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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 3, 1982

Mr. Harold Blechman
State ADjutant
Disabled American Veterans
Department of Illinois
5524 Lincoln Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60625

Dear Mr. Blechman:

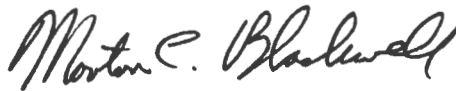
This is in response to your July 1 letter to President Reagan in which you expressed concern about the resignation of Charles Hagel as Depty Administrator of the Veterans Administration.

I can assure you that your attitudes, and those of your fellow members of the Disabled American Veterans, are taken very seriously here at the White House and by the Veterans Administration as well. But with regard to Mr. Nimmo's performance as Administrator of Veterans Affairs, we are concerned that you may be basing your information on distorted reports of his alleged attitudes and statements and not on the facts.

Mr. Nimmo addressed these allegations at the recent Disabled American Veterans convention in Las Vegas. Please find enclosed a copy of his speech.

Thank you for sharing your views with the President.

Sincerely,



Morton C. Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President

Enclosure

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL CONVENTION -- LAS VEGAS, NEVADA JULY 18, 1982

WHEN I APPEAR BEFORE THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, I FEEL I AM WITH A GROUP WITH A SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF VETERANS -- AND A SPECIAL APPRECIATION FOR PROGRAMS SET UP FOR THEIR UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS.

WHEN I APPEAR BEFORE THIS CONVENTION, I AM AWARE OF WHAT D.A.V. IS ACCOMPLISHING -- FOR OUR VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, AND FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THE COUNTRY.

YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN INDUSTRIOUS AND SUPPORTIVE OF VETERANS PROGRAMS. YOUR CONVENTIONS ARE ALWAYS LARGE, ACTIVE AND INTERESTING. SO -- AS USUAL -- YOUR AGENDA THIS YEAR IS SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF, SOMETHING TO REALLY LOOK FORWARD TO.

D.A.V. IS AN EFFECTIVE AND RESPECTED VOICE IN MATTERS THAT AFFECT THE DISABLED -- BECAUSE PEOPLE REALIZE YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO SPEAK TO THE VERY SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DISABLED.

IF YOU DID NOTHING MORE THAN SERVE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR DISABLED VETERANS, MEMBERSHIP IN D.A.V. WOULD STILL BE WORTHWHILE -- YOUR TIME AND EFFORT WOULD BE WELL SPENT. BUT THE FOUNDERS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION HAD A BROADER POLICY AGENDA.

SO I JOIN YOU TODAY IN THE PRIDE YOU FEEL AS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST AND MOST SUCCESSFUL VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS -- WITH ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR ALL AMERICANS.

I CAN APPRECIATE THE SATISFACTION YOU DERIVE FROM KNOWING THAT YOU ARE MEMBERS OF A GROUP THAT DOES THINGS TO MAKE YOUR HOMETOWNS BETTER -- BECAUSE YOU ARE PRODUCERS, ACHIEVERS, AND CITIZENS WITH GREAT CIVIC PRIDE.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE LONG ADMIRERD YOU FOR THE CAUSES YOU ESPOUSE. AND THEIR RESPECT IS BACKED UP BY THE GREATEST SYSTEM OF BENEFITS AND HEALTH CARE EVER PROVIDED BY A NATION FOR ITS VETERANS.

I CANNOT SAY -- AND I WILL PROBABLY NEVER BE ABLE TO SAY -- WE ARE MEETING THE NEEDS OF VETERANS FULLY. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO COMPLETELY SQUARE THE DEBT FOR LOST TIME, LOST OPPORTUNITY, LOST HEALTH. THESE LOSSES ARE THE UNFORTUNATE PRICE WE MUST PAY FOR LIVING IN THIS GREAT COUNTRY AND ENSURING ITS FUTURE.

WHAT YOU DO EXPECT -- AND WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE -- ARE PROGRAMS OF ASSISTANCE THAT WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO ENJOY THE FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY YOU HELPED DEFEND. YOU ARE ENTITLED TO EXPECT PROGRAMS THAT ARE PLANNED WISELY AND ADMINISTERED SKILLFULLY.

LAST YEAR, I EXPRESSED TO YOU BOTH THE PRESIDENT'S AND MY OWN COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING THE VA'S INTEGRATED QUALITY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. I TOLD YOU OF OUR RESOLVE TO CONTINUE DELIVERY OF AUTHORIZED VETERANS' BENEFITS.

AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, I MADE IT CLEAR THAT ALL VA PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW; NOT A REVIEW DESIGNED TO ELIMINATE PROGRAMS OR BENEFITS. BUT RATHER ONE TO ENSURE THAT THE AGENCY WAS BEING MANAGED EFFICIENTLY. IT WAS MY GOAL THAT BENEFIT PROGRAMS -- BOTH MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL -- SHOULD PRODUCE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO VETERANS ...AT THE LEAST POSSIBLE COST TO TAXPAYERS.

I WOULD LIKE TO REPORT ON OUR REVIEWS -- WHAT WE FOUND, WHAT WE DID, WHERE WE ARE GOING...AND, TO ALLEVIATE SOME OF THE CONCERNS I'VE HEARD EXPRESSED, WHERE WE ARE NOT GOING.

I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT:

- * AGENT ORANGE.
- * THE VIETNAM VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM.
- * AFFILIATIONS.
- * RESEARCH.
- * OUR MEDICAL FACILITY CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM.
- * VA PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT.
- * ...AND DATA PROCESSING.

AS A RESULT OF REVIEWS IN THESE AREAS -- SOME OF WHICH ARE STILL GOING ON -- WE HAVE MADE SOME FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES -- WHICH WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE DELIVERY OF VETERANS BENEFITS.

ONE OF THE FIRST PROGRAMS I REVIEWED WAS AGENT ORANGE. I FOUND OUR RESEARCH STUCK ON DEAD CENTER -- WITH GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT NOTHING MOVING.

