does not properly request a Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing as provided, in these Bylaws, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of the Charges and Specifications or, if the accused member, prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) day period or after requesting Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing, advises the Commander or the designated initiating member that a Summary Disposition or Disciplinary Hearing is not desired or fails to participate in those procedures, the accused will be deemed to acknowledge the sufficiency of the evidence and guilt of the Charges and the Commander or the designated initiating member may then take such action as is deemed appropriate, including the ordering of any penalties

prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws, subject to the following provisions:

1. If initiated by the Post, the Commander or the designated member initiating the charges, must have concurrence by majority vote of the Post to order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws.
2. If initiated by the Department Commander, the Department Commander may order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws, subject to the concurrence of a majority of the Department Council of Administration.
3. If Charges were initiated by the Department Council of Administration, the Council shall, by majority vote, order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws.
4. If initiated by the Commander-in-Chief, the Commander-in-Chief may order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws, subject to the concurrence of a majority of the National Council of Administration.
5. If Charges were initiated by the National Council of Administration, the Council shall, by majority vote, order any penalties prescribed in Section 907 of these Bylaws.

Notification of penalty shall be mailed to the accused's last known address by registered or certified mail return receipt requested.

No appeal is authorized if the accused does not request a Disciplinary Hearing.

**(e) Procedure for Summary Disposition.**

The accused may request Summary Disposition instead of requesting a Disciplinary Hearing. Under this procedure the accused cannot contest that the facts alleged in the Charges and Specifications support a finding that the accused has committed an offense under one or more provisions of Section 902 of these Bylaws, but requests an assessment of the penalty by a Panel of members of the National Council of Administration independent of the initiating officer or designated initiating member.

1. Procedure for requesting Summary Disposition. Summary Disposition must be requested in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of the Charges and Specifications by the accused. Summary Disposition must be requested by directing the request to the initiating officer or designated initiating member, who shall, within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the request, forward it through proper channels to the Commander-in-Chief, all as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.
2. Upon receipt of a timely request for Summary Disposition, the Commander-in-Chief shall appoint three (3) members of the

Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration to the Assessment Panel, designating one (1) member as the Chairman. The Panel members appointed must not be members of the same Department or geographical area as the accused or the initiating officer or designated initiating member.

3. The Assessment Panel may hear the matter electronically. The procedure for conducting the Summary Disposition shall be as set forth in the Manual of Procedure.
4. Disposition by the Assessment Panel. After reviewing the evidence presented and arguments of the parties, the Panel will separately determine the appropriate penalty and the Chairman will notify the parties and the Commander-in-Chief in writing.
5. No Appeal shall be permitted from the decision of the Assessment Panel, provided, however, a decision to terminate the member is subject to concurrence by the Commander-in-Chief.

**(f) Procedure if Disciplinary Hearing is Requested.**

If the accused member desires a Disciplinary Hearing, the accused member must, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt of the Charges and Specifications, request the Hearing. The request must be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

1. The Disciplinary Hearing shall be conducted in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure, as it may be supplemented by the Guide to Conducting Disciplinary Actions.
2. In the event a Disciplinary Hearing is requested and the accused fails to appear, the action shall continue as if no Hearing had been requested.

**(g) Resolution prior to Hearing or during Appeal.**

The Prosecutor, with concurrence of the Panel President, and accused may enter into an Agreement finally resolving the Disciplinary Action from which no appeal may be taken. The Agreement shall be reduced to writing signed by the parties. The Agreement shall set forth in detail the terms of the Agreement, including any penalties that are agreed by the parties. A copy of any Agreement must be forwarded by the initiating officer or designated initiating member to the Commander-in-Chief.

**(h) The Adjutant General shall prepare such forms as are necessary to facilitate actions under this Section. Such forms shall be an Appendix to the Manual of Procedure.**

**(i) Computation of Time.**

Whenever in this Article an action is to be taken or completed by a certain number of days it shall be calendar days, unless the final day is a Sunday or National holiday, in which case it shall be the next calendar day that is not a Sunday or a National holiday.

**Sec. 904 - Appeal.**

Except where otherwise provided in this Article, a member on whom Disciplinary Action is taken under this Article shall have the right to appeal such action. Any appeal under this Section must be made in writing and mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and postmarked no later than the date due, as prescribed in the Manual of Procedure. The time for an appeal shall be calculated beginning the date upon which the decision appealed from was delivered to the accused or to the accused last known address. The Commander-in-Chief may grant an extension, provided the request is received prior to the expiration of the time originally prescribed and the request is for good and sufficient cause. If the member fails to properly appeal the action, the appeal will not be considered.

**Appeals to the Department Commander.** Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by a Post will be to the Department Commander. The decision of the Department Commander shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration is final.

**Appeals to the Commander-in-Chief.** Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by a Department Commander or Department Council of Administration shall be to the Commander-in-Chief. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief shall be final unless an appeal is timely made to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration shall be final.

**Appeals to the National Council of Administration.** Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by the Commander-in-Chief will be to the National Council of Administration. The decision of the National Council of Administration is final.

**Computation of Time.** See Section 903(i) of these Bylaws.

Nothing herein shall be construed as preventing the Commander-in-Chief from enforcing the provisions of the Congressional Charter, these Bylaws, the Manual of Procedure, Ritual or laws or usages or the duties of the office, regardless of any pending appeal.

## **Sec. 905 - Suspension from Office.**

At any time after charges are initiated on a member holding office, the Commander-in-Chief or Department Commander having jurisdiction, may at their discretion suspend the accused member from an elected or appointed position pending a final decision on the disciplinary action, provided that, with respect to salaried positions, said suspension will be with pay. During the suspension of a Post, County Council, District or Department Commander, the office shall be temporarily filled by the Senior Vice Commander. Suspensions affected under this section are not subject to appeal under any provision of these Bylaws.

## **Sec. 906 - Prima Facie Case.**



If the accused member has been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or ordinance violation for conduct that subjects the accused member to discipline under Section 902, certified copies of the judicial record or guilty plea shall be conclusive evidence of a violation subjecting the member to discipline unless the record is proven not to be a true and correct copy or is otherwise subject to challenge as inaccurate.

#### **Sec. 907 - Penalties.**

Penalties for offenses recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be:

1. Reprimand.
2. Suspension of certain rights of membership for a specified period of time.
3. Suspension or removal from office.
4. Suspension from membership for a specified period of time.
5. Termination of membership.
6. Other administrative actions deemed appropriate.

Except as provided in Section 905, no penalty in a Disciplinary Action will be effective if an appeal is current and not finally adjudicated. The penalty shall be carried into effect at such time as a decision is final and by execution of an appropriate Special Order by the Department Commander, Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration.

#### **Sec. 908 - Administrative Actions.**

A member who has been suspended from any Post by sentence of Disciplinary Action properly executed, will be administratively transferred to Department Member-at-Large. Upon completion of the suspension of membership, a transfer is permitted in accordance with the provisions of Section 107 of the National Bylaws.

In the event that a member transfers their membership and reasonable grounds exist to initiate disciplinary action, for conduct prior to such transfer, the Department Commander or the Commander-in-Chief may transfer the member back to the jurisdiction where the disciplinary action will be initiated.

Any member or former member sentenced will be allowed one opportunity to petition directly to the Commander-in-Chief to have their conviction pardoned or their sentence commuted provided at least five years

of the pertinent sentence have been served.

(End of Article IX)”

**B-21**

Proposed by Department of Kansas

**ARTICLE XII – MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE**

**Sec. 1202 – Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 1202 – Eligibility. National Bylaws, in the first sentence, by replacing the last word “Post” with “Pup Tent”.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE**

**M-1**

Proposed by Department of Vermont

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

**Sec. 101 – Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 101 – Eligibility. Manual of Procedure, by adding the following under the ELIGIBILITY GUIDE before “Hostile Fire or Imminent Danger Pay” or where appropriate:

“Foreign Duty Service on Foreign Soil, its Airspace, and Territorial Waters for not less than 30 consecutive days, or a total of 60 non-consecutive days of duty after September 11, 2001 – Open”

**M-2**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

**Sec. 102 – Applications – Affiliation of New Members.**

Amend Sec. 102 – Applications – Affiliation of New Members., Manual of Procedure, in the first paragraph, first sentence, by removing “status as a citizen or national of the United States,”.

**M-3**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

**Sec. 109 – Right of Appeal.**

Amend Sec. 109 – Right of Appeal., Manual of Procedure, in the first paragraph, by removing No. 1 and No. 2 and renumbering the remaining chain of command.

Remove the segments titled “**Appeals to the Post:**” and “**Appeals to the District Commander:**”

Under **Appeals to the Department Commander:**, in the first sentence, by adding “Post or” before “District”.

#### **M-4**

Proposed by Department of Europe

#### **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

##### **Sec. 208 – Change of Name**

Amend Sec. 208 – Change of Name., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the last paragraph with the following:

“A post may change its name to the name of a living person, nor adopt a name already adopted by another Post in good standing in the department.”

#### **M-5**

Proposed by Department of Oklahoma

#### **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

##### **Sec. 208 – Change of Name**

Amend Sec. 208 – Change of Name., Manual of Procedure, by replacing the last paragraph with the following:

“A Post may change its name to the name of a living person, including a living Medal of Honor recipient, only after written consent from the living designee has been received. A Post shall not adopt a name already adopted by another Post in good standing in the department.”

#### **M-6**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 removing the segments titled **(11) Inspector:** and **(12) Assistant Inspector:**.

## **M-7**

Recommended by National Bylaws 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 segment titled **(9) Inspector.** with the following:

**“Inspector.** The Department Inspector shall:

1. Ensure that each District, County Council (if applicable), and Post in the Department is inspected in accordance with National and Department directives; and in accordance with a properly executed Inspection Form.
2. Provide a copy of each inspection to the Post, District and Department Commander, and set forth therein any constructive criticism and recommendations.
3. Appoint Deputy Inspectors and ensure they are properly trained.
4. Perform such other duties as may be incident to the office or may be from time to time required by the laws and usages of the organization or on lawful orders of proper authority.”

Add **“(10) Deputy Inspector:** The Department Inspector may appoint a Deputy Inspector(s).”

Renumber **“Surgeon.”** as **“(11)”**, **“Service Officer.”** as **“(12)”** and **“Other Officers.”** as **“(13)”**.

## **M-8**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 620 – Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.**

Amend Sec. 620 – Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers., Manual of Procedure, under **Vacancies;** by replacing the third paragraph with the following:

“All other vacancies occurring in the elected offices of the National Convention shall be filled by the National 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 Commander-in-Chief may call a special meeting of the National Council of Administration pursuant to Section 622 of the Bylaws. 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 Commander-in-Chief may notify all members of the Council that the vacancy exists, and names of nominees are being accepted. Fifteen (15) days thereafter, the Commander-in-Chief 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 Commander-in-Chief by mail and forward to the Adjutant General. These ballots shall be tallied at a time specified by the Commander by tellers appointed by the Commander in the presence of such National officers as the Commander-in-Chief 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."

#### **M-9**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IX – DISCIPLINE**

Amend Article IX – **DISCIPLINE**, Manual of Procedure, by replacing the entire section with the following:

#### **“ARTICLE IX – DISCIPLINE**

#### **Sec. 901 - Discipline of Members.**

Article IX does not apply to actions taken by a Post, County Council, District or Department to bar, suspend or limit members from participating in activities or using clubrooms or holding company facilities sponsored,

conducted or operated by a Post, County Council, District or Department. Such actions are subject to separate regulation by the respective Post, County Council, District or Department.

**Sec. 902 - Offenses.** (See Section 902 of the Bylaws)

**Sec. 903 - Procedure for Disciplinary Actions.**

**(a) Preliminary Requirements with Respect to Initiating Disciplinary Actions.** (See Section 903 of the Bylaws.)

**(b) Authority to Initiate Disciplinary Action.** (See Section 903 of the Bylaws.)

**(c) Procedure for Initiating Disciplinary Action.** (See also Section 903 of the Bylaws)

1. Charges and Specifications. The charges must specifically identify the subsections of Section 902 of the Bylaws that have been violated. The specifications shall provide a factual description of the conduct constituting the violation.
2. Materials Relied Upon. (See Section 903(c)(3) of the Bylaws.)
3. Special Order. The Special Order should be issued using Special Order Form DA-1 and should have attached Charges and Specifications Form DA-2, Materials Relied Upon, a Request for Hearing Form DA-6, and a Request for Summary Disposition Form DA-8. These forms may be found in the Appendix to the Manual of Procedure.

**(d) Procedure if a Disciplinary Hearing or Summary Disposition is not Requested.** (See also Section 903 of the Bylaws.)

Notification of any penalties under this procedure shall be made using Form DA-7, found in the Appendix to the Manual of Procedure.

**(e) Procedure for Summary Disposition.**

1. Within 15 calendar days following the appointment, the Chairman will contact the accused and the Initiating Officer or designated initiating member to establish a time for the Summary Disposition by the Assessment Panel. This must be scheduled within 45 calendar days of the appointment of the Chairman.
2. The Initiating Officer or designated initiating member shall provide copies of the Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon to the Panel at least 10 days prior to the Summary Disposition date. Also, by that date each party will provide the Panel and the other party with any additional pertinent evidence or documents they wish the Panel to consider. Evidence may include any relevant documentation whether written or electronic by audio or video format.
3. It shall be the duty of the Chairman to assure there is a full and fair opportunity to present evidence and arguments. The Panel members may question the parties. The Initiating Officer or designated initiating member, or their designee, will first offer evidence and argument,

followed by the accused. Each party may then make a closing presentation.

