

Mr. Speaker, in 1969, Judge Rodriguez founded Fiestas Patrias, a non-profit organization dedicated to promote an awareness of their culture and heritage among young Hispanics.

Judge Rodriguez has been the recipient of the Alex Award from the Houston NAACP Legal Program and the Benito Juarez Medalion from then President Luis of Mexico, the highest honor given a non-resident of Mexico for creating better goodwill and understanding between Mexico and the United States.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my friend, Judge Armando V. Rodriguez for thirty-two years of outstanding service to our community.

IN HONOR OF RETIRING MAJOR  
GENERAL JANET E.A. HICKS

**HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2005*

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the lifelong dedication to our Nation's service of one of my constituents, Major General Janet E.A. Hicks of Augusta, Georgia.

This week, Major General Hicks retires after 30 years of service in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. She ends her Army career as Commander of the Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon, in which position she has served since 2002.

General Hicks graduated from Simpson College in Iowa, and received her Masters Degree from Georgia Southern University in Statesboro. She was granted a direct commission in the Army in March 1975, and attended the Women Officers' Orientation Course at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

Her first assignment was to the 41st Signal Battalion in Korea. She was subsequently assigned to the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where she taught the Signal Officer Basic and Advanced Courses. She next served at Fort Richardson, Alaska as logistics officer, followed by an assignment with Central Command MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

She was promoted to command the 125th Signal Battalion, 25th Infantry Division in 1992. After attending the Army War College, she assumed command of the 516th Signal Brigade with concurrent duties as deputy chief of staff for information management of the U.S. Army, Pacific at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

She assumed command of Fort Gordon in 2002.

Major General Hicks has been awarded the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and the Humanitarian Service award.

Mr. Speaker, after 30 years of distinguished service to her Nation, Janet Hicks would be perfectly justified in taking some time off to serve herself for a change.

But I am pleased to note that her service to others will instead continue uninterrupted, as she assumes new duties as Headmaster of Augusta Preparatory School.

Mr. Speaker, as representative of the people of Georgia's 9th Congressional District, I thank Major General Janet Hicks for her dec-

ades of service to her Nation in uniform, and for her future service to our community and its young people.

CORPORAL LYLE J. CAMBRIDGE

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2005*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Corporal Lyle Cambridge.

Lyle lived a life rich in the traditions of his family and Navajo Culture. Unfortunately his life was cut short last Tuesday, July 5th, when he was killed while on patrol in Baghdad at the age of 25. This was his second tour of duty in Iraq.

Lyle, a graduate of Aztec High School, joined the United States Army in May 2002. He followed on the same military path as his brother Vernon, who has been in the Army for 12 years, and his father Joe, a veteran of Desert Storm.

Surviving Lyle are his parents, Virginia and Joe Cambridge Sr., his wife Evonne, his two sons, 3-year-old Wyatt and 1-year-old Nick, and many siblings.

After learning of Lyle's fate, they and other members of the Navajo community gathered to remember him and pray. Through their heartache, they recalled Lyle's generous spirit and fun-loving personality.

Today and always, we also recognize the spirit, strength and sacrifice of Corporal Lyle Cambridge.

Our heartfelt condolences and prayers are with Lyle's family and friends during this time of great loss. We salute him for his courage and bravery.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL RICHARD "MOOSE" HAAS

**HON. DENNIS R. REHBERG**

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2005*

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute one of the many brave men and women who serve all of us in our great military. I would especially like to pay tribute today and offer my personal thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Richard "Moose" Haas, of the United States Air Force, for a job well done.

As a fellow Montanan, I'd like to take this time to highlight Colonel Haas' service to our country. Today, he serves in the Pentagon, working at the leading edge of future National Defense writing concepts outlining how the Department of Defense will maintain the peace and security of this great Nation for years to come.

Moose is a highly decorated combat veteran winning two Distinguished Flying Crosses with Valor during missions in Operation Desert Storm. He has also served in Operations Desert Shield, Deny Flight, Provide Comfort, and more recently in Enduring Freedom where he helped plan the Air Campaign against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces. He has logged over 2500 hours in the F-111 and F-15E fighter aircraft, with over 300 of those in combat.