SO I APPOINTED AN AGENT ORANGE TASK FORCE...CREATED AN AGENT ORANGE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION OFFICE...AND BEEFED UP THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE. THESE OFFICES ARE NOW WORKING -- FULL TIME -- ON MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROJECTS TO HELP RESOLVE THE COMPLEX ISSUE OF AGENT ORANGE.

TOWARD THAT END, I RECENTLY APPROVED A 5-MILLION DOLLAR AGENT ORANGE BUDGET PROGRAM FOR THIS YEAR -- AND I WILL PETITION THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS FOR ANOTHER \$7.7 MILLION OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. THE DETAILS WILL BE SHARED WITH THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. I AM PARTICULARLY PROUD TO SAY THAT THIS IS THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE AGENT ORANGE BUDGET PREPARED BY ANY ADMINISTRATION.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, DOZENS OF OTHER AGENT ORANGE RESEARCH PROJECTS PRESENTLY UNDERWAY IN THE VA -- AND THROUGHOUT GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. WE SUPPORT AND WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH ALL THESE EFFORTS -- AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE AS A MEMBER OF THE WHITE HOUSE AGENT ORANGE WORKING GROUP...AND ITS SCIENCE PANEL.

WE ARE ADVISED IN OUR ACTIONS BY THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH-RELATED EFFECTS OF HERBICIDES -- AN ADVISORY GROUP COMPRISED OF DISTINGUISHED SCIENTISTS AND CONCERNED VETERANS -- MANY BELONGING TO VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS.

STILL, IT MAY TAKE YEARS TO GET ANSWERS TO THE MANY QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE. BUT, WE SHOULD BEGIN TO SEE IMPORTANT RESEARCH RESULTS BY LATE 1983.

IN THE MEANTIME, WE ARE ACTIVELY -- AND DILIGENTLY -- PURSUING ANSWERS, AND CONTINUING TO PROVIDE MEDICAL TREATMENT TO VETERANS WITH PROBLEMS POTENTIALLY RELATED TO AGENT ORANGE.

WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED AT THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WE HAD 90 VET CENTERS FUNCTIONING NATIONWIDE. THE SYSTEM WAS PLAGUED BY INSUFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS A GENERAL LACK OF ENTHUSIASM WITHIN THE AGENCY.

THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH STAFFING AT THE CENTRAL OFFICE-LEVEL TO MAKE THE PROGRAM COMPLETELY EFFECTIVE AND THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH STAFFING AT THE REGIONAL COORDINATOR-LEVEL TO PROVIDE PROPER PROGRAM OVERSIGHT.

THERE WERE NO SEPARATE FUNDING CONTROL-POINTS AT THE STATION LEVEL. AND THERE WAS NO DELINEATION OF VET CENTER RESOURCES IN THE DM&S BUDGET.

SO WE ESTABLISHED THE READJUSTMENT COUNSELING PROGRAM AS A SEPARATE SERVICE WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY -- UNDER THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT CHIEF MEDICAL DIRECTOR FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. WE ALSO CREATED A SPECIAL STEERING COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE PROPER PROGRAM GUIDANCE.

WE INCREASED CENTRAL OFFICE STAFFING IN THE MANAGEMENT AREA AND REGIONAL COORDINATORS RECRUITED PROGRAM MANAGERS TO PROVIDE BETTER PROGRAM DELIVERY IN THE FIELD.

IN ADDITION, WE HAVE INSTITUTED SEPARATE FUNDING CONTROLS AT THE STATION LEVEL -- SO THAT OUTREACH FUNDS MUST BE USED FOR OUTREACH PURPOSES.

A NATIONAL READJUSTMENT COUNSELING CONTRACT PROGRAM HAS ALSO BEEN INSTITUTED. AS OF JULY 1, OVER 245 CONTRACTORS ARE AVAILABLE TO INCREASE THE READJUSTMENT COUNSELING SERVICES ACROSS THE NATION.

WE HAVE NOW OPENED MORE CENTERS FOR VIETNAM VETERANS. SOME 130 CENTERS ARE OPERATIONAL, WITH SIX MORE COMING ON-LINE SOON. THE VIETNAM VETERAN OUTREACH CENTER PROGRAM IS NOW BETTER MANAGED, PROPERLY FUNDED AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT IS PLAYING A VITAL, AND SUCCESSFUL ROLE IN THE REHABILITATION OF VIETNAM VETERANS.

IN THE AREA OF AFFILIATIONS BETWEEN MEDICAL SCHOOLS AND VA MEDICAL CENTERS THE VA WILL CONTINUE TO MEET ITS STATUTORY OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE THE NATION WITH VITAL MEDICAL EDUCATION RESOURCES. BUT I HAVE INDICATED THAT THESE NEED TO BE CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZED. THE CARE OF THE VETERAN PATIENT MUST BE THE FOCUS OF AFFILIATION AND PUBLIC RESOURCES MUST BE USED TO SUPPORT THAT PHILOSOPHY.

THIS ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD IN STRENGTHENING POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF MEDICAL EDUCATION BEGAN WHEN PRESIDENT REAGAN SIGNED PUBLIC LAW 97-15. IN DOING SO, HE EXTENDED THE PERIOD IN WHICH THE VA COULD ADMINISTER GRANTS TO FIVE NEWLY ESTABLISHED STATE MEDICAL SCHOOLS WHICH HAVE MADE EXCELLENT PROGRESS. THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO COMPLETE THE EXPENDITURE OF \$133.8 MILLION IN SUPPORT OF THESE POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF AFFILIATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS.

A MORE RECENT EXAMPLE OF THIS SUPPORT IS A PROJECT NOW IN PROGRESS UNDER VA'S SPECIAL MEDICAL ADVISORY GROUP. THIS PANEL OF DISTINGUISHED, INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXPERTS HAS BEEN WORKING FOR THE PAST YEAR ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS TO EVALUATE AFFILIATIONS AND ADVISE ME ON CRITERIA THAT CAN BE USED TO DETERMINE WHERE OUR MEDICAL EDUCATION RESOURCES SHOULD BE APPLIED TO IMPROVE OUR HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM.