- (f) **Procedure where Disciplinary Hearing Requested.** In the event that the accused member requests a Disciplinary Hearing within fifteen (15) calendar days and in the manner prescribed in Section 903 of the Bylaws, the following procedures apply:

**1. Preliminary Procedures.**

- a. If the action is initiated by a Post or Post Commander, the Department Commander will appoint the Disciplinary Panel members. The Department Commander will appoint the Panel in cases arising in the Department, unless the Department Commander expects to be a witness with respect to factual matters, in which case the Department Commander shall request, in writing, that the Commander-in-Chief appoint the Panel. The Commander-in-Chief shall appoint the Panel in cases in which the Commander-in-Chief is the Initiating Officer. In cases where a member has been designated to initiate the Disciplinary Action pursuant to Sections 903(b)(6) and (7) of the National Bylaws, the designated member shall appoint the Panel.
- b. The Commander, Commander-in-Chief or designated initiating member shall, within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt of the request for Hearing, issue a Special Order. The Special Order will be on the approved form appointing at least five (5) members to the Panel and designating one (1) of them the Panel President. Only members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States in good standing may sit on a Disciplinary Panel. Panel members must be able to afford an impartial hearing. If appointees are unable to serve or are unable to afford an impartial hearing, or the time and place of a hearing must be changed, a supplemental order may be issued. Panel members shall not discuss the merits of the case prior to the Hearing. The Prosecutor, Defense Counsel and Recording Officer are not Panel members.
- c. The hearing must be set within forty-five (45) calendar days of the date of the order appointing the Panel. If the hearing is not set or not held within such time, and not otherwise properly continued, the action shall be deemed dismissed and completed pursuant to Section 903 of the Bylaws, subject to reinstatement by higher authority.
- d. The same Panel may be appointed to hear more than one (1) case and related cases may be heard at the same time, provided the Recording Officer maintains a separate record for each accused.

- e. The appointing authority or Panel President may authorize or order that the hearing be held electronically, provided that the participants, witnesses and documents may be seen and heard by the Panel and parties.
- f. Duties of the Panel President. The panel President is the presiding officer over the panel and hearing process and not subject to challenge. The duties of the President shall commence upon the issuance of the Special Order. The President shall be acquainted with the hearing procedures, maintain order and give the necessary directions for the conduct of the proceedings. The President shall require that the Prosecutor and the accused member, at least ten (10) days prior to the Hearing, disclose to each other any materials not previously disclosed under Section 903 that either party intends to introduce as evidence at the Disciplinary Hearing. The President shall rule upon all questions concerning the admissibility of evidence, the competency of witnesses, continuances, adjournments, recesses, motions, challenges and orders, the propriety of any argument or statement of counsel and on any other matter deemed appropriate for the efficient conduct of the hearing. The President shall maintain a record of all proceedings prior to the hearing, which shall be included in the record. The President may, for reasonable cause, postpone and/or reschedule a hearing. A party desiring that the President postpone or reschedule a hearing shall make such request with reasonable notice and in writing, stating the reasons for such request. All Panel members and parties shall be advised in writing of the rescheduled date and time, provided the hearing is not unnecessarily delayed.
- g. Prosecutor, Defense Counsel and Recording Officer.
  - i. Appointment and Duties of the Prosecutor. The Prosecutor shall be designated by the initiating officer or designated initiating member and shall present the evidence supporting the Charges and Specifications. The Prosecutor may not be a witness, but may provide advice concerning procedural matters.
  - ii. Duties of the Defense Counsel. The accused may select lay counsel, retain private representation at their own expense, or represent themselves. Defense Counsel may not be a witness, but may provide advice concerning procedural matters.
  - iii. Appointment and Duties of the Recording Officer. The Recording Officer shall be appointed by the initiating officer or designated initiating member. The Recording Officer shall



record all the proceedings and the recordings shall be retained and included as record. The recording officer should take reasonable steps to assure that all testimony is recorded and that all speakers and exhibits are adequately identified in the record. A complete record shall include copies of:

- Special Order advising of the initiation of a disciplinary action. (Form DA-1)
- Charges and Specifications and Materials Relied Upon. (Form DA-2)
- The written statement that the Charges and Specifications have been personally served or mailed to the accused in accordance with Section 903(c).
- The request for the Disciplinary Hearing made by the accused. (Form DA-6)
- The order appointing the Panel. (Form DA-3)
- The complete recording of the proceedings by audio or video means.
- The President's notes of the proceedings.
- Any exhibits admitted into evidence.
- The record of disciplinary action. (Form DA-5)
- The findings and sentence. (Form DA-4)
- The resolution agreement signed by all parties in accordance with Section 903(g) [if applicable].

The record shall be delivered to and maintained by the Adjutant.

2. **General Rules Concerning the Conduct of Hearings.** The procedure for conducting a Disciplinary Hearing shall be as follows:
  - a. **Challenges.** The entire panel shall initially be seated. Either side may challenge any member, but a member may be removed only for good cause. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, prejudice for or against a party, financial or other interest in the outcome or inability to afford an impartial hearing. The challenging party shall state the reasons upon which that party believes good cause exists. When a member of the Panel is challenged for cause, the President of the Panel will decide on the question. No further Panel members may be excused for cause when the effect is to reduce the number of

panel members below three. Members of the panel shall swear or affirm that they will judge the case fairly and impartially.

b. **Plea to the Charges.** After the Panel is confirmed, the Charges and Specifications shall be read to the accused by the President unless the accused advises the Panel that the accused has read the charges and they need not be read. The accused will plead guilty or not guilty to each charge and specification separately. The plea will be recorded on the Form of Record of Disciplinary Action (DA-5).

c. **Objections.** If there have been procedural errors in initiating the disciplinary action, preparing or delivering the Charges or Specifications, appointing the panel, scheduling the time and place of the hearing or any other matter occurring prior to the hearing, Defense Counsel or the accused must make their objections known to the Panel before the opening statements are given and evidence heard. Similarly, objections must be made to errors in procedure or in the admission of evidence occurring during the course of the hearing at the time of the error. Unless objections are timely made, the alleged error will not be considered in the event of an appeal.

d. **Opening Statements.** The Prosecutor and then the Defense Counsel shall be permitted to make opening statements which outline for the Panel what each believes the issues to be and what each expects to show by the evidence to be introduced.

e. **Order of Presentation.** The Prosecutor introduces evidence first followed by the defense. The prosecutor may then present evidence to rebut such evidence as may have been presented by the defense and the defense shall be given an opportunity to rebut any rebuttal evidence presented by the prosecution. Both sides shall have the opportunity to cross-examine each witness after direct testimony is given.

f. **Rules Concerning Evidence.** Evidence may be testimonial or documentary. Testimonial evidence is evidence given in the form of testimony by witnesses. All testimony shall be taken under oath or affirmation by all parties testifying.

Documentary evidence includes items presented in the form of exhibits which show or demonstrate factual matters. An adequate showing of authenticity (i.e., that the document is an original or a true and correct copy of the original) must be made with respect to documentary evidence.

A Panel may base its decision on either direct or circumstantial evidence. Direct evidence consists of testimony or documents which, if believed, would directly prove or disprove facts. Circumstantial evidence consists of testimony or documents which, if true, would prove or disprove facts or circumstances from which, either alone or in connection with other facts, the existence or nonexistence of a fact in issue could be inferred.

Hearsay evidence consists of testimony based upon the out-of-court statements of persons or documents, i.e., what some other person told the witness or upon something seen by the witness in a document that is not presented. Hearsay testimony is given less credence because there may be no opportunity to cross-examine the person who actually heard or saw the incident or wrote the document. While hearsay evidence can be considered by the Panel because of a belief that a sufficiently trustworthy basis exists for considering the evidence, it should be considered with an appreciation that the evidence is less credible. Hearsay evidence may be fully considered without that limitation if the witness is testifying concerning something the accused has said or the evidence consists of reinforcing documents or letters prepared or signed by the accused.

Books of account or business records are generally admissible. Evidence must be relevant and material. Evidence is not relevant or material when it does not tend to prove or disprove an issue in the case or the President rules that it's not material to the issue at hand

The President will exclude improper evidence to which an objection is sufficiently made. Presidents may, on their own initiative, exclude other improper evidence. Excluded evidence should not be considered by the Panel. The President should note any evidence which was offered but excluded, giving the reason therefore, and any instances where objection was made but the evidence was admitted over such objection, noting the objection. The Recording Officer must include all rulings with respect to evidentiary objections in the record.

The President should protect every witness from insulting or improper questions, harsh or insulting treatment and unnecessary inquiries into private affairs. It should also forbid any inquiries into irrelevant matters intended to merely annoy witnesses or other pertinent parties.

- g. **Closing Arguments.** After both sides have rested, the prosecution commences its closing arguments. The defense follows and the prosecution closes with rebuttal argument.
- h. **Deliberations of the Panel.** The Panel sits in closed session during the deliberation on the findings and sentence. Each case shall be decided on its own merits and the Panel shall give due regard to all of the circumstances, including the length of time between the alleged offense and the initiation of the Disciplinary Action. Deliberations should include full and free discussion of the evidence at hand. The Panel must consider each charge and specification separately and make a determination whether the accused is guilty or not guilty on each charge and specification.

- i. **Standard of Proof.** In order to convict the accused of an offense, the Panel must be reasonably satisfied that the accused is guilty of the offense.
- ii. **Conviction and Sentencing.** There must be a two-thirds majority vote in order to convict on any charge and specification. If, in computing the number of votes required, a fraction results, such fraction will be counted as one; thus, where five members are to vote, the requirement that two-thirds concur is not met if less than four concur. The sentence must likewise be determined by a two-thirds majority vote. The sentence should be commensurate with the offense committed.
- i. **Findings and Sentence.** The findings and sentence shall be announced by the President in open hearing after deliberations are complete. In the event the accused or their counsel was not present at the hearing, a copy of the Findings and Sentence (Form DA-4) shall be mailed to the last known address within seven days after the hearing.
- j. **Record of Hearing of Disciplinary Action.** The President shall prepare a Form of Record of Disciplinary Action (Form DA-5).

## **Sec. 904 - Appeal.**

Appeals shall only be based on errors in the hearing procedure or the interpretation of the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure, or laws and usages of the organization that prejudiced the outcome. An appeal is not a new hearing of the case and new witnesses or evidence will not be considered.

Failure of the member to comply with the following rules are grounds for denying the appeal.

### **(a) Rules Applicable to all Appeals.**

A proper appeal shall:

1. Be in writing, timely filed and properly delivered.
2. State the facts of the case based on the evidence introduced at the Hearing.
3. Make a clear and concise statement of the reason or reasons upon which the member claims the case was erroneously decided.

4. State the relief requested by the member.

- (b) **Appeals From Post Actions.** Appeals to the Department Commander will be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of penalties by a Disciplinary Hearing Panel. All appeals shall be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Department Commander at the Department headquarters.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Department Commander shall request that the Adjutant maintaining the Trial Record forward the same to the Commander within fifteen (15) days. The Department Commander will provide a copy of the written appeal to the Prosecutor, who shall have fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the copy to make a written response directly to the Department Commander with a copy to the accused. The accused shall then have ten (10) days from the date of such response to make a further written submission to the Department Commander, with a copy to the Prosecutor. The Department Commander shall decide the appeal and inform the accused and the Post Commander in writing as to the determination. The decision of the Department Commander is final unless within fifteen (15) days an appeal is made to the Commander-in-Chief. Such an appeal must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at National headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief will request that the Department Commander forward the Trial Record, together with any papers submitted by the parties on appeal. The Commander-in-Chief will, within thirty (30) days, decide the matter and inform the member, the pertinent Post Commander and the Department Commander of that decision. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief is final unless an appeal is made to the National Council of Administration within fifteen (15) days of the Commander-in-Chief's decision. Such appeal must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration at National headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals shall request the Commander-in-Chief forward the Trial Record and any papers submitted by the parties on appeal. The Chairman shall advise the member of a time and place that the matter will be considered and decided. The member shall have the right to appear, at their own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place as the matter is considered. By agreement between the Chairman and the accused member, the matter may be considered electronically. Upon a recommendation by the Committee

on Appeals, The National Council of Administration shall decide the appeal and subsequently inform all concerned of its decision in writing.

- (c) **Appeals From Department Actions.** Appeals from Disciplinary Actions initiated by the Department Commander or Department Council of Administration shall be to the Commander-in-Chief. Such an appeal must be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of sentence by the Disciplinary Hearing Panel. All appeals must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Commander-in-Chief at National headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Commander-in-Chief shall request that the Adjutant maintaining the Trial Record forward the same within fifteen (15) days. The Commander-in-Chief will provide a copy of the written appeal to the Prosecutor, who shall have fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the copy to make a written response directly to the Commander-in-Chief, with a copy to the accused, who shall have ten (10) days to submit a reply. The Commander-in-Chief shall decide the appeal and inform the accused and the Department Commander. The decision of the Commander-in-Chief is final unless an appeal is made to the National Council of Administration within fifteen (15) days. Such appeal shall be made in the manner specified in the foregoing subsection (b) for appeals to the National Council of Administration for cases initially appealed to the Department Commander.

- (d) **Appeals From National Actions.** Appeals from disciplinary actions initiated by the Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration shall be to the National Council of Administration. Such an appeal must be made within thirty (30) days of the imposition of sentence by the Disciplinary Hearing Panel. All appeals must be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration at National headquarters in Kansas City.