I know many of my colleagues will join me in thanking Colonel Haas for the many years of service he has given our country and in congratulating him on retirement. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING GAYLORD NELSON

**HON. TAMMY BALDWIN**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2005*

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin. Since his death a little more than a week ago, at age 89, much has been written about this extraordinary statesman, environmentalist, husband, father, and friend.

Gaylord Nelson was a giant in Wisconsin history. In a life dedicated to public service, Gaylord Nelson embodied the ethics of his state: hard work, perseverance, honesty, integrity, compassion, and good humor.

Gaylord Nelson was a patriot who, as a young soldier, courageously served 46 months in a just war, and then, as a U.S. Senator, courageously took a stand against a war he believed was unjust.

As a State Senator and Governor of Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson was an effective leader and natural-born politician who practiced the fine art of governing by always striving for the common good, seeking common ground, and practicing common decency. His political battles were never personal, and his personal friendships knew no political boundaries.

As a U.S. Senator, Gaylord Nelson brought his energy and activism to the national stage. His concern for the environment was visionary and relentless. Gaylord Nelson's efforts led to the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act. In 1995, President Bill Clinton honored him with the Nation's highest civilian award: the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Gaylord Nelson was an advocate for consumers, small business owners, farmers, and all who shared his belief in the promise of America.

Above all, he was, as one report noted, "A voice crying out for the wilderness." As the father of Earth Day, he leaves a legacy of environmental awareness and action that has changed lives and livelihoods for the better in communities throughout the world.

Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin was a citizen of the world, a leader of the highest ethical standards, and a model public servant whose life's work will continue to inspire Americans for many generations. I join with all of Wisconsin in saluting him today.

SIKH FLAG RAISED IN  
CALIFORNIA

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2005*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on July 3 in Turlock, California, the Sikh flag was raised at an event there. There were speeches from

many distinguished Sikhs, including Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, and many others. The event was organized by Dal Khalsa America, the American branch of a Sikh political party that is strongly in support of independence for Khalistan, the Sikh homeland. Leaders of Dal Khalsa have been arrested in India, along with other leaders, for raising the Khalistani flag there.

In all, dozens were charged last month on the 21st anniversary of India's military attack on the Golden Temple for daring to raise the flag of Khalistan and making speeches, even though these are not crimes in India. They are not crimes in any democratic country. Yet these charges follow the arrests of 35 Sikhs in January for hoisting the Sikh flag and making speeches on India's Republic Day.

These are just the latest acts in a pattern of repression that includes the killings of over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 89,000 Muslims in Kashmir, tens of thousands more Christians and Muslims around the country, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and other minorities. It seems that the more support for the freedom movement rises, the more brutal India's repression of it gets.

Self-determination is the essence of democracy. But instead of settling the issue of freedom democratically in a free and fair vote, India chooses to suppress the freedom movements with excessive and brutal force.

I am glad that we do not live in that kind of democracy, Mr. Speaker. Instead, we live in a country where you can say what you want, believe what you want, and raise a flag if you want. We must do what we can to help bring India to that kind of democracy, especially with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh coming for a visit soon.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to stop our aid and trade with India and to put the Congress on record in support of self-determination for the people of Punjab, Khalistan, of Kashmir (as India promised in 1948), of predominantly-Christian Nagaland, and of the other states and nations seeking their freedom. It should start with the dropping of all charges against those arrested or charged for raising a flag and with the release of all political prisoners, and I urge President Bush to bring up these two issues when Prime Minister Singh is here. Only when these goals are achieved can India be welcomed into the family of democratic nations. Only then can these minorities live in freedom, peace, security, stability, dignity, and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's press release on the flag raising in California and its open letter on the charges against the Sikh activists who raised the flag into the RECORD at this time.

KHALISTAN FLAG HOISTED IN CALIFORNIA,  
USA

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 12, 2005.—At an event on July 3 in Turlock, California, Sardar Paramjit Singh Sekhon and Sardar Gagandeep Singh of Dal Khalsa America, invited Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, to hoist the flag of Khalistan. The Council of Khalistan is the government pro tempore of Khalistan. It is leading the struggle for Khalistan's independence. Dal Khalsa has led several marches and other events in Punjab to promote independence for Khalistan, the Sikh

homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. The event was shown throughout India on an Indian television channel called Aaj Tak on July 6. Dr. Aulakh was interviewed by a California representative of Voice of America.