WE CONTINUE TO REVIEW OUR MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR WAYS OF EXPANDING AND IMPROVING OUR EFFORTS -- IN BOTH PROSTHETIC AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH. WE MUST DEVOTE GREATER RESEARCH EFFORT TO DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH VETERANS, PARTICULARLY THE AGED. WHILE I CANNOT SPEAK TO EXACT FIGURES AT THIS TIME, I INTEND TO SEEK A FISCAL YEAR '84 MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH BUDGET SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE THE \$138 MILLION WE HAVE IN THE '83 BUDGET.

LAST DECEMBER, I ORDERED A COMPLETE REVIEW OF THE MISSION AND AUTHORITY OF THE REHABILITATION ENGINEERING CENTER IN NEW YORK -- AFTER THE INSPECTOR GENERAL HAD FOUND SOME SERIOUS OPERATING PROBLEMS. BECAUSE OF GENERAL CONCERN ABOUT VA EFFORTS IN THIS AREA -- PARTICULARLY YOURS -- DOCTOR CUSTIS AND I ASKED THE REVIEW TASK FORCE TO DO TWO THINGS: (1) ASSESS THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES AT THE CENTER AND, (2) DESIGN LONG-RANGE PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPING, TESTING AND DISTRIBUTING PROSTHETIC DEVICES FOR DISABLED VETERANS.

THE TASK FORCE HAS COMPLETED PHASE ONE. I HAVE RECEIVED THEIR REPORT WHICH RECOMMENDS TRANSFERRING THE SPECIAL CLINIC AT THE VA REHABILITATION ENGINEERING CENTER TO THE TOTAL HEALTH CARE SETTING OF THE LOCAL VA MEDICAL CENTER -- AND ESTABLISHING OTHER SPECIAL CLINICS AROUND THE COUNTRY. THIS REALIGNMENT WOULD ALLOW US TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE -- TO VETERANS WHO NEED IT -- IN PLACES CLOSER TO THEIR HOMES.

THE TASK FORCE ALSO RECOMMENDS SHIFTING THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION FROM A CENTRALIZED TO A NATIONWIDE EFFORT THAT WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PARTICULAR CENTERS OF EXPERTISE.

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS WERE KEPT APPRISED OF THE TASK FORCE'S PROGRAMS.

THE TASK FORCE HAS CAUTIONED, AND I AGREE, THAT THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE VA REHABILITATION ENGINEERING CENTER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THEIR CHARTER. THAT IS, TO COME UP WITH A SYSTEM -- AND A FUNDING LEVEL -- THAT WILL BRING THE VA BACK INTO THE FOREFRONT OF PROSTHETICS AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH.

WE ALL KNOW THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN EXPLOSION OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY -- IN RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION OF NEW AND UNIQUE PROSTHESES, ORTHOTICS, MOBILITY AIDS, AND TECHNIQUES AND CONCEPTS IN REHABILITATION. THERE ARE NOW OVER 300 BLIND SENSORY AIDS -- MOST DEVELOPED OVER THE PAST DECADE. REHAB DEVICES ARE NO LONGER JUST PASSIVE, THEY NOW HAVE INTERNAL CONTROLS RELYING ON COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS.

IN THE SECOND PHASE, THE TASK FORCE IS LOOKING FOR A MECHANISM TO PROVIDE STRONG CENTRAL LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE TO A DIVERSIFIED R&D AND EVALUATION PROCESS. I HOPE TO HAVE THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS IN TIME FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE FISCAL YEAR '84 BUDGET.

CERTAINLY, VA SHOULD BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF RESEARCH INTO DISEASES AND HEALTH PROBLEMS OF THE AGED.

WE ARE STEPPING UP OUR EFFORTS IN THE GERIATRIC RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND CLINICAL CENTERS WHICH WE HAVE IN EIGHT LOCATIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY. WE REPROGRAMMED FY 82 STAFF AND FUNDING TO BOOST THIS EFFORT AND IN FISCAL YEAR 83 WE HOPE TO PROVIDE NECESSARY POSTGRADUATE AND INSERVICE TRAINING SUPPORT FOR A CONTINUING GERIATRIC EDUCATION EFFORT.

WE INTEND TO ATTRACT OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALS TO TEACH, TO CONDUCT BASIC AND CLINICAL RESEARCH ON AGING, TO PROVIDE EDUCATION IN GERIATRICS, AND TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR PROVIDING CARE TO THE AGED.

IN ADDITION, A VARIETY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES DIRECTED AT THE AGING POPULATION ARE NOW GOING ON THROUGHOUT THE VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. ONE EXAMPLE IS A GERIATRIC PHYSICIAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM. ANOTHER IS THE NEWLY-INITIATED NURSE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM -- WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED GERONTOLOGIC NURSING AS ONE OF ITS PRIORITY AREAS.

THERE WILL BE INCREASED EMPHASIS ON INVESTIGATION OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE AGED -- RESEARCH INTO SUCH AREAS AS DIABETES, CHRONIC FORMS OF HEART DISEASE, CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE LUNG DISEASE, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND IMPROVED SENSORY AIDS.

AS MANY OF YOU PROBABLY KNOW, THE VA HAS ALSO UNDERTAKEN A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES TO REFINE AND IMPROVE OUR CONSTRUCTION PROCESS.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING A REVALIDATION PROCESS FOR THOSE PROJECTS IN OUR FIVE-YEAR MEDICAL FACILITY CONSTRUCTION PLAN WHICH REVIEWS THE NEED, JUSTIFICATION, WORKLOAD DATA AND DESIGN, FOR EACH PROJECT--PRIOR TO ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING.

THE PURPOSE OF THE REVALIDATION PROCESS IS TO ENSURE THAT THOSE PROJECTS WHICH ARE THE BASIS FOR OUR BUDGET REQUEST REFLECT THE BEST CONSTRUCTION RESPONSE TO THE HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS. IT HAS NO OTHER PURPOSE THAN TO ENSURE THAT WE MEET THE NEEDS OF VETERANS WITH THE RIGHT FACILITY, IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME.

