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OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 2, 1981

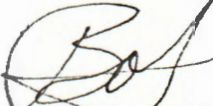
MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Morton Blackwell  
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT: Attached Telegrams

The attached telegram is being sent to the President by T.Y. Chao, Chairman of the Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen, Republic of China, Taipei, Taiwan offering their best wishes for the speedy recovery of President Reagan.

They have asked us to forward the message. For your information, the Vocational Assistance Commission is their counterpart to veterans organizations here in the United States. Would you please forward this to the proper personnel in the White House. — *sent Apr 17*

Morton, also attached for your information is a copy of a telegram to National Commander Kogutek from the Nova Scotia Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.

  
ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

Attachments

WFA015(0540)(1-002097A091)PD 04/01/81 0539

1981 APR 21 AM 5:45

ICS IPMWGWC WSH

02461 04-01 0433A EST

ICS IPMWF08

1-020953G091 04/01/81

ICS IPMIIHA IISS

IISS F M WUI 01 0228 NL

PMS WASHINGTON DC

UWA8451 FWU452 CB0002 00571 GBA0020

UWWA HL CNTP 069

TAIPEI 69/68 I 1356

LT

MR MICHAEL J KOGUTEX NATIONAL COMMANDER THE AMERICAN LEGION 1608

'K' STREET N.W.

WASHINGTONDC 20006

PLEASE FORWARD THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

W.U. 1201-SF (R5-69)

I AM SHOCKED TO LEARN THAT YOU SUFFERED A BULLET WOUND ON BEHALF  
OF MYSELF AND ALL CHINESE VETERANS I SEND YOU OUR SINCEREST  
SYMPATHY AND BEST WISHES FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY T. Y. CHAO CHAIRMAN  
VOCATIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSI ON FOR RETIRED SERVICEMEN TAIPEI  
COL LT MR MICHAEL J KOGUTEX NATIONAL COMMANDER THE AMERICAN LEGION  
1608 'K' STREET N.W.

RETR MSG

NNN

0413 EST

NNNN



WFA063(0944)(1-0060354091)PD 04/01/81 0808 APR -1 AM 9:49

ICS IPMWAWG WSH

07217 1-1773806089 03-30 531P EST

ICS IPMWF08

ICS IPMIIHA IISS

IISS FM CNT 30 1715

CND0121 HAHH356 58 FR

TDHX HALIFAX NS 30 1805

COMMANDER, AMERICAN LEGION

WASHINGTON DC 1608 K ST NW

THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE NOVA SCOTIA COMMAND OF THE  
ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BEAR WITH YOU IN YOUR MOMENT OF CRISIS  
THROUGH THE UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS DAY. OUR PR AYERS  
GO FORWARD FOR YOUR PRESIDENT AND THOSE WHO WERE INJURED IN THIS  
TERRIBLE ACT

W.U. 1201-SF (R5-69)

NOVA SCOTIA COMMAND, ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION, PO BOX  
7116, HALIFAX NS B3K 5J5

NNNN

*Natl. Commander*

**The  
American  
Legion**



*For God and Country*

# **bulletin**

NATIONAL VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION

1608 K STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

W. F. LENKER, *Chairman*

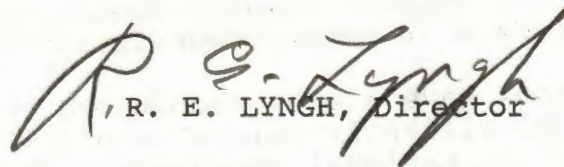
R. E. LYNCH, *Director*

No. 10-81 (20-6)

March 26, 1981

TELEGRAM FROM NATIONAL COMMANDER KOGUTEK TO PRESIDENT REAGAN

On March 25, 1981 National Commander Michael J. Kogutek sent a telegram to President Reagan, text of which is included below. The telegram was initiated by reason of a series of recent events in Washington causing deep concern by The American Legion as to the long-range commitment of the Administration to the veterans health care system.

  
R. E. LYNCH, *Director*

-----  
TELEGRAM

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The signals The American Legion and all veterans are getting from your administration are causing much concern and confusion. We are wondering at this point if you intend to propose a basic change in the way Americans have viewed assistance to veterans since the administration of Abraham Lincoln.

We are not referring only to your proposed budget cuts which will: eliminate 5,500 health care personnel in the VA system; close 60 hospital wards; scrap plans to buy needed new equipment; defer construction of two replacement hospitals; severely cripple veterans employment services, and close Vietnam Veterans Outreach Centers. We are concerned now that your intention is to eliminate the entire VA health care system.