Upon receipt of a proper written appeal, the Chairman of the Committee on Appeals of the National Council of Administration shall request the Trial Record. The Chairman will provide a copy of the written appeal to the Prosecutor who may, within fifteen (15) days, submit a written response, with a copy to the accused who shall have ten (10) days to submit a reply. The Chairman shall advise the member of a time and place that the matter will be considered. By agreement between the Chairman and the accused member, the matter may be considered electronically.

The member shall have the right to appear, at their own expense, personally or by counsel, at such time and place where the matter is

considered.

Upon recommendation by the Committee on Appeals, the National Council of Administration will decide the appeal and subsequently will inform the accused in writing of its decision. That decision is final.

(e) **Timeliness of Appeals to the National Council of Administration:**

Appeals received greater than thirty (30) days before the next scheduled regular meeting will be heard at that meeting. Appeals not within this timeframe may, at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, be referred to the Committee on Appeals and Council for deliberation at a future scheduled meeting.

**Sec. 905 - Suspension from Office.**

To effect a suspension under Section 905 of the Bylaws, the Commander-in-Chief, or the Department Commander having jurisdiction, will issue a Special Order notifying the member, the Commander-in-Chief and the respective Post, County Council, District or Department Commander of such action.

**Sec. 906 - Prima Facie Case.**

Under Section 906, it is not necessary for the Prosecutor to prove again what has already been established by a conviction or guilty plea. To meet the prosecutor's burden of proof, the Prosecutor must present certified copies of the court records. The burden then shifts to the defense to show the record is not true and correct or is otherwise inaccurate.

**Sec. 907 – Penalties.** (See Section 907 of the Bylaws)

**Sec. 908 - Administrative Actions.** (See Section 908 of the Bylaws.)

(End of Article IX)"

**M-10**

Proposed by Department of Kansas

**ARTICLE XII – MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE**

**Sec. 1202 – Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 1202 – Eligibility. Manual of Procedure, in the second sentence, by replacing "Post Commander" with "Pup Tent Seam Squirrel (Commander)" and "Post Adjutant" with "Pup Tent Hungry Cootie (Adjutant)".

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

### R-1

(Pages 3 - 4)

Proposed by Department of Pennsylvania

#### **RITUAL**

#### **COMMEMORATIVE TRIBUTES**

Amend Chapter Title – **COMMEMORATIVE TRIBUTES**, Ritual, by adding the following date in chronological sequence: “October 23 – Beirut Bombing.”

### R-2

(Pages 3 - 4)

Proposed by Department of Virginia

#### **RITUAL**

#### **COMMEMORATIVE TRIBUTES**

Amend Chapter Title – **COMMEMORATIVE TRIBUTES**, Ritual, by adding the following date in chronological sequence: “March 29 – National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day.”

### R-3

(Pages 74 – 79)

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **RITUAL**

#### **MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Amend Chapter Title **MEMORIAL SERVICE**, Ritual, under **National President of Auxiliary**; in the third sentence, by replacing “soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines” with “military service members”.

### R-4

(Pages 79 – 84)

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **RITUAL**

#### **MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**

Amend Chapter Title **MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**, Ritual, under **Auxiliary President**; in the third sentence, by replacing “soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines” with “military service members”.



**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND INTERNAL  
ORGANIZATION AT THE 122<sup>nd</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

**Resolution 201 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)  
VFW'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY**

WHEREAS, our military service taught us to embrace diversity and reject all forms of bigotry which makes the United States military the most capable force in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is comprised of veterans who have served all over the world promoting the ideals of freedom and human rights; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States come from all walks of life and the diversity they represent serves as a source of strength that makes the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States the greatest Veterans Service Organization in the country; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States does commit itself to the ideals of diversity and rejects bigotry of all kinds so as to strengthen the bonds of our great organization. (Approved)

**Resolution 202 (Submitted by Department of Maine)  
VFW SUPPLY STORE ACQUIRE MERCHANDISE MADE IN THE USA**

WHEREAS, the VFW Store carries a majority of products, apparel and uniforms that are made in foreign countries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW Store carry a majority of products, apparel and uniforms that are made in the USA (not just assembled or decorated.) (Rejected)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON  
GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AT THE 122<sup>nd</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

**Resolution 301 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)  
NATIONAL FLAG TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THOSE WHO DIED WHILE  
SERVING IN AMERICA'S MILITARY**

WHEREAS, Veterans of Foreign Wars honors the service and sacrifice of all military service members especially those who have lost their lives in service to the Republic; and

WHEREAS, since the Revolutionary War, more than 1.8 million members of the United States Armed Forces have paid the ultimate price during war, while serving in uniform, or as a result of serving; and

WHEREAS, the United States has not instituted an official symbol commemorating the ultimate sacrifice made by members of the Armed Forces who have died in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, an Honor and Remember Flag has been created by Honor and Remember, Inc., as a daily reminder for the American public to acknowledge the ultimate price of freedom; and

WHEREAS, twenty-six state legislatures across the nation have officially adopted the Honor and Remember Flag as recognition of those who have given their lives in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, the “Honor and Remembrance Flag Act” has been introduced to the 117th Congress as, specifically House Resolution 2331 (H.R.2331); and

WHEREAS, this flag serves as a symbol of national gratitude that values each American life given for our freedom and give comfort and a measure of healing to the families who lost loved ones during military service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to support H.R.2331 to amend title 36, United States Code, and designate the Honor and Remember Flag created by Honor and Remember, Inc., as an official symbol of the services and sacrifices by the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who have given their lives in the line of duty. (Rejected)

### **Resolution No. 302 (Submitted by Department of Virginia) SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is the oldest Congressionally chartered Veterans Service Organization (VSO), in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service pre-dates the founding of the United States, the first Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin, having been appointed by The Continental Congress in 1775; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of VSOs to support current and former members of the United States Armed Forces in whatever ways practical; and

WHEREAS, the American public has come to rely upon the United States Postal Service (USPS) as an essential and indispensable means of communication and commerce, even in an increasingly electronic world; and

WHEREAS, millions of military members, retirees, survivors, and beneficiaries depend upon the USPS to deliver life sustaining medications through Federal Government programs, established through the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, the United States Armed Forces rely upon the USPS to deliver, around-the-world, the critical spare parts needed to enable, restore, and sustain war-fighting capabilities; and

WHEREAS, uniformed service-members stationed at sea and ashore

on all seven continents continue to rely upon the USPS as the sole means of exercising their right to vote in elections, through absentee ballot, the loss of which would disenfranchise them from the very freedoms that they are serving and sacrificing to protect; and

WHEREAS, pronouncements, political posturing, and thinly veiled disdain for the USPS have led to threats to delay the mails and reduce enabling funds for this essential institution; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW encourages the President of the United States to include adequate funding in the national budget to sustain and further modernize the USPS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW enjoins Congress to adequately fund the USPS to provide timely, dependable, and secure delivery of the mails; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW demands that those entrusted with the stewardship of the USPS be free from compromising conflicts of interest that could inhibit the faithful and efficient fulfillment of their duties to the American armed forces and public. (Rejected)

### **Resolution No. 303 (Submitted by Department of Missouri) SUBMARINE WARFARE INSIGNIA**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is “a national association of veterans who as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen served this Nation in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters,” and “is a federally chartered corporation”; and

WHEREAS, membership is extended to eligible individuals who “served honorably as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States – “in an area which entitled the individual to receive special pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger under Section 310 of title 37”; and

WHEREAS, “Hostilities” are defined as, “Persons in the Armed Forces of the United States shall become eligible for membership immediately upon arrival on hostile soil, in hostile waters or the airspace above in the performance of service qualifying such persons for membership”; and

WHEREAS, eligibility has been extended to include members of the United States Submarine Force who have received the SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia for service aboard an SSBN submarine from Jan. 21, 1961 – Open; and

WHEREAS, crewmembers assigned to the above stated SSBN submarines received Hazardous Duty Pay, referred to by law as Sub Pay immediately upon reporting for duty as a crewmember of a commissioned and active duty SSBN submarine; and

WHEREAS, above mentioned Sub Pay was further paid to every Submariner assigned to any commissioned and active United States submarine, SS (Diesel submarines), SSBN (FBM submarines or Boomers), and SSN (Fast Attack submarines); and

WHEREAS, members of the United States Navy Submarine Force earn the coveted Submarine Warfare Insignia (hereafter referred to as “Dolphins”), and carry the proud moniker of “Submariner”; and

WHEREAS, every Submariner has demonstrated proficiency, and exceptional knowledge in the duties, operations, and mission of the Submarine Force; and

WHEREAS, the United States Submarine Force is referred to as “The Silent Service” due to the nature of its missions and patrols as a part of defending the United States; and

WHEREAS, the missions and patrols of the Diesel submarines and Fast Attack submarines have included requirements of such sensitive nature, and highly classified so that OPSEC precludes awarding of specific medals, ribbons, or even to acknowledge said missions and patrols; and

WHEREAS, all United States Submarines have operated “in hostile waters,” as referenced above, regardless of type or class during the Cold War from 1947 to Present; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the members of <Post, District, Department> request to have the “Membership ELIGIBILITY GUIDE” amended to include the Submarine Warfare Insignia, both enlisted and officer – Navy – Jan.1, 1947 – Open,” thus rectifying an injustice and oversight in membership eligibility to include SS and SSN sailors who served honorably, with distinction, and in silence. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 304 (Submitted by Department of Oklahoma)**  
**NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN VETERANS, INC.**  
**CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER**

WHEREAS, Native American Indian Veterans, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 in South Dakota, is headquartered at the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Veterans’ Office, and whose stated mission is to represent the interests of American Indians and Alaska Native veterans on a wide variety of matters; and

WHEREAS, Native American soldiers rode with Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders in the charge on San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War; and

WHEREAS, twelve thousand Native Americans served in World War I even though they were denied U.S. citizenship until Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 because of their tremendous demonstration of patriotism; and

WHEREAS, more than one-third of all able-bodied Native American men between the ages of 19 and 50 served, including the famous code talkers of the Navajo and Great Sioux Nations; and

WHEREAS, nearly 42,000 Native Americans served – ninety percent of which volunteered – during Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans served with honor in Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and continue to serve our nation

today in Afghanistan and Iraq; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we endorse the efforts of Native American Indian Veterans, Inc. to obtain a Congressional Charter to allow them a voice in Congress, representing a demographic who, by percentage, serve our nation a rate higher than almost any other; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to grant a Congressional Charter to Native American Indian Veterans, Inc. and grant them all the rights and privileges of such a Charter. (Rejected)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE 122<sup>nd</sup> NATIONAL  
CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

**Resolution No. 401 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)  
OPPOSE TRICARE FEE CHANGES**

WHEREAS, the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 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 January, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the changes mandated by the NDAA were further compounded by a change in costs instituted by the Defense Health Agency (DHA) for both the 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, Congress 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, 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 attempts to erode the earned benefit of military healthcare.

Moreover, DOD should reform its healthcare programs by eliminating institutional inefficiencies before considering participant fee increases.  
(Approved)

**Resolution No. 402 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**KEEP DEFENSE BUDGET RELEVANT**

WHEREAS, America's Number #1 priority is to defend itself, its citizens, and its interests, yet efforts by Congress continue to 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. Except for 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 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 our nation 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 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. 403 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**PRESERVE THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE**

WHEREAS, America's All-Volunteer Force engaged in a 20-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 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 12,000 American troops in Afghanistan, increasing rotations to Eastern Europe, and maintaining almost 5,200 service members in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, substandard military housing, insufficient emphasis placed on training, 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. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 404 (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 2.4 percent raise in FY 2018 and 2.6 percent raise in FY 2019 were improvements and the FY 2020 3.0 percent pay raise would be the largest pay raise in ten 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. 405 (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 there were 20,500 instances of “unwanted sexual contact” in the 2018 fiscal year, which was an increase of 38 percent from the previous survey in 2016; and

WHEREAS, women make up only about 20 percent of the military, but are the targets of 63 percent of assaults, with the youngest and lowest-ranking women most at risk, according to the survey, which suggests current strategies are not enough; 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 continues to encourage prevention efforts and tighten field reporting and managerial oversight, to include providing restricted and unrestricted options for reporting a sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, DOD 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, Congress has proposed legislation that would create an independent prosecutor for military sexual assault cases, but those efforts have been rebuffed by Pentagon leadership; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly demand DOD become more aggressive in its efforts to reduce sexual assault and harassment, to provide victims with proper and necessary medical and mental health care, as well as assistance with disability claims as may be required, to aggressively and diligently investigate every reported incident and punish attackers, as well as individuals involved in acts of retribution and retaliation, and to provide scrutiny to the military justice process to identify possible areas for reform and improvement. (Approved as Amended)

**Resolution No. 406 (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 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, the Department of Defense 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 continuously 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 as Amended)

**Resolution No. 407 (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. 408 (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. 409 (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 maintains the ability to launch nuclear-capable missiles, including a missile capable of reaching the United States, and has conducted six underground nuclear explosions since 2006, and is a known exporter of ballistic missiles and its technology to countries adversarial to the United States, most notably Iran; 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. 410 (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. 411 (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 nearly 82,000 missing Americans that include approximately 72,000 from World War II, 7,565 from the Korean War, 1,585 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 increasing the ability to be at more sites; and

WHEREAS, DPAA has strong bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, which has in the past provided additional funding required to support pending recovery operations in North Korea, which have been interrupted since 2005 due to U.S. safety and security concerns; and