THE REVALIDATION PROCESS -- LET ME ASSURE YOU -- IS NOT DESIGNED TO REDUCE BEDS. IT IS NOT DESIGNED TO DELAY VITALLY NEEDED MEDICAL FACILITIES. AND IT IS ABSOLUTELY NOT DESIGNED TO OPEN THE DOOR TO MAINSTREAMING -- A CONCEPT I STRONGLY OPPOSE.

FOR THE RECORD, LET ME ALSO -- ONCE AND FOR ALL -- CORRECT A MISCONCEPTION THAT OUR REVALIDATION PROCESS WAS A FREEZE, OR MORATORIUM, ON THE VA'S CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM.

WE ARE ABOUT TO COMPLETE THE REVALIDATION PROCESS FOR THOSE PROJECTS WHICH ARE POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR FISCAL YEAR '84 CONSTRUCTION FUNDING. WE ARE TAKING A FRESH LOOK AT THESE PROJECTS, WHILE THEY CONTINUED TO BE DESIGNED. WE INTEND TO ASSURE YOU, AND ASSURE OURSELVES, THAT THOSE PROJECTS WE SELECT WOULD REPRESENT THE BEST CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM POSSIBLE. THAT THEY WOULD BE GUIDED BY THE HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF VETERANS -- AND BASED ON DEFENSIBLE AND ACCURATE CRITERIA.

OUR REVIEW OF THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM INVOLVES 57 PROJECTS WITH A COMBINED ESTIMATED COST OF OVER \$1 BILLION. EACH PROJECT WAS COMPREHENSIVELY REVIEWED BY A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY VA TEAM -- WHICH WAS DIRECTED TO REVIEW THE PROJECT FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.

WE HAVE FOUND THE REVALIDATION PROCESS VERY PRODUCTIVE. WE WILL CONTINUE IT UNTIL WE HAVE MADE CERTAIN THAT ALL OF OUR PLANNED CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS REPRESENT THE BEST AND MOST EFFICIENT PROJECTS THAT CAN BE PROVIDED...THAT THEY MEET OUR CONTINUED GOAL, AND COMMITMENT, TO DEVELOP, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN, A QUALITY, INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE, HEALTH CARE SYSTEM FOR THE VETERAN POPULATION.

CERTAINLY, YOU SUPPORTED US. THE D.A.V. COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH THE VA IN THE REVIEW AND REVALIDATION PROCESS. YOU WERE THERE, STEP-BY-STEP -- TO PROVIDE VALUABLE ASSISTANCE.

SO YOU KNOW THAT REVALIDATION MEANS BETTER, NOT LESS. IT MEANS PROGRESS, NOT DELAY...MOMENTUM, NOT MORATORIUM...EFFECTIVENESS, NOT FREEZE.

IN THE INTERNAL MANAGEMENT OF THE VA, I AM PARTICULARLY PROUD OF OUR PROGRAMS IN PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT. WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY TO ACHIEVING AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WHICH WILL TIE POLICY FORMULATION TO PROGRAM PLANNING AND BUDGETING -- AND AID POLICY-LEVEL OVERSIGHT OF PROGRAM DELIVERY AND FISCAL OPERATIONS.

THIS YEAR, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COMPLETE A POLICY 'BASELINE' STUDY TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVES -- AND TO ISSUE POLICY GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMULATION OF FISCAL YEAR '84 THROUGH '88 PROGRAM PLANS AND BUDGET ESTIMATES.

WITH SOUND STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESPONSIBLE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, WE WILL BE ABLE TO IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF VETERAN'S BENEFITS.

OVER THE YEARS VA'S DATA PROCESSING EFFORTS HAVE BEEN LESS THAN EFFECTIVE. WE WERE FALLING BEHIND IN THE USE OF MODERN DATA PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY -- ON THE MANAGEMENT SIDE AS WELL AS IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY. WE WERE NOT EVEN CLOSE TO USING MINI-COMPUTERS TO THE EXTENT WE SHOULD.

SO WE HAD TO REORIENT AND REORGANIZE OUR WHOLE DATA PROCESSING AREA.

NOW, A TOP AGENCY OFFICIAL OVERSEES OPERATIONS -- AND REPORTS DIRECTLY TO ME.

DEPARTMENTS AND STAFF OFFICES MUST NOW PLAN -- AND DEFEND -- ALL ADP INITIATIVES IN THE INTERNAL BUDGET PROCESS. PLANNING THEREFORE MUST BE MORE EXACT IN RELATION TO MISSION REQUIREMENTS.

WE ARE UPDATING PRESENT MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHIES, ALIGNMENT AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT. WE ARE LEASING TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT INSTEAD OF BUYING. WE ARE CONSOLIDATING ADP SERVICE CENTERS.

WE ARE STREAMLINING ALL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES -- INCLUDING THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO RESEARCH NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY. ALL AGENCY POINTS -- LOAN GUARANTY, BIRLS, TARGET -- WILL NOW BE AVAILABLE TO ALL AGENCY USERS...THROUGH NETWORKING.

IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR, I ORDERED ALL OUR HOSPITALS TO DETERMINE HOW THEY COULD USE MODERN ADP TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR OPERATIONS.

G.S.A. HAS APPROVED 2.9-MILLION DOLLARS TO BUY TERMINALS AND AUXILIARY GEAR TO MAKE 24 UNDERUTILIZED COMPUTER PROCESSING SITES AVAILABLE TO MEDICAL CENTERS. SIX OF THE 24 ARE ASSISTING HOSPITALS NOW -- IN A PILOT TEST.

TO DATE, WE HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN REORGANIZING OUR MANAGEMENT OF DATA PROCESSING RESOURCES. MOST IMPORTANTLY, VETERANS HEALTH CARE WILL BENEFIT FROM OUR ACQUISITION PROGRAM FOR MINICOMPUTERS -- FOR PATIENT REGISTRATION AND SCHEDULING, PHARMACY AND LABORATORY SYSTEMS.