Administration witnesses at a House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee hearing today would not support H.R. 1969, a bill to formalize the use of VA hospitals as a backup to the military system in case of the outbreak of hostilities overseas. Does this mean that you do not want to make any long term commitment to the VA system?

Mr. Stockman told the Senate Budget Committee recently that he is working on plans for a more efficient system of veterans health services. And we have heard there are plans to experiment with a system of vouchering veteran patients into private commercial hospitals at two locations in the U.S.

Add to all of this the fact that appointment of a new VA Administrator evidently has had a very low priority at the White House, and you may be able to appreciate our growing concern. The VA is the only remaining major agency that has no head to represent agency interests in budget negotiations with OMB.

Americans have always recognized veterans assistance as a debt owed and willingly paid by society to those who have served in time of war and national emergency. It has never been considered a handout to the weak or charity to the needy. It has been an earned compensation for sacrifices borne and service rendered.

We would like to have an expression of your view of this concept in today's environment so that we might better understand your plans.

MICHAEL J. KOGUTEK  
National Commander  
The American Legion

---



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 26, 1981

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Morton C. Blackwell  
Special Asst. to Mrs. Elizabeth Dole

SUBJECT: Attached telegram to the President

As we discussed by telephone and at last night's reception The American Legion has filed the attached telegram with the President of the United States. We believe signals outlined in the telegram to be fact. Therefore, we ask for the Administration's expression of viewpoint towards the questions outlined.

As you are aware this continues to be of increasing concern, not only to The American Legion, but to all veterans groups--but more importantly to thirty million veterans. As we pledged to you there is no question about our support for the President's programs, however, on the issues that we may have disagreement in relation to the VA, I will keep you informed.

For your information, I have attached a copy of a memorandum from another veterans organization which lists sixteen likely VA Hospital closures. We know this not to be fact and issued a Bulletin to our leadership negating this accusation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob".

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

cc: Mrs. Elizabeth Dole  
Asst. to the President for Public Liaison



PLEASE CHARGE TO ACCOUNT #CWA 054 661, The American Legion, 1608 K Street, N.W., Wash. D. C.

MAY WE PLEASE HAVE A CONFIRMATION COPY. ATTN: ROBERT W. SPANOGLE

TELEGRAM

WESTERN UNION

STRAIGHT WIRE

March 25, 1981

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The signals The American Legion and all veterans are getting from your administration are causing much concern and confusion. We are wondering at this point if you intend to propose a basic change in the way Americans have viewed assistance to veterans since the administration of Abraham Lincoln.

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MICHAEL J. KOGUTEK  
National Commander  
The American Legion



Motto: "If I cannot speak good of my comrade, I will not speak ill of him."

# DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NATIONAL SERVICE and LEGISLATIVE HEADQUARTERS  
807 MAINE AVENUE, S.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024  
(202) 554-3501

Memo To: All Members of Congress  
From: Stan Pealer, National Commander  
Subject: VA Budget Cuts for 1982  
Date: March 20, 1981

*1031 11*  
*According to Scott*  
*the VA is not going to*  
*close any hospitals*  
*per office*  
*affairs*  
*committee*  
*-9*

On August 18, 1980, candidate Reagan said, "To me it is unconscionable that veterans in need are denied hospital and medical care because of inadequate funding which has closed hospital beds and cut health care personnel within the VA.

On March 10, 1981, however, OMB Director David Stockman submitted to the Congress the Fiscal Year 1982 budget revisions for the Veterans Administration calling for cuts amounting to \$744 million.

Frankly speaking, if a reduction of this magnitude takes place within the Veterans Administration, it will result in the closing of VA hospitals and regional offices nationwide. Here are some of the proposals associated with the \$744 million cut in VA programs:

- \*Centralize all VA claims processing into one center containing some 12,000 personnel, thereby closing or reducing to contact points all VA's regional offices located in each state--transforming the system into an ineffective shambles.
- \*Eliminate the VA hospital system through continual reductions in personnel (5,181 in FY 1982), closing hospital beds (1,800 in FY 1982), reducing outpatient visits (1.7 million in FY 1982), cutting the number of nursing care patients (3,628 in FY 1982) and by cancelling and deferring VA's ongoing replacement and modernization construction program (Baltimore and Camden cancelled and Brooklyn, Chillicothe, Denver, East Orange, Gainesville, Long Beach, Palo Alto, New Orleans and Washington, D. C. deferred indefinitely).

In testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on HUD and Independent Agencies, VA officials stated that studies for consolidation of VA regional offices and closure of VA medical facilities will take place in the Spring 1981 review.

We are appalled that the recent actions of the Office of Management and Budget to slash VA programs by \$744 million are in direct contradiction to the President's pre-election statements--apparently only made in order to court veterans' votes.