WHEREAS, Congress has in recent years acknowledged the importance of the Fullest Possible Accounting mission by increasing DPAA funding above requested amounts; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that DPAA remain adequately 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, in past years, DPAA has been forced to postpone, downsize, or cancel recovery missions due to funding issues such as Congress not having passed a budget. Additional money 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 our nation's previous 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 increase funding levels for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Full Accounting Mission; and

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. 412 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**CALL FOR MORE UNILATERAL POW/MIA ACTIONS BY VIETNAM**

WHEREAS, 2,646 Americans were listed as missing and unaccounted-for at the end of the Vietnam War. As of February 2020, the number of missing is now under 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; and

WHEREAS, joint U.S. – Vietnam field operations, first conducted 35-years ago, continue to provide answers to families of unaccounted for American servicemen; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam granted access to their National Archives I and II and the People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) Library; and

WHEREAS, many of the grieving families may never live to see the return of their missing loved one; and

WHEREAS, Vietnamese museums contain many personal items which belonged to missing U.S. servicemen; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Vietnam to grant U.S. government analysts access to the PAVN archives where potentially valuable documents which could lead to case resolution may be located; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in this cooperative effort, that we encourage the Vietnamese government to turn over any items of a personal nature from missing American servicemen that are currently in the custody of Vietnamese museums so they may be returned to their grieving families. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 413 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**RECOGNITION for AFGHAN and IRAQI COMBAT TRANSLATORS**

WHEREAS, Afghan and Iraqi wartime allies were bridges to the Afghan

and Iraqi people during U.S. operations against terrorism in those countries; and

WHEREAS, Mission success was directly dependent on close working relations between local nationals and U.S. agents; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies often served consecutive tours with several different units to provide continuity; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies' lives and the lives of their family members 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, this initiative is supported by all post 9/11 former secretaries of defense as well as key national security leaders in the military, Department of State, and the intelligence community; and

WHEREAS, the former chairmen of the 9/11 Commission have stated, "As former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, we encourage Congress to do everything in its power to keep the nation's promise to Afghan and Iraqi combat translators and to ensure these intrepid partners can achieve the American Dream. Special Immigrant Visas recipients from Afghanistan and Iraq loyally protected our men and women in uniform. Many directly saved American lives. Their future success will help to prevent the continued growth of Islamist terrorism – the third goal identified by the 9/11 Commission. A great nation keeps its promises"; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to recognize the contributions of Afghan and Iraqi Combat Interpreter Immigrants who stood shoulder to shoulder with, assisted and protected U.S. military service members, U.S. diplomats and government agents, non-governmental organizations, and media organizations during U.S. involvement in those countries. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 414 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)  
NAMING OF U.S. NAVY VESSEL USS TELESFORO TRINIDAD**

WHEREAS, 2021 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines establishing formal diplomatic relations; and

WHEREAS, for over a century the Philippines has been America's longest and strongest ally in Asia, joining America as our comrade-in-arms during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, for more than 90 years the United States Navy recruited

Filipinos for direct service in the United States Navy, with tens of thousands recognized for their distinguished and honorable service; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines, an independent nation of more than 7,100 islands in Southeast Asia, adopted their language, culture, and governance based on decades of American colonization; and

WHEREAS, there are more than four million Filipino-Americans living in the United States of America, and the Tagalog language of the Philippines is the fourth most spoken language in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the United States Navy honors our nation by naming ships to manifest high regard for the rich history and valued traditions of the United States Navy, with names that include our national heroes; and

WHEREAS, the high honor of naming United States Navy ships is the prerogative of the Secretary of the Navy; and

WHEREAS, there is no ship in the United States Naval fleet with a name that recognizes the Asian Pacific Islanders legacy and their unique alliance forged in war and peace; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Second Class Telesforo de la Cruz Trinidad is the first and thus far only United States sailor of Asian descent to receive the Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism while serving in the United States Navy, and whose valor can exemplify for thousands like him who served in the United States Navy and "swore to support and defend," and did so with honor and distinction; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Robert W. Zaher Post 2485, in recognition of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines, and the enduring historic military ties and camaraderie between Americans and Filipinos, and given the factual history and bravery of Fireman Second Class Telesforo de la Cruz Trinidad now exists with his Medal of Honor citation, respectfully urge the Secretary of the United States Navy, by the authority granted to his office, name a newly commissioned surface combatant ship, the USS Telesforo Trinidad, in honor of his heroism and in recognition of the commitment, distinction, and valor of Filipinos and Filipino-Americans who proudly served in the United States Navy. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 415 (Submitted by Department of Virginia)**  
**COMBAT HEROS DESERVE COMBAT DECORATIONS**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is the oldest Congressionally-chartered Veterans Service Organization (VSO), in the United States, membership in which is reserved for those members of the United States Armed Forces who have been recognized as serving in combat zones or in direct support of armed conflict; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DoD) has established, in DoD Manual 1348.33 - Manual of Military Decorations and Awards, various criteria

for award of decorations for meritorious and heroic service or achievement in combat, as well as equivalent decorations for when combat is not involved; and

WHEREAS, the Bronze Star Medal (BSM) is the appropriate award for “heroic (valorous) or meritorious achievement or service...only...if during the period, the awardee was exposed to hostile action, or was at significant risk of exposure to hostile action; otherwise, the appropriate award would be ...the [Meritorious Service Medal]”; and

WHEREAS, the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) criteria is a degree of “meritorious or service” greater than that considered for the Commendation Medals of the various Services, but is specifically identified as the inappropriate award (in favor of the BSM) if service was “performed under combat conditions”; and

WHEREAS, the individual Services have established heroism awards specifically for actions not involving armed conflict with the enemy, such as the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, Soldier’s Medal, Airman’s Medal, and Coast Guardsman Medal; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart Medal is awarded to service members who have sustained wounds or fatal injuries from combat incidents, including acts of terrorism; and

WHEREAS, each military Service recognizes honorable combatant involvement against an armed enemy through combat action badges, ribbons, or medals; and

WHEREAS, notable among the armed Services, the Department of the Navy (DON) has regularly awarded non-combat decorations, specifically the MSM, to those who have performed heroically in Lower-Intensity Conflicts of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century for which combat action medals/ribbons/badges and/or Purple Heart Medals have been concurrently earned; and

WHEREAS, the prestige of the Bronze Star Medal (BSM) far exceeds that of the MSM due to the combatant nature of the award while the MSM is predominately associated with outstanding performance is an administrative nature, far from the front; and

WHEREAS, the DoD has recognized this inequity in their rewrite of the DoD Manual 1348.33 by applying these criteria to periods after October 30, 2000; and

WHEREAS, this past year, the Nation observed the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) anniversary of the bombing of the USS COLE (DDG 67), following which no less than twelve (12) non-combat medals were presented to Sailors despite recognition of combat service through award of the Combat Action Ribbon and more than fifty (50) Purple Heart Medals; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW believes that the current BSM criteria should be made retroactive to the origins of the Bronze Star Medal itself, to wit: December 6, 1941; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW believes that those service personnel recognized as being in combat deserve combat decorations for their heroism and meritorious performance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW enjoins DoD to review and upgrade to the Bronze Star Medal, with appropriate Valor or Combat device, all MSMs awarded for meritorious or heroic performance during events for which the service's combat action award or Purple Heart Medal was concurrently awarded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the DoD to thoroughly review all non-combat heroism decorations (i.e., Navy and Marine Corps Medal, Soldier's Medal, and Airman's Medal) awarded for performance during periods when combat action or Purple Heart Medals were concurrently awarded for potential upgrade to an appropriate combat decoration - Silver Star Medal, Service Cross, or Medal of Honor. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 416 (Submitted by Department of Colorado)**  
**WARTIME ALLIES BURIAL RIGHTS**

WHEREAS, our nation fought in Vietnam with the support of the Vietnamese regular army and special operations personnel; and

WHEREAS, our Vietnamese wartime allies distinguished themselves during combat in support of U.S. military objectives throughout the southeast Asia theater of operation; and

WHEREAS, many Vietnamese regular and special operations personnel, upon the US. Withdrawal from Vietnam, received Special Immigration Visas (SIV) and are now U.S. citizens; and

WHEREAS, our Vietnamese wartime allies who are now U.S. citizens and have distinguished themselves in combat in support of U.S. military operations have as their last wish to receive the honor of being buried alongside their U.S. brothers and sisters in arms in a U.S. military cemetery; and

WHEREAS, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States have been personally impacted by the support of our Vietnamese wartime allies; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that wartime allies that have performed direct military support of U.S. military operations and are now U.S. citizens, we urge Congress to create a legislative pathway for allowing wartime allies who served honorably to receive U.S. military burial rights. (Approved as Amended)

**Resolution No. 417 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT THE AWARDING OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR E. ROYCE**  
**WILLIAMS**

WHEREAS, on November 18, 1952, then LT. E. Royce Williams, USN

serving with Fighter Squadron Seven Hundred Eighty-One (VF-781) on the USS Oriskany participated in an early morning strike against the Hoeryong industrial complex five miles from the North Korea-Russian Border; and

WHEREAS, against later enemy retaliating bogeys LT. Williams launched in treacherous winter weather as section lead of a four plane F9F-5 Combat Air Patrol (CAP) in defense of Carrier Task Force 77 (CTF-77); and

WHEREAS, with complications amidst the other three CAP aircraft, LT. Williams unhesitatingly and with no regard for personal safety or risk of life, climbed and singly engaged the seven superior MiG-15s; and

WHEREAS, in a fierce 30 – 40minute fight, LT. Williams' superb pilot skills and gunnery accounted for three MiGs downed and a fourth confirmed years later, stopping the attack against CTF-77 in its tracks; and

WHEREAS, out of ammo and suffering a 37mm hit which disabled all but elevator control and a little aileron control LT. Williams successfully disengaged and returned to the task force using the weather for cover; and

WHEREAS, LT. Williams displayed outstanding airmanship I getting his badly damaged F9F-5 back on USS Oriskany with a minimum control speed of 170 knots (normal carrier approach speed is 105 knots); and

WHEREAS, LT. Williams' singular courage, superb skill, call to duty over personal risk of life reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service; and

WHEREAS, LT. William's singular act of valor is unmatched either in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, or since then; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of California request the Veterans of Foreign Wars to petition the United States Congress and the Department of Defense to consider Captain E. Royce Williams, USN (Ret.) to be awarded the Medal of Honor for his act of valor given in service to our country on November 18, 1952; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States of America continues to exert the maximum effort for honoring our forgotten heroes who have given so much to ensure our freedom.  
(Rejected)

**Resolution No. 418 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT NAMING A UNITED STATES NAVY COMBAT SHIP IN HONOR OF**  
**FIREMAN SECOND CLASS TELESFORO TRINIDAD, A RECIPIENT OF**  
**CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR**

WHEREAS, the American Veterans of Foreign Service and the National Society of the Army of the Philippines merged in 1914 creating the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and VFW has always supported recognizing the service and sacrifice of heroes and Congressional Medal of Honor recipients; and

WHEREAS, the United States Navy honors our nation by naming U.S. Navy ships with names that include Congressional Medal of Honor recipients

and that the Secretary of the Navy is the authority responsible for the naming of U.S. Navy Ships; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad was among the many Filipinos recruited to join the Insular Force of the U.S. Navy in the Philippines that was established in 1901 through Executive Order by then President McKinley; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad was awarded the United States Congressional Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism above and beyond the call of duty in saving the lives of his fellow shipmates aboard USS San Diego (CG-6) in the Gulf of California on January 21, 1915; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad is the only U.S. Navy Sailor of Asian American descent and the first Filipino American to receive the United States Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism from service in the United States Navy and whose valor can speak for thousands like him who swore to defend the nation; and

WHEREAS, to date, there is no ship in the U.S. Navy that is named after a member of the U.S. Armed Forces of Filipino American descent; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of California requests the full support of the Veterans of Foreign Wars to approve this resolution and petition the United States Navy and Secretary of the Navy to name a U.S. Navy warship – an Arleigh Burke-class Aegis Guided Missile Destroyer (DDG) or Constellation-class Guided Missile Frigate (FFG) - in honor of Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad, a Medal of Honor recipient, for valor, loyalty, selfless sacrifice and courageous service to the United States of America in accordance with U.S. Navy authority under Title 10 of the United States Code, Section 8662. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 419 (Submitted by Department of Maryland)**  
**NAMING A UNITED STATES NAVY COMBAT SHIP IN HONOR OF**  
**FIREMAN SECOND CLASS TELESFORO TRINIDAD, A RECIPIENT OF**  
**CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has always supported recognizing the service and sacrifice of heroes and Congressional Medal of Honor recipients; and

WHEREAS, the United States Navy honors our nation by naming U.S. Navy ships with names that include Congressional Medal of Honor recipients and that the Secretary of the Navy is the authority responsible for the naming of U.S. Navy Ships; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad was among the many Filipinos recruited to join the Insular Force of the U.S. Navy in the Philippines that was established in 1901 through Executive Order by then

President McKinley; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad was awarded the United States Congressional Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism above and beyond the call of duty in saving the lives of his fellow shipmates aboard USS San Diego (CG-6) in the Gulf of California on January 21, 1915; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad suffered burns on his face and other injuries during his heroic act of valor and selflessness to save the lives of fellow Sailors and that by his actions he showed unwavering service and commitment to the ship and his shipmates above self; and

WHEREAS, Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad is the only U.S. Navy Sailor of Asian American descent and the first Filipino American to receive the United States Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism from service in the United States Navy and whose valor can speak for thousands like him who swore to defend the nation; and