MEDICAL CENTER DIRECTORS ARE BEING GIVEN WIDE LATITUDE IN DEVELOPING LOCAL DATA PROCESSING APPLICATIONS TO MEET PATIENT NEEDS. AND WE WILL HAVE 11-MILLION DOLLARS PROGRAMMED FOR THIS EFFORT THIS YEAR.

IN THE AREA OF VETERAN'S LEGISLATION, THE PRESIDENT AND I BOTH SUPPORTED THE FORMER PRISONER OF WAR BENEFITS ACT.

JUST AS WHOLE-HEARTEDLY, WE SUPPORTED:

* VETERANS' DISABILITY COMPENSATION, HOUSING, AND MEMORIAL BENEFITS AMENDMENTS.

* VETERANS' HEALTH CARE AND TRAINING -- AND THE...

* VA AND DOD HEALTH RESOURCES SHARING AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS LEGISLATION.

I HOPE YOU KNOW, BY NOW, THAT I OPPOSE ANY LACK OF EQUITY FOR VETERANS. WHILE I ORIGINALLY SUPPORTED AN 8.1 PERCENT COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR COMPENSATION RECIPIENTS, I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT 7.4 PERCENT -- AS LONG AS VETERANS ARE TREATED THE SAME AS ALL OTHER CITIZENS.

WE HAVE TESTIFIED IN SUPPORT OF A 7.4 PERCENT INCREASE IN COMPENSATION -- AS WELL AS HIGHER RATES FOR CERTAIN SPECIFIED DISABILITIES...AND RATES FOR ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS. THE ANNUAL CLOTHING ALLOWANCE WOULD BE INCREASED -- AS WOULD D.I.C RATES TO SURVIVORS OF VETERANS WHOSE DEATHS WERE SERVICE-CONNECTED.

IN OUR VAST INSURANCE PROGRAM, WE HAVE REVIEWED THE USGLI PROGRAM. WE PROPOSED REGULATIONS DECLARING THE POLICIES FULLY PAID-UP. IF APPROVED, NO FUTURE PREMIUM PAYMENTS WOULD BE REQUIRED.

RIGHT NOW, THE VA IS GUARANTEEING 4.1 MILLION HOME LOANS WORTH 105.1 BILLION DOLLARS. BUT THE TYPICAL VETERAN IS STILL FACING TREMENDOUSLY HIGH INTEREST RATES -- AS WELL AS HIGH COSTS. THIS IS OUR CONCERN. SO WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO STAY UP WITH THE CHANGING ECONOMIC NEEDS OF VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

IN APRIL, WE ANNOUNCED THAT VA-GUARANTEED GRADUATED PAYMENT MORTGAGES WERE AVAILABLE WITH LOWER DOWN PAYMENTS FOR NEW HOME PURCHASES. MANDATED BY CONGRESS LAST YEAR, THE GPM PROGRAM PROVIDES LOWER MONTHLY PAYMENTS FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS THAN WOULD BE AVAILABLE ON A TRADITIONAL MORTGAGE FOR THE SAME AMOUNT.

IN JUNE, WE EXPANDED OUR SERVICES TO VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS WITH ACCEPTANCE OF GROWING EQUITY MORTGAGES. UNDER THIS NEW CONCEPT, LOANS ARE ARRANGED TO MATURE MUCH EARLIER THAN STANDARD 30-YEAR MORTGAGES -- WITH NO INCREASE IN THE INTEREST RATES.

IN SOME CASES, THE LOAN CAN BE SATISFIED IN 11 YEARS, EVEN THOUGH EARLY MORTGAGE PAYMENTS ARE THE SAME AS THOSE FOR A 30-YEAR LOAN. ANOTHER ADVANTAGE TO THE BORROWER IS THAT THE INVESTMENT IN THE PROPERTY GROWS RAPIDLY -- AT A RELATIVELY LOW MONTHLY COST.

EARLY THIS MONTH, WE PUBLISHED PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO OUR REGULATIONS WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY RESPONSIVE TO TODAY'S NEEDS.

IN ONE CASE, IT WILL ALLOW US TO PROVIDE LOAN GUARANTEES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. IF ADOPTED, THIS WOULD AID LOW OR MODERATE INCOME VETERANS TO OBTAIN HOUSING.

IN THE OTHER CASE, VA GUARANTEED LOANS COULD BE USED TO OBTAIN HOUSING IN RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES -- OR OTHER DEVELOPMENTS WITH AGE RESTRICTIONS.

WE CAN'T GUARANTEE THESE LOANS AT PRESENT, BECAUSE OF THE RESALE OR AGE RESTRICTIONS.

SINCE OCTOBER 1981, VA-GUARANTEED MOBILE HOME LOANS HAVE INCREASED AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF OVER 12 PERCENT. THIS IS PARTLY DUE TO THE EXTENSION OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR GREATER PERIODS OF TIME.

THIS KIND OF HOUSING IS IMPORTANT TO VETERANS IN THEIR EARLY YEARS -- ESTABLISHING THEIR CAREERS AND FAMILIES -- AND TO THE GROWING NUMBER OF RETIRING VETERANS WHO RELOCATE IN THE SUNBELT STATES. SO WE ARE SUPPORTING EFFORTS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS OF RESTRICTED ZONING AND -- IN SOME CASES -- LACK OF PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE.

WE HAVE ALSO MOVED AGGRESSIVELY TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL BURIAL SPACE AT VETERANS CEMETERIES THAT ARE NOW CLOSED. ALTHOUGH THE REGIONAL CEMETERY CONCEPT HAS NOT BEEN ABANDONED, WE RECOGNIZE THAT MOST VETERANS WISH TO BE BURIED AS CLOSE TO THEIR HOMES AS POSSIBLE.

IT IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE DESIRE. AND WE ARE GOING TO ACCOMMODATE IT IN EVERY WAY WE CAN -- BY EXPANDING, OR ADDING TO OUR OLDER CEMETERIES.