Please find enclosed a list of those hospitals likely to be closed in the event that the OMB budget cuts are adopted by the Congress and a copy of our recent testimony before the House Budget Committee regarding these reductions in VA programs.

On behalf of the more than 685,000 members of the Disabled American Veterans, I urge you not to accept the President's reductions in VA programs slated for Fiscal Year 1982.

*Stan Pealer*



VA HOSPITALS

Marlin, Texas

Big Spring, Texas

Port Lyon, Colorado

Iron Mountain, Michigan

Saginaw, Michigan

Miles City, Montana

Ft. Harrison, Montana

Grand Island, Nebraska

Muskogee, Oklahoma

Livermore, California

Los Angeles, California

Newington, Connecticut

Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Fargo, North Dakota

Boise, Idaho

Boston, Massachusetts

New York, New York

Chicago, Illinois

# The American Legion

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 K<sup>th</sup> STREET, N. W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 ★  
202) 331-4811 ★



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 26, 1981

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Morton C. Blackwell  
Special Asst. to Mrs. Elizabeth Dole

SUBJECT: Attached telegram to the President

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob".

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

cc: Mrs. Elizabeth Dole  
Asst. to the President for Public Liaison



PLEASE CHARGE TO ACCOUNT #CWA [REDACTED], The American Legion, 1608 K Street, N.W., Wash. D. C.

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March 25, 1981

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The White House  
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MICHAEL J. KOGUTEK  
National Commander  
The American Legion





*For God and Country*

## NEWS RELEASE

NEWS HOTLINE (800) 428-2686  
(INDIANA) (317) 637-6649

## National Public Relations Division

Wm. M. Detweiler, Chairman  
Frederick Woodress, Director

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206  
(317)-635-8411

1608 K St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202)-861-2792

CONTACT: Bob Hermann/Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SUBJECT SUMMARY:** The American Legion sent a telegram to President Reagan March 25 voicing fear he may intend dismantling the Veterans Administration health care system and criticizing him for failing to appoint a head of that agency after two months in office.

WASHINGTON, D.C.--American Legion National Commander Michael J. Kogutec sent a telegram to President Reagan March 25 voicing fear the new Administration may intend dismantling the entire Veterans Administration health care system and criticizing the President for failing to appoint a head of that agency after two months in office.

Legion concern for the future of the VA network of 172 hospitals was sharpened when Administration witnesses from the Defense Department and VA withheld support for H.R. 1969 in testimony the same day before the House Veterans Affairs subcommittee on hospitals and health care. The bill would designate VA as the principal emergency backup to military medical facilities in case of a national emergency involving military casualties.

Following is the text of National Commander Kogutec's telegram:

"The signals The American Legion and all veterans are getting from your administration are causing much concern and confusion. We are wondering at this point if you intend to propose a basic change in the way Americans have viewed assistance to veterans since the administration of Abraham Lincoln.

"We are not referring only to your proposed budget cuts which will: eliminate 5,500 health care personnel in the VA system; close 60 hospital wards; scrap plans to buy needed new equipment; defer construction of two replacement hospitals;

(more)

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"We would like to have an expression of your view of this concept in today's environment so that we might better understand your plans."

(end)





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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NATIONAL SERVICE and LEGISLATIVE HEADQUARTERS
807 MAINE AVENUE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024
(202) 554-3501

Memo To: All Members of Congress
From: Stan Pealer, National Commander
Subject: VA Budget Cuts for 1982
Date: March 20, 1981

According to Scott... The VA is not going to close any hospitals per office VA Liaison Committee - 9

On August 18, 1980, candidate Reagan said, "To me it is unconscionable that veterans in need are denied hospital and medical care because of inadequate funding which has closed hospital beds and cut health care personnel within the VA.

On March 10, 1981, however, OMB Director David Stockman submitted to the Congress the Fiscal Year 1982 budget revisions for the Veterans Administration calling for cuts amounting to \$744 million.

Frankly speaking, if a reduction of this magnitude takes place within the Veterans Administration, it will result in the closing of VA hospitals and regional offices nationwide. Here are some of the proposals associated with the \$744 million cut in VA programs:

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We are appalled that the recent actions of the Office of Management and Budget to slash VA programs by \$744 million are in direct contradiction to the President's pre-election statements--apparently only made in order to court veterans' votes.

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On behalf of the more than 685,000 members of the Disabled American Veterans, I urge you not to accept the President's reductions in VA programs slated for Fiscal Year 1982.