WHEREAS, to date, there is no ship in the U.S. Navy that is named after a member of the U.S. Armed Forces of Filipino American descent; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars that we approve this resolution and petition the United States Navy and Secretary of the Navy to name a U.S. Navy warship – an Arleigh Burke-class Aegis Guided Missile Destroyer (DDG) or Constellation-class Guided Missile Frigate (FFG) - in honor of Fireman Petty Officer Second Class Telesforo Trinidad, a Medal of Honor recipient, for valor, loyalty, selfless sacrifice and courageous service to the United States of America in accordance with U.S. Navy authority under Title 10 of the United States Code, Section 8662. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 420 (Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania)  
GOLD MEDAL FOR DUST OFF CREWS OF THE VIETNAM WAR**

WHEREAS, the Congressional Gold Medal has been given out to a pro golfer and a postal unit from WWII and Dust Off crews picked up 900,000+ patients with very little protection just a red cross on the side of the helicopter; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation to pass a Dust Off Crews of the Vietnam War Congressional Gold Medal Act. (Approved)

**RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE ON  
VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS  
AT THE 122<sup>nd</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

**Resolution No. 601 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET**

WHEREAS, there are more than 18 million living veterans; and  
WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs anticipates that enrollment in the Veterans Health Administration will grow to nearly 10 million veterans and more than 7.2 million of those veterans will be seen by VA for health care; and

WHEREAS, veterans use VA for numerous other benefit programs including education programs, recipients of disability compensation, and insurance policies; 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 to 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; 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 Department of Veterans Affairs

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)**  
**VA MEDICARE AND TRICARE REIMBURSEMENT**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views it as essential that the Department of Veterans Affairs 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 Department of Veterans Affairs 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. 604 (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 Department of Veterans Affairs health care and provide all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care services which include nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, current VA regulations extend VA eligibility for nursing home care to those veterans who are service-connected at 70 percent or above or those seeking nursing home care for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, the demand for VA nursing home care is increasing as the veteran population continues to age; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care units are VA hospital-based and provide an intensive and extensive level of nursing home care supported by the clinical specialties and other services within the host hospital; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care is considered the “safety net” for VA outpatient services such as residential care, respite care, hospital-based home care, adult day health care, homemaker/home health aid services and other extended care programs; and

WHEREAS, VA, through their own statements, recognizes the difference in eligibility for nursing home care and inpatient hospital care as inconsistent with the principles of sound medical practice, which support continuity of care for veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish a standard Department of Veterans Affairs nursing home entitlement for all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 605 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HEALTH CARE**

WHEREAS, since 2019, more than 41,000 service members have sustained Traumatic Brain Injury 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 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 Department of Veterans Affairs 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 service-connected head trauma to include, but not limited to Traumatic Brain Injuries; 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 TBIs caused by blast injuries, blunt traumas, motor vehicle accidents, falls and other related injuries to ensure veterans who have experienced a TBI receive effective health care. (Approved as Amended)

**Resolution No. 606 (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, studies conducted by VA through the National Center for PTSD found an average of 23 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have been diagnosed with PTSD; 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 die by suicide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to assess what specific treatments or practices are the most effective in helping our veterans cope with their PTSD. (Approved)

#### **Resolution No. 607 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief) VA HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS**

WHEREAS, the total number of women veterans continues to grow, as does the number of women utilizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that as of FY 2019 only 25 percent of women veterans utilize VA health care facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA currently has two Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCP) at all of the VA's health care systems. In addition, there are WH-PCPs in 90 percent of the community-based outpatient clinics; 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 FY 2019 that more than 80 percent of enrolled women veterans are assigned to a Designated Women's Health Provider (DWHP), who have experience and training in women's health care; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that the VA has improved the care and services it provides women veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to continue to staff, equip, 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 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 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 as Amended)

**Resolution No. 608 (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, the comprehensive program has begun to expand for the caregivers of veterans of other eras; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States believes severely wounded, injured, and ill 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, 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 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 provide the accurate resources to VA for the expansion of the Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program to veterans of all eras; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to fully align the VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program with the Department of Defense Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living 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. 609 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY CARE OPTIONS**

WHEREAS, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States report being satisfied with the health care they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs 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 consistently worked with Congress and VA to improve the health care VA provides our nation's veterans through community care programs to ensure veterans have a seamless experience; 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; and

WHEREAS, VA is now allowed to charge veterans copayments for service-connected care they receive from networked urgent care clinics in the community; and

WHEREAS, the networks of VA community care programs, to include dependent care delivered through CHAMPVA, are limited by factors that influence the willingness of private sector providers to participate in these programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress must provide Department of Veterans Affairs with the oversight, appropriations and assets necessary to properly implement the VA MISSION Act as intended by Congress; 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 programs, while ensuring veterans and eligible dependents are not held financially liable for services furnished through such programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must remain the guarantor and coordinator of care for enrolled veterans and that the VFW remains opposed to privatizing VA or eroding VA's ability to provide direct care to veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW opposes any out-of-pocket costs for care coordinated by VA for service-connected disabilities; 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)

**Resolution No. 610 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**RESEARCH ON MEDICAL CANNABIS TREATMENTS**

WHEREAS, over the past several years, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury 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 more than 36 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Mariana Islands, with more states pending legalization legislation, state funding has supported research into the effective use of medicinal marijuana for PTSD and other health care issues; 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, 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, other substantial evidence from comprehensive studies by the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academic Press concluding cannabinoids are effective for treating various medical conditions; and

WHEREAS, veterans are at risk of losing their right to possess or own firearms if they report their use of marijuana to VA healthcare providers based on the difference in Federal and State laws; now, 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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, veterans who use state approved marijuana programs should not forfeit their Second Amendment rights.  
(Approved)

**Resolution No. 611 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**COVID-19 LESSONS LEARNED**

WHEREAS, there were over 217,000 VA COVID-19 cumulative cases and 9,800 known deaths in the past year within the Department of Veteran Affairs; and

WHEREAS, shortly before March 13, 2020, VA instructed veterans with previously scheduled care appointments to contact their facilities to

convert to audio-only and video-based telehealth appointments, therefore in home or off-site telehealth visits increased by 1,785%; and

WHEREAS, previous to the COVID-19 pandemic VHA had almost 45,000 unfilled vacancies, by the end of FY20 Q4 VHA's vacancies decreased to 30,578; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide the appropriate funding to ensure telehealth is an available option to access VA care by improving technology, accessibility, and security; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Veterans Health Administration to ensure that the Office of Human Resources have the necessary staff to properly implement policies and procedures to accelerate qualified employees' hiring processes to adequately maintain the number of health care personnel. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 612 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**CONSIDER TREATMENT FOR A PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE-CONNECTED**  
**CONDITION OR A SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITION THAT HAS INCREASED IN**  
**SEVERITY 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 Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facility; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) neither communicates with nor obtains treatment records from VHA until a claim for compensation benefits has been filed with VBA; and

WHEREAS, many VHA 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 compensation 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 VHA facility for a condition or disease recognized, as presumptively service connected or a service connected disability that has increased in severity will serve as the effective date for service connected compensation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to enact legislation requiring VA to notify veterans, upon receiving treatment for a presumptive disability, that said disability is a claimable presumptive service connected disability. (Approved as Amended)

**Resolution No. 613 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**EXTENDING GULF WAR PRESUMPTIONS 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 served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, Afghanistan is not considered part of the Southwest Asia theater of operations during; 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 presumptive service connected conditions for 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 Department of Veterans Affairs 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 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. 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 service members face is frequently guerrilla-style combat where the enemy is widely known to use improvised explosive devices and indirect fire; 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 service members 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 Department of Veterans Affairs 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 COMPENSABLE 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 or Coast Guard 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 Department of Veterans Affairs was for hearing loss or tinnitus; and

WHEREAS, the VA 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, 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.

BE IT FURTHER 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. 616 (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, Congress has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved its oversight. Yet, the attrition rate and quality 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, VA has attempted to increase workload production by implementing arbitrary timeliness goals that rarely account for the complexity of claims; 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, 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 Department of Veterans Affairs 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. 617 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**BURIAL PLOT ALLOWANCE**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs 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 annually and the current VA benefit is \$2,000 for a service connected death, and \$300 burial and up to \$780 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 VFW urges Congress to provide the resources required to meet the burial needs of all veterans who have served their country so honorably and faithfully. (Approved)

### **Resolution No. 618 (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 such 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 exposure are 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, which 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, the anti-malaria drug mefloquine, and radioactive substances in K2 Uzbekistan; and

WHEREAS, veterans stationed at Woomera Air Station in South Australia, were exposed to radiation during nuclear weapons testing during the 1950's and 1960's and subsequent closure and cleanup; and

WHEREAS, veterans and dependents stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama were exposed to Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB), and now suffer from associated conditions; and

WHEREAS, 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 government has no plans to study the effects of such chemicals on troops; 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 we urge Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to grant a presumption of service connection for all conditions and illnesses that are deemed by scientific evidence to be at least as likely as not associated with or caused by exposure to a toxic substance or environmental hazard and not solely on the basis of a definitive causal link or scientific certainty; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense to disclose known and potential toxic exposures during all military operations; 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. (Approved)

### **Resolution No. 619 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief) DIGITAL CLAIMS PROCESS**

WHEREAS, advancements in technology have created an expectation among many Americans to conduct business in real time in a secure, digital space; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs now processes nearly all its workload in a digital environment; this includes claims for compensation, pension, survivor benefits and appeals, but still fails to offer timely access to this digital environment to veterans' representatives in the benefits process; and

WHEREAS, VA has committed to developing new self-service tools for veterans to file claim actions, but has failed to similarly invest in secure resources that would allow VSOs to provide quality claims assistance to veterans in real time, relying instead on its antiquated Personal Identity Verification (PIV) credentialing process; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has unsuccessfully

tried to engage with VA to assist in developing cutting-edge digital tools for VA-accredited representatives to provide high quality assistance anytime, anywhere; and

WHEREAS, in the interim, VSOs have been forced to either contract with third-party vendors or develop internal ad-hoc solutions at substantial cost to the VSOs and without proper insight or oversight from VA; 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 Department of Veterans Affairs to update regulations to authorize VSOs the same advocacy rights in the digital environment as were allowed in the paper-based claims process and honor proof of digital transmission to VA as the effective date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs work with all VA-accredited entities to develop real-time, secure access to tools that allow advocates to provide comprehensive assistance to clients in real time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress pass legislation granting VSOs 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 and if there are discrepancies that require communication with VA decision makers that the clock is temporarily suspended until those questions are resolved. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 620 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS LIFE INSURANCE**

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs has established life insurance designed to support veterans whom might otherwise be uninsurable due to service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, by statute the maximum coverage rate is \$40,000; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has statutory authority to increase coverage if he or she determines that such new maximum amount and the premiums therefor are administratively and actuarially sound; and

WHEREAS, VA life insurance rates will not be competitive with private insurance company rates should the VA Secretary fail to exercise his or her discretion to increase the maximum coverage amount; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that VA life insurance rates are competitive with private insurance company rates; and

BE IT RESOLVED FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to index for inflation the maximum coverage rate of the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance program. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 621 (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 it 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 five years, whichever is greater, so as to maintain a practical quality of life and benefit from current safety and technology standards. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 622 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief)**  
**DOMICILIARY PROGRAMS AND TEMPORARY TOTAL RATINGS**

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs provides free medical treatment for service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA grants temporary total ratings for veterans hospitalized in excess of 21 days due to service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, veterans are not able to work while participating in VA domiciliary and day programs; and

WHEREAS, VA has mischaracterized the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims decision *Mangham v. Shinseki* and now no longer

considers domiciliary and day programs as “hospital care” for temporary 100 percent disability ratings; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress restore eligibility for temporary 100 percent ratings to include medical treatment provided by all domiciliary and day programs provided the program is treating a service connected disability. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 623 (Commander-in-Chief)**  
**IMPROVE EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR SURVIVORS**

WHEREAS, the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program 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 Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program 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. 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 Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem program and the Department of Labor Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

WHEREAS, programs such as VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families and the joint Housing and Urban Development and VA's Supportive Housing 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 Department of Veterans Affairs 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)

#### **Resolution No. 625 (Submitted by Commander-in-Chief) 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, Department of Veterans Affairs 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 Department of

Veterans Affairs 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 housing payments 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 we 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 Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment 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 Department of Veterans Affairs 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 if unsuccessful, to ensure the reasons and bases are clearly communicated to the veteran; 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; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must provide better information about VR&E during the Transition Assistance Program Class for separating

service members. (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 program and other Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service programs; 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; 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; but such programs should never come at the expense of other earned veterans' benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress hold Department of Veterans Affairs 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 Virginia)**  
**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP INTEGRITY**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is the nation's oldest Congressionally-chartered veterans service organization and serves as an advocate for veterans and their beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) has the sacred obligation to care for more than 17 million American veterans who have borne the battle and for their widows and orphans; and

WHEREAS, the DVA is entrusted with the sound management of an annual budget of more than \$250 billion and more than \$77 billion in assets; and

WHEREAS, service to such a large population of beneficiaries and management of such a significant value of taxpayer funds requires sound fiscal, managerial skill, development, measurement, and evaluation of goals and performance and dedication to the mission of the DVA; and

WHEREAS, the Inspector General of the DVA has, over the last four years, documented a disturbing number of statutory or ethical violations by self-serving and/or vindictive senior-level appointees, which have had a negative impact on the effective use of DVA resources, as well as demoralizing DVA staff and causing beneficiaries to lose faith and trust in the DVA, itself; and