IN CONSTRUCTION, WE HAVE THE INDIANTOWN GAP NATIONAL CEMETERY IN PENNSYLVANIA SCHEDULED TO OPEN THIS FALL. QUANTICO NATIONAL CEMETERY -- 25 MILES SOUTH OF WASHINGTON, D. C. -- WILL OPEN IN THE SPRING OF 1983. AND FORT MITCHELL NATIONAL CEMETERY, IN ALABAMA, IS EXPECTED TO OPEN FOR BURIALS IN 1986.

IN ADDITION TO THESE CEMETERIES, WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT A NEW NATIONAL CEMETERY SHOULD BE BUILT IN FLORIDA -- TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THAT STATE'S GROWING VETERAN POPULATION.

THESE INITIATIVES CLEARLY INDICATE WE ARE LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM -- WITH AN EYE ON EXTENDING THE UTILIZATION OF OUR EXISTING CEMETERIES -- AND FOCUSING ON BUILDING OUR NEW CEMETERIES WHERE WE SEE THE GREATEST NEED.

IN FEBRUARY 1982, I APPROVED THE ADOPTION OF A STANDARD GRAVESITE SIZE POLICY FOR OUR NATIONAL CEMETERIES WHICH WILL BE USED IN NEW NATIONAL CEMETERIES, AND IN THE NEW BURIAL SECTIONS OF EXISTING CEMETERIES. THIS WILL RESULT IN REDUCED DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE COSTS PER GRAVESITE. AND ULTIMATELY, IT WILL ALSO EXTEND THE LONGEVITY OF OUR CEMETERIES.

THE CONCEPT OF GARDEN NICHES IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES FOR THE INTERMENT OF CREMATED REMAINS IS ANOTHER NEW POLICY INITIATIVE. THIS WILL PROVIDE FOR THE EFFECTIVE USE OF CEMETERY LAND THAT IS OTHERWISE UNSUITABLE FOR THE INTERMENT OF CASKETED REMAINS.

AND AS WE STRIVE TO IMPROVE OUR PRODUCTIVITY, AND BENEFITS DELIVERY -- WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF MEMORIAL AFFAIRS -- I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT ALL OUR ACTIVITY WILL FLOURISH IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF CARE AND COMPASSION. WE CAN DO IT NO OTHER WAY.

WE ARE NOW IN THE EARLY STAGES OF PREPARING THE VA'S 1984 BUDGET. BUT BEFORE LOOKING AHEAD, I SHOULD BRIEFLY REVIEW OUR 1983 BUDGET:

AFTER REPEATED NEGOTIATING SESSIONS WITH OMB LAST FALL, WE PUT TOGETHER A VA BUDGET OF 25.6 BILLION DOLLARS IN BUDGET AUTHORITY -- WHICH THEN BECAME PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET...FORWARDED TO CONGRESS.

GIVEN THE CONSTRAINTS WE WERE WORKING WITH, IT WAS A GOOD BUDGET.

ALTHOUGH IT DIDN'T PROVIDE AS MUCH FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH -- OR CONSTRUCTION -- AS WE WOULD HAVE LIKED, IT DID PROTECT OUR VITAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AGAINST ANY EROSION. AND OVERALL, IT REPRESENTED ABOUT A 900-MILLION DOLLAR INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

WHILE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES HAVE NOT YET ACTED, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT CONGRESS WILL SUPPORT OUR BUDGET AS PRESENTED. TO DATE, THE BUDGET COMMITTEES OF THE CONGRESS HAVE REDUCED OUR REQUEST BY ABOUT ONE-BILLION DOLLARS.

WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO DISSUADE THE CONGRESS FROM MAKING ANY REDUCATIONS IN MEDICAL CARE. BUT EVEN IF WE ARE FORCED TO TAKE SOME REDUCTIONS -- GIVEN THE COST-CUTTING MOOD PREVAILING IN CONGRESS -- OUR FY 83 BUDGET REQUEST WILL STILL FARE BETTER THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCY EXCEPT DEFENSE.

AND WHILE I AM GENERALLY PLEASED WITH OUR 1983 BUDGET, I CANNOT BE COMPLACENT ABOUT OUR 1984 BUDGET WHICH IS NOW GETTING UNDERWAY. WE CANNOT DISREGARD THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE. BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT I WILL BATTLE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY TO PROTECT OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR PROSTHETIC AND MEDICAL RESEARCH, TO FUND ESSENTIAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, AND INSURE THAT OTHER VETERANS BENEFITS REMAIN INTACT.

THE PRESIDENT AND I ARE COMMITTED TO THE PROTECTION OF VETERANS BENEFITS -- AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR VITAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. AND WE MEAN TO KEEP THAT COMMITMENT.

AS DEMANDS GROW, AS NEEDS CHANGE, AS NEW MODES OF TREATMENT DEVELOP, THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION WILL DO ITS UTMOST TO MAKE ALL OUR SERVICES THE BEST THEY CAN POSSIBLY BE. WE WILL DO OUR UTMOST FOR AS LONG AS THOSE WHO NEED US COME TO US -- AND, OF COURSE, FOR AS LONG AS THE SOLEMN ASSIGNMENT GIVEN US BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE CONTINUES.

MY CHIEF CONCERN -- AND ONE I BELIEVE WE ALL SHARE -- IS TO ENSURE THAT BENEFITS REMAIN AVAILABLE IN THE YEARS AHEAD, WHEN THE VETERAN POPULATION DWINDLES...AND SUPPORT FOR VETERANS' PROGRAMS MAY WANE.

DESPITE OCCASIONAL DIFFERENCES, THAT MAY AT TIMES DIVIDE US, I BELIEVE OUR MUTUAL RESPECT ENDURES. AND THIS RESPECT WILL ENABLE US TO CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER, IN BEHALF OF OUR NATION'S VETERANS.

WE IN THE VA HAVE ALWAYS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS. AND WE HAVE ALWAYS APPRECIATED THE VALUABLE HELP YOU HAVE PROVIDED. WE WANT IT TO CONTINUE.