Stan Pealer



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Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Fargo, North Dakota

Boise, Idaho

Boston, Massachusetts

New York, New York

Chicago, Illinois



# The American Legion

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE, 1808 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 ★  
202 391 4811 ★



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 20, 1981

Mrs. Elizabeth Dole  
Assistant to the President  
for Public Liaison  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Dole:

The American Legion wishes to thank you for arranging the visit of our National Commander and seven Vietnam veterans with the President on Monday, March 16. Though we encountered some logistical problems and some miscommunication, as we begin to understand the functioning of your office and you understand the functioning of our organization this miscommunication will not take place.

It was unfortunate that we received the final word that the meeting would not take place late Friday before the intended visit. Up to that time reports had been favorable and we, like you, were faced with a communication problem since most of our leadership was on a travel schedule bringing them to Washington. However, since the situation rectified itself on Monday morning and the meeting went well, this is now history.

The American Legion fully believes in the strong communication policy you outlined to us during our first meeting in February. We believe in our country and our support for the President should be and will continue to be unquestioned.

We do, however, reserve the right to disagree with Administration policies as they effect the constituent group we represent. Any disagreements of this kind can normally be overcome by communication with all parties concerned such as the briefings that were held between veterans organizations, OMB and your staff.

If we then disagree we will necessarily represent our constituent group in Congress through the proper committees and submit testimony before the appropriate Congressional committees.

Mrs. Elizabeth Dole

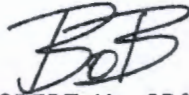
March 20, 1981

I realize this is somewhat lengthy, however, I do thank you for your assistance in arranging the meeting of our Commander and the Vietnam veterans from across the country on March 16. Each of these young men and lady reported back that the President was kind in his comments, and were appreciative of the time that he spent with them. These representatives may have disagreed with specific veterans programs and the Administration's current positions, but came away from the meeting optimistic.

They reported to their fellow Vietnam veterans at the luncheon that the President was deeply concerned about veterans. We therefore look at the meeting in a most positive way because communication can only create understanding and trust.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

cc: Mr. Morton Blackwell ✓  
Special Assistant to the President



The  
American  
Legion

WASHINGTON OFFICE \* 1808 K STREET, N.W. \* WASHINGTON, D.C. 20007 \*  
202 391 1811 \*



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 20, 1981

Mrs. Elizabeth Dole  
Assistant to the President  
for Public Liaison  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Dole:

Attached is a Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation bulletin which concerns itself with the false rumor started by another organization concerning the Administration's plans to close 16 VA hospitals. Of course, this is not true, but it has caused much political and constituent consternation in the United States.

As you can see by the attached bulletin that has gone to our leadership, we are trying to squelch false rumors about the budget. The direct communication with your office and OMB at an early date thwarted a possible frustrating situation for both the Administration and veterans.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "BOB".

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

Attachment

cc: Mr. Morton Blackwell ✓  
Special Assistant to the President



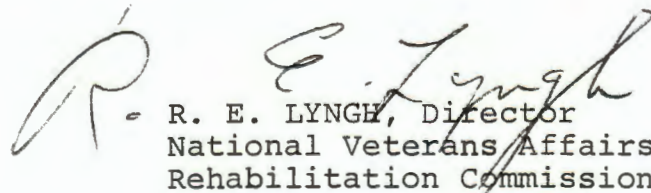
March 19, 1981

MEMORANDUM TO: Department Service Officers/Rehabilitation  
Directors  
Department Rehabilitation Chairmen  
Members of the National Veterans Affairs  
and Rehabilitation Commission

SUBJECT: There is No Government List of VA Medical  
Centers to be Closed

There appears to be information circulating throughout the country to the effect that sixteen VA Medical Centers are scheduled for closing. The American Legion has checked with authoritative sources in Congress, at VA and with a high official of the Office of Management and Budget. The fact is there are presently no VA Medical Centers scheduled for closing, and no prospective list of hospitals to be closed has been developed by the Department of Medicine and Surgery, or by any of the authorities mentioned above.

In the event any authority within the Federal Government proposes the closing of VA hospitals, all Department Headquarters and Department Service Officers will be promptly notified of that fact by this office.

  
R. E. LYNCH, Director  
National Veterans Affairs and  
Rehabilitation Commission





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
WASHINGTON OFFICE

file  
American  
Legion

3-11-81

Dear Morton:

Thanks for the great  
lunch and conversation.

Your assistance to The  
American Legion and veterans  
is appreciated.

Morton I look forward to  
working with this administration  
and your office to rebuild  
our great country.