WHEREAS, the transgressions by no less than the Secretary of Veterans Affairs led the VFW to call for his resignation; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign of Wars of the United States that the VFW enjoins the Biden Administration and subsequent



Administrations to carefully vet all candidates for political appointment within the Veterans Affairs to be free of conflicts of interest, have a documented history or dedication to veterans, and possess the financial and leadership management skills necessary to effectively and efficiently manage the VA's resources and essential services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW stands ready to review and comment upon the suitability of any such candidates if called upon to do so. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 630 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)  
PROCESSING OF FOREIGN MILITARY PROGRAM (FMP) CLAIMS**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) states that the goal of enrollment in VA health care is to provide access to world-class medical care to veterans, and personalized, proactive, and patient-driven care; and

WHEREAS, at this time, the veterans living or traveling abroad who are also enrolled in the VA Foreign Medical Program often face hardships caused by long wait times to process health care reimbursement claims; and

WHEREAS, this long delay is in part, caused by the fact that there is currently no procedure that allow for online processing of FMP claims; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no procedures in place to provide reimbursement of said claims other than payment by paper check; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would enable the Veterans Affairs to process the health care reimbursement claims (VA Form 10-7959f-2) of veterans enrolled in the VA Foreign Medical Program online and within 30 days of submission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that part of this legislation include procedures that would allow for electronic submission and status monitoring of said claims; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that part of this legislation include procedures that would allow for direct deposit reimbursements of said claims to the claimant. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 631 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)  
ACCESS TO VETERAN HEALTH IDENTIFICATION CARDS (VHIC)**

WHEREAS, due to ongoing worldwide coronavirus travel restrictions, it is difficult for veterans living abroad to travel long distances to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility and apply for, or renew, a Veteran Health Identification Card in a timely manner; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would provide the Veterans Affairs with the resources required to provide veterans the ability to

apply for, or renew, a Veteran Health Identification Card at any of the Veterans Affairs Overseas Military Coordinator offices located abroad. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 632 (Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas)**  
**CONSIDER AMENDING BILL S2320, "REMEMBERING AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN VETERANS CEMETERY ACT OF 2012" TO ADD THE FORMER UNITED STATES MILITARY CAMP JOHN HAY CEMETERY 1 AND 2 IN BAGUIO CITY, PHILIPPINES AS ONE OF THE US MILITARY CEMETERIES UNDER THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENT COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, service members and their families which dates back to the 1900s, the Boxer Rebellion, World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War are buried at the former US Military Facility at Camp John Hay Cemetery 1 and 2, Baguio City, Philippines; and

WHEREAS, the US Military Cemetery at Camp John Hay Cemetery 1 and 2 are dilapidated and are in need of maintenance. When the US Bases was handed over to the Philippine government in 1992 the US government made no arrangements for any ongoing care or maintenance of the cemeteries. Just as at Clark APB the cemeteries were abandoned and forgotten by the U.S. administration. Currently, it is being used by local farmers to graze their cows and other animals and the local Security Agency guarding the area is using it as parking spaces for their motorcycles and other people use it a pathway to walk along these very sacred grounds; and

WHEREAS, there is a plan being considered by a certain Commercial Corporation that in particular Cemetery 2 of the old US Military Camp will be converted into a Commercial Facility to house commercial buildings and offices which is not right and what will happen to our U.S. Military and Family members that are buried there; and

WHEREAS, the current Clark Air Base Cemetery is being managed by the American Battle Monument Commission and should the Camp John Hay Cemetery 1 and 2 be added as US Military Cemetery and be included as such; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation to amend Bill 52320, "Remembering America's forgotten veteran's cemetery act of 2012", to add the former United States Military Camp John Hay Cemetery 1 and 2 located in Baguio City, Philippines as a US Military Cemetery under the American Battle Monument Commission. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 633 (Submitted by Department of New Jersey)**  
**GREEN STAR FLAG FOR VETERAN SUICIDE**

WHEREAS, the mental health crises that veterans face from various service endeavors, resulting in suicide, whose only resolution is programs that

are reactive; and,

WHEREAS, family members and caregivers affected by veteran suicide whose support is provided through unrelated and underfunded services; and,

WHEREAS, the need for this resolution to elevate national support and garner the attention of federal legislators; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would provide veteran suicide awareness through an awarded Green Star Flag for next of kin of covered veterans who are deceased as the result of suicide and establish a counseling program for certain family members and caregivers of veterans deceased as a result of suicide. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 634 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT THE TRANSFERABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR**  
**VETERANS WHO SERVED POST 9/11 BUT SEPARATED BEFORE 8/1/2009**

WHEREAS, our Service members and our veterans have risked their lives to protect our freedom, and their families who collaterally sacrifice, deserve every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and educational well-being as more than 2,770,000 of our troops have deployed overseas since September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, in the military operations after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, over 959,701 reservists have been involuntarily and/or were voluntarily placed on active duty, according to the Congressional Research Service; and

WHEREAS, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, also known as the "Forever GI Bill," was signed into law on Aug. 17, 2017, and it brought significant changes to veterans' education benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Forever GI Bill states, that as of Aug. 1, 2018, veterans who transferred entitlement to a dependent can now designate a new dependent if the original dependent dies, and if the veteran dies, a dependent who received transferred entitlement can now designate a new eligible dependent of the veteran to transfer any of the dependent's remaining entitlement; and

WHEREAS, the Forever GI Bill states that even though a veteran may be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, he/she must also be a CURRENT member of the Armed Forces (active duty or Selected Reserve, officer or enlisted) on or after Aug. 1, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the Forever GI Bill did NOT address the Transfer of Educational Benefits for veterans who served after 9/11/01, but were separated before 8/1/09, because those veterans can NOT transfer their educational benefits according to [https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/factsheets/Transferability\\_Factsheet.pdf](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/factsheets/Transferability_Factsheet.pdf); now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

that we urge the federal government to pass legislation that must allow the hundreds of thousands of veterans who served after 9/11/01, but were separated before 8/1/09, to transfer their educational benefits. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 635 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF STELLATE GANGLION BLOCK RESEARCH**  
**AND IMPLEMENTATION TO TREAT POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

WHEREAS, every June is designated as “National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Month” to help raise public awareness, reduce the associated stigma, and help ensure those individuals suffering from the invisible wounds of war promptly receive proper treatment; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that approximately 20%, 12%, and 30% of service members and veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the Persian Gulf War, and the Vietnam War, respectively, have had Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) in a given year; and

WHEREAS, both government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have made significant advances in the identification, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of PTS; and

WHEREAS, one of the most promising PTSD treatments is Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) and the VA Long Beach Healthcare System in California and the VA Center for Compassionate Care Innovation (CCI) are leading an effort to offer SGB to a subset of veterans who have not experienced relief from traditional PTSD treatments; and

WHEREAS, there is growing evidence that SGB may alleviate certain PTSD symptoms such as hyperarousal, exaggerated startle responses and anxiety, and it appears to calm an exaggerated “flight or fight” survival reflex in people living with PTSD, which can become triggered by various events that don’t warrant it, and veterans who received SGB for other health conditions like nerve pain report positive effects for their PTSD symptoms including reduced anxiety and hypervigilance; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States urges the entire federal government to accelerate Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) research, that the Veterans Affairs advertise SGB in all Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and that the VA must expand the CCI-led clinical demonstration nationwide. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 636 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT THE FUNDING AND EXPANSION OF VET CENTERS,**  
**MOBILE VET CENTERS, AND VET CENTER OUTSTATIONS**

WHEREAS, Vet Centers, Mobile Vet Centers, and Vet Center Outstations across the country provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services and these community-based counseling centers provide a

wide range of social and psychological services, including professional readjustment counseling to eligible veterans, active duty service members, including National Guard and Reserve components, and their families, and Readjustment counseling is offered to make a successful transition from military to civilian life or after a traumatic event experienced in the military, and individual, group, marriage and family counseling is offered in addition to referral and connection to other Veterans Affairs (VA) or community benefits and services, and Vet Center counselors and outreach staff, many of whom are veterans themselves, are experienced and prepared to discuss the tragedies of war, loss, grief and transition after trauma; and

WHEREAS, 298,576 Veterans, active duty service members (including Guard and Reservists) and their families received readjustment counseling at VA's 300 Vet Centers, totaling more than 1.9 million visits in Fiscal Year 2018, and across the nation, town hall meetings (including the one in Fairfield, CA on May 23, 2019 attended by nearly 200 concerned veterans and stakeholders) clearly indicate the need to place additional Vet Center Outstations and/or Mobile Vet Centers in under-served metropolitan and/or rural areas; and

WHEREAS, two of the most concerns for single fathers and mothers is that the "Veterans Affairs should provide child care to veterans at Vet Centers in the same manner as the Secretary provides child care to veterans at other Department of Veterans Affairs facilities" and to have VA transportation to fixed Vet Centers and Outstations similar to transportation to VA Medical Centers, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs); now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge the Veterans Affairs to fund and expand Vet Centers, Mobile Vet Centers, and Vet Center Outstations, to provide childcare at Vet Centers just like other VA facilities, and to provide VA transportation to fixed Vet Centers and Outstations. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 637 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT SUICIDE PREVENTION BY UTILIZING DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS) AND EXPANDING VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)**  
**SERVICES**

WHEREAS, there are approximately 20.6 deaths by suicide per day among our Service members and veterans and worse, only six — or 29 percent — had recently used federal resources; and

WHEREAS, the National Research Strategy for the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End the National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS) is identifying numerous integrated/collaborative strategies with federal, state, county, city, and non-government organizations (NGOs) to tackle this national tragedy; and

WHEREAS, we can mitigate deaths by suicide by fully utilizing safety net services from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)-funded community health and human/social services because our "at-risk-of-suicide"

service members are discouraged to go to military treatment facilities as mental health issues are stigmatized, and their federal poverty level incomes — especially those with families — also strains their quality of life; therefore, the service member/family could be enrolled in Medicaid so they can access community behavioral health services in a civilian setting and also utilize other temporary assistance to needy families (TANF) services; and

WHEREAS, many of our service members leaving the military do not have concrete plans on the 3-Hs: Housing, Health, and Honey or steady income, and uncertainty increases the chance for suicide and/or harm to others; therefore, before their discharge, service members/families — who would qualify at their post-discharge zero income — should be pre-enrolled in Medicaid (via DHHS) with their home-of-record community health and human/social services offices; and

WHEREAS, we can also streamline access to VA services by giving every discharging service member: a) medical card to ensure continuity of health care during their critical transition period; b) certificate of eligibility for housing vouchers, education, and/or home loan; and c) zero percent disability rating because this “presumptive policy” would simplify the veteran’s process for applying for other benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States urges the entire federal government to fully utilize existing safety net services from the Departments of Health and Human Services and expanding Veterans Affairs services and benefits as outlined above. (Approved)

#### **Resolution No. 638 (Submitted by Department of California) SUPPORT FUNDING FOR VISITS TO NATIONAL CEMETERIES**

WHEREAS, only 20% of U.S. Veterans (596,000), who died in the U.S. and Puerto Rico in FY 2018 were buried in a national cemetery (15%), and at a state or tribal Veterans cemetery (5%)

per [www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/facts.pdf](http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/facts.pdf); and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Affairs (VA) projects only after new national, state and tribal Veterans cemeteries are opened can this percentage be expected to increase; and

WHEREAS, from discussions with veterans and families, the most common reason for this low percentage is the time/distance to VA cemeteries; and a major part of grieving and closure is visiting your loved-ones' grave as often as possible, and

WHEREAS, the VA's 75-mile rule is problematic especially in high-traffic urban areas, so many families would rather be burdened to pay for a local grave than be buried too far away at VA cemeteries; and this disproportionately affects the most vulnerable and/or lower income and/or poor veterans and family members; and

WHEREAS, until newer/closer cemeteries are opened, the NCA should reimburse mileage for grieving families – similar to VHA reimbursing mileage

for appointments - for at least 6 months of visits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge the Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration to reimburse mileage for grieving families – similar to Veterans Health Administration reimbursing mileage for appointments - for at least 6 months of visits. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 639 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT THE TRANSLATION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS INFORMATION**

WHEREAS, although most veterans are fluent in English, we find that they usually do NOT file for benefits (~75% of veterans nationwide do not take advantage of Disability Compensation and Pension benefits per [www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Comp\\_n\\_Pen\\_by\\_Cnty\\_2018.xlsx](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Comp_n_Pen_by_Cnty_2018.xlsx)) because veterans have been regimented to be self-sufficient and/or are too "proud" to ask for help and/or do not know how; and

WHEREAS, in the experience of veterans service offices, the veterans' loved-ones - who are sometimes NOT fluent in English - are usually the ones who encourage/help the veteran to pursue their benefits; and

WHEREAS, the procedures for applying for Veterans Affairs (VA) Health, Benefits, Cemeterial, etc. benefits should be translated to the same [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) threshold languages, specifically, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polski, French, Hatian Creole, Portuguese, Japanese, Spanish; and

WHEREAS, by translating procedures into other languages, placing public service announcements (PSAs) and putting them in YouTube, social media, etc., then we can improve on the low 25% Veteran Utilization Rate; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge the Veterans Affairs to translate the procedures for applying for VA Health, Benefits, Cemeterial, etc. benefits into to the same [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) threshold languages and fully utilizing public service announcements, YouTube, social media, etc., so we can improve on the low 25% Veteran Utilization Rate. (Approved as Amended)