As soon as Dr. Aulakh raised the flag, slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad" ("Long live Khalistan") were raised. Speakers at the event spoke out strongly for a free and independent Khalistan. Speakers included Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon from Canada, Dr. Aulakh, Sardar Sekhon, Sardar Ajit Singh Pannu, Dr. Ranbir Singh Sandhu from Tracy, California, Sardar Karj Singh Sandhu from Philadelphia, Dr. Paramjit Singh Ajrawat, Sardar Dharam Singh Bains of Philadelphia, and others.

"If anyone speaks out for freedom, the Indian government labels them terrorists," Dr. Aulakh said. "This is not going to work. Everyone knows the modus operandi of the Indian government." The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1948, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Bodos, Manipuris, Dalits, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! "These prisoners never committed any crime but peacefully speaking out for Sikh freedom," said Dr. Aulakh. "How can there be political prisoners in a democracy?" he asked. "We demand the release of all political prisoners," he said.

"As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh,'" Dr. Aulakh noted. He added that the event in Turlock was in line with the strong sentiment for freedom in Punjab, Khalistan. "We must work hand-in-hand, the Sikh diaspora and our Sikh brothers and sisters in Punjab, Khalistan, until the glow of freedom shines on a free and sovereign Khalistan," he said. "I thank Sardar Sekhon for organizing this event."

"The flame of freedom still burns bright in the hearts of Sikhs despite the deployment of over half a million Indian troops to crush it," Dr. Aulakh said. "Last year, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh signed a bill canceling the agreements that allowed the diversion of Punjabi water to non-riparian states. The bill asserted the sovereignty of Punjab. Sardar Atinder Pal Singh, another former Member of Parliament, held a seminar on Khalistan in Punjab. It was well attended and featured outstanding presentations, including one by Professor Gurtej Singh, IAS, Professor of Sikhism," he said. "Dal Khalsa has held marches through Punjab demanding the establishment of an independent Khalistan."

On the Anniversary of the Indian government's military attack on the Golden Temple, the center and seat of Sikhism, last month, Dal Khalsa, the Khalsa Panchayat, the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), Damdami Taksal, the Sikh Student Federation (Bittu), and the Akal Federation marched through the streets of Amritsar demanding freedom for Khalistan. They carried posters of the demolished Golden Temple and distributed pamphlets on the life of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a Sikh leader who was murdered in the Golden Temple attack along with General Shabeg Singh, Bhai Amrik Singh, and others. Bhindranwale was a strong advocate of Sikh freedom. Dal Khalsa also raised the flag of Khalistan on

Republic Day, January 26. 35 Sikhs were arrested at that time. Some of them have been denied bail. Cases were registered against dozens of Sikhs for raising the Sikh flag at the Golden Temple on the anniversary of the Golden Temple attack in the presence of over 30,000 Sikhs. Warrants have been issued for their arrest. Those charged include Dal Khalsa leaders such as Kanwarpal Singh Bittu, Sarabjit Singh Ghuman, Dr. Manjinder Singh Jandi, and others, as well as former Member of Parliament Simranjit Singh Mann.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. Steve Forbes, writing in Forbes magazine, said that India is a multinational, multiethnic, multireligious, multicultural, multilingual state that is doomed to disintegrate like the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

"We must continue to pray for and work for our God-given birthright of freedom," Dr. Aulakh said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish."

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,  
Washington, DC, July 12, 2005.

DEAR KHALSA JI: Last month on the anniversary of India's brutal military attack on the Golden Temple and 125 other Gurdwaras throughout Punjab, dozens of Sikhs were charged by the Indian government. Warrants for their arrest were issued. Their crime was raising the flag of Khalistan in the presence of over 30,000 Sikhs. We salute them for this action and for their courage. Apparently, peacefully demonstrating in support of self-determination and freedom can get you arrested in India. Unfortunately, this is part of a pattern.