Bob Edmundo

---



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
WASHINGTON OFFICE

February 27, 1981

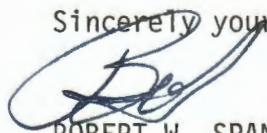
Dear Wayne:

During the budget briefings over a week ago attended by various veterans groups including The American Legion, we met with Don Moran from OMB who has oversight of the Veterans Administration budget. During that meeting we understood that when a new or acting Administrator was named for the Veterans Administration a budget briefing would be held on any line item cuts of the VA budget.

I am therefore requesting such a meeting since Max Cleland's resignation has been accepted by the White House and Rufus Wilson has been named Acting Administrator. From my understanding of the process, this meeting would have to be held prior to March 16.

I look forward to hearing from you. With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



ROBERT W. SPANOGLE

Mr. Wayne Valis  
Special Assistant to the President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500



**The  
American  
Legion**

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N. W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 ★



OFFICE OF THE  
NATIONAL COMMANDER

February 27, 1981

Mr. Morton Blackwell  
Special Asst. to the President  
The White House, Room 128  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

You are cordially invited to attend a reception to be held at the Capital Hilton Hotel in the Federal Room on Sunday, March 15, 1981 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. honoring Vietnam veterans from each state and other distinguished Vietnam veterans from a cross section of the leadership of our country.

This reception is being held in conjunction with the March 16 presentation of The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal (the highest award of The American Legion) at Arlington National Cemetery in recognition of those killed or missing in action during the Vietnam War. Those in attendance at this Sunday evening reception will include Vietnam veterans from all 50 states as well as numerous guests such as Larry Wilcox, Star of ABC's CHIPS, F. Lee Bailey and C. Ross Perot, to name but a few, as well as other Vietnam veterans who have distinguished themselves in public and private life.

We hope that you will be available to share with us in this rare opportunity to recognize the sacrifices made by these young men to their country and that your personal schedule will allow you to attend.

Sincerely yours,

*Michael J. Kogutek*

MICHAEL J. KOGUTEK  
National Commander

RSVP on or before March 10, 1981  
(202) 861-2716

# The American Legion

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N. W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 ★



OFFICE OF THE  
NATIONAL COMMANDER

861-2700-

Am. Legion

62 years old

TR Jr. Powis 1919  
Birthday week

February 27, 1981

Simpson

Daker

Tower

John Paul  
Hammersmidt

85 Members

Most All

Viet Nam  
Vets

Pr

MEMO TO: Morton Blackwell  
Special Assistant to the President

SUBJECT: Distinguished Service Medal - Vietnam Veteran

This is in response to your telephone inquiry and will supplement our letter to the President of February 2 from our National Commander Michael J. Kogutek and my letter of February 19 to Wayne Valis.

There will be three functions connected with the presentation of The American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal on behalf of the dead and missing of the Vietnam War at Arlington National Cemetery. The itinerary is as follows:

## SUNDAY, MARCH 15

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Distinguished Guest Reception, Federal Room of the Capital Hilton Hotel - Distinguished Guests are as follows:

200 Vietnam veterans from each state of the union. These Vietnam veterans were selected by state units of The American Legion and 100 of them will have their expenses entirely paid by the Legion. Of the additional 100, at least 50 are being sent at the expense of our state units. The other 50 are either Congressional Medal of Honor holders, Vietnam veterans active in governmental agencies in Washington, or are coming in at their own expense.

Distinguished Guests who have accepted thus far at national headquarters expense are Larry Wilcox, star of TV series CHIPS, combat veteran of Vietnam, and his wife Holly; C. Ross Perot, Chairman of the Board of Texas Instruments who has been very active in assisting Vietnam veterans; Tom Sneva, one of the top 30 race car drivers in the United States, and who will be involved in the Atlanta 500. His automobile will be named "Vietnam Veteran Special"; and F. Lee Bailey, distinguished trial



lawyer who has been very active in supporting Vietnam issues such as the recent Vietnam Veterans Memorial to be constructed in the Constitution Gardens per legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President.

Other invitations waiting to be confirmed by next week, pending adjustment of their personal schedules, include Bob Hope, Martha Raye, Rocky Blier, and Roger Staubach. As you probably are aware, these personalities were either involved in entertainment during the war or as in the case of Rocky Blier, actually a Vietnam veteran.

MONDAY, MARCH 16

7:30 - 9:00 a.m. Distinguished Guest Prayer Breakfast, South American Room of the Capital Hilton Hotel.

This breakfast will be open only to distinguished guest Vietnam veterans and personalities. We wanted Billy Graham to conduct this service, however he will be out of the country, and so we have issued an invitation to the Most Reverend James A. Hickey, a Bishop from Washington, D.C.