WE NEED YOUR WISE COUNSEL. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT. WE NEED YOUR ENERGY. AND WE NEED THE KINDNESS OF D.A.V. VOLUNTEERS.

I LEAVE YOU WITH SINCERE THANKS -- FOR YOUR INVITATION AND FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. BEST WISHES FOR A COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL CONVENTION -- AND A HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE YEAR AHEAD.

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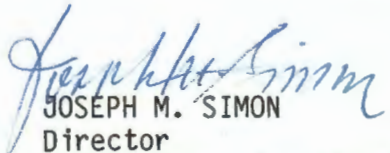


AUGUST 12 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR :

Morton C. Blackwell
Special Assistant
Office of Public Liaison
The White House

I am pleased to enclose a suggested draft letter for signature of a White House official to Mr. Harold Blechman, State Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans, Chicago, Illinois.


JOSEPH M. SIMON
Director
Executive Review Staff

Attachment

OK for me
S:5.

Dear Mr. Blechman:

This is in response to your July 1 letter to President Reagan in which you expressed concern about the resignation of Charles Hagel as Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration.

I can assure you that your attitudes and those of your fellow members of the Disabled American Veterans are taken very seriously here at the White House and by the Veterans Administration as well. But with regard to Mr. Nimmo's performance as Administrator of Veterans Affairs, we are concerned that you may be basing your information on distorted reports of his alleged attitudes and statements and not on the facts.

Mr. Nimmo addressed these allegations at the recent Disabled American Veterans convention in Las Vegas. Please find enclosed a copy of his speech.

Thank you for sharing your views with the President.

Sincerely,

D R A F T S MAppleman -- (064) -- Tel 389-2741 7/28/82

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date 19 Jul 82

To: Robert Niemi

From: Morton C. Blackwell

Please respond on behalf of
the President

Please prepare draft for
Elizabeth Dole's signature

Please prepare draft for
my signature

FYI

Department of Illinois
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

D. RAY WILSON
Commander

JOHN F. HORAN
Sr. Vice Chairman
ROBERT E. JEWELL
1st Jr. Vice Commander
THOMAS C. BAKER
2nd Jr. Vice Commander
EDMUND S. STEVENS
3rd Jr. Vice Commander
DAVID W. STANLEY
Judge Advocate
STANLEY C. WALLACE
Chaplain
WOULLARD LETT
Sergeant-At-Arms
ALFRED W. GRAJEK
Jr. Past Commander

*Morton
Blackwell*



5524 LINCOLN AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60625
(312) 275-2353

HAROLD BLECHMAN
Adjutant
DANIEL C. MARTELOTTA
Director of Service
LAWRENCE E. LOCKHART
Chief of Staff
THOMAS R. PEPIN
Inspector General
DENNIS R. GUERNSEY
Legislative Liaison
JAMES HARRIS
Employment Officer

July 1, 1982

Ronald Reagan, President
United States of America
White House - Washington, D.C.

Dear President Reagan:

The Department of Illinois, Disabled American Veterans, the 3rd largest of the State's Veterans Organization, which consists of members who have received service-connected disabilities as a result of war, feels time has come for our organization to stand firm and let you know how we feel about the Veterans Administrator, Robert P. Nimmo. As a result of the resignation of Charles Hagel, the #2 man in the Veterans Administration who was the highest ranking Vietnam Era veteran in that Department, we in our Disabled American Veterans Organization feel that Mr. Nimmo should be asked to resign his position.

We feel Mr. Nimmo has made mistakes running his office and also by being so passive to the cuts in the benefits and services to the service-connected disabled veterans of our nation. We would recommend that you confer with the leaders of the major Veterans Groups for a suitable replacement.

Mr. Nimmo's time has come and for the good of your administration we strongly urge this action.

Yours in Comradeship,

Harold Blechman

Harold Blechman
State Adjutant

HB/ak

January 12, 1984

Dear Mr. Joyner:

I have been asked to acknowledge your letter to the President and to thank you for inviting him to the opening session of your 63rd National Convention to be held on August 26-30, 1984.

Your thoughtfulness of the President is most appreciated, but we are unable to project his schedule this far in advance. It is suggested, therefore, that you proceed with your plans at this time, not counting on his participation. Then, if you would like to renew your invitation to the President nearer the date -- I suggest eight weeks ahead -- we should be better able to give you a definite answer.

With our best wishes,

Sincerely,

FREDERICK J. RYAN, JR.
Director, Presidential
Appointments and Scheduling

Mr. Dennis A Joyner
National Commander
Disabled American Veterans
807 Maine Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

FJR:MR:emuf3
FJR-18

bcc: ~~Morton Blackwell~~
Craig Fuller

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY



COMMITTEES:
SMALL BUSINESS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
TAX, ACCESS TO EQUITY CAPITAL AND
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
HEALTH AND HOSPITALS
HOUSING AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS
COMMISSIONER:
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3766
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SUITE H
HAMILTON, NEW JERSEY 08619
(609) 890-2800
222 HIGH STREET
BURLINGTON CITY, NEW JERSEY 08018
(609) 386-5534
402 EAST STATE STREET
ROOM 102 A
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08608
(609) 988-2140
7703 MAPLE AVENUE
PENNSAUKEN, NEW JERSEY 08110
(609) 663-3937

July 20, 1983

Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant To The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

sole
DAV

Dear Morton:

I understand that officials of the Major Thomas B. McGuire, Jr. Memorial Committee have contacted your office concerning the possibility that President Reagan could attend a dedication ceremony at McGuire Air Force Base.

For your information, I have enclosed a copy of my letter to the President on this subject. Your support of this request would greatly be appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration, and please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

CHS:pjw

Enclosures

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS



CHAPTER #39, BORDENTOWN

Phone: 609-298-1634

OFFICE OF COMMANDER
Wallace D. Melville
39 Georgetown Rd.
Bordentown, N.J. 08505
8 June 1983

President Ronald Reagan
White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President,

We, the Comrades of Chapters 27, 39, 42 of Northern Burlington County, State of New Jersey, honorably request the presence of you, Mr. President and Mrs. Reagan, on the evening of August 13, 1983, at McGuire Air Force Base. We are honoring the Past Chapter Commanders for their outstanding work in servicing the Disabled Veteran, Veterans, their Widows and Families. An engraved invitation is enclosed for this event.