**Resolution No. 640 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT INITIATIVE TO DECREASE HOMELESSNESS BY**  
**MATCHING HOMELESS VETERANS WITH VETERAN EMPTY-NESTERS**

WHEREAS, according to the [www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org) website, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that 40,056 veterans are homeless on any given night; and

WHEREAS, an additional 1.4 million other veterans, meanwhile, are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks,

and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing; and

WHEREAS, From a 2020 analysis from [www.Realtor.com](http://www.Realtor.com), the market needs a whopping 3.8 million additional new homes to meet consumer demand and it will likely take many years to build additional homes or dwelling units; and

WHEREAS, many veterans who own homes may have “empty-nest” rooms that they may be willing to rent out to fellow veterans if they are asked and if properly vetted or matched; and

WHEREAS, this can be a win-win situation as the veteran homeowner can get additional income and the homeless veteran can live with a fellow veteran - who will likely be more understanding and supportive in both tangible and intangible ways; and

WHEREAS, non- government organization (NGOs) like the National Alliance to End Homelessness, GOs such as [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless), etc., are always looking for innovative and outside-the-box ways to decrease Veterans homelessness by finding ways for homeless veterans to increase their income/resources via HUDVASH, Supplemental Security Income, DHHS-Medicaid, VA benefits, etc. to help fund the rent and other expenses; and

WHEREAS, VA should consider distributing voluntary questionnaires at all VA facilities that ask Empty-Nest veterans if they are willing to rent out their empty rooms to homeless veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States urges the Veterans Affairs to query empty-nest veterans who may be willing to rent out their empty-rooms, and for VA to collaborate with other Government Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations to find outside-the-box and innovative ways to compassionately end veteran homelessness. (Rejected)

**Resolution No. 641 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**TECHNOLOGIES FOR CONTINUOUS BUDDY CHECKS**

WHEREAS, COVID and the extended “stay-at-home” periods are creating worse situations for at-risk veterans who are feeling left-out; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Affairs (VA) Solid Start program (calls new veterans in their first year of separation to help them better understand their benefits and get a “solid start” on civilian life), and REACH VET (computer-based statistical risk program that flags veterans) are promising programs for preemptive care and support for at-risk veterans; and

WHEREAS, to preemptively confront the new challenges of COVID to ALL veterans, the VA should leverage technology to expand outreach efforts and continuously contact ALL veterans via Vet Center Teleconferencing, Group Therapies, Video Connect Appointments, and even Robocalls as these will lessen loneliness and feeling left-out, increase health and mental health-care appointments made, decrease missed appointments, fewer inpatient mental health admissions, mitigate suicide and other collateral issues; now, therefore



BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States urges the Veterans Affairs to utilize and leverage existing programs to improve overall communications with veterans that will decrease mental health issues while improving metrics on other collateral issues. (Approved)

**Resolution No. 642 (Submitted by Department of California)**  
**SUPPORT THE PASSAGE OF COMMITMENT TO**  
**VETERAN SUPPORT AND OUTREACH ACT**

WHEREAS, County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) nationwide carry out programs that promote health and wellness, strengthen the coordination, implementation, and evaluation of comprehensive veteran suicide prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, CVSOs offer a higher probability of improving outreach and assistance to veterans and the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, and they ensure that such individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans and veterans-related benefits and programs (including State veterans programs) for which they may be eligible; and

WHEREAS, there is currently NO federal funding directly available for CVSOs, and in California, the Total CVSO Operations Funding (all sources) for Fiscal Year 2018-19 was \$38,784,221, of which County Funding accounted for 77%, and the State General Fund was 15%, and the Other State Funds was 8%; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is immensely affecting the financial health of States and Counties as evidenced by their widespread fiscal deficits, and at the same time, many at-risk Veterans need more assistance during this recession; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to immediately pass the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act, to amend Title 38 of the United States Code, and to authorize the Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with and award grants to States to promote health and wellness, prevent suicide, and improve outreach to veterans, and for other purposes. (Rejected)

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

Chairman: Glen M. Gardner, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

Vice Chairman: Allen F. Kent, Past Commander-in-Chief, Arizona

(Room 3501GH, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	Alan Bowser	5228
<b>Alaska</b>	Daniel Garcia	1685
<b>Alaska</b>	Brett Spencer	1685
<b>Arizona</b>	Brit Deuce Brandt	404
<b>Arkansas</b>	William Beams	2278
<b>Arkansas</b>	Christine Oldham	4548
<b>California</b>	Earl Fulk	9934
<b>California</b>	Buford Maples	5985
<b>Colorado</b>	Anthony Archer	101
<b>Colorado</b>	Carol Thomas	2551
<b>Connecticut</b>	Robert Bailey	10153
<b>Connecticut</b>	Richard DiFederico	7330
<b>Connecticut</b>	Ronald Rusakiewicz	9460
<b>Delaware</b>	Mac Garduno	3238
<b>Delaware</b>	Mark Newman	3238
<b>Florida</b>	Kevin Hice	12204
<b>Florida</b>	Glenn Wright	7909
<b>Georgia</b>	Denisa Adams	6077
<b>Georgia</b>	Arnold Gonzales	6445
<b>Georgia</b>	Patsey Nuzum	8385
<b>Idaho</b>	Troy Junier	4000
<b>Illinois</b>	Eugene Blackwell	311
<b>Illinois</b>	Maurice Bridges	4183
<b>Illinois</b>	John Davin	5917
<b>Illinois</b>	Steven Eller	7710
<b>Illinois</b>	Derek Giffin	2378
<b>Indiana</b>	Cory Mahan	2714
<b>Indiana</b>	Rebecca Murphy	1282
<b>Iowa</b>	Dale Henry	8884
<b>Iowa</b>	John Lingelbach	9668
<b>Kansas</b>	Johnathan Duncan	7397
<b>Kansas</b>	John Muckelbauer	3712
<b>Kentucky</b>	John Wingfield	2921
<b>Louisiana</b>	Shane Fowler	3619
<b>Maine</b>	Amy Meuchel	6859
<b>Maine</b>	Steven SanPedro	6859
<b>Maryland</b>	Denise Perry	6054

<b>Maryland</b>	R Brian Sturgis	5118
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Jody Freitas	523
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Jeffrey Najaria	1788
<b>Michigan</b>	Derek Blumke	423
<b>Minnesota</b>	Scott Bill	3915
<b>Minnesota</b>	Chad Solheid	7
<b>Mississippi</b>	Edward Corker	5393
<b>Mississippi</b>	Stephan Trochessett	2132
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Quentin Carroll	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Richard Depontee	4238
<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Lawrence Maher	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Zach Schwenk	5606
<b>Missouri</b>	Teresa Shaw	2513
<b>Missouri</b>	Andre Sidney	1829
<b>Montana</b>	Sheila Schwegel	276
<b>Nebraska</b>	Joseph Smith	2280
<b>Nevada</b>	Jon Way	12119
<b>New Hampshire</b>	James England	808
<b>New Jersey</b>	Jonathan Hinker	6257
<b>New Jersey</b>	Carey Pritchett	6590
<b>New Mexico</b>	Mark Decker	9517
<b>New Mexico</b>	Vincent Lawrence	7686
<b>New York</b>	Thomas Howard	8259
<b>New York</b>	Eugene Ratigliano	420
<b>North Carolina</b>	Victor Letourneaut	9960
<b>Ohio</b>	Larry Moore	3494
<b>Ohio</b>	Jose Torres	1662
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Darryl Mabry	1193
<b>Oregon</b>	George Carroll	3973
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Alexander Fores	124
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Gary Smith	1446
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Glenn Umberger	7155
<b>South Carolina</b>	Robert Holsclaw	10624
<b>South Dakota</b>	Sean Johnson	17
<b>South Dakota</b>	Rick Williamson	3164
<b>Tennessee</b>	John Mechkowski	9806
<b>Texas</b>	Keith King	3278
<b>Utah</b>	Dennis Parizek	1481
<b>Utah</b>	Heath Silcox	12087
<b>Vermont</b>	Joseph LaPerle	792
<b>Washington</b>	Frank Persa	5580
<b>West Virginia</b>	Thomas Anderson	4442
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Kerry McAllen	7591

**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION**

Chairman: John W. Smart, Past Commander-in-Chief, Virginia

Vice Chairman: John E. Moon, Past Commander-in-Chief, Ohio

(Room 3501ABCD, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	Pedra Munoz	6020
<b>Alaska</b>	Lorraine Roehl	10029
<b>Arizona</b>	William Schaeffler	549
<b>Arkansas</b>	Jerry Tobey	3031
<b>Arkansas</b>	Rodney Wood	7796
<b>California</b>	Deborah Johnson	10859
<b>Colorado</b>	John Keene	1
<b>Connecticut</b>	Kenneth Hartline	1265
<b>Delaware</b>	Thomas DiOrrio	3420
<b>Europe</b>	Blane Gish	10506
<b>Europe</b>	Peter Mascetti	27
<b>Europe</b>	Norberto Millet	9342
<b>Florida</b>	Ronald Evans	3233
<b>Florida</b>	Anthony Gardner	10140
<b>Hawaii</b>	Norbert Enos	2875
<b>Hawaii</b>	Faamanu Teofilo	3830
<b>Idaho</b>	Rockey Davis	10043
<b>Illinois</b>	Kyna Simpson	311
<b>Indiana</b>	Carl Courtney	1587
<b>Indiana</b>	Laura McKee	1587
<b>Iowa</b>	Gerald Huffman	8884
<b>Iowa</b>	Bradley Whitmore	9127
<b>Kansas</b>	Jackie Barnes	7285
<b>Kansas</b>	John Muckelbauer	3712
<b>Kentucky</b>	Ernest Moscoe	6423
<b>Louisiana</b>	Gerald Dugas	3121
<b>Louisiana</b>	James Prestenback	3665
<b>Maine</b>	David Williams	1641
<b>Maine</b>	Kevin Woodward	11553
<b>Maryland</b>	Diedra Padgett	9619
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Troy Henke	872
<b>Michigan</b>	Kimberly Napoleon	9931
<b>Minnesota</b>	David Staehlin	8752
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Marilynn Archuleta	5178

<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Adam St. pierre	4238
<b>Montana</b>	Heather Allen	3596
<b>Nebraska</b>	David Dietze	10725
<b>Nebraska</b>	Larry Gerlt	2704
<b>Nebraska</b>	James Lutz	759
<b>Nevada</b>	David Sousa	3396
<b>New Jersey</b>	Norman Wiener	6964
<b>New Jersey</b>	James Wisor	2290
<b>New Mexico</b>	Paul Golden	5890
<b>New Mexico</b>	Lenwood Hampton	6917
<b>New Mexico</b>	Bradley Nulf	401
<b>New York</b>	Robert Barnhart	686
<b>New York</b>	Harold Leavor	9487
<b>New York</b>	Firth Turner	8259
<b>North Carolina</b>	Charles Slater	7383
<b>North Carolina</b>	Pat Tompkins	2423
<b>North Dakota</b>	William Tuff	7564
<b>Ohio</b>	Chester Tenhundfeld	6428
<b>Ohio</b>	Ervin Yoder	7424
<b>Oklahoma</b>	James Patterson	3916
<b>Oregon</b>	Kirk Mickelsen	6881
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Shawn Watson	2917
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Charles Beattie	212
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Sean Smith	5392
<b>South Carolina</b>	James Fox	11079
<b>South Carolina</b>	Giner Graham	6740
<b>South Dakota</b>	Charles McKean	3298
<b>Tennessee</b>	Robert Hunt	5066
<b>Texas</b>	Willie Keller	3892
<b>Utah</b>	Darryl Root	8376
<b>Vermont</b>	Allston Gilmond	782
<b>West Virginia</b>	Kami Elliott	7048
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Walter Hogan	6498
<b>Wisconsin</b>	George Stoeber	7308
<b>Wyoming</b>	Rodney Birkle	3558

## **COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS**

Chairman: William A. Thien, Past Commander-in-Chief, Indiana

Vice Chairman: John F. Gwizdak, Past Commander-in-Chief, Georgia

Vice Chairman: Thomas A. Pouliot, Past Commander-in-Chief, Montana

Vice Chairman: William J. Schmitz, Past Commander-in-Chief, New York

(Room 2505AB, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
Alabama	Takeo Coleman	1349
Alaska	Johnathan Hackett	9365
Alaska	Melody Quesenberry	9785
Arizona	Hugues Byrne	1677
Arizona	Stephen Franklin	1433
Arizona	Timothy Ogden	9400
Arizona	Lewis Wood	9400
Arkansas	Teddy Pipkin	2330
Arkansas	Tanya Taylor	6527
California	Angela Ipock	1981
California	Rodger Meier	10125
Connecticut	David Greene	10004
Delaware	Robert Webb	5447
Europe	Michael Kinsavage	10506
Florida	Patricia Harrell	8195
Florida	Glen Tilley	7909
Florida	Jeanne Vogt	4643
Georgia	George Fields	6449
Georgia	El-hajj Salaam	658
Idaho	Nathan Suekel	63
Illinois	John Barrett	3523
Illinois	Ryan Higginbotham	4226
Illinois	Robert McLeod	8283
Indiana	Roger Ferguson	1114
Indiana	Keith Rohloff	9297
Iowa	Donald Fisher	6172
Iowa	Annette Harvey	526
Kansas	Kenneth Allred	3115
Kansas	Vance Hill	6957
Kansas	John Muckelbauer	3712
Kentucky	Tommie Eiland	10281
Kentucky	William Thomason	5908
Kentucky	David Wilson	6291
Louisiana	Ed Horton	4588
Maine	Teresa Drag	9787
Maine	Arthur Roy	1603
Massachusetts	Joseph Gallick	697
Massachusetts	Jason Main	3291
Massachusetts	James Morrissey	3264
Michigan	Bruce Bridson	5680
Michigan	Gerald Gorski	2645
Michigan	David Prohaska	4434
Minnesota	Leonard Gudmunson	1210