10:00 - 10:45 a.m. Presentation of the Distinguished Service Medal and wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

One wreath will be presented at the Tomb of the Unknowns by Michael J. Kogutek, National Commander of The American Legion on behalf of our organization and our 600,000 Vietnam veteran members. One wreath will be presented by the President of the United States if he accepts our invitation to do so.

The Distinguished Service Medal will be presented in the Memorial Room (formerly the Trophy Room) by Michael J. Kogutek to Raymond Costanzo, Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery who will present the Medal to Major General Arter, Commander of the First Military District. The Medal will then be permanently affixed to the wall of the Memorial Room.

As you are aware, all ceremonies at the Tomb itself are silent. Therefore I believe the ceremony will move quite expeditiously.

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Distinguished Guest Luncheon, South American Room of the Capital Hilton Hotel.

This will be a stand up luncheon prior to departure from Washington, D.C. by all invited guests.



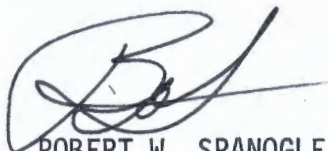
Morton, as I explained by phone, our distinguished guests are the 200 Vietnam veterans. They come from all ranks of the military and are in fact from all walks of life. Some are in wheel chairs, some are 100% disabled, and some served their 13 month tour in Vietnam without being wounded, returned to civilian life and married, entered business and are raising a family.

As a Vietnam era veteran and one who was President of the largest Vietnam veterans organization in America in the late 1960's and early 1970's which worked within the system and took pride in America, I can think of no time in my 13 years of experience when a group of Vietnam veterans such as this has visited Washington. The ceremony is for the dead and missing of Vietnam. These 200 Vietnam veterans are a small cross-section of their fellow veterans and are indeed the distinguished guests.

I am sincerely hopeful that the President can attend the Arlington ceremony and the prayer breakfast. The commitments the President and Mrs. Reagan made while he was Governor of California to the returning disabled Vietnam veterans are well remembered. His commitment to our country is outstanding towards all veterans but most importantly, a visit to this group would demonstrate that commitment to the Vietnam veteran.

If this group could visit their President in the White House, I know it would be something that they would remember and I feel would go a long way towards healing the divisive factors created by Vietnam.

I am asking each of these distinguished guests to complete a biography, which I should start receiving next week. These biographies on their own merit should convince anyone that this group is most deserving of a visit with the President.



ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

The  
American  
Legion

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(202) 861-2711 ★



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 19, 1981

Mr. Wayne Valis  
Special Assistant to the  
President for Public Liaison  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Wayne:

Attached is a copy of the letter that we sent to the President February 2, 1981 which outlines our program honoring the Vietnam veteran. I think more important, however, is that we are including not only the Congressional Medal of Honor holders, but also prominent Vietnam veterans and most importantly the average Vietnam veteran from each state.

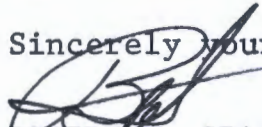
For your information I have attached the sheet concerning the award, to show prominence of those who have received it in the past. The planning for this event began in October, 1981 however, as I pointed out in my letter to the President the initial resolution was passed by The American Legion in the middle sixties.

During the period of the sixties and the seventies I personally managed The American Legion's outreach efforts to the Vietnam veteran. This is a continuation of that effort and is perhaps a public display of our attitude of a wartime veterans organization. We will continue to be addressing the problems of the Vietnam veteran with respect to his needs for jobs, education, and training.

If we can receive White House support for this program it would be deeply appreciated. I doubt, however, because of the planning for this event that I could stop the machinery in progress since invitations have already been sent and confirmations received from invitees. We have confirmations from many. If we can work on the logistics we can share in the recognition.

With warmest regards, I am

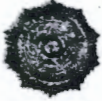
Sincerely yours,

  
ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director



# The American Legion

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(202) 861-2711 ★



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 2, 1981

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Michael J. Kogutek, National Commander of The American Legion, would like to invite First Lady Nancy Reagan and you to a ceremony on Monday, March 16, 1981 at 10:00 a.m. at Arlington National Cemetery to honor the dead and missing from the Vietnam war.

As you are aware The American Legion being a wartime service organization of over 2.7 million members of whom 600,000 are Vietnam veterans, has been predominant in assisting the Vietnam veteran in his transition and readjustment to civilian life. At this ceremony The American Legion will be presenting its highest award - The Distinguished Service Award. We have had a standing mandate in The American Legion since 1964 that this medal would be placed on the tomb of the unknown soldier from the Vietnam war.

However through constant research on our own and with the Department of Defense it has been concluded that there are no unknowns from the Vietnam war. Therefore at our 1980 October meeting of the National Executive Committee it was decided that we would place the award in the Memorial Room of Arlington National Cemetery. It is interesting to note that there are no awards honoring the Vietnam soldier at Arlington Cemetery.