The flame of freedom continues to burn brightly in the heart of the Sikh Nation. No force can suppress it. On Republic Day, Sikh leaders raised the Sikh flag in Amritsar and made speeches in support of Khalistan. 35 Sikhs were arrested for raising the Sikh flag. Eleven of them continue to be held and they have been denied bail. I was invited to raise the flag on July 3 in Turlock, California, at an event organized by Dal Khalsa America. I would like to thank Sardar Paramjit Singh Sekhon and Sardar Gagandeep Singh of Dal Khalsa America, who invited me to hoist the flag of Khalistan. Speakers included Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon from Canada, Dr. Aulakh, Sardar Sekhon, Sardar Ajit Singh Pannu, Dr. Ranbir Singh Sandhu from Tracy, California, Sardar Karj Singh Sandhu from Philadelphia, Dr. Paramjit Singh Ajrawat, Sardar Dharam Singh Bains of Philadelphia, and others. The event was shown throughout India on an Indian television channel called Aaj Tak on July 6. I was interviewed by a California representative of Voice of America. When I raised the flag, slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad" were raised.

In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh gave sovereignty to the Sikh Nation, giving the blessing "In grieb Sikhin ko deon Patshahi" ("I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs.") Just two years after his departure from this earthly plane in 1708, the Sikhs established our own independent state in Punjab. Sikhs ruled Punjab from 1710 to 1716 and from 1765 to 1849. There was no such thing as India then.

Today we struggle to regain the sovereignty that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon us over 300 years ago. Yet the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Joginder Singh Vedanti, was quoted as saying that "We don't want a separate territory." Does Jathedar Vedanti,

like every other Sikh, pray "the Khalsa shall rule" every morning and evening? Has he forgotten our heritage of freedom? How can the spiritual leader of the Sikh religion deny the Sikh Nation's legitimate aspiration for freedom and sovereignty? Is he not stung by the words of one of his predecessors, former Akal Takht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh, who said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh"? Is Akal Takht occupied by a person who does not believe in Sikh values and Sikh aspirations?

Punjab's Chief Minister, Captain Amarinder Singh, was declared a hero of the Sikh Nation for asserting Punjab's sovereignty and preserving Punjab's natural resource, its river water, for the use of Punjab farmers by cancelling Punjab's water agreements. In so doing, Amarinder Singh and the Legislative Assembly explicitly declared the sovereignty of the state of Punjab. In December former Member of Parliament Simranjit Singh Mann again reverted to public support of Khalistan. He pledged that his party will lead a peaceful movement to liberate Khalistan. Obviously, Mr. Mann is aware of the rising support of our cause. Mann joins Sardar Atinder Pal Singh, Sardar D.S. Gill of the International Human Rights Organization, and other Sikh leaders in Punjab in supporting freedom for Khalistan openly. Jagjit Singh, President of Dal Khalsa, was quoted in the Deccan Herald as saying that "the Indian government can never suppress the movement. Sikh aspirations can only be met when they have a separate state." There is no other choice for the Sikh nation but a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Every Sikh leader must come out openly for Khalistan. We salute those Sikh leaders in Punjab who have done so.

Any organization that sincerely supports Khalistan deserves the support of the Sikh Nation. However, the Sikh Nation needs leadership that is honest, sincere, consistent, and dedicated to the cause of Sikh freedom. Leaders like Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan, Harchand Singh Longowal, Didar Bains, Ganga Singh Dhillon, the Akali Dal leadership, and others who were complicit in the attack on the Golden Temple cannot be trusted by the Sikh Nation. The evidence against them is clear in Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism. The Sikh Nation cannot believe that these leaders will not betray the cause of Khalistan, just as they betrayed the Sikh Nation in 1984. We must be careful if we are to continue to move the cause of freedom for Khalistan forward in 2005 as we did in 2004.

The Akali Dal conspired with the Indian government in 1984 to invade the Golden Temple to murder Sant Bhindranwale and 20,000 other Sikh during June 1984 in Punjab. Even the Pope spoke out strongly against this invasion and desecration of our most sacred shrine. How can these so-called Sikh leaders connive with the people who carried it out? If Sikhs will not even protect the sanctity of the Golden Temple, how can the Sikh Nation survive as a nation?

The Akali Dal has lost all its credibility. The Badal government was so corrupt openly and no Akali leader would come forward and tell Badal and his wife to stop this unparalleled corruption. If Jathedar Vedanti opposes freedom and sovereignty for the Sikh Nation, then he is not fit to sit in Akal Takht, in the seat of the Khalsa Panth. The Sikh Nation should have a Jathedar who is committed to restoring sovereignty that is our birthright and that Guru Gobind Singh granted.

Is this the freedom that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon us? Is this the "glow of

freedom" that Nehru promised us when Master Tara Singh and the Sikh leaders of the time chose to take our share with India?