There has never been a President of the United States that has attended an event honoring New Jersey's Disabled Veterans. Would you be the first?

I would like to add that since this event is taking place at the greatest organized Air Force Base that I know of in this great Country, there will be no security problems. From the Commanding Officer of the 21st Air Force, the Wing Commander, Base Commander, all the officers and airmen, I know that you would be bestowing a great honor with your visit to McGuire Air Force Base.

Again, As Chairman of the event, it would give the Disabled Veterans of New Jersey the greatest pleasure to introduce you and Mrs. Reagan on the night of August 13.

If do to your busy schedule, you find that you cannot attend this gala event, would it be possible to send a representative in your place; such as, Vice President Bush or a member of your cabinet.

Anxiously awaiting the arrival of your reply, I remain,

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wallace D. Melville".

Wallace D. Melville
Commander, Disabled American
Veterans Chapter #39
Bordentown, New Jersey

Disabled American Veterans
of
Tri-Chapters No. 27, No. 39, No. 42
cordially invite you to participate in a
Past Commanders Testimonial
Dinner and Dance
to be held
on Saturday, the thirteenth of August
nineteen hundred and eighty-three
at six o'clock in the evening
Officers Club
McGuire A F B, New Jersey

R S V P

5
BLIND VETERANS NATIONAL CHAPTER



DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

ROBERT H. DAWSON
Commander
2739 Hiram Court
Wichita, Kansas 67217

CALVIN D. VENABLE
Adjutant-Treasurer
2785 Skyline Drive
Westminster, Colo. 80030

JERRY R. MONROE
Sr. Vice Commander
763 Princeton Ave.
Bricktown, N.J. 08723

WILLIAM D. CAMERON
1st Jr. Vice Commander
Route 6 Box 111
Yakima, Wash. 98902

JOSEPH SCHLICHTIG
2nd Jr. Vice Commander
P.O. Box 419
Port Richey, Fla. 33568

EDMUND FIBICH
3rd Jr. Vice Commander
2336 E. River Road
Grand Island, N.Y. 14072

JAMES E. TILLMAN JR.
4th Jr. Vice Commander
2009 Holmes Street
Tallahassee, Fla. 32304

*LEONARD D. FEASTER
Judge Advocate
1001 E. Mac Arthur #120
Wichita, Kansas 67216

P.L. "BARNEY" BARFIELD
Chaplain &
"White Cane" Editor
508 S. Washington
Lindsborg, Kansas 67456

Nov. 13, 1982

Dear Mr. President,

I wish to thank you for passing and signing into law, bill HR 6782 and a Public Law designating the week of November 7-13 as National Disabled American Veterans week. I had the honor to serve on the Resolutions Committee of the D.A.V. National Convention, to help write this resolution to the Veterans Committee. I sincerely wish to thank you for signing this into law and for your support. So often we forget to say thank you. May God help you in your endeavors.

Sincerely,
Leonard D. Feaster

Two enclosures attached.

The High Price of U.S. Freedom

Congress finally has passed a bill, signed into law by President Nixon, designating the week of Nov. 7-13 "National Disabled Veterans Week." The week-long observance especially is designed to honor the sacrifices made by America's more than two million service-related disabled veterans.

We made many sacrifices by laying our lives on the line to keep freedom, as we know it, for this country during World Wars I and II, and in Korea and Vietnam. Many of my comrades lost arms, legs, eyes and other parts of their bodies. Many have diseases indigenous to other parts of the world, as well as many have mental sufferings that

will remain with them the rest of their lives.

We know freedom is not free. We paid the price for all Americans.

LEONARD D. FEASTER
Wichita

Editorial page
Wichita Eagle-Beacon
Nov. 8, 1982

(Reached 140,000 Kansans).

P R O C L A M A T I O N

By the Governor

**Executive Department
State of Kansas
Topeka, Kansas**

TO THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS, GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, there are two million three hundred thousand veterans with disabilities resulting from their service in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, these disabled veterans have sacrificed their well-being in the service of their country; and

WHEREAS, many of these disabled veterans endure severe disabilities, such as loss of limb, paralysis, blindness, deafness, and delayed-stress syndrome and other mental disorders; and

WHEREAS, these disabled veterans consistently experience inordinately high rates of joblessness; and

WHEREAS, these disabled veterans have made vital contributions to the national security and welfare by helping our Nation preserve its freedom, strength, and prosperity;

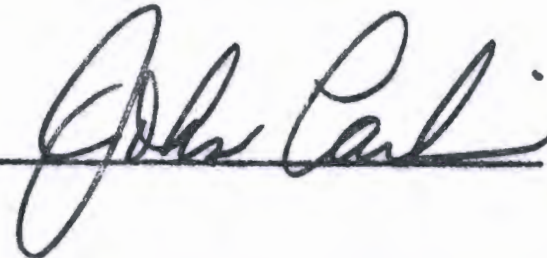
NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN CARLIN, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF KANSAS, do hereby proclaim the week of November 7 through 13, 1982, as

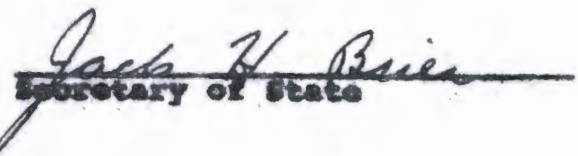
NATIONAL DISABLED VETERANS WEEK

in Kansas, and urge the citizens of Kansas to recognize the contributions that veterans with service-connected disabilities have made to the national security and welfare of the United States, and to observe the week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

**DONE At the Capitol in Topeka
Under the Great Seal of
the State this 23rd day
of September, A. D., 1982.**

BY THE GOVERNOR:





Secretary of State



Assistant Secretary of State