The American Legion strongly feels that the Vietnam veteran deserves the recognition and thanks of this country. We know that you share this feeling as the leader of our country.

The American Legion will be inviting, and many of them have already accepted, prominent Vietnam veterans to participate in this ceremony. They include Larry Wilcox (star of the TV show Chips), Rocky Blair and Roger Starbach. We are also inviting many entertainers with close affiliation to Vietnam

The President

February 2, 1981

such as Bob Hope, Martha Raye, and Jimmy Stewart.

We have already invited cabinet officials, members of the joint chiefs of staff, POW's from the Vietnam war, Gold Star Mothers and wives.

The American Legion will also be inviting one Vietnam veteran from each state, at our expense, to represent his fellow veterans by attending this ceremony. We will be housing these veterans and all distinguished guests at the Capital Hilton hotel on March 15, 1981.

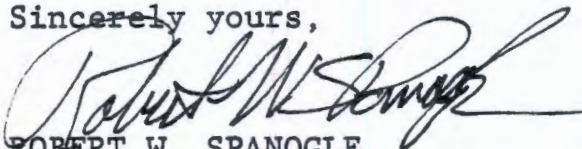
We would like to have you attend all functions during this tribute to the Vietnam veteran. We will have a special reception on March 15 with a prayer breakfast the morning of March 16 and hope to have Billy Graham conduct this breakfast.

Mr. President, this is an ongoing commitment to the Vietnam veteran by The American Legion. We will be continuing as we have since 1961 our commitment to the recognition and readjustment of our fellow countrymen.

Mr. President, this public recognition is long overdue.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director



# Recipients of The American Legion

## *Distinguished Service Medal*

President Gerald R. Ford  
1980



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Marshal Ferdinand Foch<br>of France — 1921                | Gen. of the Army<br>Dwight D. Eisenhower<br>1945   | Unknown Servicemen of<br>World War I, World War II,<br>and Korea,<br>interred at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,<br>Arlington National Cemetery — 1958 |
| Adm. Earl Beatty<br>of Great Britain — 1921               | J. Edgar Hoover<br>1946                            | Sen. Robert S. Kerr<br>1959   |
| Gen. Baron Jacques<br>of Belgium — 1921                   | Bob Hope<br>1946                                   | President John F. Kennedy<br>1961   |
| Gen. Armando Diaz<br>of Italy — 1921                      | William Randolph Hearst<br>1946                    | Gen. Lucius D. Clay<br>1962   |
| Charles Bertrand<br>of France — 1921                      | Maj. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey<br>1946                 | Dr. Thomas A. Dooley<br>(Posthumously) — 1962   |
| Gen. of the Armies<br>John J. Pershing<br>1922            | Hon. Cordell Hull<br>1946                          | Francis Cardinal Spellman<br>1963   |
| Adm. Robert E. Coontz<br>1923                             | Lt. Gen. William S. Knudsen<br>1947                | Dr. Charles W. Mayo<br>1964   |
| Gen. Josef Haller<br>of Poland — 1923                     | Sen. Edward Martin<br>1947                         | President Herbert C. Hoover<br>(Posthumously) — 1965  |
| Ignace Jan Paderewski<br>of Poland — 1926                 | Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson<br>1947               | Hon. James F. Byrnes<br>1965  |
| Comte<br>Francois Marie Robert Dejean<br>of France — 1927 | President Harry S. Truman<br>1949                  | Capt. Roger H. C. Donlon<br>1966  |
| Field Marshal Viscount Allenby<br>of Great Britain — 1928 | George Herman (Babe) Ruth<br>(Posthumously) — 1949 | Hon. Tom C. Clark<br>1967   |
| Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis<br>1929                     | Maj. Gen. Frank Parker<br>(Posthumously) — 1949    | President Lyndon B. Johnson<br>1968   |
| Adm. William S. Sims<br>1930                              | Charles F. Johnson, Jr.<br>1950                    | Gen. William C. Westmoreland<br>1968  |
| Gen. Douglas MacArthur<br>1942                            | Maj. Gen. Milton A. Reckord<br>1950                | President Richard M. Nixon<br>1969  |
| Gen. George C. Marshall<br>1943                           | Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers<br>1950                   | Rep. Olin E. Teague<br>1970   |
| Adm. Ernest J. King<br>1943                               | Gen. Charles P. Summerall<br>1951                  | Rep. L. Mendel Rivers<br>(Posthumously) — 1971  |
| Hon. Frank Knox<br>(Posthumously) — 1944                  | Rep. Royal C. Johnson<br>(Posthumously) — 1953     | Sen. Richard B. Russell<br>(Posthumously) — 1971  |
| Henry Ford<br>1944  | Maj. Gen. George A. White<br>(Posthumously) — 1954 | Sen. John C. Stennis<br>1972  |
| Gen. H. H. Arnold<br>1944                                 | Dr. Jonas E. Salk<br>1955                          | Dewitt Wallace<br>1972  |
| President Franklin D. Roosevelt<br>(Posthumously) — 1945  | Maj. Gen. Ellard A. Walsh<br>1955                  | Hon. Henry A. Kissinger<br>1974   |
| Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.<br>(Posthumously) — 1945     | Vice Adm. Joel T. Boone<br>1956                    | Rep. F. Edward Hebert<br>1974   |
| Ernest (Ernie) Pyle<br>(Posthumously) — 1945              | Charles Stewart Mott<br>1956                       | Harry W. Colmery<br>1975  |
| Hon. Henry L. Stimson<br>1945                             | Gen. Mark W. Clark<br>1957                         | Pat O'Brien<br>1976   |
| Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz<br>1945                      | The Most Reverend<br>Fulton J. Sheen<br>1957       | Howard A. Rusk, M.D.<br>1977  |
|   | Bernard Mannes Baruch<br>1958                      | Bowie K. Kuhn<br>1978   |
|   |  | Thomas A. Murphy<br>1979  |