The Council of Khalistan has stood strongly and consistently for liberating our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. For over 19 years we have led this fight while others were trying to divert the resources and the attention of the Sikh Nation away from the issue of freedom in a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Khalistan is the only way that Sikhs will be able to live in freedom, peace, prosperity, and dignity. It is time to start a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation.

The Akal Takht Sahib and Darbar Sahib are under the control of the Indian government, the same Indian government that has murdered more than a quarter of a million Sikhs in the past twenty years. The Jathedar of the Akal Takht and the head granthi of Darbar Sahib toe the line that the Indian government tells them. They are not appointed by the Khalsa Panth. Otherwise they would behave like a real Jathedar, Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke, rather than like Indian government puppet Jathedar Aroor Singh, who gave a Siropa to General Dyer for the massacre of Sikhs and others at Jallianwala Bagh. These institutions will remain under the control of the Indian regime until we free the Sikh homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian occupation and oppression and sever our relations with the New Delhi government.

The Sikhs in Punjab have suffered enormous repression at the hands of the Indian regime in the last 25 years. Over 50,000 Sikh youth were picked up from their houses, tortured, murdered in police custody, then secretly cremated as "unidentified bodies." Their remains were never even given to their families! Another 52,268 are being held as political prisoners. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! Over 250,000 have been murdered at the hands of the Indian regime. Even now, the capital of Punjab, Chandigarh, has not been handed over to Punjab, but remains a Union Territory. How can Sikhs have any freedom living under a government that would do these things?

Sikhs will never get any justice from Delhi. The leaders in Delhi are only interested in imposing Hindu sovereignty over all the minorities to advance their own careers and their own power. Ever since independence, India has mistreated the Sikh Nation, starting with Patel's memo labelling Sikhs "a criminal tribe." What a shame for Home Minister Patel and the Indian government to issue this memorandum when the Sikh Nation gave over 80 percent of the sacrifices to free India.

How can Sikhs continue to live in such a country? There is no place for Sikhs in supposedly secular, supposedly democratic India. Let us dedicate ourselves to living up to the blessing of Guru Gobind Singh. It is time to launch a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan. We must demand self-determination in a free and fair vote, the democratic way. It is time to shake ourselves loose from the yoke of Indian oppression and liberate our homeland, Khalistan, so that all Sikhs may live lives of prosperity, freedom, and dignity.

Sincerely,

GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,  
*President.*

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2005*

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, July 12, 2005, I was unavoidably absent from the business of the House. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows on recorded votes:

Rollcall vote No. 365, ordering the previous question on H. Res. 351, "no"; No. 366, passage of H. Res. 351, "no"; No. 367, suspend the Rules and pass H. Res. 352, "no"; No. 368, suspend the Rules and pass H. Res. 343, "yes"; No. 369, passage of H.R. 739, "no"; No. 370, passage of H.R. 740, "no"; No. 371, passage of H.R. 741, "no"; No. 372, passage of H.R. 742, "no."

## RECOGNIZING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION ON JULY 21, 1930

### HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2005*

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, today I am introducing H. Res. 361 recognizing the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Veterans Administration on July 21, 1930. I am joined by the Committee's Ranking Member, Mr. EVANS, in introducing this resolution.

More than 48 million men and women have served America well and faithfully in military uniform. More than 1 million made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Twenty-five million veterans are living among us today. These men and women selflessly set aside their civilian lives to put on the uniform and serve us. Many return from that service bearing wounds to body and spirit. Many return hungry to take advantage of the fruits of the democracy they defended, and seek education and employment opportunity.

The nation's obligation to her defenders is as old as that defense itself. In his second inaugural address in 1865, President Abraham Lincoln clearly expressed the obligation: ". . . to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan."

On July 21, 1930, pursuant to a Congressional authorization, President Hoover issued an executive order to "consolidate and coordinate Government activities affecting war veterans," creating the Veterans Administration. The new VA was charged with ensuring that America's veterans received the benefits and services they had earned through their military service.

Today the 230,000 public servants of the Department of Veterans Affairs, formed from the VA in 1989, continue the noble tradition of their predecessors in service to veterans and their families.

The men and women of today's VA are dedicated to caring for today's veterans and stand ready to provide for our servicemembers who now defend our freedoms and our way of life.