<b>Minnesota</b>	Duane Hermanson	4452
<b>Minnesota</b>	Dennis Maddox	5518
<b>Mississippi</b>	John Floyd	9573
<b>Mississippi</b>	Steven Organ	5395
<b>Mississippi</b>	Richard Thornton	4272
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Donald Hentges	1003
<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Norman Morgan	5368
<b>Montana</b>	Michael Pryor	276
<b>Nebraska</b>	Norman Anton	131
<b>Nebraska</b>	Charles Roberts	3755
<b>Nebraska</b>	Kenneth Yount	5820
<b>Nevada</b>	Carlton Fogg	36
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Joseph Clark	816
<b>New Jersey</b>	Steven Niblett	2347
<b>New Mexico</b>	Rogelio Anaya	8874
<b>New Mexico</b>	Brian Ravak	6917
<b>New York</b>	James Brooks	600
<b>New York</b>	Leslie Crossett	7220
<b>New York</b>	Wayne Humburg	2475
<b>North Carolina</b>	Stephen Amos	5352
<b>North Carolina</b>	Gregory Stafford	6060
<b>North Dakota</b>	David Rice	762
<b>North Dakota</b>	Terry Thomas	12169
<b>Ohio</b>	Gerald Constable	3283
<b>Ohio</b>	Thomas Price	2743
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Gary Miles	1201
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Erica Traxler	5263
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Gary Walker	8706
<b>Oregon</b>	Cheryl Campos	10626
<b>Oregon</b>	Bert Key	4273
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Jessica Martinez	8180
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Jessica King	6675
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Leo Swider	8955
<b>South Carolina</b>	Nicholas Camera	10804
<b>South Carolina</b>	Janet Chisolm-Richard	3433
<b>South Carolina</b>	Betty Hilliard	3433
<b>South Dakota</b>	Glynis Collier	2038
<b>Tennessee</b>	John Furgess	1970
<b>Tennessee</b>	Terry Huskey	5146
<b>Tennessee</b>	Kimberly King	10904
<b>Texas</b>	Shenna Lawless	8273
<b>Texas</b>	Robert Martinez	2059
<b>Texas</b>	Lupita Perez	12178

<b>Texas</b>	Lazaro Velasquez	8932
<b>Utah</b>	Danny Zaharias	409
<b>Virginia</b>	Christopher Birch	9760
<b>Virginia</b>	Travis Hafner	9274
<b>Virginia</b>	Virgle Lane	8947
<b>Washington</b>	James Daly	224
<b>Washington</b>	Frederick Green	9430
<b>Washington</b>	Carla Scott	2047
<b>West Virginia</b>	Erica Covington	896
<b>West Virginia</b>	Joshua Rife	1064
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Jason Dean	5470
<b>Wisconsin</b>	John Kleinmaus	1393
<b>Wyoming</b>	Amanda Preddice	9439

### **COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Chairman: Larry W. Rivers, Past Commander-in-Chief, Louisiana

Vice Chairman: Robert E. Wallace, Past Commander-in-Chief, New Jersey

(Room 2215C, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

### **SUBCOMMITTEE ON POW/MIA**

Chairman: James E. Nier, Past Commander-in-Chief, Texas

Vice Chairman: Paul A. Spera, Past Commander-in-Chief, Massachusetts

(Room 2215C, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	William Millington	12185
<b>Arizona</b>	Derek Hulsebus	3713
<b>Arizona</b>	James McCormick	9972
<b>Arkansas</b>	Terry Callahan	9095
<b>Arkansas</b>	Ashley Little	4548
<b>Arkansas</b>	Elvin Tate	5225
<b>California</b>	Arthur Napiwocki	1614
<b>Colorado</b>	Kirk Rosa	12009
<b>Connecticut</b>	Stanley Borusiewicz	1946
<b>Delaware</b>	Paul Phillips	2863
<b>Europe</b>	James Vergott	27
<b>Florida</b>	Kenneth Corr	10097
<b>Hawaii</b>	Dean Anzai	10276
<b>Illinois</b>	Robert Bailey	7452
<b>Illinois</b>	Clarence Caraker	3455



Illinois	Christine Pawley	7448
Illinois	Adam Yau	5520
Indiana	Gregory Baker	6978
Indiana	Sheila Corcoran	1587
Iowa	Michael Young	9127
Kentucky	Bruce Ashley	7387
Kentucky	Nicole Horseman	680
Louisiana	Aaron Lawrence	3615
Louisiana	Matthew West	3619
Massachusetts	Rene Fuentes	3104
Massachusetts	Eric Segundo	3236
Michigan	Robert Jackson	2725
Michigan	Reinold Yahnka	6056
Minnesota	Gary Anderson	6587
Minnesota	Douglas Doerfler	1296
Minnesota	Michael Meyer	3723
Mississippi	Terry Tolar	4877
Missouri	Christopher Bell	5789
Missouri	Jessie Jones	2657
Missouri	James Mueller	5077
Missouri	John Roth	5077
Montana	Jack Hawley	1087
Nebraska	Gary Bush	3755
Nebraska	Cathy Winegarden	1346
New Hampshire	Jorg Dreusicke	10722
New Jersey	Lester Ponder	12165
New Mexico	Vincent Lawrence	7686
New York	Michael Burke	686
North Carolina	Mickey Joe Biggs	8969
North Carolina	Roberta Sheets	6365
Ohio	Iris Foster-DeNieuwe	3764
Ohio	Kari Pfeifer	2920
Ohio	Colleen Wiley	3035
Oklahoma	Michael Merit	10887
Oregon	John Dobbs	3973
Pennsylvania	John Otte	3258
Rhode Island	Sarah Cavanaugh	152
Rhode Island	Guyde Lombardi	10011
Rhode Island	Patrick Murray	152
South Carolina	Wilton Fowler	9273
South Dakota	William Hoffman	3298
Tennessee	Henty Hooper	11333
Tennessee	John Lambert	1970
Tennessee	Michael Rhew	684
Texas	John Shipley	6970

<b>Texas</b>	Eddie Terry	10429
<b>Vermont</b>	Michael Choquette	792
<b>Virginia</b>	David Jarrett	12179
<b>Washington</b>	Daniel Bujok	2669
<b>Washington</b>	Anthony Whetstone	1741
<b>West Virginia</b>	Melvin Goddard	4469
<b>West Virginia</b>	Todd Kingsbury	3522
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Jason Janecek	690

## **NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS**

Chairman: Brian J. Duffy, Past Commander-in-Chief, Kentucky

Vice Chairman: Thomas J. Tradewell, Past Commander-in-Chief, Wisconsin

(Room 2215AB, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

### **SUBCOMMITTEE I – HEALTH**

Chairman: Raymond Denisewich, Rhode Island

Vice Chairman: Elizabeth Salvador, Pennsylvania

Staff Advisors: James Moss, Assistant Director, Veterans Health Policy, NVS

Tammy Barlet, Deputy Director, NLS,

(Room 2209, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

### **SUBCOMMITTEE II – BENEFITS**

Chairman: Eric Drake, Ohio

Vice Chairman: Daniel Arnold, Montana

Staff Advisors: Chris Macinkowicz Assistant Director, Training & Quality Assurance, NVS

Kristina Keenan, Associate Director, NLS

(Room 2215AB, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

### **SUBCOMMITTEE III – ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY/OTHER**

Chairman: Cynthia Archuleta, New Mexico

Vice Chairman: Tab Brown, North Carolina

Staff Advisors: Brad Hazell, Asst. Director, Compensation & Pension Policy, NVS

Patrick Murray, Director, NLS

(Room 2210, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, MO)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
Alabama	Melissa Adams	1349
Alabama	Michael Gronkowski	5162
Alabama	Janice Harris	1349
Alaska	Ryan McNeely	9365
Alaska	Lisa Robinson	9785
Arizona	Kenneth Deist	7401
Arizona	Thomas Rogers	9972
Arkansas	Darrell Darner	1674
Arkansas	Robert LaFond	2586
California	Michael DiGiordano	1555
California	Lucia Hernandez	9934
Colorado	Stephen Urbany	6461
Connecticut	Edward Banas	10004
Connecticut	Charles Pickett	12150
Delaware	John Mitchell	7234
Delaware	Philip Smith	3792
Europe	Mark Kistner	9342
Florida	Chris Gates	3282
Florida	Jason Smith	10094
Georgia	Belinda Boldoe	12180
Georgia	Jason Nichols	5897
Georgia	Dean Raakoskie	10825
Hawaii	Benedict Fuata	3830
Hawaii	James Kahalehoe	10154
Idaho	William Heyob	63
Idaho	Joseph Riener	4902
Illinois	Jason Davis	1197
Illinois	John De Groot	1337
Illinois	Gary Fravel	2671
Illinois	Georges Sanon	311
Indiana	Ronald Capps	6978
Indiana	Terry Peck	717
Iowa	Gregory Allen	8879
Iowa	Benjamin Dales	9127
Iowa	Larry Steele	9127
Kansas	Allen Barnes	56
Kansas	David Kennedy	6957
Kansas	John Muckelbauer	3712
Kentucky	Timothy Atkins	5829
Kentucky	Rosalyn Cox	680
Louisiana	Michael Jorden	8971
Louisiana	Ronald McGinty	4588
Louisiana	Monty Parr	3750
Maine	John Poulin	8835

<b>Maryland</b>	Georgia Eaves	341
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Delray Dorsey	1399
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Michael Figlioli	2017
<b>Michigan</b>	Harry Croyle	6756
<b>Michigan</b>	Barry Walter	4005
<b>Minnesota</b>	Edward Eibon	246
<b>Minnesota</b>	Jon Gohn	6208
<b>Minnesota</b>	Thomas Hanson	1639
<b>Mississippi</b>	Tyson Wiggins	2434
<b>Mississippi</b>	Danny Williams	3685
<b>Mississippi</b>	Raybon Windham	9122
<b>Missouri</b>	Debra Anderson	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Donald Brockmeier	1773
<b>Missouri</b>	Dennis Flynn	2866
<b>Missouri</b>	Kevin Jones	7356
<b>Missouri</b>	Quincy Myrick	1831
<b>Montana</b>	Daniel Arnold	1087
<b>Nebraska</b>	Nancy Johannes	3704
<b>Nebraska</b>	Matthew Starkey	4755
<b>Nevada</b>	Martin Aguiar	10054
<b>Nevada</b>	Denise Estes	10053
<b>New Hampshire</b>	John Barrett	1631
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Denis Querrard	3041
<b>New Jersey</b>	Kevin O`Hora	1049
<b>New Mexico</b>	Cynthia Archuleta	5890
<b>New Mexico</b>	Rusty Coffey	5890
<b>New Mexico</b>	Vincent Lawrence	7686
<b>New York</b>	Richard Tibbetts	7279
<b>New York</b>	Thomas Todaro	53
<b>North Carolina</b>	Tab Brown	2771
<b>North Carolina</b>	Mark Erskine	4542
<b>North Dakota</b>	Brian Deckert	7564
<b>North Dakota</b>	James Torkildson	4655
<b>Ohio</b>	Eric Drake	2595
<b>Ohio</b>	Todd Reveron	3320
<b>Ohio</b>	John Wiley	3035
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Robert Allan Clark	4876
<b>Oklahoma</b>	James Dockemeyer	1317
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Stacy Reddig	1843
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Gordon Wheeler	9969
<b>Oregon</b>	Dennis Guthrie	4108
<b>Pacific Areas</b>	Mariano Fajardo	3457
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Elizabeth Salvador	914
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Raymond Denisewich	272
<b>South Carolina</b>	Richard Bell	4262

South Carolina	John Johnson	8738
South Carolina	Augustus Singleton	4262
South Carolina	James Taylor	12136
South Dakota	David Baumiller	5807
South Dakota	Michael Mullen	2730
Tennessee	James Haney	5146
Tennessee	David Moomy	9851
Tennessee	Reginald Sims	6496
Texas	Gregory Brannan	12205
Texas	Angel Ramirez	4443
Utah	Wendy Griffin	6154
Utah	James Sheppard	7442
Vermont	Samuel Haskins	1034
Vermont	Charles Magnant	778
Virginia	James Cooper	637
Virginia	Ryan Gallucci	3150
Virginia	Bobbiejo Lazo	637
Virginia	Alexander McKenna	12202
West Virginia	Kevin Link	2102
West Virginia	Thomas Queen	1064
West Virginia	David Sisler	4442
Washington	Todd Gruchalla	2669
Washington	Jerry Herker	3386
Washington	Joshua Schreck	1263
Wisconsin	Sandra Hudec	5470
Wisconsin	Renee Simpson	10911
Wyoming	Brian Ensley	9439
Wyoming	Melissa Gilliam	1881

### COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Chairman: Bertha Gripp, Post 549, Arizona

### COMMITTEE ON CONVENTION RULES

Chairman: Keith E. Harman, Past Commander-in-Chief, Ohio

Vice Chairman: John E. Hamilton, Past Commander-in-Chief, Florida

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Post No.</b>
Michigan	David Prohaska	4434
Missouri	Johnathan Duncan	1829
Missouri	Zach Schwenk	5606
Washington	Joshua Schreck	1263