February 17, 1981

Mrs. Elizabeth Dole  
Assistant to the President  
for Public Liaison  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Dole:

The American Legion and I want to thank you for meeting with us last Saturday to introduce us to your staff and Don Moran from OMB. We fully realize that you have a very busy schedule, and appreciate your willingness to meet with us early in the President's term.

We also appreciated the opportunity to have James Baker stop in and speak with us briefly. After the last four years when access to The White House was slim or non-existent, this opportunity affords us to become part of the policy decisions affecting our 2,700,000 members.

We are vitally interested, as the world's largest veterans organization in rebuilding this country - both its economy and its national security, and will support the President in all major issues. Though we may disagree at times concerning the budget, I do want you to know that you have our full support, because as veterans we feel that we have a vested interest. Our main purpose is a healthy economy and to make sure there are no more wars.

I am sorry that you will not be able to join us for our luncheon tomorrow, but do understand with the President's budget message that it will be a very busy day for you. We deeply appreciated the meeting and your offers of assistance to us.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

bcc: Wayne Valis



February 17, 1981

Mr. James A. Baker, III  
Chief of Staff  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. Baker:

The American Legion and I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you in the Roosevelt Room of The White House on February 14. It was a great opportunity to meet with Mrs. Dole and her staff concerning the Veterans Administration and our nation's economy.

We realize that your schedule is extremely busy, and your visit to our meeting was deeply appreciated.

We look forward to working with President Reagan on making this nation No. 1 both in the economy and national security, and all other measures.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,

ROBERT W. SPANOGLE  
Executive Director

bcc: Wayne Valis ✓



**MYLIO S. KRAJA**

Executive Director  
Washington Office

**THE AMERICAN LEGION**

1608 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

202-861-2711

**THIS  
MAY  
INTEREST  
YOU!**



*For God and Country*

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# NEWS RELEASE

NEWS HOTLINE (800) 428-2686  
(INDIANA) (800) 382-9042

**CONTACT:** Jim Witek/Washington

Date of Origin: October 5, 1982

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C.--American Legion National Commander Al Keller voiced concern Monday that the resignation of Veterans Administrator Robert Nimmo not affect ongoing programs of the VA.

"This is a critical time for the VA to be left without strong leadership, because of the negotiations on the fiscal 1984 budget that will be proposed to Congress by President Reagan in January," he said.

"The American Legion's only concern is for veterans issues and programs, not for personalities and politics. We have had differences of opinion with Mr. Nimmo as we have had with previous Administrators of Veterans Affairs. However, we have always found Mr. Nimmo open to suggestions by The American Legion and the veterans community.

"In fact, Mr. Nimmo appeared at The American Legion's National Convention in August of this year announcing that as Administrator he was bringing the Agent Orange issue to the top level of the VA Central Office and giving this serious problem the priority it deserves. This was a departure from the Agency's past foot-dragging through two administrations.

"We hope President Reagan will move quickly to find a dedicated, knowledgeable and able person--preferably a man or a woman who has served in uniform and who instinctively stands up as a veterans' advocate.

"With those qualifications the next Administrator can be confident of the respect and full support of The American Legion in undertaking a hard and very important job," Keller concluded.

(end)